

Pathways to stability: Rethinking the EU's role in the Great Lakes

Report of the 2 October 2025 conference



EurAc

Europe-Central
Africa Network

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About

EurAc

The Europe-Central Africa Network (EurAc), created in 2003, brings together 32 non-governmental organizations active in Central Africa, with a particular focus on the Great Lakes Region. EurAc advocates for strong, consistent, and sustainable engagement on the part of the European Union and its Member States to help the Region build a better future.

As a network collaborating with European and African civil society actors, EurAc provides a common platform for exchange between CSOs and European Union institutions, creating a coordinated and comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges facing the Region, as well as solutions tailored to the needs and realities on the ground.

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Just Future Alliance

Just Future is both a program and an Alliance of international and local NGOs and civil society organisations, led by Cordaid. It works to strengthen civil society in fragile and conflict-affected contexts so they can effectively demand more accessible, responsive and accountable security and justice institutions, as well as more inclusive political governance and peace-making.

Grounded in locally led development, the Alliance supports partners to shape priorities, lead engagement processes, and influence decision-makers at every level. Through multi-level advocacy — from community structures and local authorities, to national institutions, regional bodies and multilateral forums — Just Future helps ensure that lived experiences and local expertise drive policy and reform agendas.

The programme operates in six countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Niger and South Sudan, with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Introduction

Context

On October 2, 2025, the Europe-Central Africa Network (EurAc) and the Just Future Alliance were pleased to welcome more than 150 participants to Brussels for a day of discussion dedicated to the future of European action in the Great Lakes Region.

More than two years after the implementation of the European Union's (EU) renewed strategy for the Great Lakes, the Region is facing a deep crisis with complex political, security, and humanitarian dimensions. In this context, the need for inclusive and forward-looking dialogue has never been more urgent.

By bringing together European decision-makers, regional actors, and representatives of local and international civil society, the conference aimed to collectively rethink the responses to national, regional, and international challenges, while reaffirming the leading role that the EU intends to play in consolidating peace and development in the Great Lakes Region.

Objectives

The purpose of this report is to present the key ideas, analyses, and lines of thought that emerged from this day of discussion devoted to the Great Lakes Region. It also presents **a series of recommendations and proposals for action that were developed collectively during the various workshops on three key themes:**

- Peace and security;
- Human rights and civic space; and
- Sustainable management of natural resources.

Supported by the expertise of EurAc and Just Future members and partners in the Great Lakes Region, this collective effort aims to fuel strategic thinking within the EU and its Member States on the future of their action and policy priorities in the Region. **Please note that the opinions expressed in this report are based on discussions at the conference and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EurAc network or the Just Future alliance.**

Opening panel: Trends and challenges of the multidimensional crisis in the Great Lakes Region

Key point 1:

The Washington and Doha peace processes are only the first step toward an inclusive and holistic dialogue that must be supported and integrated by the African Union (AU).

- Current negotiations are dominated by international and political actors, limiting ownership by local actors, who are directly affected by the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- Bilateral or transactional agreements, such as those in Washington or Doha, remain focused on short-term political and economic compromises and do not take into account regional complexity, the root causes of conflict, and cross-border dynamics.
- The active involvement of the AU in resolving conflicts in the DRC is essential, without which the implementation of these agreements and their monitoring will be difficult.
- To ensure legitimacy and sustainability, the mediation process led by the AU must remain the cornerstone of peace initiatives in the Region, with the EU playing a supporting role, without replacing regional initiatives.

Key point 2:

Lasting peace and stability can only be achieved through a long-term vision that fully integrates local dynamics and cross-border considerations.

- The countries of the Great Lakes Region are characterized by young, highly mobile, and strongly interconnected populations. In such a context, economic, social, and security issues extend far beyond national borders.
- Only an inclusive and proactive regional approach will enable national policies to be coordinated around a common vision of security and prosperity, while promoting cross-border cooperation and conflict prevention.
- The future of the Region cannot be built on a logic of national isolation, but through regional integration based on solidarity, complementarity, and mutual trust.

Key point 3:

The pursuit of justice and the fight against impunity must be the central pillar of peace processes, with the effective inclusion of victims in all national and international initiatives.

