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Dear readers,

The year 2022 is not ending well in the Great Lakes region with the resumption of the conflict in the east between the Congolese army and the M23 rebel movement. Once again, the populations are caught between the strategic interests of the states in the region to the detriment of respect for their fundamental rights and the preservation of peace. The resurgence of this conflict shows how necessary it is to mobilize the highest international authorities to put an end to the reign of impunity. While the tone of the international community has lately become tougher regarding the protagonists, the European Union and its Member States must further strengthen the coherence of their actions in favor of peace in the region. It is also with a bitter taste that we observed the lifting of sanctions and a possible restart of international cooperation between Burundi and the EU without significant changes or guarantees from the authorities in the field of Human Rights. These political choices, and more generally the renewed tensions in the region, show the importance and relevance of the work carried out by EurAc and its members.

A busy agenda lies ahead in 2023 for the EU’s external action with numerous crucial milestones such as the elections in the DRC, the legislative review of the European Regulation on Responsible Sourcing and the adoption of a new European external strategy for the Great Lakes region. EurAc and all its members are already fully mobilised on these crucial issues for the stability of the region.

Finally, EurAc welcomed in September a new Advocacy officer on the issue of natural resources and new members to its Board. The resumption of the General Assemblies in person has allowed to strengthen the synergies between the members of the network in favor of stronger advocacy for the Great Lakes region!

Camille Liewig, EurAc’s President
The European Network for Central Africa (EurAc), created in 2003, aims for the EU and its Member States to develop and implement strong and coherent policies regarding 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 Board

- Camille LIEWIG – President, Secours Catholique - Caritas France
- Véronique PATERNOSTRE – Treasurer, CNCD-11.11.11.
- Lore BERTREM – Administrator, 11.11.11.
- Davide SOTO NARANJO – Administrator, Cordaid
- Thibaud KURTZ – Administrator, AEDH

About EurAc

Secretariat

- Clara DEBEVE – Director
- Clément IRAOLA – Project and policy Officer
- Teodora NGUEN – Advocacy Officer
- Daniela BISHOP – Communication Officer until January 2022
- Vasty MIGUEL – Communication Officer until November 2022

Clara DEBEVE – Director
EurAc focuses its advocacy on 3 thematic axes translated into 4 policy objectives:

- **PEACE AND SECURITY**
- **HUMAN RIGHTS AND INCLUSIVE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**
- **NATURAL RESOURCES**

The EU adopts meaningful policies, legal and political instruments to minimise the adverse environmental, social and economic impact of the exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes region.

The EU supports democratic, civil-society-led efforts from the people of the Great Lakes region to promote human rights and democratic participation.

The EU engages in foreign relations that promote peace and security for the citizens of the region, and particularly for the most vulnerable groups.

European Member States act with one voice with regards to their political and economic relations with the region, which are rooted in human rights and prioritise the wealth and well-being of its people and the environment.
Member organisations
EurAc gathers 34 member organisations across 12 European countries.

EurAc members are European civil society organisations working in and on the region and supporting local civil society in Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda in the promotion of peace and development and the defense of human rights.

Country of origin:

- Belgium (11)
- France (5)
- Germany (1)
- Ireland (1)
- Italy (1)
- Netherlands (4)
- Norway (1)
- Spain (2)
- Sweden (2)
- Switzerland (2)
- United Kingdom (1)
- Finland (1)
- International (2)
A glimpse of 2022

- 30+ different key policy-makers met
- 6+ publications (reports, policy briefings and statements) released publicly or confidentially
- 2 press releases published
- 6 public events organised in Brussels and Kinshasa
- 35+ consultation meetings with civil society organisations in Europe and the Great Lakes region
- 3 working missions of the Secretariat in the Great Lakes region
To develop its analysis, elaborate its policy recommendations and conduct its advocacy, **EurAc** collaborates with numerous stakeholders from Europe and the Great Lakes region: civil society organisations, experts, researchers, diplomatic networks, representatives of the private sector, national, European or international policy-makers.

