

SOUND OF AFRICA – VIENNA DECLARATION NGO-Response to the EU-Africa Strategy

More than **290 participants from 40 states** across Europe and Africa, representing Civil Society Actors, Research Institutions, Parliaments, Ministries and Governmental Institutions, **came together in Vienna on 22/23 of June 2006 at SOUND of AFRICA**, an international conference, to discuss the content of the EU-Africa Strategy, its implications and the requirements for the operationalisation and implementation phase over the next ten years.

Prior to this international conference, regional NGO-meetings have taken place in Kampala, Uganda (East Africa), Goma, DRC (Central Africa), Cape town, RSA (Southern Africa), Bamako, Mali (West Africa), Brussels, Belgium and Bonn, Germany (Europe-wide) and Bratislava, Slovakia (Central Europe). The results of these meetings serve to provide the basis for the discussions at the international conference in Vienna as well as for this declaration.

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN NGOS

- criticise the lack of genuine consultation with and participation by African partners in the drafting of the EU-Africa strategy and the unsubstantiated rhetoric, which claims that this is a joint strategy
- demand that in the further formulation, implementation and evaluation of the strategy that there is genuine dialogue with African and European civil society, as well as African continent wide and regional organisations and states

call upon the European Union, its Member States, the African Union and the African Governments to:

- ensure delivery on existing agreements (such as the Cotonou Agreement and the explicit role it grants to civil society organisations) to avoid any undermining of prior achievements, and on their commitments to more and better aid ensuring that aid and related policies work for the poor and reinforce local and downward accountability
- ensure, that a rights based approach to development is being followed throughout the entire strategy
- keep the African people at the centre of development and this people-based development at the heart of the EU-Africa Strategy, in order to reach the MDGs. In particular we stress that it is absolutely necessary that a high-level of respect is paid to the empowerment of the most vulnerable groups, such as children, women, people affected by HIV/Aids, the elderly, persons with disabilities etc.
- develop a true Joint-African-European-Strategy, in a broad-based process involving all relevant actors on both African and European levels by introducing binding mechanisms, to ensure participation and ownership, the principles of sustainable development
- recognise the essential role of civil society in ensuring accountability in the European Union as well as in African states, and to support capacity building for civil society to fulfil this role meaningful
- demand the complete overhaul of the European Union's administrative procedures for disbursing development assistance in order to make it easier for African civil society to access the financial resources and reduce the administrative burden
- ensure Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) in all policy areas covered by the EU-Africa Strategy

- develop and use a monitoring and evaluation plan with clear indicators and milestones for the implementation of the new strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, considering already existing evaluation processes
- increase the support to the African Union and to strengthen capacities and resources to implement the strategy, especially to strengthen ECOSOC and other regional networks/platforms to enable them to play an effective part in the implementation of the strategy

call upon the Civil Society Actors in Europe and Africa to:

- engage actively in the development of a Joint-EU-Africa-Strategy, its implementation and monitoring
- demand the right to participate in the entire process and on all levels, from that of the community up to the national and international levels. This is especially essential within the context of existing agreements, where the participation of civil society is already legally binding, e.g. the programming of the 10th EDF under the Cotonou Agreement that is still in progress
- strengthen their capacities to contribute in a forceful and effective way
- recognise the diversity of civil society and ensure an integrated approach when representing civil societies in the process
- foster cooperation and the forming of alliances
- engage in closer cooperation with other relevant non-governmental actors, such as members of parliaments, traditional leaders and the private sector
- increase the support European actors grant African civil societies on the levels of implementation, information and advocacy

IN ADDITION THE REPRESENTATIVES OF AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN NGOS

recommend within the area of Peace and Security in Africa to:

- ensure that actions taken in the name of Peace and Security are contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and/or to the fulfilment of all human rights such as full democratic participation
- guarantee that resources originally allocated to long-term development financing are solely used for achieving the MDGs and not used to support short-term security interests
- put the focus to the root causes of conflict and crisis, rather than solely concentrating on the management of crisis situations, by giving priority to promoting development and conflict prevention, access to justice, access to environmental and natural resources, and peaceful conflict resolution and avoiding to let peace and security become a new conditionality
- improve the capacities and foster the cooperation of civil society in Africa and Europe in order to actively take part in the debate at all levels on peace and security issues and by putting civil society participation at the centre of peace and security initiatives to ensure that the views, needs and rights of the people concerned are addressed adequately
- conduct a debate that questions the approaches to security policies in Africa and the European Union in the spirit of a balanced partnership, to build up confidence between the EU and Africa needed to achieve long term sustainable development
- involve the African Union as well as concerned regions and local structures in Africa in the design and the implementation of the strategy in the area of peace and security and take into account and respect existing local and regional peace agreements
- push for peace building education as a security measure
- get the EU to mobilise international political support for peace in Africa
- enforce the measures to combat the trafficking in small arms and light weapons in conflict regions

- identify ways to address the growing security related problems caused by private foreign military companies
- the EU to offer mediation in conflicts in Africa, taking into account the interests of all conflict parties, including forgotten actors
- ensure the involvement and empowerment of women in all stages of peace processes, as well as in conflict prevention activities, according to the UNSC Res. 1325

recommend within the area of Human Rights and Governance to:

- acknowledge that Human Rights, including women's rights, are the basis for sustainable development. In this context African priorities have to be reflected rather than a European perspective, in defining governance and transparency as an underlying key-element of development policies, e.g. in relation to food security, gender and HIV/AIDS
- ensure that the focus of governments is based on their accountability to their citizens and to strengthened civil society so that citizens can demand their rights, including their sexual and reproductive health rights, and the governments are held accountable for their commitments and actions taken accordingly
- promote governance structures enabling a full participation in planning, implementation and monitoring processes of all relevant stakeholders at the various levels, including the African Union, African Governments, Parliaments, local government structures, unions, NGOs and other civil society organisations (CSO), and with regard to public participation on a local level to emphasise on harnessing local potential and local information through creative usage of public space rather than predetermined and structures forms of participation
- better reflect the growing momentum for local government's role in development in Africa in the governance chapter of the European Union's strategy for Africa, by acknowledging the principle of local government discretion to ensure that local governments can fully exploit their developmental potential, under a strong central or provincial supervision in order to guarantee strong local governments
- support initiatives and reforms aimed at enhancing local government's status in the nation's institutional structure and programs to strengthen the capacity of regional and local governments e.g. in the context of the devolution of a sufficient degree of discretion over financial matters to the level of local government, in financial management to ensure that the values of local accountability by bringing public expenditure closer to the people are realised
- recognise the traditional forms of local governance
- ensure, that the new EU's governance initiative is focused on reaffirming & supporting local and downward accountability, that the respective process in developing this initiative is completely consistent with the EU's own principles of good governance, and that it is not used to impose additional conditionalities on African states
- timely include civic education in EU programmes to support free and fair elections in African states

recommend within the area of Trade and Regional Integration to:

- revisit and unravel the philosophical values, underpinning assumptions and concepts in any trade cooperation agreements between the EU and African states and take into account, that trade negotiations are run in the context of unbalanced power relations and interest, particularly the huge capacity constraints African states are facing
- reverse the top down approach in trade policy into a bottom up approach that involves SME, CSO, farmers organisations, informal sector, women, youth and disabled persons enterprises, etc., to ensure that any growth is built on people's voices and choices, to create employment for women and men in African countries, be equitable and sustainable, and support human development
- make regional integration work that is based on existing regional structures and within the framework of the African Union/NEPAD, to achieve a regional integration being African driven,

based upon and responding to the needs of different social and economic groups within the population, ensuring regional cohesion and equity.

- promote intra-regional African trade and investment that is directed towards local or regional companies and SMEs, as well as new partnerships between EU and African SMEs
- develop mechanisms for addressing supply side constraints, production capacity and competitiveness, reduce transaction costs, improve cost efficiency of infrastructure, and establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the impact of trade liberalisation and the achievement of the MDGs
- ensure, that the rights and needs of the most vulnerable people and communities are considered in the respective trade policies, by emphasising a pro-poor economic and infrastructure development; there is a well-known threat that few will benefit from liberalisation and poor people will gain very little
- eliminate trade-distorting agricultural-subsidies within the EU as well as export-subsidies for EU agricultural products, and promote the sustainable increase of agricultural production in Africa
- define a code of conduct for European companies, investing in Africa
- safeguard policy coherence for development (PCD) that are equally binding for the European Commission and EU Member states - e.g. by integrating an obligatory section on PCD into the Country Strategy Papers to be worked out for the programming of the 10th EDF - and to raise the awareness of European citizens on policy coherence for development
- ensure sufficient special and differential treatment in the design of economic partnership agreements that favour African countries and their people (principle of “unconditional help”), internalising economic development strategies in Africa through the African Union and other pan-African initiatives
- ensure that informal economies are taken into account and integrated in the development of a strategy for rural development and the development of local markets
- increase accountability and transparency of EU-African trade negotiations
- stop arms trade
- promote and support technology and knowledge transfer that are environmental sound

recommend within the area of Key Development Issues to

- use a rights based approach with a specific focus on community involvement to put the MDGs at the core of any strategy, and work in the context of already agreed African strategies and commitments
- introduce mechanisms for ensuring the participation of civil society organisations and communities at all stages of development policies and programmes, and prioritise monitoring of impact on communities, with a specific focus on marginalised people such as women, children, people living with HIV and AIDS and persons with disabilities and the elderly

THE PARTICIPANTS

- ensure all EU financing mechanisms, in particular the 10th EDF and Member States bilateral assistance prioritise human and social development and aim to provide 0.7 % of GNI **now**. In doing this, the EU as a donor must avoid using misleading figures of aid quantity
- in particular ensure adequate resources to
 - *address the gap between health systems and communities*
 - *invest resources in health and education management information systems to ensure that donor and government plans are based on analysed and accurate data*
 - *prioritise and invest in human resource development for key sectors (health, education, trade and infrastructure) in order to halt brain drain which undermines sustainable development in Africa*
 - *provide adequate funding for strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and communities to play key roles in research and innovative models for sustainable development to ensure government and donor accountability to the poor*
 - *create poverty reduction programmes targeted at women who form 70 % of the African poor*
 - *provide for equal involvement of opinion in secondary and tertiary education, in treatment of AIDS, malaria and care for sexual and reproductive health, support for women's access to land, for women's actions in environment protection, and in conflict resolution and peace building*
- create systems and capacities in the EU and Africa in order to be able to cope with the increasing ODA to African countries to achieve the MDGs in line with African national and regional poverty reduction strategies and action plans, ensuring that by no means resources originally allocated to development financing are siphoned-off for migration and /or other purposes
- ensure that the European Commission and African decision makers reaffirm the importance of universal primary education
- conduct a debate on migration that is based on the perspectives of an African-European partnership to avoid migration becoming a new conditionality rather than a development issue to be addressed with a focus on the root causes – in other words, not only Africa but also the European Union must question its migration policy and make it transparent for public debate
- raise public awareness among policy makers and the broad public on all key development issues, including migration, and accordingly make development education an important element of the strategy

This declaration has been drafted

In response to the:

- Council Conclusions of the European Council Meeting on 15/16 of December 2005 about the EU-Africa Strategy: *The EU and Africa: Towards a strategic Partnership*
- Conclusions of the GAERC from November 2005: *Council Conclusions on an EU Strategy for Africa*
- Communication from the European Commission from 12 of October 2005: *EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development*
- *Contribution by EU High Representative JAVIER SOLANA to the EU Strategy for Africa* from 21 of November 2005
- *Report from the European Parliament from 27 of October 2005 on a development strategy for Africa*
- *Communiqué from the EU-Africa Ministerial meeting Bamako (Mali), 2 December 2005*
- *Report of the Africa-European Union Dialogue Troika Meeting 13-14 February 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*
- *Final Communiqué EU - AFRICA MINISTERIAL TROIKA MEETING Vienna, 8 May 2006*
- *JOINT IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX OF COMMITMENTS ARISING FROM THE AFRICA / EU DIALOGUE AU / EU EXPERTS' MEETING Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-14 February 2006*

and taking into account the:

- EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT (November 2005)
- United Nations Millennium Declaration (MDGs) (September 2000)
- Council Conclusions on Quality and Quantity of Aid (May 2005, April 2006)
- Cotonou Agreement: *PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC GROUP OF STATES OF THE ONE PART, AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES, OF THE OTHER PART,...*(June 2000)
- *PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS* (March 2005)
- Council Conclusions on Policy Coherence for Development (May 2005, April 2006)
- Conclusions of various preparatory seminars organised by NGOs in Africa and Europe (Spring 2006)
- African Union Strategic Plan for Africa
- African Union Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health adopted by all heads of state in Khartoum in January 2006
- Abuja 2001 and 2005 Declarations of Commitment by the African Heads of State on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other poverty related diseases
- Recommendations of the Commission for Africa 2005
- The plan of action for the African Decade of People with Disabilities (July 2002)
- NEPAD Programme of Health 2005

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

International Conference "SOUND OF AFRICA - EU-AFRICA STRATEGY - A WAY OUT OF POVERTY?"
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	Name		Organisation	Job Title	Contact	CC
1	Abdelmageed	Khalid	University of Vienna	Student	khalid_12@maktoob.com	
2	Adamcova	Lenka	University of Economics in Prague	Associate Professor	adamcova@vse.cz	CZ
3	Adekemi	Adeshida O.	Office of the Economic Adviser to the President of Nigeria	Researcher	delegatessinfo@fastemail.com	NG
4	Aeschbacher	Lucas	ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency Austria	Marketing Officer	office@adra.at	AT
5	Ahnsohn	Albrecht	ASA – Programme InWEntg GmbH	Head of Division	albrecht.ansohn@inwent.org	DE
6	Akuche	Andre Ben Moses	Strategic Skill Centre for Wealth Creation	International Officer	sscwng@yahoo.com	NG
7	Alshammari	Eman	OFID – OPEC Fund for International Development	Technical Assistance Officer	e.alshammari@opecfund.org	AT
8	Anene	Francis Chuma	Office of the Economic Adviser to the President	Senior Adviser	delegatessinfo@fastemail.com	NG
9	Antonissen	Rein	Koepel van de Vlaamse Noord Zuidbeweging - 11.11.11	EU Policy Officer	rein.antonissen@11.be	BE
10	Aranka	Bikadi				
11	Ari	Laura	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Assistant	laura.ari@chello.at	AT
12	Arsova	Tzvetelina	Christian Aid	Senior Policy Officer	tarsova@christian-aid.org	UK
13	Aydogmus	Ümit	The Light House Association	Policy Consultant	uaydogmus@denizfeneri.org.tr	TR
14	Bachleitner	Helga	World Vision	PR & Communications Officer	helga.bachleitner@worldvision.at	AT
15	Badibangova	Bambi	UNDP - Administrative and Contractive Unit	Project Manager for SE Europe and Africa	bambi.badibangova@undp.org	SK
16	Bail	Christoph	Global Marshall Plan Initiative		christoph.bail@globalmarshallplan.org	DE
17	Bail	Angelika	Global Marshall Plan Initiative			DE
18	Bauer	Gustav	Honorary Consul of Burkina Faso		bardon@eunet.at	BF
19	Baumgartner	Veronika	ADA-Austrian Development Agency	Private Sector & Multilateral Cooperation	veronika.baumgartner@ada.gv.at	AT
20	Bawa-Bwari	Abubakar	Parliament of Nigeria	Member of Parliament	jag774@hotmail.com	NG
21	Bayr	Petra	Parliament of Austria	Member of Parliament	petra.bayr@spw.at	AT
22	Beaumont	Sophie	Light for the World – Belgium	Liaison Officer in Brussels	sophie.beaumont@light-for-the-world.net	BE
23	Bedoya	Christine	TRIALOG Vienna	Capacity Building Officer	c.bedoya@trialog.or.at	AT
24	Bekele Worku	Genanew	University of Linz	Ph.D. Student	gensich@yahoo.com	ET
25	Ben O	Anthony		Artist	conntact4life@yahoo.co.uk	NG