- Both the fight against impunity and the promotion of transitional justice are essential for lasting peace because they enable victims to participate in reconciliation processes and respond to human rights violations from a regional perspective.
- This pursuit of justice requires rigorous documentation and must also target all parties to the conflict, without exception, in order to rebuild the social fabric and prevent a new cycle of violence.
- Civil society has a crucial role to play in promoting the integration of justice and accountability into agreements. Without such an anchorage, peace efforts risk remaining superficial and reproducing the same cycles of violence and impunity.

Key point 4:

The EU must act as a partner and facilitator by working closely with local actors and civil society to better understand the realities on the ground and tailor its interventions to the specific contexts of the Great Lakes Region.

- The EU must act as a supporting and facilitating actor, by working even more closely with local peace actors and civil society to better understand the realities on the ground and tailor its interventions to the specific contexts of the Great Lakes Region.
- Even in a context of regional tensions and conflicts, the EU must remain fully engaged on the diplomatic, political, economic, and humanitarian fronts and prioritize a proactive and sustainable approach rather than reacting to crises.
- To achieve these objectives, the EU must promote close cooperation with the AU, the States in the Region, and civil society in order to contribute to a balanced approach that sustainably integrates human rights, justice, and reconciliation into peace processes.

Human rights and civic space: Strengthening EU action in response to threats to civic space in the Great Lakes Region

Key point 1:

Civic space in the Great Lakes Region is increasingly restricted, due to the combined effect of a tougher legal framework and the government's exploitation of the security situation.

- In the DRC, the 23/027 law^[1] of 15 June 2023 on the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders strictly regulates the work of human rights defenders (HRDs). Although the stated objective of this law is to protect HRDs, some of its provisions introduce new risks to their safety and hinder their work in support of human rights. For HRDs working in occupied territories, this situation is exacerbated by the criminalization of their activities and abandonment by the central authorities.
- In Burundi, the political crisis that has been gripping the country since 2015 has had a severe impact on civil society. Hundreds of human rights activists, journalists, and lawyers have been forced into exile, while dozens of associations have been dissolved or suspended. The part of civil society still active in the country has been under constant pressure since 2015: excessive administrative requirements, surveillance, restrictions, and smear campaigns or harassment against critical actors. This working environment has led to increasing self-censorship among the remaining actors.
- The security crisis in Eastern DRC has had an additional impact on the work of civil society throughout the Region. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are confronted with increasingly repressive governments, which legitimize their actions on the grounds of security concerns.

[1] [Law No. 23/027 of June 15, 2023, on the protection and accountability of human rights defenders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

Key Point 2:

In this context of an ever-narrowing civic space, women's rights organizations are particularly vulnerable.

- Women human rights defenders are doubly vulnerable due to their mission, the sensitive nature of their actions, and their gender. They regularly face gender-based and sexual violence, stigmatization, and smear campaigns.
- Their access to funding and advocacy spaces is being significantly reduced, even though they play a crucial role in preventing violence, consolidating peace, and promoting women's political participation.
- Faced with these obstacles, they have adopted new strategies to continue their mission, relying in particular on partnerships with other actors and organizations through national and transnational networks that secure their actions and reinforce the legitimacy of their messages.

Key point 3:

In this difficult context, major international donors appear to be gradually withdrawing, even though the need for support for human rights and civic space has never been greater.

- Faced with an increasingly restrictive environment, international donors are gradually withdrawing, limiting CSOs' access to sustainable and independent funding that would enable them to address sensitive issues.
- Despite this, CSOs are adapting by creating networks and alliances to strengthen the legitimacy and impact of their actions despite the decline in external support.
- The EU's current strategy lacks local roots: civil society must be placed back at the heart of partnerships and programs in order to support a civic space conducive to dialogue and governance.

Key point 4:

Civil society plays an essential role in ensuring institutional accountability, protecting fundamental human rights, and giving a voice to the most vulnerable.

- Corruption and poor governance are at the heart of the instability and insecurity that have been plaguing the Great Lakes Region for several decades. The persistence of corruption hinders the implementation of lasting peace.
- These needs are all the more important in an electoral context where security concerns are used as a pretext to limit civic space, restrict individual freedoms, and hinder independent monitoring and political pluralism.
- The EU's Great Lakes strategy places inclusive governance and the fight against corruption at the heart of its action. To achieve these objectives, it must strengthen its political, diplomatic, and financial commitment to effectively support civil society, even in the most repressive contexts.



Peace and security:

Towards a more inclusive approach to the pursuit of peace

Key point 1:

The inclusion of civil society in peace negotiations is a strength, but it also has several limitations that can hinder its implementation.

