



Protocol of the Afrika Club (online meeting) held on Tuesday, May 4th, 2021

News from the African diaspora
Chad after the death of Idriss Deby
The new EU-OACPS Agreement 2021-2041

With input from:

- **ADYFE, AEWASS, RATV, ADEPT, Women for Peace, Aktion Regen**
- **Gerald Hainzl**, Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management (IFK)
- **Geord Lennkh**, former Special Envoy for Africa and Ambassador

Protocol: **Olesya Kryshevich, Franz Schmidjell (Editing)**

Previous protocols: www.vidc.org/themen/afrika/afrika-club/protokolle

The Afrika Club is a joint initiative of Radio Afrika TV (RATV), the Association of African Students in Austria (VAS Österreich), the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC) and Ambassador Georg Lennkh.



SUMMARY

News from the diaspora organisations

ADYFE (African Diaspora Youth Forum Europe) focuses on further digitalisation in its activities and started a program called „Diaspora Entrepreneurship Program Promotion“. ADYFE plans to gather 150 young people and engage them in a crowd-coaching platform with 25 coaches involving countries like Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya.

AEWTASS (Advancing Equality within the Austrian School System) works for a better (re)presentation of the African continent as well as Black People in the Austrian school system. AEWTASS has more than 20 members and offers anti-racism and awareness-raising workshops for teachers and students. Another research initiative by the group in cooperation with the VIDC is called „African Diaspora Engagement“ in Austria.

Radio Africa TV provides all media formats like TV, newsletters, online office and social media and approaches its 25th anniversary. It will address three areas: News from Africa (News Agency), Media for Development (news to promote development in Africa) and Voices from the communities. The African “express” press agency will provide news from Africa in the German speaking countries.

ADEPT (African Diaspora Platform in Europe) has 50 member-organisations, 200 networkers and is based in Brussels. Alexis Neuberger has recently become their president. ADEPT enhances the capacity development of African diaspora organizations and advocates for favourable policies towards diaspora engagement.

Women for Peace in the Horn of Africa is the name of a new initiative by **Ishraga Hamid**, a political scientist and Sudanese activist in Vienna. In March 2021 she organised an online conference about „Gender and Diversity“. Women from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan participated and showed their interest to form an association. The conference will take place from June 10 - 12 in Vienna in cooperation with the VIDC.

Aktion Regen was presented by Ines Kohl, a social anthropologist who lived and worked in Africa for many years. The association deals with family planning and sexual health rights and aims to empower women and reduce poverty. Their concept is „knowledge as a chance“. Women should gain knowledge and use it to determine their own lives.

Chad after the death of President Idriss Deby (Input by Gerald Hainzl)

- On April 19th, the government of Chad announced that president Idriss Deby had died from wounds sustained while visiting troops at the frontlines. But there were also rumours that the perpetrators came from within his own circles.
- According to the constitution, the president of the parliament should act as interim president and elections should take place within 90 days. Although a military council took over, officials from the AU or EU did not use the term “coup d’etat”. The military council is headed by Deby’s son, Gen. Mahamat I. Deby, who received his military education in France.



- Chad is a so-called anchor state in the fight against terrorism. France is dependent on the Chadian army. Chad is France's airbase and an important member of the G5 Sahel initiative.
- 47% of the population live below the poverty line; HDI ranking: 187 out of 189 countries. It is a country that functions through client politics. There are barely any protests against this military council as there is practically no political space for a critical civil society.
- Some ethnic groups live in both Chad and Sudan and many members of the opposition are close to the border or even in Sudan itself. The situation might have a negative effect on the unstable transformation process in Sudan.

Partnership Agreement between European Union (EU) and Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific Countries (OACPS): Input by Georg Lennkh

- On April 15th, the new EU OACPS Partnership Agreement was initialled. It sets the political, economic and sectorial cooperation framework for the next twenty years between the EU and OACPS (formerly known as the ACP Group). The agreement is set to be signed officially at a conference in Samoa by September 2021. The Agreement combines a common foundation with three protocols (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific).
- On the European side, there was a disagreement about the nature of the agreement: a so-called „mixed treaty“ needs to be signed and ratified by both, the EU institutions as well as its individual member states, while a “pure EU treaty” only has to be signed by the EU institutions. Austria sees the agreement as “mixed treaty”.
- Another controversial issue surrounds the European Development Fund (EDF) that was integrated into the EU budget which implies less co-management by EU-MS and OACPS
- Migration received special attention. While the EU pushed for return and readmission mechanisms, the African countries demanded more legal pathways.
- The African side was very vocal about the topic of conditionality (e.g., in cases of human rights violations) and wanted to remove the paragraph with partial success.
- Trade and economic cooperation are mentioned, but the new agreement refers to the controversial Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Critics argue that the new treaty extends a parallel structure in the context of AU-EU relations (which includes North Africa) and which is seen as inefficient. The new „policy first approach” gives EU interests priority including anti-migration issues.