26	Bharier	Jake	CONCORD/Skillshare International	Treasurer/Strategic Services	jake.bharier@skillshare.org	UK
27	Bialozyt	Wojciech	Polish Forum of Young Diplomats	Secretary of the Board of the Regional Representative Office	wbialozyt@diplomacy.pl	PL
28	Bichler	Gabriele Aisha	HORIZONT3000	Project Coordinator	aisha.bichler@horizont3000.at	
29	Binder	Gert-Michael	Light for the World – Mozambique	Mozambique Country Coordinator	lightfortheworld@teledata.mz	MZ
30	Blessing	Iyoha	Federal Institute for Regional Research and Urban Development	Resource Person	federal_institute_research@yahoo.co.uk	NG
31	Bock	Stefan	Jugend Eine Welt – Don Bosco Aktion Austria	Project Desk	stefan.bock@jugendeinewelt.at	AT
32	Bogolepova	Klara	Plop Slovakia	Project Manager	bogolepova@pobox.sk	SK
33	Böhm	Wolfgang	DKA Austria – Development Cooperation Agency of Jungschar	Project Consultant	wolfgang.boehm@dka.at	AT
34	Bonavia	Ritienne	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malta	First Secretary, Development Policy Unit	ritienne.bonavia@gov.mt	MT
35	Bonk	Claudia	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Coordinator	claudia.bonk@oneworld.at	AT
36	Bruckschwaiger	Karl	WZW – Wissenstransfer für Wien	Website Coordinator	karl.bruckschwaiger@wzw.at	AT
37	Bukasa	Di-Tutu	Die Bunte		ditutu.bukasa@chello.at	AT
38	Butler	Sian	BOND-UK Platform of NGOs	Intern	sbutler@bond.org.uk e.campestrini@licht-fuer-die-welt.at	UK
39	Campestrini	Elisabeth	Light for the World – Austria	Advocacy Officer	e.campestrini@licht-fuer-die-welt.at	AT
40	Chaquisse	Américo	Salesian Delegation of Mozambique		economista@salesianos.org.mz	MZ
41	Chimbindi	Albert Ranganai	Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe	Minister Counsellor	zimbruseels@skynet.be	ZW
42	Collen	Sarah	World Vision	Research and Campaigns Assistant	sarah_collen@wvi.org	BE
43	Collin	Catherine	EIB – European Investment Bank	Senior Corporate Planner	collin@eib.org	
44	Corrie	John	AWEPA – European Parliamentarians for Africa		johncorrie@tiscali.co.uk	UK
45	Cvetek	Mojca	SEZAM	Project Assistant	cvetek@gmail.com	SI
46	Dabo	Seyni	La Senegalaise – Mode & Accessoires	Executive Director	seyni.dabo@chello.at	AT
47	Daniel	Gerda	HORIZONT3000	Director	gerda.daniel@horizont3000.at	AT
48	Daubrey	Marc	Interface Developpement	Consultant	interfacedev@yahoo.fr	FR
49	De Bergh	Marie-Laure	ECPDM – European Centre for Development Policy Management	Programme Officer	mdb@ecdpm.org	NL
50	De Visser	Jaap	University of Western Cape/GOOD GOVERNANCE LEARNING NETWORK	Coordinator and Senior Researcher Local Government Project	jdevisser@uwc.ac.za	ZA
51	De Waal	Johan	Namibian Parliament	Member of Parliament	n_keeja@yahoo.co.uk	NA
52	Dembele	Ely	FONGEM – Forum of European NGOs for Mali	Coordinator	ely_dembele@yahoo.fr	ML

53	Dick	Gundi	Volkshilfe	Humanitarian Aid	gundi.dick@volkshilfe.at	AT
54	Dismas	Leonard				
55	Djolic	Denis	SOS-Kinderdorf Austria	Deputy Head of PR/CSR	denis.djolic@sos-kinderdorf.at	AT
56	Dlamini	Angela	Anti Poverty Forum	CEO	rpstrategies@bruboer.co.za	RS A
57	Donnaberger	Elisabeth	World Vision	Project Coordinator	elisabeth.donnaberger@worldvision.at	AT
58	Duarte	Karim	World Media Insights/Discover TV	Journalist	wmi_office@gmx.net	AT
59	Eckersberger	Elisabeth	ICEP - Institute of Cooperation on Development Projects	Intern	pp@icep.at	AT
60	Ede	Ene	Equity Advocates/Woman Today Newspaper	CEO/Publisher	sscwng@yahoo.com	NG
61	Eichinger	Irmgard	Commercial Academy Baden	Teacher	ieichinger@hotmail.com	AT
62	Elaju	William	Africainfo.hu – Internat. Law Research+HR Monitoring Organisation	Executive Director and Editor in Chief	william.ejalu@nemzetkozijogert.hu	HU
63	Elobeid	Mohamed Elobeid	Sudan Embassy	Deput Head of Mission in Brussels	elobeidm@yahoo.com	SD
64	Eneogwe	Joel G.A.	Equity Advocates/Woman Today Newspaper	Senior Consultant	sscwng@yahoo.com	NG
65	Erbler	Josef	AAI – Afro-Asiatic Institute Salzburg	Chairman	josef.erbler@aai-salzburg.at	AT
66	Fadul	Idris	Humanitas	Researcher	info@humanitas.si	SI
67	Faia	Paulo Tiago Andrade	University of Bath	Doctorate Student	tiagofaia@yahoo.co.uk	UK
68	Fedosova	Monika	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic	Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid	monika.fedosova@mzv.cz	CZ
69	Ferreira	Paulo	ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency EU	Director	paulo.ferreira@adra-eu.org	BE
70	Findl	Gertraud	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Public Relations Officer	gertraud.findl@eu-platform.at	AT
71	Fine	Guillaume	Coordination Sud/Survie	General secretary	guillaumefine@hotmail.com	FR
72	Flan	Cesar	AAI – Afro-Asiatic Institute Salzburg	Demy		
73	Föderl-Schmid	Alexandra	Der Standard	Journalist		AT
74	Fodor	Erika	Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Department of International Development Cooperation	efodor@kum.hu	HU
75	Frank	Robert	World Vision	Project Coordinator	robert.frank@worldvision.at	AT
76	Fuchs	Ingrid			ingrid.fuchs@chello.at	AT
77	Gahamanyi	Bibiane Mbaye	ENDA – Environmental Development Action in the Third World	Policy and Advocacy Officer	syspro2@enda.sn	SN
78	Gal	Lászlo	Helloafrika NGO Hungary	Director	galaxy@mail.tvnet.hu	HU
79	Gana	John	Delegation of Abubakar Bawa Bwari		jag774@hotmail.com	NG