- Civil society brings essential perspectives that are often absent from peace negotiations, including the voices of women, young people, and marginalized groups, as well as insights into sensitive issues such as transitional justice, the fight against impunity, and the duty of transparency. It also provides useful expertise and local experience that is often overlooked by other actors at higher levels.
- Nevertheless, its inclusion remains complex and involves many challenges: lack of unity, problems of coordination and representativeness, “competition” between organizations, particularly in terms of legitimacy and visibility, the need for significant resources, and the risk of slowing down processes, often linked to a lack of knowledge of mechanisms or a lack of expertise.
- The notion of inclusivity also raises questions: who exactly should be included and when? It is not just a matter of bringing participants together, but of ensuring that all voices, including those traditionally marginalized, can contribute meaningfully to decisions and the implementation of solutions.

Key point 2:

Several initiatives have been launched to respond to the crisis in the Great Lakes, but they often lack coherence and remain too disconnected from local realities. The CENCO-ECC process is a promising response to this limitation.

- International (Washington, Doha) and regional (AU) processes suffer from complex architecture and a lack of legitimacy due to a top-down approach, which weakens their legitimacy and their ability to propose comprehensive solutions adapted to local and regional realities, as well as their implementation on the ground, risking the reproduction of existing conflict patterns.
- The multiplicity of initiatives and the lack of coordination between different levels further accentuate this gap between decisions taken “from above” and local realities.
- Processes such as CENCO-ECC aim to create links between local initiatives and international negotiations in order to strengthen the coherence and sustainability of peace.

Key point 3:

Thanks to its proximity to local communities, civil society plays a central role in peace processes. However, it must become an active participant in these initiatives and strengthen its expertise in order to maximize its contribution.

- To be recognized as legitimate actors in peace negotiations, CSOs must resolve issues of representativeness and unity, while developing their expertise and technical capacities.
- Ongoing financial and technical support, ensuring continuity and long-term action, particularly from the EU, is key to enabling CSOs to participate fully and effectively in peace processes and to develop new initiatives that are better suited to their needs.
- Strengthening local capacities could transform CSOs into producers of proposals and autonomous actors capable of exerting a lasting influence on the process of reflection and implementation of agreements.

Key point 4:

An inclusive process involves the participation of all actors in the conflict, including armed groups.

- A truly inclusive peace process must involve all actors in the conflict, including women, young people, marginalized groups, as well as the private sector and armed groups, in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to the causes of the conflict.
- However, it is crucial not to repeat past mistakes of rewarding these actors with amnesties. Instead, dialogue mechanisms must be established at the community level to hear their demands.
- The participation of armed groups must be supervised and integrated into a more comprehensive peace strategy, combining security, justice, and community engagement, to prevent these dialogues from compromising future stability.



Peace and security: Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in the Great Lakes Region

Key point 1:

Women are systematically excluded from the negotiating table, even though they are among the main victims of crises and armed conflicts in the Great Lakes Region.

- Women suffer the direct consequences of conflicts in the Great Lakes Region: physical and psychological violence, displacement, exile, or threats as human rights defenders, all exacerbated by the impunity of the perpetrators.
- Yet they are largely excluded from the negotiating table and face a lack of access to information, particularly in rural areas, which impacts their ability to influence the processes.
- This exclusion reinforces the transactional and security-based nature of agreements, marginalizing key issues such as the protection of civilians, justice, accountability, and human rights.

Key point 2:

The implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in the Great Lakes Region shows serious shortcomings in terms of implementation and monitoring, mainly due to a lack of funding and transparency in the use of funds.

- Legislative instruments and national plans exist in the DRC and Burundi, but their implementation remains hindered by instability, persistent conflicts, and barriers to women's access to justice.
- This situation is exacerbated by a lack of funding and the absence of dedicated monitoring mechanisms, which permanently compromises the effectiveness of planned actions on the ground and limits women's active participation in peace processes.
- In order to address these challenges, the increased involvement of women's organizations is essential to develop clear, budgeted, and monitored action plans, thereby ensuring the concrete and sustainable implementation of Resolution 1325^[2].

^[2] [Security Council resolution 1325](#), UNSC, 31 October 2000.

Key point 3:

The implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda is based on two complementary aspects: the pursuit of justice and the fight against impunity, as well as the empowerment of women.