Protocol

Franz Schmidjell (VIDC) welcomed the guests. He pointed out that the Africa Club has two pillars: 1) to discuss the newest developments on the African continent and the relationship between Africa and Europe and 2) the situation of the diaspora in Austria and Europe and the activities of their associations. During this meeting, several diaspora initiatives will be introduced. The second part of the meeting is dedicated to the situation in Chad after the death of president Idriss Deby and the new agreement between the EU and the ACP countries.

1. News from diaspora organisations

Youssef Diakite from ADYFE introduced his association, based in Vienna and Brussels, which represents the **African diaspora youth in European** countries. ADYFE is currently focusing on further digitalisation in its activities. Their latest program is called „Diaspora Entrepreneurship Program Promotion“. Within its framework they plan to gather 150 young people and engage them in a crowd-coaching platform with 25 coaches. Meetings have already taken place with community leaders from Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya to build the capacity of those 150 participants in the field of entrepreneurship. Several partners have already been approached such as UN agencies and national Investment Promotion Agencies. Emphasis will be on access to digitalisation solutions to ensure a wider reach of the continent for the businesses. Another focus will be on developing financial solutions. The initiative is in touch with the WKO (Austrian Chamber of Commerce) and similar institutions in Europe. The Austrian Foreign Ministry gave a very positive feedback on the project proposal. The next 2-3 months will focus getting financial means to run it

Maida Schuller introduced herself as part of the team of „**Advancing Equality within the Austrian School System**“ (**AEWTASS**), whose goal is a better presentation of the African continent and Black People in the Austrian school system. There are more than 20 members, and they primarily offer workshops for teachers but also ones for students like on „Critical Whiteness“. Members have previously worked and studied in the field of international development or African studies. There is also a group dedicated to analysis of schoolbooks, which she is part of. Another research initiative by the group is called „African Diaspora Engagement“ in Austria. This was inspired by a VIDC study from November 2020 on the activities of Somali associations in Austria. They will analyse about 20 associations and their activities in Austria, including conducting interviews and analysing their successes.

Alexis Neuberg from Radio Africa TV welcomed the participants and showed the audience their new website (www.radioafrika.net). On the 21st of March the association turned 24 years old and now RATV is approaching its 25th anniversary. Alexis Neuberg pointed the newsletter that one can subscribe to through the website. Radio Afrika TV will address three areas in the future: 1) News that connect Africa with Austria: bring news about and from Africa to Austria, address fake news about Africa, currently about five countries but they want to reach ten within a year. 2) Media for Development: News to promote the development in Africa and in Austria as well and support for diaspora engagement for development. 3) Voice for Africa and African descendants in Austria: create reports about the communities for other media outlets. RATV is currently working with radio stations like Ö1 and plans to become an African “express” press agency that will work not only for their own media outlet but also for Austrian, German and Swiss media and journalists. They want to



share their items with those living in Africa, so they know how Africans live in Austria. There will be an exchange of programs between their association and various African countries.

Radio Afrika TV works with his all kinds of media formats: radio, TV, newsletter and online office and social media. It needs permanent news and topics and will be happy to receive them from all participants.

Alexis Neuberg has recently become the president of „ADEPT- Africa –Europe diaspora development platform, based in Brussels. ADEPT is working on a European level to promote and enhance the capacity development of African development organizations in Europe and to advocate for favourable policies towards diaspora engagement. Another aim is to increase the visibility of diaspora organizations. ADEPT plans the creation of diaspora grant funds to support the diaspora organization in the field of development cooperation. Currently there are 50 member organisations and 200 networkers. There are three types of members. 1) Larger organisations that have a lot of experience, 2) middle-sized organisations with minimum structures and 3) those who do not yet have the infrastructure and want to grow.

Ishraga Hamid is a political scientist and Sudanese activist. She works for a network that was started in 2015 in Rome, where she attended a conference called „Network of Eritrean Woman“ and thought of a similar idea for African women in Austria. In March 2021 she organised an online conference about „Gender and Diversity“, because diversity management is one of the biggest problems in the Horn of Africa. The conference was dedicated to the Sudanese princess Mendy who was fighting against colonialism, yet was never mentioned in history in Sudan. Ishraga wanted to highlight her role as an invisible woman in Sudan and as a model for all forgotten women in Sudan. Women from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan showed interest in forming an association. Women from North and South Sudan have been brought together and shared experiences about their histories, which is a first. All of this is happening via WhatsApp, and now some women from Chad have joined. From 10-12 of June there will be a conference in Vienna, where some of these diaspora women from the Horn of Africa will attend or join online to talk about the topic of peace and security from their perspective. In all the conflicts women pay a high price. Therefore, it is important that the women become visible and share their stories. Franz Schmidjell (VIDC) added, the VIDC will be glad to host this forum which will fill the UN resolution 1325 with life.

