



EuroMed**Rights**

Promoting human rights  
in the Euro-Mediterranean region  
since 1997

**EuroMed Rights Regional Seminar**  
20-21 October 2017, Brussels

*Countering the shrinking space for civil society in the Euromed Region*

Venue: Palais des Académies, Rue Ducale 1, 1000 Bruxelles

**Objectives of the seminar**

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*This seminar will follow the EuroMed Rights 20th Anniversary Celebration Event:*

I/ **The ceremony for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EuroMed Rights:** in the morning of 20 October, high-level EU representative and representatives of Member States are invited to present their views on the 'shrinking space' phenomena as well as to interact with Civil society organisations from all over the EuroMed region. Attendees in the shrinking space seminar will take part to the conference and the debate.

II/ **Shrinking space yearly seminar:** two days (20-21 October) focused on exchanging experiences between CSOs from the region on countering multi-faceted restrictions through different means at national and regional levels. Participants will assess the situation of public freedoms in their own country and the region; they will learn about the possible establishment of an Early Warning System by the European Union aimed at anticipating restrictions of the civil society space in third countries. They will discuss about the launch of a new "EU Structured Dialogue with civil society". The seminar will also be the opportunity to define concrete recommendations that can be jointly addressed to the EU to protect civil society space and promote human rights and democracy in the MENA. Participants will finally debate about the impact of internet censorship on freedom of association and assembly as well as to identify adequate responses to build partnerships among CSOs, increasing their protection and fostering impact of their campaigns.

# PROGRAMME

20 OCTOBER: EuroMed Rights 20th Anniversary Celebration Event, followed by the regional seminar

## 9.00 Registration of participants

*Welcome coffee*

## 9.30 – 10.45 20 years after - a EuroMed civil society, a 'dream' turned into a reality?

*Moderator & presenter: Michel Tubiana, EuroMed Rights President*

- Projection of the 20th anniversary film
- The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in EU's Global Strategy, by HR/VP **Federica Mogherini** (on video)
- The importance of relations and solidarity between the two shores of the Mediterranean, by **Nick Westcott**, MENA Managing Director, EEAS (TBC)
- How EuroMed Rights has contributed to connect civil society activists from both shores of the Mediterranean, to build their capacities and to be impactful thanks to solidarity and advocacy efforts, by **Michel Tubiana** and **Kamel Jendoubi**, present and past EuroMed Rights presidents

*Coffee break, interviews, photo call*

## 11.00 – 12.30 Panel discussion on civil society's role in the EuroMed region in 2017 and beyond

*Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi, EuroMed Rights Honorary President*

Speakers:

- **Nabia Haddouche**, President of the Democratic Association of Moroccan Women (ADFM), EuroMed Rights Vice-President
  - **Osman İşçi**, General Secretary, Human Rights Association (İHD), Turkey; member of EuroMed Rights Executive Committee (via Skype)
  - **Irène Mingasson**, Head of Unit for Regional Programmes Neighbourhood South, DG NEAR, European Commission
  - **Marc Schade-Poulsen**, EuroMed Rights Executive Director
- Q&A, debate with the audience

## 12.30 – 14.00 Cocktail, walking lunch, and 'best of luck' panel

*Participants leave a message for the 20th anniversary of EuroMed Rights*



## Regional seminar

### Session 1: Shrinking space for civil society in the MENA region and Europe

14.00 – 15.30: Round of presentations of participants. Introduction on the concept and scope of ‘shrinking space’. Interactive dynamic with participants on the state of plays in the Euro-Mediterranean region, identifying patterns of violations and restrictions, and understanding the policy and the narrative that sustain them both in Europe and the South Mediterranean.

*15.30 – 16.00: Coffee break*

### Session 2: EU existing tools and perspectives on the establishment of an Early Warning System

16.00-17.30: How CSOs can benefit from the existing tools to support civil society at the EU level (new ENP, Human Rights Action Plan, ...)? The EU may establish an Early Warning System level to “to ensure a more timely and systemic responses” to the shrinking space for civil society. Could this mechanism be useful to CSOs in North Africa and the Middle East and how ?

*20.00: Group dinner*

## 21 OCTOBER: Countering the shrinking space for civil society

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### Session 3: The launch of a new “Structured Dialogue”: opportunities and challenges for civil society in its dialogue with the European Union

9.00-9.30: Presentation of the new “EU Structured Dialogue with civil society” and discussion with the participants about opportunities and challenges that arise from it.

*10.30 –11.00 Coffee/tea break*

### Session 4: Which impact of Internet censorship on freedom of association and assembly in the EuroMed Region?

11.00 – 12.30: Restricting access and surveillance of electronic communications not only infringe public freedoms but also divest CSOs from the potentiality that the online space can offer them to empower their actions. Participants will discuss the impact that internet censorship has on freedoms of assembly and association, based on their experience in their specific national context.

*12.30 – 13.30 Lunch break*

### Session 5: Recommendations to the EU to make its mechanisms to address the ‘shrinking space’ more effective

14.00-15.30 Participants exchange on the main recommendations to address to the EU in the framework of the ENP and the Human Rights Action Plan as well as ahead of the establishment of an Early Warning system; identify specific challenges and needs for CS support in the MENA region.

*15.30-16.00 Coffee/tea break*

### Session 6: New ideas & Lessons learnt from civil society best practices to counter the shrinking space

16.00-16.30: Presentation of new and innovative experiences from CSOs. Goal: inform participants about existing tools and initiative they can take benefit from or get inspiration. North-South cooperation: failure, success and solidarity among CSOs. Debate among participants on adequate responses from CSOs to build partnerships, increase their protection and foster their impact.

#### **Session 7: Evaluation and closure**

16.30-17.30 Participatory evaluation and closure