**EurAc**’s team regularly travels to the Great Lakes region to meet with frontline actors, partners and decision-makers, this year we had the opportunity to visit **Kigali**, **Bukavu** and **Kinshasa**.
Towards an EU regional approach for the Great Lakes

The resurgence of the M23 rebel group, combined with the persistence of other armed groups in the east of DRC, has led to an alarming deterioration of the security situation and to episodes of targeted violence. This crisis has already forced the displacement of thousands of people, while humanitarian needs in the DRC, already high, have continued to increase.

Throughout the year, EurAc organised online panel discussions that brought together experts and local actors to exchange views on the security situation, humanitarian challenges, as well as electoral issues and the role of the international community. These exchanges allowed us to mobilise our members, their partners, as well as other international NGOs working on human rights, peace and security to feed our advocacy and analysis.

In parallel, the EU and its Member States have developed their new strategy for the Great Lakes region which recognises the need for a regional approach to address the root causes of instability and will serve as a reference framework for all EU policies and actions in the region. EurAc has been actively advocating to present its strategic priorities for the region and to ensure that the EU and its Member States act with one voice regarding their political and economic relations in the region.
The UN adopted two resolutions on youth in 2015 and 2016. In 2022, the UN established a UN Youth Desk. In DRC, the Resolution 2250 on National Action Plan was launched in August 2022. Its objective is to strengthen and promote the participation of youth in decision-making and peace processes. At the European level, following the EU Council Conclusions on Youth in External Action (2020), the EU adopted an EU External Action Action Plan for Youth (2022-2027) on 4 October 2022.

On this occasion, we organised a round table with our member Justice and Peace to bring the voice of youth fighting peacefully, across borders, for peace and democracy in Africa’s Great Lakes region. The round table created a space for exchange between the young Burundian and Congolese participants and and representatives from the European External Action service. These exchanges drawn conclusions on how the EU and its Member States can better contribute to youth-led efforts in the region and the tools they should implement to support them.

Youth represents a significant demographic weight in the African continent. Although their role is increasingly recognised by regional and international institutions, some of them still struggle to give the youth proper consideration in peace-building and reconciliation issues. Young people should be recognised as essential drivers of change.
After the political crisis of 2015, the change of head of state, President Evariste Ndayishimiye, in 2020 raised many hopes for the improvement of the security and human rights situation in Burundi. However, in 2022, human rights organisations continued to document killings, enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as sexual and gender-based violence. In response to President Ndayishimiye’s openness and willingness to re-engage with the international community, the Burundian government and EU representatives resumed their political dialogue, which had been suspended since 2016. The EU also lifted restrictions under Article 96 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement on 8 February 2022. However, many civil society organisations deplore the lack of tangible changes and the continued shrinking of civic space.

EurAc, in collaboration with its members and other European civil society organisations, continues to monitor the situation of human rights and civic space in Burundi; and to propose possible actions for the EU and its Member States to ensure that their diplomatic and cooperation initiatives promote the full exercise of the citizens’ civil, social and political rights, paying particular attention to youth and women.
The PEUPLE project has been implemented since 2020 by a consortium of 6 Congolese (SPFA, REBAC and PIDP) and European (AEDH, EurAc, and DOCIP) organisations. It promotes the defence of IPP’s rights and interests in the DRC, particularly in the provinces of Equateur and North Kivu, where our partners’ activities are implemented. The project aims to strengthen IPPs’ advocacy strategies to increase their visibility and advocacy message at national, European and UN level.

In 2022 within the framework of this project, EurAc coordinated the production of an ‘action research’ in collaboration with a researcher from the University of Mons in Belgium. This research aims to document and provide a global analysis of the discrimination and rights violations encountered by indigenous populations and to question the European Union’s action and leverage to respond to these challenges. The research will be published in 2023.

A success for the rights of Pygmy Indigenous People... and for our project!

The year 2022 marked the achievement of a long advocacy work led by indigenous pygmy people (IPPs) for almost 10 years with the adoption of the National Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of IPPs in the DRC.