Ines Kohl (Aktion Regen) is a social anthropologist who lived and worked in Africa for many years. She is now working in development cooperation at “Aktion Regen” which deals with family planning and sexual health rights with the aim to empower women and reduce poverty. Knowledge about contraception means that women do not slide from one pregnancy into the next. They work with trained „multipliers“, who pass on the knowledge in communities and schools. The organisation was founded by a gynaecologist, who was aware that knowledge about the female body had to be shared without taboos. They also address female genital mutilation in their educational initiatives. They are active in Western and Eastern Africa. They see themselves as an educational organization. It is easier to access information in Europe which they use to train locals who have the relevant socio-cultural knowledge to transfer said knowledge in situ. The name “**Aktion Regen**” refers to plants that need rain to grow, like people need knowledge to develop. Their concept is „knowledge as a chance“. Women should gain knowledge and use it to determine their own lives.



Franz Schmidjell (VIDC) mentioned that beside the Women for Peace conference from June 10 - 12, the VIDC and “Kulturen in Bewegung” will organize a Mini-FESPACO (May 27 - 31) with films from the famous African film festival in Ougadougou (Burkina Faso). Furthermore, there are two studies planned. One was mentioned by Maida Schuller about the African diaspora engagement in Austria. The other study is about funding mechanisms for diaspora engagement in selected European countries. The second part of the meeting started with the situation in Chad where the long-term president has died in an open battle.

2. Chad after the death of President Idriss Deby **Input by Gerald Hainzl**

Gerald Hainzl from the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management (IFK) said that everyone was caught off guard when the president perished in the battle. It was not surprising though. He took part in the battles and he was always close to the front line, also in the south towards Boko Haram. But nobody expected him to get this close to the battle and some say maybe it was not even accidental. There is a publication by a Canadian author which states that for a long-term African dictator the greatest danger comes from within his own circles. Why is Chad so important for France and Europe? Chad is a so-called anchor state. Chad is France's airbase. The operations in Mali are conducted from Chad, which is why the reactions from France were very shocked and one was hoping that there would be some stability. Both France and the EU took their time in reacting. Also, the reactions from the African Union were quite interesting, the peace and security council wants to send a mission to find out what happened.

I have read the constitution and it is clear, if the president leaves office for whatever reason, within 90 days new elections should take place. If there is a military council that imposes someone as the head of state, then that would be a coup, but one has never heard this word in official circles. France is very dependent on the fact that Chad continues offering its soldiers and there was the fear that these soldiers get pulled out, especially given the French president's promise to reduce the French military presence in West Africa. The rebel group that is mentioned in this context is very interesting because it has no religious, but rather an ideologic background. There is a fear that other international actors who have an interest in Africa can use this situation to their benefit, like the Russian Federation who is trying to have a say in Central Africa. Similarly, they try to use a port in Sudan for Russian military ships.

So if Chad does not participate in these missions itself, it could become an instable factor in the region in itself. The funeral itself was quite interesting. The French president said goodbye to the coffin together with the AU leadership, then other regional leaders came. This says a lot about the ranking in the region. Deby's son received his military education in France, which will also be an important factor. An interim government has been formed but I am really sceptic whether there will be fair and free elections within 18 months and Chad will see a positive development. For the people in Chad, this could be a blessing.

47% of the population live below the poverty line although the official unemployment rate is 2.2%. Who benefited from the system so far and what will the future look like? In finance, if you deal with stocks, if there is long-term stability in the price, as soon as there is some volatility, will be felt even more, and the same can be said about Chad.



With regards to the attendance during the funeral, Gerald Hainzl pointed out that the EU was represented by HR Josep Borrell. France was represented by the president Emanuel Macron and the foreign minister. They conducted conversations with the G5 Sahel countries on the evening before, as there must have been a concern about power vacuum. **Georg Lennkh** pointed out that the interim government includes some people from the opposition. During his time as the EU special envoy to Chad he met all these members of the opposition. It is a country that functions through client politics. There is no political party that has a clear ideology. **Gerald Hainzl** confirmed that client politics. The elites will probably try to arrange everything between themselves, which is why there are barely any protests against this military council.

