

An aerial photograph of a village built on a steep, red-hued hillside. The houses are densely packed and have light-colored roofs. In the foreground, a dirt path winds through tall, dry grass. Several people are walking along the path, some carrying large white bundles on their heads or backs. The background shows more of the red hills under a clear sky.

**eurAC**

# Annual Report 2017

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## EurAc: 15 years of engagement for the people of the Great Lakes region

### Editorial by François Mercier, President of EurAc

The year 2017 was marked by many challenges for the African Great Lakes region. Despite beginning on a hopeful note in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) through the New Year's Eve Agreement, which seemed to offer a solution to the political crisis facing the country, the rest of the year was unfortunately marred by a continuous shrinking of democratic space and ended

fatally with the violent repression of the demonstrations of December 31st, 2017. In Rwanda, despite an undeniable economic development, freedom of speech is in danger and dissident voices remain completely muzzled, as illustrated by the re-election of Paul Kagame as President with 98.7% of the vote in August 2017. 2017 also saw the continued failure of holding political dialogues in Burundi, whilst grave violations of human rights are reported on a daily basis by Burundian civil society, the majority of which is still forced into exile.

In this context, **EurAc** has repeatedly called on the European Union (EU) to adopt a strong diplomatic attitude and to better support the populations of the region in their quest for development and stability. The diplomatic sanctions against some Congolese senior officials in May 2017, as well as the conclusions of the Council of the EU in December of

the same year, are encouraging steps to which **EurAc** contributed through its advocacy efforts. These measures however remain insufficient in view of the seriousness of the situation.

At the beginning of 2018, 15 years after its creation, **EurAc** is at a turning point due to increasing budgetary constraints. It is thus becoming increasingly important to support the network, whose work contributes to the efforts of establishing peace and development in Burundi, Rwanda and DR Congo. Indeed, **EurAc** remains an organization whose work is more essential than ever to remind European decision makers of their responsibilities and their role in promoting human rights and respect for democratic principles in order to establish peace as well as sustainable and equitable development in the Great Lakes region.

## EurAc: 15 years of commitment for peace, human rights & development in the Great Lakes region

### Our mission, objectives & strengths



Created in 2003, the **European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)** gathers member organisations from civil society in several European countries. These organisations work on and in the Great Lakes region in Africa and wish to tackle the structural causes of under-development and instability in the region. They support civil society organisations in **Burundi**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) and **Rwanda** in their efforts

to promote peace, the respect of human rights and development by making local voices heard and taken into consideration by European Union (EU) policy and decisions-makers at all levels.

**EurAc's mission** is to carry out **advocacy towards the EU** to contribute to the development and the implementation, by the EU and its members States, of **strong and coherent policies** promoting

peace, security, inclusive political participation, the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources and the full respect of human rights in the Great Lakes region.

**EurAc's strength** lies in the fact that **EurAc** benefits from a **solid and multi-faceted expertise** in its thematic areas of work and from **long-standing relations** with policy and decision-makers in EU



institutions in Brussels, in EU capitals and with key partners in the Great Lakes region. **EurAc** is in a unique position to monitor EU relations with the Great Lakes region and to send clear and fact-based messages that can shape the EU agenda in accordance with **EurAc's** mission and principles.

“ The work of EurAc is greatly professional and valuable. They bring an incredible expertise, especially on Burundi and DRC, based on fact-finding missions, continuous contact with local stakeholders and in-depth EU policy knowledge and analysis. They are an important source of reliable information and guidance on their region for the European community”.

Quote from an EU official, EurAc External evaluation 2017

# 2017 for EurAc in numbers

## Our work in 2017 in a few key numbers:

- EurAc was created in **2003**, thus celebrating its **15th anniversary** in 2018;
- EurAc groups **38** member organisations from **11** different European countries;
- EurAc has **1** overall objective: the establishment of peace, human rights and development in the Great Lakes Region and works on **3** thematic areas: Peace and security; Human rights and inclusive political participation; Sustainable and equitable management of natural resources;
- EurAc works on **3** Great Lakes countries: Burundi, DRC and Rwanda;
- EurAc conducted **4** field missions to the region in 2017;
- EurAc launched **3** reports and organised **3** public conferences in 2017;
- EurAc organised **2** press conferences in 2017;
- EurAc wrote and sent **20** policy briefs to EU policy and decisions-makers in 2017;
- EurAc published **13** press releases in 2017;
- EurAc was featured **13** times in EU and international media in 2017;
- EurAc has **1528** followers on twitter and **2000** newsletter subscribers;
- More than **50** EU policy and decision makers met EurAc partners from the Great lakes region, including human rights defenders, civil society actors, members of the National Catholic Church representatives, journalists and members of pro-democracy movements.

