



eurAC

**Annual
Report
2018**

Table of contents



Editorial by François Mercier, President of EurAc	03
The new EurAc Strategy 2018–2020: Towards an increased EU support to the people of the Great Lakes region	04
2018 for EurAc in numbers	06
Our work at the EU level in 2018	07
Our member organisations in action	10
Our publications & our presence in the media	12
Financial situation in 2018	14

Editorial by François Mercier, President of EurAc



2018 was a significant year for the African Great Lakes region, and for the European Network for Central Africa (EurAc).

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), the long-awaited electoral process was singularly tumultuous, with an increasingly shrinking civic and media space and numerous human rights violations. EurAc successfully called on the EU and its member states to support the Congolese people in their **fight for democracy** by maintaining targeted sanctions against those responsible for grave human rights violations, and by pushing for a credible and inclusive electoral process. Kabila not running for a 3rd term at the December 2018 presidential elections was a positive sign: outside pressure, combined with courageous actions by civil society actors, have indeed helped to foster change in the DRC. However, many challenges remain on the way to achieving good governance, the rule of law and development in the country.

Burundi and **Rwanda** did not see any improvement in 2018 in the field of **human rights and inclusive political participation**. In these countries, EurAc actively advocated an increased and improved EU support to agriculture programs, taking into account the poorest farmers and the most vulnerable rural actors. In Burundi specifically, EurAc drew the attention of EU policy and decision-makers on the organisation of a controversial referendum aiming at changing the constitution. This referendum was also marked by systematic and serious human rights violations.

From **electoral processes** to **land reforms**, EurAc continued in 2018 to play an essential role in pushing the EU to comply with its commitments for the Great Lakes region. With the upcoming European elections in 2019, EurAc's advocacy work is even more crucial than before to push the EU to support development and peace in the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda.

Despite its achievements, the financial situation of EurAc still remains a challenge, as EurAc was not able to find new funding partners in 2018. In view of this situation, the members expressed a strong commitment and several of them pledged to increase their membership fees in 2019, which is an encouraging sign of support. Fundraising will of course remain a priority for the year to come.

The new EurAc Strategy 2018-2020:

Towards an increased EU support to the people of the Great Lakes region



OUR MISSION, OBJECTIVES & STRENGTHS

In 2018, the **European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)** started to implement its new Strategy 2018-2020 defining its priorities and main activities to enable an increased support from the European Union (EU) to the people of **the Great Lakes region**.

Overall, EurAc and its members wish to tackle the structural causes of instability in the Great Lakes region and to support or to back local dynamics of local civil society in their efforts to promote peace, the defence of human rights and development.

EurAc's members share the same overall objectives: the establishment of peace, security, inclusive political participation, sustainable and equitable management of natural resources as well as the full respect of human rights in **Burundi**, the **DR Congo** and **Rwanda** and within a regional approach.

EurAc's goal remained quite similar to the previous one: to encourage the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European External Action Service and EU member states to engage more and in a more coherent and sustainable way so that the EU plays its role in full in the

pacification, stabilisation and development of the Great Lakes region. EurAc also directs its advocacy activities towards the EU and its member states when they are acting within the United Nations and other international community fora framework.

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 key local civil society actors from the Great Lakes region, as well as policy and decision-makers in EU institutions in Brussels, in EU capitals and in UN agencies, notably in Geneva..

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 and actions in accordance with EurAc's mission and principles.



EurAc's December 2018 General Assembly
Ready for the new year to come!

2018 for EurAc in numbers

- ▶ **1 field mission** conducted to the DRC and Rwanda
- ▶ **1 report** on the human rights situation in Burundi
- ▶ **4 public conferences and round-table** in Brussels and Paris
- ▶ **2 press conferences** (organised and co-organised)
- ▶ **15 confidential & public policy briefs** sent to EU policy and decisions makers, notably on the DRC elections, on the human rights situation in Burundi and Rwanda and on land and agriculture in Rwanda and Burundi.
- ▶ **16 press releases**, **14** times featured in **EU & international media**, and **4 interviews** given
- ▶ **1926 followers** on Twitter, and **1700 newsletter subscribers**
- ▶ **More than 35 EU policy and decision makers met 11 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 work at the EU in 2018

Overall, the Great Lakes region continued to be prey to an institutional governance crisis, as leaders often wield excessively centralised power refusing to respect the democratic principle of political alternation.

