

## **R05 \* EU has to take their responsibilities about DRC's conflict !**

Proposer: Ecolo j - Jong Groen - DWARS  
Agenda item: 8. Resolutions

### **Motion text**

#### 1 **Prelude**

2 **The conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) cannot be reduced**  
3 **to isolated events or simplified narratives. Rather, it is the product of deeply**  
4 **rooted structural factors, including colonial legacies, regional power**  
5 **struggles, and the global demand for natural resources. Our aim is to provide a**  
6 **concise yet essential historical and contextual background. This overview**  
7 **underscores the continuity between past and present forms. It also situates the**  
8 **role of the EU, within a broader framework of responsibility, accountability,**  
9 **and policy coherence.**

#### 10 **History**

#### 11 **Europe**

12 **The colonization of the Congo was a broad European project that extended well**  
13 **beyond the actions of Belgium, primarily coordinated through the Berlin**  
14 **Conference of 1884. Organized by German Chancellor, this conference invited**  
15 **several European powers, including France, the United Kingdom, and the**  
16 **Netherlands, to establish rules for the division of the continent.**

17 **Leopold II, king of Belgium, granted large tracts of territory as concessions to**  
18 **private companies which in return surrendered a portion of their profits. These**  
19 **companies were allowed to levy taxes in kind, organize forced labor, and deploy**  
20 **their own armed forces to enforce rubber quotas. As a result, large parts of the**  
21 **country were transformed into giant rubber plantations, where the population had**  
22 **to harvest rubber only to subsequently hand it over far below the world market**  
23 **price. The labor regime was characterized by extreme coercion, violence, and**  
24 **terror, especially in the rubber zones. Historical and demographic estimates**  
25 **vary, but many studies speak about millions of deaths as a result of murders,**  
26 **hunger, overwork, disease, and declining birth rates during Leopold's reign.**

27 Under heavy international pressure and growing Belgian political resistance, the  
28 Belgian state took the Congo Free State in 1908 over and transformed it into the  
29 Belgian Congo. At this time, the economic core shifted from rubber and ivory to  
30 mining: copper, cobalt, uranium, gold, and diamonds from regions such as Katanga  
31 and Kasai became the focus. Profits flowed primarily to Belgian shareholders and  
32 holdings, while Congolese workers received low wages and remained subject to  
33 colonial control. A large part of the profits was used to urban projects in  
34 Belgium to finance, primarily in Brussels and the surrounding area.

35 In Antwerp, during the 1885 and 1894 world exhibitions, "Congolese villages"  
36 displayed over a hundred Congolese people in degrading conditions. Used as  
37 propaganda by Leopold II, these exhibitions aimed to legitimize colonialism by  
38 reinforcing racist hierarchies and showing the so-called "civilizing work",  
39 similar to the "human zoos" seen across Europe.

40 Others European nations also exhibited a form of colonial complicity by  
41 participating in the administration and exploration of the territory. The  
42 operational and military infrastructure of the Congo also relied heavily on an  
43 European workforce. The Force Publique, the colony's paramilitary force  
44 responsible for enforcing rubber quotas through brutal means, recruited many of  
45 its officers from European nations.

46 In a more modern context, European involvement has continued through the  
47 European Union, which has deployed military forces from 19 member states,  
48 including France and the United Kingdom, to oversee democratic processes. The  
49 independence of Congo on June 30, 1960, was barely prepared and created a power  
50 vacuum that ultimately led to the Congo Crisis and the assassination of Patrice  
51 Lumumba with involvement of the Belgian state and the CIA. Following Lumumba's  
52 assassination and the gradual suppression of alternative governments, Mobutu  
53 finally came to power in 1965. He installed a long-lasting dictatorship (Zaire)  
54 that relied on patronage, repression, and close ties with Western states and  
55 companies in exchange for access to raw materials.

## 56 **Rwanda, related to Congo**

57 Colonial intervention, by Germany and by Belgium, profoundly disrupted the order  
58 in Rwanda. The borders, drawn without taking into account local realities, froze  
59 spaces that were previously interconnected, and thus became subject to new  
60 tensions. Influenced by anthropometry, a pseudoscience aimed at classifying and  
61 hierarchizing "races," the colonial administration imposed a racialized reading  
62 of society. The Tutsis were then defined as coming from a people of herders of  
63 so-called "Hamitic" origin, supposedly superior to the Hutus and the Twas. This  
64 racialization of Rwandan society has major consequences on the genocide of the  
65 Tutsis in 1994 and up to today.