## Our member organisations

Our **38 member organisations** represents civil society from **11 different European countries** who work in close partnership with local civil society actors independent of governmental authorities and political parties, in order to promote **peace**, the defence of **human rights** and **development** in Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda.

**EurAc** works in close collaboration with its members to ensure that **local voices** are heard at the highest decision-making levels in Europe, and so that advocacy activities can be coordinated and complemented at both the EU and the EU member state level.



**GERMANY**  
ÖNZ

**BELGIUM**  
11.11.11  
Broederlijk Delen  
Congo Dorpen  
CNCD-11.11.11  
Entraide et Fraternité  
FONCABA  
Action Damien  
IPIS  
Justice et Paix Belgique francophone  
Memisa  
RCN Justice & Démocratie  
Solidarité Socialiste  
Medecins du Monde  
Pax Christi International  
JESC



**SPAIN**  
Alboan  
Lliga Dels Dret Dels Pobles  
Mainel Foundation

**FRANCE**  
Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme - AEDH  
CCFD-Terre Solidaire  
Forum Réfugiés/Cosi  
Secours Catholique/ Caritas France

**IRELAND**  
Trocaire

**ITALY**  
Maendeleo-Italia  
Rete Pace per il Congo



**NORWAY**  
Norwegian Church Aid

**THE NETHERLANDS**  
Cordaid  
ICCO Cooperation  
PAX  
Mensen met een Missie

**UNITED KINGDOM**  
Christian Aid

**SWEDEN**  
Diakonia  
PMU

**SWITZERLAND**  
Fastenopfer  
HEKS-EPER  
FH Suisse  
Franciscans International

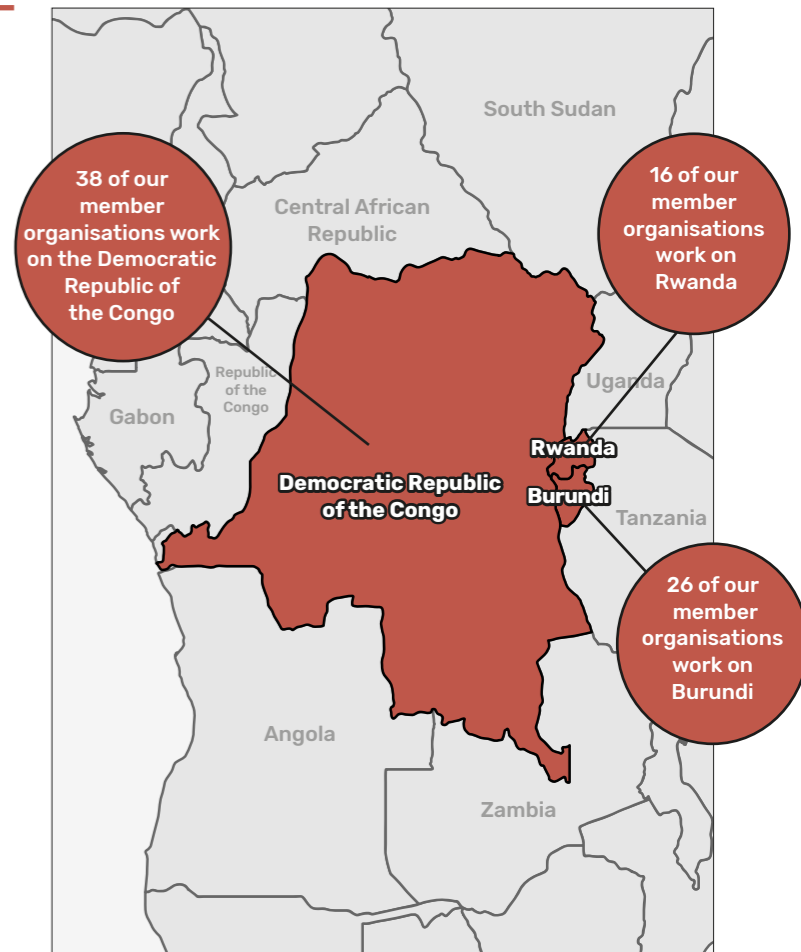
## In 2017, EurAc had several successful collaborations with its members :