80	Garang	Atem Deng	Sudan Parliament	Vice-President of Sudan National Assembly	sudanbx@yahoo.com	SD
81	Garic	Davor	World Media Insights/Discover TV	Cameraman	wmi_office@gmx.net	AT
82	Gavas	Mikaela	BOND-UK Platform of NGOs	Policy Officer	mgavas@bond.org.uk	UK
83	Gazdag	Rita	PLANET Foundation	Project Coordinator	rita@planetclub.hu	HU
84	Geingob	Hage G.	Namibian Parliament	Former Prime Minister, MP	n_keeja@yahoo.co.uk	NA
85	Giese	Sonja	European Parliament	Parliamentary Assistant to Feleknas Uca, MEP of the GUE/NGL Group	fuca-assistant@europarl.eu.int	
86	Godday	Osaro	Federal Secretariat Abuja	Statistics Officer	danubajigawa@yahoo.com	NG
87	Golda	Hannah	WIDE Austria – Women in Development Europe	Director	wide.austria@nexta.at	AT
88	Gonda	Modeste	Formateur	Development Expert		CF
89	Gorgemans	Arnaud	EURAC – European Network for Central Africa	Director	arnaud.gorgemans@eurac-network.org	
90	Gosch	Elke	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Project Assistant	elke.gosch@eu-platform.at	AT
91	Grima	Christopher	Embassy of Malta	First Counsellor	chris.m.grima@gov.mt	MT
92	Grochalova	Martina	IF SBAH - International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	Journalist	grochalova@katnoviny.sk gabriela.grosinger@horizont3000.at	SK
93	Grosinger	Gabriela	HORIZONT3000	Project Coordinator		
94	Gruber	Petra C.	Institute for Environment – Peace – Development Austria	Director	p.gruber@iufe.at	AT
95	Grünberg	Agnes		Conflict Consultant	agnesgruenberg@gmail.com	AT
96	Gudenus	Caroline	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Head of Subsaharan Africa Unit, Political Section	caroline.gudenus@bmaa.gv.at	AT
97	Gulyás	Gáspár	Consulate of the Republic of the Gambia	Minister Counsellor	un@gambia.hu	GM
98	Haarbrink	Joyce	Marie Stopes International	European Advocacy Manager	joyce.haarbrink@mariestopes-org.be	BE
99	Habermann	Birgit	Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences	Coordinator	birgit.habermann@oeaw.ac.at	AT
100	Habiboulah	Bakhoum	Mansah Transconsult		office@mansah-transconsult.net	AT
101	Hahn	Marlene			rappotti@hotmail.com	AT
102	Hanak	Ilse	WIDE Austria – Women in Development Europe		ilse.hanak@aon.at	AT
103	Hauser	Agnes	Light for the World – Austria	Programme Officer	a.hauser@light-for-the-world.at	AT
104	Hawighorst	Kathrin	HORIZONT3000	Regional Office East Africa	horizont3000@africaonline.co.ug	AT
105	Haynes	Angela	HelpAge International	EU Representative	ahaynes@helpageinternational.org	

106	Heiden	Andreas	HORIZONT3000	Project Coordinator	andrea.heiden@horizont3000.at	
107	Heinrich	Ursula	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Head of Section VII.4a	ursula.heinrich@bmaa.gv.at	AT
108	Herret	Judith	MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières	Financial Coordinator	judith.herret@gmx.at	AT
109	Hochleitner	Madlene	ARGE Weltläden	Member of the Board	madlene.hochleitner@weltlaeden.at	AT
110	Horváth	Attila	ELTE University Budapest	Part-Time Teacher in African Studies	afurika@freemail.hu	HU
111	Hulényi	Peter	Permanent Mission of the Slovak Republic to the OSCE		peter_hulenyi@mfa.sk	SK
112	Hüttner	Claudia	Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights	Project Coordinator	claudia.huettner@univie.ac.at	AT
113	Huzejrovic	Vahida	Help Age International – South East Europe Office	Regional Programme Officer	vahida.hai@siol.net	SI
114	Ifeagwu	Sam Chukwudi	OFID – OPEC Fund for International Development	Senior Officer	s.ifeagwu@opecfund.org	AT
115	Iliescu	Mircea	Romanian Embassy, Vienna	Third Secretary at the Romanian Embassy	mircea.iliescu@ambrom.at	RO
116	Imge	Emete	Cyprus NGO Network	Economist	emeteimge@hotmail.com	CY
117	Ingabire	Immaculée	DYSCAC – Dynamique des Sociétés civiles du Burundi de la R.D.Congo et du Rwanda	President	mikingabe@yahoo.fr	RW
118	Jacob	Emmanuel	Office of the Presidency – Federal Secretariat Abuja	Senior Admin	danubajigawa@yahoo.com	NG
119	Jacobs	Olu	National Assembly, 3 Arms Zone, Abuja			NG
120	Jäger	Inge	Austrian North-South Institute for Development Cooperation	Member of the Board	jaeger.i@aon.at	AT
121	Janata	Martin	Renner-Institute	Project Manager	janata@renner-institut.at	AT
122	Janke	Jan Peter	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Assistant	japeja@gmx.net	AT
123	Jirovsky	Elena	Amnesty International Austria	Volunteer	elena.jirovsky@gmx.net	AT
124	Jorge	Pedro Costa	Portuguese Platform of NGOs	Representative	info@plataformaongd.pt	PT
125	Julian	Joseph T.	Office of the Economic Adviser to the President of Nigeria	Officer	delegatessinfo@fastermail.com	NG
126	Juntunen	Sanna	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	Intern	sanna.juntunen@formin.fi	FI
127	Kabelková	Magdalena	Salesian Association of Don Bosco	Coordinator of Volunteers for Ethiopia	madla9@tiscali.cz	CZ
128	Kahlin	Anna	Ladinsky Tech			
129	Kalin	Ana		External Consultant	ana.kalin@gmail.com	
130	Keeja	Ngakare	Namibian Mission to the EU in Brussels	First Secretary	n_keeja@yahoo.co.uk	NA
131	Kerl	Stefan	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Coordinator	stefan.kerl@oneworld.at	AT
132	Kerschbaumer	Susi	AMREF – African Medical and Research Foundation	Executive Director	office@amref.at	AT
133	Kiesel	Hirut	World Media Insights/Discover TV	Journalist	wmi_office@gmx.net	AT

