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Discrimination against women in the DRC: calling for strong recommendations from the CEDAW Committee on the impact of mining on women's rights and political and public participation

On 9 July 2019, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)'s 8th report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is going to be under review by the CEDAW Committee. In that framework, the European Network for Central Africa (EurAc) publishes a policy brief, aiming to pinpoint key issues affecting women in the public and political space and in the mining sector.

On the positive side, this review takes place in an encouraging context. On many occasions, the new DRC president Felix Tshisekedi publicly took a position on women empowerment and gender equality, with regular contacts and exchanges between the new regime and women activists.

Despite some legislative progresses, as for instance the Parity Act, the DRC has not taken any temporary special measures such as quotas to accelerate the equal participation of women in political and public life. The country relies on formal and protective equality which strengthens gender stereotypes without leading to transformation. The lack of women participation is also observable within the mining sector which seriously hampers the enjoyment of their full rights, with specific prejudicial impacts on their health and employment.

"This review is a crucial opportunity to raise strong recommendations towards the DRC to ensure that gender rhetoric leads to effective practices to put an end to discrimination against women in the country", conveys EurAc's director Brune Mercier.

EurAc notably calls on the CEDAW Committee to recommend to the DRC to:

- Re-examine the electoral law to ensure that parity is constraining and the inadmissibility of political parties' list which do not respect it.
- Make the necessary amendments to ensure the law on the protection of human rights defenders is fully gender sensitive and aligned with international and regional human rights standards.
- Ensure that all economic actors in the mining sector take into account and apply the directive on the resettlement and compensation of communities displaced in reason of mining investments, with a particular attention to women's needs.

Link

- ▶ The full Policy Brief with all recommendations is available on EurAc's website: <https://www.eurac-network.org/sites/default/files/eurac-policybrief-cedaw-03july2019-vf.pdf>

About EurAc

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. They support civil society

organisations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda in their efforts to promote peace, the defence of human rights and development.

EurAc's mission is to carry out advocacy work towards the European Union to ensure a strong, coherent and sustainable engagement by the EU and its member states, integrated to a regional approach, in order to help the Great Lakes region build a better future.

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