- the organisation of **3 public conferences** at the European Parliament: one in March on the new EU Regulation on responsible mineral sourcing with our member **ALBOAN** with a photo-exhibition, one in June on the democratic processes & political stalemates in the Great Lakes region and the role of the EU with our member **Commission Justice & Paix** and finally one on the role of the EU for an equitable land management in the Great Lakes region with our members **Broederlijk Delen, Commission Justice & Paix, Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER), Fastenopfer, Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement-Terre Solidaire (CCFD-Terre Solidaire)** and **Entraide et Fraternité;**
- the organisation of **2 press conferences** with Congolese National Bishop's Conference (CENCO) representatives on the derailing political, security and humanitarian crisis in the DRC organised with our member **Commission Justice & Paix;**
- the moderation of a **side-event** to the UN Human Rights Council on the deteriorating human rights crisis in the DR Congo together with **Franciscans International;**
- joint research ventures in the field to produce high-qualitative reports.



## Notable achievements and events for our members in 2017:

- **AEDH** organised several events with human right defenders from DRC and Burundi;
- **CCFD-Terre Solidaire** has conducted several projects in Africa, including project on agroecology in Burundi;
- **CNCD-11.11.11** conducted a project in Katanga (DRC) on promoting development;
- **Commission Justice et Paix** has written reports on the Kasai crisis (DRC) and the Kimberly process;
- **Diakonia** had a photo exhibition on conflict minerals during "Almedalsveckan", the political highlight in Sweden that takes place on an annual basis.



\*Some of our member organizations work on several countries in the region at a time.

## Human rights & inclusive political participation

Political participation and the protection and promotion of civil and political rights and freedoms in the Great Lakes region faces many political and security obstacles, particularly around the organization of **electoral cycles**.

Indeed, in 2017 each of the three countries in the Great Lakes region - Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda - continued to be prey to a crisis of **institutional governance**, as leaders wield excessively centralised power, refusing to respect the democratic principle of political alternation. The crisis of governance was accompanied by a crisis of democratic principles with a **lockdown of democratic space** and increasing **attacks on fundamental freedoms and human**

**rights**. In each of the three countries the different electoral processes have been systematically called into question by both failed (as in Burundi up to now) or successful (as in Rwanda) attempts by governments to modify the Constitutions so as to stay in power. **Citizens' political participation** in the region is furthermore severely hampered by the use of violent and systematic state repression of dissident voices, which feeds into the larger trend of **impunity** for crimes and abuses that are rampant in countries where the legal system and the security services are seriously dysfunctional, lacking in independence and often corrupt.

In the **DRC**, in reaction to the deteriorating political situation, the **EU** has



taken a few welcome steps in 2017, but we currently witness a shift in its position and a worrying tendency to keep a diplomatic low profile, publishing weak statements with no concrete nor firm measures to prevent further escalation of violence and abuse in the country. This is incoherent with past decisions of the EU Council in 2016 and May 2017 to apply targeted sanctions against Congolese officials most responsible for human rights abuses and the strong Council Conclusions of December 2017.

In **Burundi**, the perseverance, seriousness and breadth of human rights abuses are alarming in a country where violations of the right to life persist and where cases of enforced disappearances are on the rise in a context of absolute impunity and with no end in sight to the political and security crisis. In reaction to this, in 2016 the EU decided to suspend its direct financial support to the Burundian administration but maintaining full financial support for the population and its humanitarian aid. Since then, EU positions on Burundi have remained timid, even for some contradictory with the regime of sanctions currently imposed, for instance when the EU decided to resume its financial contribution to the Burundian contingent involved in the African Union Mission to Somalia. In **Rwanda**, where we see a rigid disregard for civil and political liberties and human rights, there is a risk that a continuous lack of public condemnation by the EU

of the Rwandan government's breach of Rwandan and international law may perpetuate a sense of impunity both in the eyes of Rwandan and European citizens

In 2017, **EurAc** published the report '**Democratic processes and political stalemate in the Great Lakes region: For a stronger engagement of the European Union in Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda**', the result of intensive desktop and field research on the matter, analysing the different political and security crises linked to democratic processes, including electoral processes, in each of the three countries, as well as proposing key recommendations and lines of action for the EU to further strengthen its commitment to the defence of the rule of law, a stronger and more inclusive political participation of citizens and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.



## Sustainable & equitable management of natural resources

Natural resources represent the **main source of livelihood** for the people of Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. Be it through agricultural activities, the economic backbone of the Great Lakes, or through the extractive sector and the plethora of economic activities connected to it, most citizens in the region depend on their **land** to sustain their livelihoods.

For farmers to be able to support their families through agricultural production, it is crucial that land rights be recognized and secured, be they enshrined in state-law or in customary law, which is rarely



the case in the region. However, formalising individual rights over land does not always guarantee a safeguard against conflicts or abuse of land in rights. **Tenure security**, in fact, is affected by several factors: population movements and agricultural policy for example may put pressure on local rights and needs.