134	Kindermann	Karoline	Camp-Project/nomad-theatre	Project Assistant	karoki@gmx.at	AT
135	Kopf	Martina	Südwind Magazine Austria	Editorial Journalist	martina.kopf@oneworld.at	AT
136	Krátka	Zuzana	Slovak NGOs Platform – Platforma MVRO	RPP Manager	office@mvro.sk	SK
137	Kremlicka	Jean	Avance	Translator	jean_a@web.de	
138	Kriz	Jakub	ARS – Association for Development Cooperation	Managing Director	kriz@arsczech.org	CZ
139	Krpata	Erwin	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Assistant	e.krpata@chello.at	AT
140	Küblböck	Karin	ÖFSE – Austrian Researchfoundation for Development Aid	Scientific Officer	k.kueblboeck@oefse.at	AT
141	Kugler	Martin	KAIROS Consulting	Director	martin.kugler@kairos-pr.com	EG
142	Kurat	Anke	VENRO – German NGO platform	Coordinator	a.kurat@venro.org	DE
143	Kuthan	Peter	Austria Zimbabwe Friendship Association	Chairman	argezim@silverserver.at	ZW
144	Kuthan	Anna	Austria Zimbabwe Friendship Association	Student	kuthan@cat-x.at	AT
145	Kyallo	Joshua	AMREF -- African Medical and Research Foundation	Director AMREF Uganda	joshuak@amrefug.org	UG
146	Lackova	Maria	SAVIO Slovakia	Project Manager	savio@savio.sk	SK
147	Lätt	Jeanne	German Development Institute	Public Relations Officer	jeanne.laett@die-gdi.de	DE
148	Leitner	Heidi	KOO – Coordination Office of the Austrian Episcopal Conference		puravida@gmx.at	AT
149	Leutgeb	Anita	ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency Austria		office@adra.at	AT
150	Lichtblau	Pia	Attac Austria/Mattersburger Kreis	Board member	pia.lichtblau@attac.at	AT
151	Lindau	Joachim	Development Expert		j.lindau@t-online.de	DE
152	Litjens	Paul	Ministry of Foreign Affairs The Netherlands	Deputy Africa Director	pjm.litjens@minbuza.nl	NL
153	Lugmayr	Martin	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Desk Officer for Development Cooperation	martin.lugmayr@bmaa.gv.at	AT
154	Lunacek	Ulrike	Austrian Parliament	Member of Parliament	ulrike.lunacek@gruene.at	AT
155	Macher	Walter	ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency Austria	Director	office@adra.at	AT
156	Mair	Dominique-Claire	ADA-Austrian Development Agency	Desk Officer Human Rights, Democratisation and Peace Building	dominique-claire.mair@ada.gv.at	AT
157	Makokha Marani	Martin	University of Salzburg	Ph.D. Student	martin.marani@sbg.ac.at	KE
158	Malundah	Issofu Abdul Shareef	Light for the World – Mozambique	Deputy Country Coordinator	tuyiche@gmail.com	MZ
159	Matola	Ibrahim	Malawi National Assembly	Honourable	ibumatola@yahoo.com	MW
160	Mavar	Guy	AAI – Afro-Asiatic Institute Salzburg	Doctorate Student	guymavar@hotmail.com	AT
161	Maycock	Joanna	Actionaid International	Partnership Development Co-Ordinator	joannam@actionaid.org	BE

