



# The implications of the expansion of the East Africa Community to the Democratic Republic of Congo

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**The DR. Congo is now a member of the East African Community. Despite some enthusiasm about this brand-new membership, some doubt the relevance of the DRC contribution and wonder how this membership could be profitable.**

1. The DRC is a member of several Regional Economic Communities and joined the East African community recently. This is an important milestone as it means the ***DRC is now a member of the East African Community***. With this, the East African Community now extends from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean.
2. Despite some enthusiasm about this brand-new membership, some doubt the relevance of the DRC contribution and wonder how this membership could be profitable.
3. Yes, the DRC's membership in the EAC brings a set of challenges as it occurs at a sensitive time, with the state of war in the eastern part of the country. But it is an opportunity for the EAC to do its part in promoting peace in order to maintain bloc unity. ***It is important for us to plead for peace in the eastern part of the DRC and across the region in order to enable the development and prosperity.***
4. Admitting the DRC, which is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest country in Africa by population (95 million) and shares a border with 5 of the 6 EAC partner states (Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda), into the EAC ***is an opportunity for business, trade, free movement of people, peace and security including the legal certainty.***
5. There are several benefits to the DRC of joining the EAC, including stronger market access, increased infrastructure development, and enhanced security. This signifies wider market access for the rest of the EAC partner states which will boost intra-regional trade in the long run.
6. The EAC and the DRC can gain much from this new level of integration as its can play a vital role in diversifying economies away from dependence on the export of just a few mineral products; in delivering food and energy security; in generating jobs for the increasing number of young people; and in alleviating poverty and delivering shared prosperity.
7. *The EAC is also opening up to the DRC economy, which is rich in natural resources such as cobalt and copper. The DRC is the world's largest producer of cobalt and Africa's most important copper producer. Cobalt is an important component in the production of batteries in electric cars, computers, and cell phones. **Together with infrastructure development, this can drive the EAC's industrialization agenda.***

8. As Lawyers, this membership is also an opportunity for business and people of the region for their cases to be heard before the ***East African Court of Justice [EACJ]*** a world-class Court dispensing quality justice for a prosperous Community.

### **In conclusion**

- The DRC will open a new 90 million strong market to the EAC
- With this, the DRC offers the bloc the largest market and since the EAC pact allows for free movement of people, goods and services across the bloc, it means the organization has just acquired itself access to a big market.
- Now, the East African States can trade with the DRC at much lower costs than ever before.
- The DRC has joined the bloc, the members now have access to trade with the DRC at considerably reduced costs of doing business; this also opens doors for investing in DRC and allows for greater trade with the country.