Citizens' political participation in the region was furthermore severely hampered by the use of violent and systematic state repression of dissenting voices, which feeds into a larger trend of impunity for crimes and human rights violations that are rampant in countries where the legal system and the security services are seriously dysfunctional, lacking in independence and often corrupt.

The economic incentive to non-democratic governance was still intertwined with the bribery and corruption surrounding the exploitation of large mineral wealth.

2018 was a very intense year in terms of research and advocacy for EurAc, in our thematic areas of work.



HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACE & SECURITY

On 25 September, in collaboration with Protection International, EurAc organised and moderated a **public conference on the criminalisation of the citizen movement *Lutte pour le Changement (LUCHA)*** in the DR Congo at the European Parliament.

On 4 June 2018, in light of the seriousness of the political and security crisis in **Burundi** and the needs for continued pressure by the **EU**, we organised a public conference at the European Parliament "**Burundi: Is the persisting human rights, security & humanitarian crisis fading from the European agenda?**". It was a perfect opportunity for Burundian civil society to put forward their views to the attention of key EU policy-makers as well as the broader public, and to exchange views on the role of the EU and wider international community.



Additionally, on this occasion, EurAc presented its **latest report "Authoritarian abuses and covert elimination of dissident voices in Burundi. What role for the EU?"**, providing an in-depth analysis of the human rights and security crisis in Burundi and key recommendations to the EU on important future steps to take in order to avoid a worsening large-scale human rights, security and humanitarian crisis in the country and more generally in the Great Lakes region.

NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2018, EurAc continued to play a crucial role in coordinating the **advocacy on the implementation of the EU regulation on responsible mineral sourcing**, in collaboration with other international NGOs. Having successfully advocated for the regulation, EurAc is now paying attention to the implementation of the law.

For EurAc the **involvement of local civil society** from the DRC in this process is crucial. This is why in July EurAc participated in a workshop organised by Cordaid in Goma (DRC) discussing the potential benefits of the EU regulation.



In April, EurAc published a policy brief on **Land & Agriculture in Rwanda**, offering a critical overview of the main achievements of the Rwandan agricultural sector and calling on the EU to focus its support on strengthening the position of the poorest most vulnerable farmers. In November, EurAc published a second brief on the topic, calling on Rwanda's donors to ensure the **participation of farmers in the design of agricultural policies**.

In May, EurAc published a policy brief on the deteriorating situation of **agriculture and food security in Burundi**, calling on the EU & Switzerland to directly support the Burundian population in addressing their food security needs.

Our member organisations in action

In 2018, EurAc has organised different successful activities together with its members.

In May, in collaboration with other international NGOs, including members **Cordaid** and **IPIS**, EurAc organised a meeting in The Hague between the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM) and international NGOs working on the issue of conflict minerals and responsible mineral sourcing.

In August EurAc supported its member **Cordaid** in the organisation of an advocacy e-learning class for its partners from the DRC, followed by an advocacy tour in Brussels in which EurAc supported Cordaid partners' advocacy on the extractive industry in the DRC in bilateral meetings with EU policy makers.



In September, EurAc supported **Franciscans International** and other INGOs in the organisation of a side-event organised at the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on the human rights crisis in the DRC. The debate explored the human rights, security and political situation in the DRC, giving the opportunity to a panel of defenders, experts and victims of human rights violations to present their analysis and make sound recommendations to the Human Rights Council on how to holistically address the protracted crisis in this country and ensure free and fair elections.

On 6 December 2018, we organised a public conference “Peace & Human Rights in the Great Lakes region : what role for the international community, the European Union and France?” in Paris (France), in collaboration with our member **Secours-Catholique**, with the presence of Solange Lwashiga, from the Congolese women movement *Rien Sans les Femmes*, Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle, lecturer at Université Panthéon-Sorbonne and Gerardus Gielen, Head of the Central Africa Unit at the European External Action Service (EEAS).

EurAc also co-organised two **press conferences** in 2018:

- ▶ In March, on the occasion of the **Congolese Bishops’ National Conference (CENCO) visit to Brussels**, organised jointly with **11.11.11** and **Commission Justice & Paix**;
- ▶ 15 May 2018, on the occasion of the **launch of latest EurAc report on Burundi**.



Publications & Media

KEY PUBLICATIONS IN 2018

Our reports and policy briefs are all based on extensive research from the field and include policy recommendations specifically tailored for EU policy and decision-makers.