66 At the end of the 1950s, in a context of rising independence demands and under  
67 pressure from the United Nations, Belgium profoundly modified its policy in  
68 Rwanda. Whereas it had until then relied on Tutsi elites, it now chose to  
69 support the Hutu majority, considered more numerous and more docile. After  
70 independence, in 1962, Belgium continued to support Rwandan authorities  
71 dominated by the Hutus until the genocide, which lasted from April to July 1994  
72 made at least 800,000 victims.

73 After the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees,  
74 including genocidaires, fled into Kivu which was already marked by instability  
75 since the colonial rule created artificial borders and left identity tensions in  
76 eastern Congo, where Rwandophone communities have long lived. Since then,  
77 eastern DRC has become a space of regional rivalry, marked by the presence of  
78 armed groups.

## 79 **Current situation**

80 After the Rwandan genocide, a rebel group composed mostly of ethnic Tutsis  
81 emerged called M23. Rwanda's involvement is the most contentious element of the  
82 current conflict. Rwanda was accused of providing troops, weapons, and direct  
83 military support to M23, accusations that Rwanda denies. Rwanda's stated concern  
84 is the presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a  
85 Hutu military force with ties to the 1994 genocide, which operates in eastern  
86 DRC and has at times cooperated with the Congolese army.

87 Rwanda and Uganda have intervened repeatedly, sometimes with genuine security  
88 concerns, with economic motives, turning the eastern DRC into a place for proxy  
89 warfare, where countries indirectly confront each other through military and  
90 economic support of different actors. Currently, 8.2 million people are  
91 displaced, projected to reach 9 million by end-2026, including 5.8 million  
92 internally displaced. Nearly 15 million people are in need of humanitarian  
93 assistance. Disease outbreaks, food insecurity, and sexual violence (use as a  
94 weapon of war) are extremely present.

## 95 **EU relationships**

### 96 The European Union's raw materials partnerships

97 The European Union's raw materials diplomacy is a central pillar of its  
98 industrial strategy, aimed at securing access to mineral reserves that are  
99 essential for European industry. To achieve this, the EU establishes strategic  
100 partnerships and policy dialogues. At the same time, the EU implemented the  
101 Conflict Minerals Regulation requiring EU companies to ensure their imports come  
102 from responsible sources only. However, these partnerships have encountered

103 significant ethical and geopolitical problems, most notably regarding the EU-  
104 Rwanda strategic partnership, intended to develop "sustainable value chains",  
105 signed in February 2024. Reports from the United Nations and other international  
106 organizations suggest that minerals exported from Rwanda are often illicitly  
107 smuggled from the DRC, which is inextricably linked to violent activities.

#### 108 Budgetary and military support to Rwanda

109 The EU provides military and budgetary assistance to Rwanda primarily through  
110 the European Peace Facility. The EU justifies this support as a commitment to  
111 "African solutions for African problems" and as a means to protect regional  
112 interests. However, this military support is highly controversial due to the  
113 lack of traceability of funds.

#### 114 **Call to action**

115 We, as FYEG, call upon the EU, its member states, and the international  
116 community to:

- 117 • Create a unified, credible and effective response to the crisis in the  
118 DRC, which guarantees that diplomatic, humanitarian and economic actions  
119 are fully aligned and mutually reinforcing.
  
- 120 • Increase humanitarian aid to guarantee access to food, medical care, clean  
121 water, and the protection of displaced persons
  
- 122 • Take strong and decisive measures towards Rwanda to reflect the gravity of  
123 the reported violations, suspend the EU-Rwanda protocol on sustainable raw  
124 materials value chains and ensure that any future cooperation with Rwanda  
125 is done under strict and enhanced transparency requirements
  
- 126 • Strengthen EU regulation on conflict minerals to prevent financing armed  
127 groups through the illegal exploitation of natural resources.
  
- 128 • Stop all military cooperation with all parties involved in the conflict,  
129 where there is a clear risk that such equipment could be used to commit  
130 serious violations of international humanitarian law

- 131       • **Increase targeted sanctions against individuals responsible for serious**  
132       **violations of humanitarian law**
- 133       • **Respect and support the decisions of the African Court on Human and**  
134       **Peoples' Rights and the International Court of Justice in order to uphold**  
135       **international law and ensure accountability**
- 136       • **Cover their colonial history extensively in primary and secondary**  
137       **education.**
- 138       • **Develop a broad European awareness campaign regarding the traces of their**  
139       **colonial past.**
- 140       • **Implement measures to limit the use of natural resources used over the**  
141       **world.**

142 **We call on the European Green Party for a common position based upon the above**  
143 **calls, to ensure a coherent, unified and effective response.**

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