- The fight against impunity, and in particular the punishment of perpetrators of sexual violence, is essential to building trust and ensuring women's safety.
- The economic, social, and political empowerment of women is also necessary to strengthen their ability to participate in peace processes and defend their rights.
- Both of these dimensions must be integrated into all programs and initiatives to ensure that the WPS Agenda has a tangible impact in the Region.

Key point 4:

In the Great Lakes Region, it is crucial to prevent the militarization of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda so that its objectives of justice, protection, and empowerment of women are not hijacked by security or military considerations.

- The WPS Agenda can be exploited for security or military purposes, to the detriment of justice, peace, and women's empowerment.
- This militarization undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of initiatives on the ground, reducing their ability to respond to the real needs of communities.
- It is essential to ensure a balance between security and human rights, placing women at the center of decision-making and ensuring that their priorities remain protection, justice, and empowerment.

Natural resource management: Striving for equitable governance of critical minerals - what role for the artisanal sector in the EU-DRC partnership?

Key point 1:

The artisanal mining sector has considerable potential to stimulate economic development in the DRC, but it remains largely informal, opaque, and dangerous.

- In Ituri and South Kivu, artisanal mining is carried out using rudimentary tools, in precarious conditions that expose miners, particularly women and children, to serious health and safety risks.
- The lack of traceability and porous borders fuel massive smuggling of minerals to neighboring countries, often under the control of informal networks and armed groups.
- In areas not affected by conflict (such as Haut-Katanga), similar problems persist, mainly due to weak State control and the predominance of foreign actors, particularly Chinese, which accentuates the marginalization of local actors and limits the economic benefits for the DRC.

Key point 2:

Weak governance in the mining sector is one of the major structural causes of the lack of formalization and transparency.

- The State remains largely absent from mining areas, leaving room for political-military networks to control or influence the mineral trade, often to the detriment of human rights and community well-being.
- Corruption, clientelism, and impunity hinder the effective implementation of the Mining Code and transparency initiatives such as the EITI or the ICGLR.
- These governance deficits contribute to insecurity, illegal exploitation, and a lack of sustainable economic benefits for local populations.

Key point 3:

Facing these challenges, the EU has a decisive role to play in supporting the formalization and sustainable transformation of the artisanal mining sector.

- In its Great Lakes Strategy and through the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), the EU has placed responsible management of natural resources and securing supply chains at the heart of its strategic priorities in the Region.
- To be effective, this commitment must be accompanied by concrete support for the formalization of the artisanal sector: the creation of legal mining zones at the national level, technical support, and above all, the strengthening of the due diligence of European companies.
- Punitive approaches such as embargoes should be avoided as they weaken local communities without addressing the root causes of the problem.

Key point 4:

It is essential to place local communities at the heart of this EU-DRC partnership, in particular by strengthening the capacities of cooperatives.

- The sustainable transformation of the artisanal sector requires an approach focused on local communities, which are the real drivers of change. This formalization must therefore be based on a more equitable and inclusive partnership, aligned with the real needs of workers, particularly women and children.
- To achieve this goal, artisanal mining cooperatives are an essential lever but suffer from a lack of funding and weak legal and institutional recognition.
- The EU and its partners must support the strengthening of their organizational capacities, facilitate their access to financing, and advocate for their integration into national mining policies to ensure sustainable and autonomous local development.

Closing session:

Towards lasting peace in the Great Lakes Region

Key point 1:

It is essential to put human rights back at the heart of efforts to resolve the crisis in the Great Lakes Region.

- In a global context marked by the rise of authoritarian regimes and the temptation to prioritize security, it is important to keep in mind that no conflict can be resolved by force alone: respect for human rights, the rule of law, and a pluralistic and active civil society is an essential lever for stability.
- The EU, even if imperfect, has particular credibility in these areas and must therefore fulfill its role as a strategic partner by placing these principles at the heart of its cooperation and diplomacy policies in the Region.
- Support for local initiatives related to the defense of rights, inclusive governance, transitional justice, and institutional accountability must be strengthened in order to rebuild the confidence of the people.

Key point 2:

Regional economic integration can be a lever for peace and stability, provided that it remains inclusive and respectful of human rights.

- Economic integration can strengthen stability if it is accompanied by a holistic approach that takes into account the social, political, and security realities of the Great Lakes Region.
- Infrastructure development, sustainable natural resource management, and investment in trade corridors must aim to achieve shared prosperity that benefits local populations and respects human rights and the environment.
- The EU has a key role to play in supporting regional mediation and ensuring that economic and political cooperation processes are inclusive, equitable, and based on human dignity.