162	Mayer	Harald				
163	Mboup	Amadou	A.J.E.S - Association des Jeunes pour l'Education et la Santé	Educator	amadoumboup2000@yahoo.fr	SN
164	Meijer	Arwa	Global Campaign for Microbicides	European Programme Associate	ameijer@path.org	BE
165	Meirhofer	Angelika	Balance Global-Weltladen Baden	Obfrau	angelika.meirhofer@aon.at	AT
166	Mekonnen	Deribie	Light for the World – Ethiopia	Programme Coordinator in Ethiopia	info@licht-fuer-die-welt.at	ET
167	Mfasoni	Jean	African Union	Acting Executive Secretary, Permanent Mission in Brussels	africanunion@skynet.be	
168	Mihretu	Mamo E.	Ministry of Trade and Industry Ethiopia	Senior Trade Policy Advisor	wayewi@yahoo.com	ET
169	Molitor-Ruckenbauer	Josefa	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Project Coordinator	josefa.molitor@eu-platform.at	AT
170	Monteso Cullell	Marta	Stop Aids Alliance	EU Policy Officer	marta@stopaidsalliance.org	BE
171	Mookkenthottathil	Sona	ADA – Austrian Development Agency	Intern	sona.mookkenthottathil@ada.gov.at	AT
172	Mugochi	Taenzanis wa Kennedy	Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum	Researcher	research@hrforum.co.zw	ZW
173	Mugenyi	Frank	CfAD – Centre for African Development	Executive Director	cfadev@yahoo.co.uk	UK
174	Mukkath	George J.	Every Child	Development Director - Africa and SE Europe	george.mukkath@everychild.org.uk	UK
175	Mulenga	Angela	TWN-Africa		anglmwape@yahoo.com	ZM
176	Müller	Franziska	AgChange, University of Hamburg	Junior Researcher	f.mueller@agchange.de	DE
177	Müllner	Josef	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Ambassador	josef.muellner@bmaa.gv.at	AT
178	Mutandiro	G.T.	Zimbabwe Embassy	Ambassador	z.vien@chello.at	ZW
179	Mwandha	James	Light for the World – Uganda		jamesmwandha@yahoo.com	UG
180	Mwandha	Catherine	Light for the World – Uganda		jamesmwandha@yahoo.com	UG
181	Mwingira	Mary	TANGO – Tanzania Association of NGOs	Executive Director	tango@bol.co.tz	TZ
182	Nalunga	Jane	Seatini (U)		seatini@infocom.co.ug	UG
183	Ndao	Isamaila	University of Vienna	Ph.D. Student	adamael4@hotmail.com	SN
184	Nemeckova	Tereza	University of Economics in Prague	PhD Student	nemecte@vse.cz	CZ
185	Ngarande	R.T.	Zimbabwe Embassy	Counsellor	z.vien@chello.at	ZW
186	Nikolic	Alexander	Camp.Project	Research and Artist	an@eroticunion.org	AT
187	Noussi	Katharina	Light for the World – Austria	Project Coordinator	k.noussi@licht-fuer-die-welt.at	AT
188	Novak	Ana	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Slovenia	Minister Counsellor	ana.novak@gov.si	SI
189	Nwosu	Boniface O.	Strategic Skill Centre for Wealth Creation	National Secretary	sscwnq@yahoo.com	NG
190	Nyanhongo	Gibson Stephen	University of Zimbabwe, College of Health Sciences	Lecturer	gnyanhongo@yahoo.com	ZW

191	Obrovsky	Michael	ÖFSE – Austrian Researchfoundation for Development Aid	Development Policy Officer	m.obrovsky@oefse.at	AT
192	Ognian	Drumes	CARE International Bulgaria	Country Director	ognian.drumev@care-bg.org	BG
193	Omoriege	Festus	Federal Institute for Regional Research and Urban Development	Statistics Officer	federal_institute_research@yahoo.co.uk	NG
194	Onwuchekwa	Prince Charles	Strategic Skill Centre for Wealth Creation	National Chairman	sscwng@yahoo.com	NG
195	Oosters	Barbara	CBMI – Christian Blind Mission International	EU Liaison Officer	barbara.oosters@cbmi.net	BE
196	Pampalk	Josef	Centre International Lebret-Irfed	Civil Society Facilitator & Networker	josef.pampalk@gmx.at	AT
197	Parizkova	Lada	TRIALOG Brussels	Policy and Lobby Officer	trialog@concordeurope.org	BE
198	Pauna	Raluca	Anti Poverty Forum	Senior Consultant	rpstrategies@bruboer.co.za	ZA
199	Philemon	Theresa	Namibian Parliament	Parliamentarian Clerk	n_keeja@yahoo.co.uk	NA
200	Pickard	Russell	Open Society Institute Brussels	Senior Policy Officer	russell.pickard@osi-eu.org	BE
201	Pillhofer	Sarah	CARE Austria	Programme Officer	sarah.pillhofer@care.at	AT
202	Poeti	Maria	Planning Bureau of the Republic Cyprus	Coordination Officer	mipoeti@planning.gov.cy	CY
203	Polzer	Miroslav	Austrian Science and Research Liaison Office Ljubljana	Director	polzer@zsi.at	SI
204	Powell	Sophie	Traidcraft	Trade Policy Adviser	sophiep@traidcraft.org	UK
205	Pracht	Elisabeth	Österreichische Gesellschaft für Familienplanung	Exec. Director	e.pracht@oegf.at	AT
206	Punungwe	Gift	Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe	Ambassador	zimbrussels@skynet.be	ZW
207	Rabitsch	Maria-Waltraud	ADA-Austrian Development Agency	Poverty-Reduction, Countrified Development, Decentralisation	waltraud.rabitsch@ada.gv.at	AT
208	Rädler	Angelika	CARE Austria	Press Officer	angelika.raedler@care.at	AT
209	Rafamatanantsoa	Elisa	ACP Local Government Platform		platform@acplgp.net	BE
210	Rehbichler	Sabine	Austrian EU-Platform of NGOs	Advocacy and Networking Officer	sabine.rehbichler@eu-platform.at	AT
211	Reisinger	Magdolna	Foundation for Africa	Cultural and Educational Manager	afrikaert@afrikaert.hu	HU
212	Richard	Pascal	Zimbabwe Watch	Coordinator	pascal.richard@niza.nl	NL
213	Riga	Stella	CARE Austria	Intern	stella.riga@care.at	AT
214	Roniger	Rupert	Light for the World – Austria	Chairman	r.roniger@licht-fuer-die-welt.at	AT
215	Rutkowski	Stephan	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Desk Officer	stephan.rutkowski@bmaa.gv.at	AT
216	Sackl	Anita	MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières	Evaluation Unit	anita.sackl@aerzte-ohne-grenzen.at	AT
217	Saedaddin	Anas	Student	Student	anas.saedaddin@gmx.net	
218	Salzer	Martin	Austrian Doctors for Disabled	Chairman	office@doctorsfordisabled.at	AT
219	Samuel	John	Leeds Metropolitan University	Business Development Manager (Leeds Met Africa)	j.samuel@leedsmet.ac.uk	UK