Pygmy Indigenous People in the DRC

The partners of the project in visit in Kinshasa - DRC, December 2022
In December 2022, during its General Assembly, EurAc organised a conference on ‘Climate change in the Great Lakes Region’. Climate change and environment protection are at the center of discussions at the highest political level. The EU stresses the importance of climate mitigation measures and the need for a green energy transition. Yet, EU’s attention to issues related to climate change in the Great lakes region remains largely unsufficient.

The implication of climate change and environmental protection goes beyond natural hazards, floods and droughts. Social cohesion, stability and economic development are deeply linked with climate concerns. The stabilization efforts of the region need to be integrated within an environmental prospective.

This event brought together the members of the network to reflect on how to deal with climate change in the Great Lakes region, which is directly linked to all EurAc’s core thematic of work: peace and security, land conflicts and land grabbing, the rights of indigenous peoples, the exploitation of natural resources and human rights.
Throughout 2022, EurAc, together with its members and partners, has continued its advocacy work with the EU for an effective implementation of the European Regulation on Responsible Sourcing (3TG).

In September 2022, EurAc published the report of a three-day online workshop that brought together more than 50 representatives of Colombian, Congolese and European civil society organisations (CSOs) to formulate policy recommendations to the EU and its Member States on the implementation of the EU Responsible Sourcing Regulation (3TG). This workshop was followed by a public online conference where civil society representatives expressed their concerns to EU representatives (Parliament and Commission) and presented their recommendations. This report calls for more transparent and effective regulation of minerals.

In December 2022, EurAc organised a visit to the DRC (Bukavu and Kinshasa) to meet local CSOs in the formalisation of the artisanal mining sector. These meetings were an opportunity to understand the implementation of the European Regulation on 3TG in the DRC and to relay local CSOs’ concerns to the European institutions in Brussels and Kinshasa during an advocacy tour carried out in the framework of the MADINI project.

Read the report: European Regulation on Responsible Mineral Sourcing
In view of the up-coming elections scheduled for December 2023 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), **EurAc** developed a series of activities to mobilise its members and the European community to speak with one voice in support of an inclusive, transparent and credible electoral process that respects the sovereign will of the Congolese people.

In this regard, **EurAc**, in collaboration with the Royal Egmont Institute for International Relations, organised a webinar **aimed at drawing lessons learnt from the 2018 electoral cycle in the DRC** with various local and international civil society actors as well as diplomatic representatives. This allowed to propose concrete recommendations and actions to the EU and its member states, in order to rectify the mistakes of the past.
In its report «Elections in 2023 in the DRC: rectifying past mistakes to consolidate democracy», EurAc has drawn up a state of play of the various challenges faced by Congolese officials in the preparation of this new electoral cycle. The network also makes a series of recommendations to the EU and its Member States to prepare for this crucial moment for the future of democracy in Congo.

The report was elaborated thanks to the contributions of EurAc members, as well as their partners in the field who observe closely the organisation of the electoral cycle. On 18 and 19 May 2022, EurAc organised a two-day workshop with its members and their partners, with more than 30 participants from Europe and different parts of the DRC. Finally, the report was presented in Kinshasa on 20 May 2022 at a conference with European policy makers, representatives of international organisations and European and Congolese civil society actors (more than 50 participants).

PRESS RELEASE: Reconnaissance des droits des peuples autochtones pygmées : une victoire historique en RDC – Novembre 2022 (only available in French)

PRESS PUBLICATION: Présidentielle en RDC: un rapport visant à rectifier les erreurs du passé pour consolider la démocratie, la Libre (BE), 31 May 2022. 

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE | Mai 2022

Elections de 2023 en RDC : L'Union européenne et ses États membres doivent adopter un positionnement clair et une stratégie commune.

D'après plusieurs rapports officiels et antérieurs en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), le processus électoral et la situation politique en RDC ont été marqués par de nombreux défis. Les résultats des dernières élections ont souligné la nécessité de prendre des mesures pour garantir une transition vers une démocratie plus forte et plus inclusive. Les États membres de l'Union européenne ont un rôle crucial à jouer dans ce processus.

