

PRESS RELEASE | 27 OCTOBER 2021

CENI: the European Union must adopt a firm position on the respect of the electoral process in the DR Congo

The European Network for Central Africa (EurAc) and its members regret that the appointment of the new president of the CENI Denis Kadima took place in the absence of consensus. The European Union (EU) must do everything possible to avoid a major political crisis that could jeopardise the holding of peaceful democratic elections in 2023.

On Saturday 23 October 2021, President Félix Tshisekedi signed the ordinance appointing the members of the new bureau of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), thus confirming the controversial choice of Denis Kadima as president of the institution in charge of organising the 2023 elections. Although Denis Kadima's electoral expertise is recognised by many Congolese and international actors, a consensus on his appointment could not be found among the representatives of the eight religious denominations, which are responsible for appointing this authority. The Catholic and Protestant Churches fear that his proximity to the current authorities will undermine his duty of independence. This non-consensual appointment bears the seeds of potential future electoral disputes.

If measures are not taken quickly to ease tensions and strengthen the confidence of the Congolese population in the credibility and independence of the electoral process, the DR Congo risks heading towards a major and destabilising crisis.

President Félix Tshisekedi will have to reassure the Congolese population and use all the means at his disposal to respect the constitutional deadline for the organisation of the general elections scheduled for December 2023 and to guarantee their proper conduct.

In this worrying context and in the light of past electoral experience in DR Congo, EurAc and its members call on the EU and its Member States to:

1. Monitor the pre-election situation closely;
2. Ensure that human rights are respected before, during and after the elections;
3. Adopt a firm position on the respect and proper conduct of the electoral process;
4. Call for the respect of the Constitution, electoral standards and more generally the rule of law.

More information

- ▶ Policy brief: ***DR Congo's current political crisis: urging the EU and its Member States to start making all the necessary provisions to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections in 2023.***
https://www.eurac-network.org/sites/default/files/20200120_drc_political_crisis_final.pdf

Contact

- ▶ Teodora Nguen | Advocacy Officer | teodora.nguen@eurac-network.org | +32 493 35 52 44
- ▶ Clara Debeve | Director | clara.debeve@eurac-network.org | +32 490 43 76 70

About EurAc

The European Network for Central Africa (EurAc), created in 2003, aims to help the Great Lakes region build a better future. EurAc carries out advocacy work for a strong, coherent and sustainable engagement by the European Union and its Member States integrated to a regional approach. EurAc gathers 36 European civil society organisations that work on and in the region and that support local civil society in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in promoting peace and development, and in defending human rights.