



ECCAS

ECCAS: Introduction

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Chart 1: Political map of ECCAS



Chart 1 is a political map of ECCAS.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was established on 18 October 1983 by the UDEAC members and the members of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes States (CEPGL), as well as São Tomé and Príncipe through the signing in Libreville of its Constitutive Treaty. It was then **revised** and adopted on December 18, 2019 and entered into force on December 28, 2019.

ECCAS has 11 member states (see Chart 1), namely Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe. Angola remained an observer until 1999 when it became a full member. Rwanda withdrew in 2007 and rejoined in 2013.

According to its Treaty, the Community aims to *“promote cooperation and strengthening of regional integration in Central Africa in all areas of political, security, economic, monetary, financial, social, cultural, scientific and technical activity with a view to achieve collective self-reliance, to raise the standard of living of the people, to increase and maintain economic stability, to strengthen and preserve the close peaceful relations between its Member States and to contribute to the progress and development of the African continent”*.

ECCAS was inactive from 1992 to 1997 due to non-payment of membership fees and conflict in the Great Lakes region, with Rwanda on the opposite side of Angola. The **decision** to revive ECCAS in 1998 was a significant commitment from its member states to revitalise the organisation and address the region's conflict-prone nature. The Libreville Conference not only marked the resumption of ECCAS's activities but also involved a comprehensive reform. The organisation's mandate was expanded to include security concerns, in addition to its original economic focus, enabling it to actively promote peace and security in the region

The Community is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognised by the African Union. However, it generally suffers from low levels of regional integration and limited coordination. A number of ECCAS member states also belong to other RECs. In terms of currency, Angola uses the Kwanza, Burundi uses the Burundian Franc, and Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea all use the CFA Franc. The Democratic Republic of Congo uses the Congolese Franc, Rwanda uses the Rwandan Franc, and São Tomé and Príncipe uses the Dobra. This variety of currencies across the region complicates trade and economic cooperation, requiring constant currency conversions and adjustments in financial transactions.

The World Bank classifies Gabon and Equatorial Guinea as nominally upper-middle-income countries. Still, the extreme levels of poverty, poor governance and corruption mean that these categorisations do not reflect the reality of most of their populations. Angola, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, and São Tomé and Príncipe are all considered lower-middle-income countries. The ECCAS countries classified as low-income are Burundi, CAR, Chad, DR Congo and Rwanda.

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Ms Tumi Mkhize-Malebo joined the ISS in May 2023 as an AFI intern and is now Junior Research Officer. Before that, Tumi worked as an operations intern at Uber. She holds a Bachelor's degree in economics and econometrics from the University of Johannesburg and is a graduand set to complete her Honours degree in economics from the University of South Africa.

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