The challenges of the **mining sector** are most evident in the DRC, one of the world's largest producers of the so-called **3T minerals (tin, tungsten and tantalum)**, essential components of electronic devices such as smartphones and computers. While mining represents the main source of revenues for an important part of the population, communities in the DRC are often subject to dispossession when their land is eyed by mining investors. Moreover, people in **artisanal mining** often face risky working conditions under informal, unsecure arrangements. Finally, mining sites are often controlled and exploited

by local armed groups looking to fund their own activities.

With regards to land tenure, since 2012 the **EU** has been active in supporting and promoting the Voluntary Guidelines on the management of land, one of the main instrument today available to civil society groups fighting for their land rights. However, this support is accompanied by the absence of any mechanism to monitor EU corporations investing in land and agriculture in developing countries. With regards to mining, in March 2017 the EU approved a binding regulation for the **responsible supply of 3T minerals and gold** obliging importers, smelters and refiners to carry out due diligence to assess the risk of **human rights violations** or of **financing of armed groups** along production chains.

In 2017, **EurAc** published its report '**Accompanying Measures to the EU**

**Regulation on Responsible Mineral Sourcing**'. The report, the last step of four years of advocacy work, addresses the measures adopted by the EU to prepare the implementation of the regulation on responsible mineral supply. **EurAc** highlighted the issues of artisanal small mining, and the importance of **accompanying measures** that value, support and benefit this sector as a viable economic activity.

In 2017 **EurAc** also published the report '**Land, development and conflicts in the Great Lakes**', after more than one year of desktop and field research on **land management and conflicts** in the region. The report called on the EU for a stronger engagement to protect the land rights of vulnerable people, a better monitoring of EU investments in land and a renewed support for civil society organizations, the main actors in preventing and mediating land conflicts.



## Peace & security

Peace and security are major challenges in the Great Lakes, a region marked by **violent and deadly conflicts**, especially since the early nineties. Although each country in the region has specific conflict dynamics, there are some common factors and regional issues that lead to dramatic security and humanitarian crisis such as the civil war in Burundi (1993-2000), the Rwandan genocide (1994) and the two Congo wars (1996-1997 and 1998-2003). Power sharing, land tenure issues, population movements, natural resource management and governance issues in the security sector especially are the major factors putting peace and security at risk in the region.

While different **national and regional agreements**, including the *Arusha*

*Accords* and more recently the UN *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region*, have laid down principles for **building peace**, it is still not a reality in the region. Serious violations of **human rights and war crimes** committed on a daily basis by a multitude of armed groups in the area as well as by some national security forces, dramatically illustrate the lack of security and the suffering faced by the population of the Great Lakes.

The protection of civilians, the support of **peace building initiatives** and **social cohesion** at all levels, the respect for international humanitarian law, the esta-



ishment of strong and coherent **reform of the security and justice sector** as well as **disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes** of armed groups are areas to be tackled by national governments with the support of the international community and in particular the EU.

Since 2015, the **EU** has played a less direct security role in the region, particularly with the end of its EUPOL and EUSEC missions in the DRC and the suspension of direct budgetary support to Burundi. Nevertheless, the EU

plays indirectly a very important role through its contribution to the oldest, most important and costly peacekeeping mission in the world, the **MONUSCO**, as well as through its **Africa Peace Facility instrument** which consistently supports the African Union in its actions on peace, security and conflict prevention within the continent.

In 2016, **EurAc** produced the report '**EU support to security sector reform in the DRC**' analysing lessons learned from the **EUPOL and EUSEC missions** and by giving concrete recommendations for further action from the EU to support the Congolese government in its security issues. In 2017, **EurAc** focused its efforts on monitoring and analysing the **security risks posed by the pre- and**



**post-electoral processes** under way in the three countries, as well as the role the EU should play in preventing cycles of violence and repression associated with these processes, through the publication of press releases and confidential advocacy documents to alert EU decision and policy makers.





# Publications & media

## Key publications

Our reports and policy briefs are all based on extensive research from the field and include policy recommendations specifically tailored for European policy and decision-makers. To further ensure that these advocacy documents reach their target, we launch them during public conferences that see the participation of members of the European Parliament, senior officials from the European Commission, the European External Action Service or from EU member states as panellists.

