



Mission members tell their stories

« The Central African Republic natural wealth's quantity and diversity fascinate me »

European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic

On May 22, we celebrate World Biodiversity Day. A good reason to talk with Jérôme, the Strategic Advisor to the Ministry of Water and Forests of the EUAM RCA Mission, who is committed daily alongside the CAR authorities in the preservation of this formidable reservoir of biodiversity that is the Central African Republic.



What are the natural characteristics of the Central African Republic?

First of all, the weather. Almost 6 months of rain per year! The CAR is also home to the main basin that feeds Lake Chad, which is 800 km away, via the Chary River, which passes through the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Chad.

To which extent is climate change noticeable in CAR?

Two examples are particularly striking: drought and deforestation. The drought in Sudan and Chad is causing pastoralist populations to make cross-border transhumance into northern CAR, which is generating conflicts with local inhabitants. Deforestation in the hills of Bangui for heating and for cultivating new fields is causing temperatures to rise in the capital. The average temperature in Bangui has risen from 35° two decades ago to over 42° today!

What is the impact of climate change on the security situation in CAR?

The drought is causing population displacements outside the country, but also internally, to more fertile areas that are already occupied. The poverty of these populations exposes them to all sorts of dangers (banditry, trafficking).

What are the most important challenges to address first?

The challenges are numerous, and one of the most important is to ease internal tensions by helping populations fleeing the drylands to settle elsewhere, without creating new internal conflicts. This requires a concerted policy by the authorities to find available land with water points for these populations, but also to help provide sufficient manpower to manage these conflicts.

How is the EUAM RCA Mission helping the country to face future challenges?

Forest management is a major challenge and the EUAM RCA Mission is helping the country reform its codes and texts. The interoperability between CAR's state forces is essential, as it allows for the pooling of resources and personnel between ministries (police, gendarmerie, customs, water and forests) during specific missions dedicated to them.

What fascinates you about your work in the CAR?

The Central African Republic natural wealth's quantity and diversity fascinate me. Did you know that the forest of the Congo Basin, which also extends into the Central African Republic and Cameroon -- with its surface area of over 268 million hectares -- represents the second largest lung on earth after the Amazon? The Central African Republic is a green, but dry country with an incredible diversity of animal species. Also, the passion of the ministry's executives with whom I work is fascinating. They know their country by heart, what lives there and how the species live. This is a rich source of knowledge and inspiration for me on a daily basis.