Le communiqué souligne l'importance de garantir un processus équitable et transparent des élections, ainsi que de veiller à ce que les droits des peuples autochtones pygmées soient respectés. Il encourage également l'Union européenne à soutenir la consolidation de la démocratie en RDC, en particulier dans les régions les plus éloignées et les zones conflictuelles.
Social Networks

European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)
More than 930 followers

Twitter
@EurAc_Net
More than 2,460 followers

LinkedIn
European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)
More than 930 followers
EurAc works almost exclusively thanks to the commitment and support of its member organisations. Their annual membership fees enable the Brussels-based Secretariat to carry out its advocacy and information work independently.

### REVENUES 2022*

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<td>Membership Fees</td>
<td>181,940 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Contributions</td>
<td>25,284 €</td>
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<td>Projects</td>
<td>51,231 €</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>258,455 €</td>
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### EXPENSES 2022*

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<td>Human resources</td>
<td>175,951 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating costs</td>
<td>28,030 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional and network life</td>
<td>5,245 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>997 €</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy activities</td>
<td>39,901 €</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>250,124 €</td>
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In 2022, the majority of EurAc’s revenues came from the members’ annual membership fees (70,4%). The rest of the revenues stemmed from external projects such as the MADINI project financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (10%), the PEUPLE project financed by the French Agency for Development (AFD) (6%) and the natural resources project financed by the Belgian cooperation (DGD) in collaboration with IPIS (3,7%). EurAc was also supported by extraordinary contributions from some of its members on specific activities such as the publication of a report and the organisation of a seminar in Kinshasa (9,7%).

Most expenses directly serve the Secretariat’s advocacy work, which is essentially based on the cost of human resources (70,3%) and a series of activities (such as field missions, the organisation of meetings/events or the drafting of reports for example) called advocacy activities (16%) and communication (0,4%). Other operating costs (11%) and institutional costs (2%) remain limited.

*The figure and financial results for 2022 shown in these tables remain provisional until their final approval by the external auditor and the General Assembly.
Join us!

Are you part of a NGO based in Europe working on/in the African Great Lakes region, more specifically Rwanda, Burundi, and/or the DR Congo? Are you interested in issues linked to human rights, participatory democracy, peace and security, and/or in promoting the sustainable management of natural resources in the region? **Join the network!**

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A strong, well-known and legitimate network

*EurAc* relies on its solid expertise and its long-standing relations with the political leaders of the EU institutions, its Member States as well as with the main actors of civil society in the Great Lakes region.

Being a member of *EurAc* means benefiting from a network of experts, privileged access to follow EU’s relations with the Great Lakes region and contributing to a common advocacy to shape EU’s agenda and actions in line with the network’s mission and principles.

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“Protection International joined EurAc in 2019, after years of being an active participant in the network. EurAc and PI have implemented numerous joint advocacy activities, such as the publication of a joint statement denouncing the DRC’s draconian human rights defenders draft bill, and the organisation of a joint event at the European Parliament to raise awareness about the criminalization of La Lucha, a pro-democracy movement in DRC. PI believes that the work carried out by EurAc is unique and highly relevant. EurAc has a deep understanding of the dynamics and realities of the Great Lakes region, is a reliable source of information, and regularly publishes relevant research. EurAc also actively seeks the participation of local organisations, giving them the opportunity to be heard by key decision-makers at the EU level.”

Marjorie Unal, Head of Programs, Protection International – Intl

“EURAC has been an important partner for many years. The network is very useful for NCA to know more about processes happening at the EU level, and about the perspectives and activities of other organisations pursuing compatible goals.”

Fernando Pineda Pinzon, Advisor, Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity from NCA - Norway

“KIOS re-joined EurAc about a year ago. The membership has given a boost to our advocacy work, but also to our overall work in the Great Lakes. EurAc brings together a wealth of information and know-how. In addition, the people at the EurAc secretariat are professional, dynamic and a pleasure to work with”.

Maarit Roström, Expert from KIOS Fundation - Finland