In 2017 EurAc published the **three following reports:**

- **22 March 2017:**

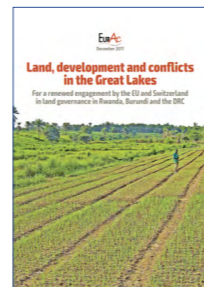
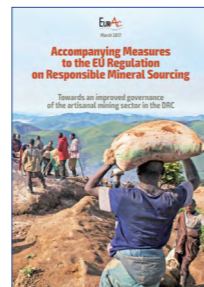
**Accompanying Measures to the EU regulation on Responsible Mineral Sourcing: Towards an improved governance of the artisanal mining sector in the DRC.**

- **7 June 2017 :**

**Democratic processes & political stalemates in the Great Lakes region: For a stronger engagement from the EU in Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda.**

- **7 December 2017:**

**Land, development and conflict in the Great Lakes region: Towards a renewed engagement of EU and Switzerland for equitable and sustainable land management in Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda.**



## Our presence in the media

EurAc has an active presence in **both traditional and social media**, through which our positions and activities have been publicly promoted and we have engaged directly with EU decision-makers, journalists, as well as international and local partners.

In 2017 EurAc was **interviewed and featured several times by EU and international media outlets** on key burning issues such as the aggravating human rights situation in Burundi, the effects of applied EU targeted sanctions in DRC, the EU conflict minerals regulation as well as the presidential election in Rwanda and the role of Congolese Bishops (CENCO) or quoting

our take on the Belgian decision to grant DRC Minister and government spokesperson Lambert Mende a humanitarian visa to Belgium despite the fact that he is subjected to EU targeted sanctions.



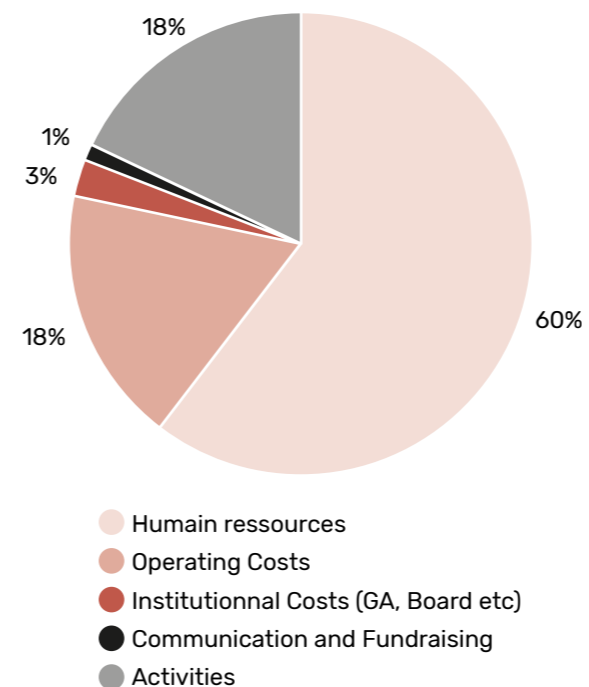
## Financial situation 2017

REVENUES	
Membership fees	185,417
External grants from Humanity United & NED	145,536
Additional member contribution (through specific projects)	29,378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360,331</b>
EXPENSES	
Human resources	206,082
Operating costs	61,366
Institutionnal costs (GA, Board etc)	8,875
Communication & Fundraising	3,570
Activities	62,190
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>342,084</b>
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>18,247</b>

In 2017, **EurAc**s member organizations contributed to 60% of the overall budget of the network either through their **membership fees** or through **specific contributions for activities**. In 2017, these specific contributions allowed **EurAc** to publish a report on land issue in the Great Lakes region with the conclusions and recommendations been presented during a public conference at the European Parliament. Two United States donors, the **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)** and **Humanity United**, contributed to the remaining 40% of the 2017 annual budget, enabling **EurAc** to carry out complementary activities related to strengthening the capacities of Congolese civil society actors in European advocacy, as well as to cover a significant part of the structural costs.

The main category of **EurAc**'s budget expenditure is human resources: **EurAc** team is composed of 4 people working on the internal communication of the network and the coordination of the 38 members, the external communication, and especially on research and advocacy on the 3 thematic areas of work: 1) Peace and Security; 2) Natural resources and 3) Inclusive political participation and Human rights.

Category of expenses for 2017



**EurAc**'s activities (publications, public events organisation, etc.) account for 18% of the budget, as do the operational costs to ensure the functioning of the structure.

This distribution of expenditure can be explained by the low cost of the type of activity carried out by **EurAc**, i.e. research and analysis which mainly requires significant human resources to produce qualitative and regular reports and advocacy documents on the region.



# Member organisations & Contacts



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