

**Harmonization of electronic commerce laws in the East African community:
lessons from the European Union**

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This study focused on the process of harmonizing electronic commerce laws in the East African Community. The study sought to achieve the objective of ultimately having electronic commerce laws in the East African Community. The study examined the East African Community Legal framework for Electronic Commerce, assessed roles played and form adopted to harmonize electronic commerce laws in the Community and also sought to identify challenges and factors that hamper the harmonization process and give necessary recommendations. This study was confined in East African Community countries, namely, Republics of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania. This study assumed that the East African Community Common Market will only be beneficial to the EAC nationals upon passing harmonized e-commerce pieces of legislations, which adopt a top-down form of harmonization and uses Directives as tools for harmonization. The study tested a hypothesis by examining the EAC legal framework for Cyber Laws, reviewing and analyzing EU texts on harmonization of e-commerce laws and also analyzing the field data. Results revealed that EAC legal framework for e-commerce laws is not harmonized because most EAC Partner States provided for substantive rather than procedural provisions when enacting e-commerce laws. Moreover, adopted tools for the same are ineffective and the respective institutions granted the powers to promote harmonization of e-commerce laws in the EAC are powerless. Thus, the researcher recommends for Partner States to harmonize their e-commerce laws to incorporate both substantive and procedural provision to achieve harmonization.