Key point 3:

In a context of multidimensional crisis, reforming security governance and justice with a focus on people is essential for long-term stability.

- The reform of the security and justice sector in the DRC must be structural and should focus on professionalizing the forces, fighting corruption, and restoring public confidence.
- Security forces that are not subject to oversight and accountability risk perpetuating insecurity and abuse. Their supervision, training, and accountability are therefore essential to ensuring the protection of civilians.
- International partners, including the EU, can support this process through technical and financial assistance, but the reform must be led by Congolese leadership and based on transitional justice and an end to impunity.

Key point 4:

To achieve these objectives, it is essential to have an inclusive dialogue that involves all stakeholders, including civil society, in order to legitimize the peace processes and ensure their sustainability.

- Civil society, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, must be fully involved in order to legitimize peace processes and ensure their sustainability.
- National dialogue initiatives, such as the ECC-CENCO pact, must be expanded to incorporate regional and local dynamics, including community conflicts and issues related to natural resources.
- The EU and regional partners can support these efforts through training, funding, and expertise sharing, while ensuring that inclusion is genuine and serves as a driver of national cohesion.

Recommendations

In terms of diplomacy and regional security:

- **Support the establishment of a permanent regional coordination mechanism led by the African Union (AU) and equipped with sufficient resources, aimed at ensuring convergence between the various ongoing peace processes in the Great Lakes Region.** In this context, it would be important to support the organization of regular meetings between the main facilitators, regional actors and civil society in order to align priorities and harmonize approaches.
- **Contribute to strengthening the AU's technical and logistical capacities to enable it to fully perform its regional coordination and facilitation role.** This support could take the form of seconding technical experts to the AU Commission, financing analytical monitoring units for peace processes, and providing logistical resources for regular regional consultations. The EU could also finance the creation of a joint EU-AU political monitoring mechanism to improve the flow of information, harmonize approaches, and ensure greater complementarity between regional and European initiatives.
- **Support efforts to better coordinate local, national, and regional peace initiatives in order to ensure consistency and complementarity of actions in the Great Lakes Region.** This strategy can be implemented by mapping existing initiatives and creating multi-level dialogue platforms bringing together local authorities, civil society, economic actors, and regional mediators with a view to sharing information and developing joint roadmaps.
- **Promote the systematic inclusion of clear and binding clauses guaranteeing respect for human rights, justice, and the fight against impunity in future peace agreements in order to foster reconciliation and break the cycle of violence.** This commitment should be based on ongoing dialogue with local actors, including civil society and victims, to ensure that the agreements truly reflect the needs for justice and reparation expressed on the ground.
- **Promote inclusive and coherent diplomacy that fully integrates civil society into peace processes, particularly women's and youth organizations.** It is important to support the establishment of structured consultation spaces dedicated to dialogue between these actors and decision-makers, but also to ensure the financing of capacity-building programs to enable CSOs to participate in an informed and credible manner in decision-making processes.

In terms of international cooperation and development:

- **As part of the EU's next multiannual budget, establish stable, predictable, and accessible funding mechanisms to enable civil society in the Great Lakes Region to better plan and carry out long-term actions.** Particular attention should be paid to organizations that have been active in the field for several years and work closely with local communities, particularly youth and women's organizations working to promote women's political participation and combat sexual and gender-based violence.
- **Systematically accompany future programs with a technical and administrative component enabling local CSOs to strengthen their capacity to manage projects,** particularly in terms of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and financial management.
- **Allocate specific funding dedicated to cross-border cooperation in the Great Lakes Region in support of regional and community projects,** with a particular focus on issues of governance, sustainable management of natural resources, the fight against impunity, and community reconciliation.
- **Strengthen the capacities of civil society in countries in the region by developing training programs focused on mediation, advocacy, and strategic communication.** The capacities of these organizations can also be supported through the establishment of coordination platforms between national and regional organizations, promoting the sharing of expertise and common positioning.
- **Strengthen coherence between Member States' national policies and the EU's external action through a *Team Europe* approach.** The EU and its Member States should strengthen their strategic coordination to ensure better alignment between their national policies and the EU's renewed strategy in the Great Lakes Region. This alignment, including coherence between financial instruments and political priorities, would increase the collective impact in favor of stability and lasting peace, while consolidating a more coherent and visible approach.