Ishraga Hamid pointed out that with 30 years in power, it is a dictatorship, and the recent events will have an effect on the entire region. Some ethnic groups live in both Chad and Sudan and many members of the opposition are close to the border or even in Sudan itself. The situation might have a negative effect on Sudan where the transformation process is not stable either. The EU should support the democratization. **Ines Kohl** finds the death of

president Idriss Deby and the fact that a new interim government was set up so quickly quite suspicious and asked about the rumours about a targeted assassination. **Gerald Hainzl** would not exclude anything, but he wonders whether one could keep it secret for a long time. And those who killed him would probably try to use it for their own publicity. Maybe he died in the battle and it was only announced later, once the military knew how to react so that the president of the parliament does not take over.

Concerning the role of the civil society engagement and critical voices within Chad Gerald Hainzl mentioned that the political space for civil society has always been restricted. The tanks seen in N'Djamena before the announcement of this death would suggest some level of repression if there are critical voices in the public. **Georg Lennkh** pointed out that there are two possibilities regarding the death of Deby. Either the army underestimated the situation and FACT militia (Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad) had many arms from Libya, where they supported General Haftar. Or president Deby was killed by the army itself, which is supported by the fact that there was a new government immediately, the parliament was dissolved, and the constitution suspended.

3. Partnership Agreement 2021-2041 between European Union (EU) and Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific Countries (OACPS) Input by Georg Lennkh

Georg Lennkh, former ambassador, was taking part in the negotiations on Austria's behalf for the previous Cotonou Agreement (2000 – 2020). He said that the word „partnership“ has to be set in inverted commas, because the agreement was initialled on April 15th and there have not been any discussions in Brussels since. It has to be ratified by the EU side on one hand, and by the ACP states on the other. The agreement should be signed officially at a conference in Samoa by September, but some states said they will apply the interim agreement nonetheless. We can also expect a certain opposition to it from different sides.



On the European side, there was a disagreement between the EU institutions and its member states. The Cotonou treaty was a so-called „mixed treaty“, so it needs to be signed by the EU Commission and the individual member states. But now the EU wants to have a pure „EU treaty“, which member states do not agree to. The text itself refers to the EU as the „EU party“, because the signing party has not been defined yet. Austria is also against a pure EU treaty. One controversial issue surrounds the European Development Fund (EDF) and how it will be managed in the future, whether the members will get a budget that they can also co-manage with a national representative. It is an unequal treaty, since the EU is financing and the other side is receiving.

The other conflicting issue is that the AU wanted to have a direct treaty with the EU but the ACP countries successfully blocked that. In terms of content, certain things have been highlighted in particular. Not surprisingly, from the EU side, and Austria in particular, the topic of migration was addressed. It has received six pages, while the old Cotonou agreement only had one. It is very clear that one of the aims is migration prevention. At the same time, the African side was very vocal about the topic of conditionality, as is the case in Article 8 of the Cotonou agreement, which involves sanctions if certain conditions are not met. There have been human rights issues every now and then, like in Ethiopia where a protester was killed by police, or Uganda adopting an anti-homosexual law, which went against the fundamental EU principles, and it was clear that there would be repercussions for development cooperation. This conditionality is something the African states wanted to remove and have partially succeeded. The agreement consists of two parts, the main text and three regional side protocols. Once the agreement is finalised, the discussions should be taken up again in the Africa Club.

Franz Schmidjell added that the old Cotonou had three pillars – political dialogue, economic cooperation including trade and development cooperation, mainly through the EDF. The EDF is not integrated within the EU budget and the influence of the ACP states is reduced. Trade and economic cooperation are mentioned in the new agreement, but it refers mainly to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). He also mentioned the issue of „return and readmission“, which the EU was very persistent about, while Africans were emphasising the right to legal immigration. He also suggests that the Africa protocol of the new treaty seems to be a parallel structure to the bilateral AU-EU relations, which is inefficient. He asked about the „policy first approach“. Does it mean that poverty reduction and other related aims are out and the EU interests come first?

Georg Lennkh mentioned that the EU Trust Fund is effectively an anti-migration fund. When considering initiatives to ensure food security, those can also be sold as something that can tie people to their country and not to leave.

Alexis Neuberg pointed out that „diaspora engagement“ comes up at least 8 times in the 180 pages, which opens the door for his association to join the debate. **Alexis Neuberg said that ADEPT** also wants to follow the signing procedures and get involved on an EU level. In Austria one has to see how this new treaty is received. **Georg Lennkh** retorted that he wants to continue conversations with relevant people in the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

Franz Schmidjell thanked all participants for their input. He suggested to have a next meeting end of June and invite more initiatives from the second generation including #BlackLivesMatter.