220	Sangare	Alexander Sekou	Institute of African Economics	Chairman	iea_gn@yahoo.com	GN
221	Schachner	Elfriede	AGEZ – Working Association for Development Cooperation	Executive Director	office@agez.at	AT
222	Scheele	Karin	European Parliament	Member of Parliament	kscheele@europarl.eu.int	EU
223	Schelander	Ulrike	CARE Austria	Director	ulrike.schelander@care.at	AT
224	Schiefer	Bernadette	Südwind Austria	Journalist	bernadetteschiefer@gmx.net	AT
225	Schierer	Christian H.	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber – Austrian Trade	Regional Director Africa, Near and Middle East	christian.schierer@wko.at	AT
226	Schlingmann	Hanna	WEED – World Economy, Ecology and Development	Intern	hanna.schlingmann@weed-online.org	DE
227	Schlitz	Nicolas	Verein für Dienste im Ausland	Student	schlitz@auslandsdienst.at	AT
228	Schneider	Rentate	WIDE Austria – Women in Development Europe	Obfrau	renate_schneider1@gmx.at	AT
229	Schnitzer	Manfred	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Department for Development Cooperation	manfred.schnitzer@bmaa.gv.at	AT
230	Schnitzer	Astrid	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Desk Officer/Humanitarian Affairs	astrid.schnitzer@bmaa.gv.at	AT
231	Schuster	Nadja	Austrian North-South Institute for Development Cooperation	Programme Officer	schuster@nordsued.at	AT
232	Schwarz	Magdalena			lena_schwarz@yahoo.com	AT
233	Sebban	Florent	Eurostep – European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People	Policy Advisor	fsebban@eurostep.org	
234	Seewald	Magda	Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation		seewald@vidc.org	AT
235	Sekibaha	Dismas Leonard	University of Dar es Salaam	Student	diseles@yahoo.co.uk	TZ
236	Seller	Daniel	University of Vienna	Ph.D. Candidate	dsinfo@gmx.net	AT
237	Sellner	Gregor	Student	Student	g-sellner@gmx.at	AT
238	Semlitsch	Karl	Austrian Ugandan Friendship Association	Vice-President	k.semlitsch@aon.at	AT
239	Senussi	Arij	OFID – OPEC Fund for International Development	Technical Assistance Officer	a.senussi@opecfund.org	AT
240	Seper	Simone	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Desk Officer for Bilateral Development Cooperation	simone.seper@bmaa.gv.at	AT
241	Sheinberg	Diane	EURAC – European Network for Central Africa	Policy Officer	diane.sheinberg@eurac-network.org	BE
242	Silva	Alirio Vicente	Embassy of the Republic of Cape Verde	Ambassador	embcviena@nnweb.at	CV
243	Six	Clemens	ÖFSE – Austrian Researchfoundation for Development Aid	Scientific Officer	c.six@oefse.at	AT
244	Slezak	Gabi	ÖFSE – Austrian Researchfoundation for Development Aid	Country Documentation	g.slezak@oefse.at	AT
245	Smith	Daniel	Namibian Representative in Austria	Charge d'Affaires	n_keeja@yahoo.co.uk	NA

246	Sobotova	Lenka	People in need	Volunteer-Project: Let's build a school in Africa	lsobotova@mercury.com	CZ
247	Somkuti	Peter	Austrian EU-Platform of NGDOs	Assistant	suedwind.pr@oneworld.at	AT
248	Sommer	Christine	Institute for Integrative Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (IICP)	Coordinator	sommer@iicp.at	AT
249	Stanek	Oldrich	Zivot 90		oldrich.stanek@zivot90.cz	CZ
250	Steiner	Klaus	Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Department Development Cooperation	klaus.steiner@bmaa.gv.at	AT
251	Stemerding	Thomas	MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières	Project Manager	thomasstemerding@hotmail.com	AT
252	Stinnig	Elke	ÖAD – Austrian Exchange Service	Coordinator & Networker	elke.stinnig@oead.ac.at	AT
253	Stummer	Christina	CARE Austria	Project Coordinator	christina.stummer@care.at	AT
254	Stumpf	Mariella	WIEN NORD PILZ Werbeagentur GmbH	Customer Consulting	stumpf@wnp.at	AT
255	Suha	György	Consulate of the Republic of the Gambia	Ambassador	un@gambia.hu	GM
256	Suomalainen	Nina	Kehys ry – Finnish Platform of NGDOs	Development Policy Coordinator	nina.suomalainen@evl.fi	FI
257	Szilasi	Ildiko	Foundation for Africa	First Secretary	afrikaert@afrikaert.hu	HU
258	Sznajderski	Tadeusz	European Contact Group Poland	Academic and Journalist	tadeusz.sznajderski@wp.pl	PL
259	Tack	Sue	Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation	Policy and Development Officer	sue@euroopaliikumine.ee	EE
260	Taiwo	Obafemi Emmanuel	Federal Institute for Regional Research and Urban Development	Senior Admin Officer	federal_institute_research@yahoo.co.uk	NG