In terms of regional economic integration:

- **Ensure the full implementation and maintenance of the requirements of European legislation on due diligence and traceability of minerals, in particular the EUTR and the EU Regulation on conflict minerals.** This requires maintaining binding obligations for companies, including the annual publication of traceability reports and the implementation of financial and commercial sanctions in the event of non-compliance with these requirements.
- **Support the formalization of the artisanal mining sector in the DRC in order to promote responsible, legal mining that respects human rights.** Specifically, this objective includes the implementation of programs dedicated to the creation of legal artisanal zones and the professionalization of artisanal workers, including health, safety at work, the fight against child labor, and the promotion of decent economic conditions.
- **Support the implementation of a credible, independent, and transparent certification and control system aligned with international standards,** including the strengthening of the six tools of the ICGLR Regional Initiative against Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources (IRRN).
- **Integrate human rights and sustainable development considerations into all EU trade and investment relations with countries in the region.** It is essential to ensure that future trade agreements and investments include clear commitments to respect human rights and responsible governance and do not contribute, even indirectly, to the continuation of violence.

In terms of human rights:

- **Renew and strongly affirm the EU's commitment to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law throughout the Great Lakes Region.** This commitment must be reflected in enhanced political and diplomatic support for actors working to promote fundamental freedoms, in particular through unequivocal political condemnation of violations, increased diplomatic presence at the trials of human rights defenders, journalists, and political opponents, and regular and transparent dialogue with national authorities during human rights dialogue sessions. With this in mind, the EU must fully support the work of its EUSR for Human Rights in order to ensure a more coherent approach.

- **Ensure lasting and enhanced protection for HRDs, both in exile and on the ground, with particular attention to women defenders.** It is necessary to consolidate existing protection mechanisms at Member State and EU level, but also to establish a permanent European protection mechanism with stable, multi-annual funding to meet long-term needs. The establishment of simplified and accelerated visa procedures for the most at-risk HRDs, in coordination with Member States and EU delegations, is absolutely essential in order to respond to developments on the ground.
- **Develop preventive and intersectional protection strategies for HRDs that are more tailored to gender, local contexts, and dynamics,** in particular by funding platforms for dialogue and training sessions bringing together CSOs, local authorities, and European institutions in order to promote the sharing of best practices and coordinate responses to risks.
- **Provide enhanced financial and technical support to local organizations working to document human rights violations,** including collecting and securing evidence, in order to strengthen their protection and resilience capacities, prioritizing small organizations working in the field, particularly those led by women and young people.
- **Support the establishment of local transitional justice mechanisms adapted to the national and regional context and encourage their coordination.** In particular, funding and technical support should be provided for initiatives aimed at developing participatory processes involving victims, civil society, local authorities, and national institutions in order to strengthen their legitimacy and ownership by communities.
- **Strengthen political, technical, and financial cooperation with international investigative and judicial mechanisms, in particular the work carried out by the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Commission of Inquiry.** Cooperation between the EU, Member States, and these mechanisms should also be strengthened in order to maximize the impact of actions.

With regard to implementation and monitoring of the EU strategy in the Great Lakes Region:

- **Establish regular and structured consultation cycles between EU delegations, embassies, and local civil society in all its diversity, with the main objective of gathering information and better aligning policy decisions with needs on the ground.** The coordination role could be entrusted to networks of NGOs active in the Region, thus ensuring a holistic analysis of the situation. It is also important to strengthen intra-EU coordination by establishing regular exchanges between delegations in the region.
- **Create a joint mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the EU strategy in the Great Lakes Region,** involving representatives from the various EU institutions and Member States. This mechanism could draw on consultation sessions with civil society and produce conclusions and recommendations for developing a roadmap with strategic priorities.
- **Strengthen the role and capabilities of the EUSR for the Great Lakes by giving him a clear mandate to coordinate and monitor the regional strategy.** He must have adequate human and financial resources, a formalized framework for cooperation between the EEAS, the Commission, and Member States, and a regular reporting mechanism to ensure the consistency, leadership, and visibility of European action in the region.
- **Strengthen the EU's communication strategy in the Great Lakes region by establishing more transparent, regular, and accessible mechanisms at the local level.** This approach aims to better inform CSOs and communities about the EU's actions while reducing the sense of disconnection and frustration among actors on the ground. It could notably take the form of the publication of an annual public report on the implementation of the EU's commitments in the Region. Such a document should be developed on the basis of regular consultations with civil society and local and regional actors and should include precise and measurable indicators on the coherence and impact of the actions carried out.



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