In 2018, EurAc issued one report and 15 public & confidential policy briefs including the following:

REPORT

- ▶ **Authoritarian abuses and covert elimination of dissident voices in Burundi. What role for the EU?**, May 2018

POLICY BRIEFS & OPEN LETTERS

- ▶ **DR Congo: The EU and its member states must stop their 'wait and see' approach and act now in a preventive and united manner**, May 2018
- ▶ **The EU and its member states must have a coherent and effective European approach about human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Rwanda**, June 2018
- ▶ **Creating a dedicated country-wide human rights monitoring and reporting mechanism on the Democratic Republic of Congo at the UN Human Rights Council**, September 2018



OUR PRESENCE IN THE MEDIA

In 2018, EurAc followed very closely the electoral situation in the DR Congo and issued **8 press releases** to alert on the burning need for the EU to stop their “wait and see” approach and take effective action in a preventive and united manner, showing a stronger and more concrete commitment to peace, respect for human rights and development in the DRC.

EurAc also followed the situation of **human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Rwanda**, as well as critically overviewed the main results and achievements of the **Rwandan agricultural sector**.

In 2018, EurAc was active on Twitter and has also been pitched many times in EU and international media.



Burundi: « On dirait qu'on nous a oubliés »: la société civile rappelle le drame burundais



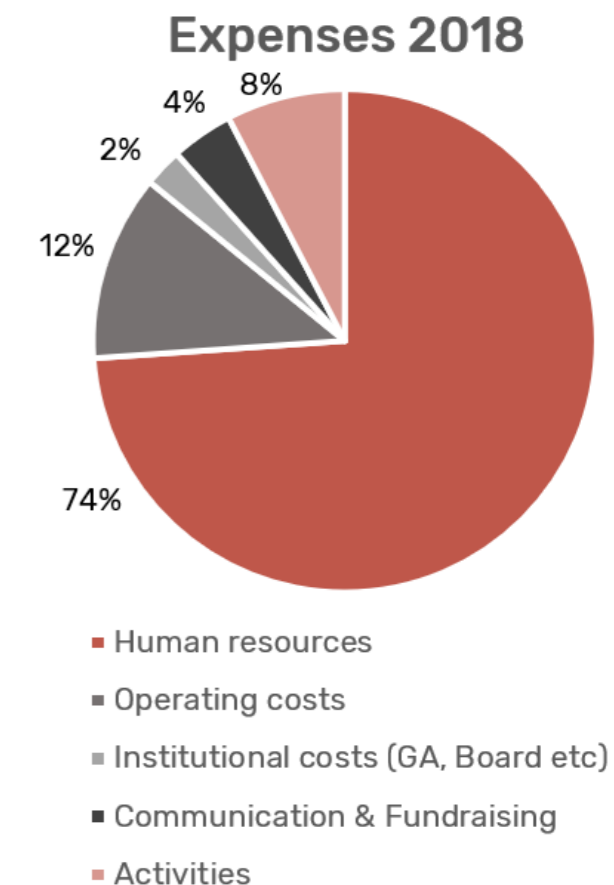
Financial situation in 2018

In 2018, EurAc's member organisations contributed to 93% of the overall budget of the network either through their membership fees or through specific contributions for activities. In 2018, these specific contributions allowed EurAc to initiate its desk research on women's participation and leadership in political and civic space in Rwanda and the DRC; and how the EU can improve the promotion of gender equality. EurAc's report on this issue will be launched at the end of 2019.

The US donor National Endowment for Democracy (NED) contributed to the remaining 7% of the 2018 annual budget, enabling EurAc to carry out complementary activities related to strengthening the capacities of three Congolese civil society actors through the organisation of European advocacy training in Brussels, followed by bilateral meetings with key EU stakeholders and the organisation of a **public conference** at the European Parliament on 23 March.

The main category of EurAc's budget expenditure is human resources: the EurAc team was composed of 4 people working on research, advocacy and on the internal and external communication. EurAc's activities (publications, public events organisation, etc.) account for 18% of the budget, as are 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.

REVENUES	2018
Membership fees	168.942
External grants from NED	13.921
Additional member contribution (through specific projects)	6.764
Reserves used	66.837
TOTAL	256.464
EXPENSES	2018
Human resources	189.515
Operating costs	30.756
Institutional costs (GA, Board etc)	6.342
Communication & Fundraising	10.264
Activities	19.587
TOTAL	256.464



Member organisations



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