



WELCOME TO THE FIRST NEWSLETTER ON GPTOC INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES!



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

GPTOC Newsletter

May 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

A Global Programme to implement the Organized Crime Convention (UNTOC)

Focus on international cooperation

This first newsletter focuses on international cooperation because its publication will coincide with the **Working Groups on International Cooperation and Technical Assistance** of the Conference of the Parties to the Organized Crime Convention. We look forward to meeting new and familiar faces at the working groups.

When states conduct investigations, they need information and eventually will need admissible evidence for prosecution. In cross-border and transnational crime, states may need to obtain information, evidence or secure the presence of persons from other jurisdictions. International cooperation in criminal matters is the legal term for the process by which states request **mutual legal assistance, extradition and other forms of cooperation**.

International cooperation in criminal matters is a complex area of law and for practitioners; the formal processes can seem cumbersome, slow and frustrating. However, in many cases, the process can be improved by following some good

practices and **using informal contacts before sending a formal request for assistance**. UNODC, including through the GPTOC programme, is trying to support practitioners in this area.

GPTOC activities

The GPTOC supports the creation and development of **networks of prosecutors and central authorities**. In addition, the GPTOC provides technical assistance and expertise in **cross-cutting and specialized areas of criminal justice**.

Activities include **legislative assistance, training** for investigators, prosecutors and judges, **mentoring programmes** and support to establish and strengthen **central authorities**.

An upcoming activity will be the **sponsoring of liaison magistrates** from one country to another. This will enhance cooperation and direct contacts between respective central authorities. In cooperation with other UNODC programmes, a pilot initiative is currently being implemented with the deployment of a prosecutor from Nigeria to Italy.

Learn more on GPTOC-supported judicial cooperation networks (inspired by the European Judicial Network and Eurojust):

West Africa - WACAP

The West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP) was created in 2013 and its impacts on international cooperation in criminal matters in West Africa are already visible – learn more below!

Page 2

Central Asia and Southern Caucasus - CASC

The Network of Prosecutors and Central Authorities from Source, Transit and Destination Countries in response to Transnational Organized Crime in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus is being relaunched – find more information below.

Page 3

Great Lakes Region - GLJCN

The Great Lakes Judicial Cooperation Network launched in November 2017 will be operationalized this year – read more below on upcoming priorities for this new judicial cooperation network.

Page 3



WACAP
West African Network of Central Authorities
and Prosecutors against Organized Crime

FAST FACTS AND NUMBERS

December 2011

Outcome of the Bamako Declaration on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights

May 2013

WACAP network launched

16 countries

15 ECOWAS countries and Mauritania

34 contact points

Representatives of central authorities in charge of international judicial cooperation and/or judicial/prosecuting authorities with responsibilities in this field

333 practitioners

Trained on mutual legal assistance (training-of-trainers for prosecutors, judges, law enforcement officers and INTERPOL agents)

What is the WACAP?

The West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP) is implemented with the support of the ECOWAS Commission and the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice. It facilitates **direct contacts** and **operational cooperation** between central and/or competent authorities for mutual legal assistance (MLA) as well as the **exchange of information and good practices**. The WACAP Charter was signed by the Ministers of Justice of all WACAP countries.

Through WACAP, UNODC also provides **training to support prosecutors** and other practitioners to more effectively address diverse forms of transnational organized crime and to understand new and evolving issues such as how to locate, request and use digital evidence.

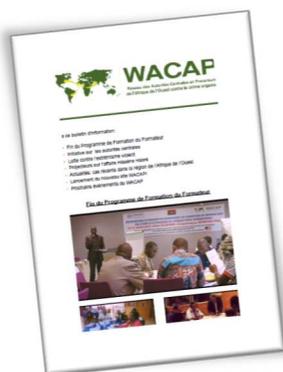
Examples of WACAP impacts on judicial cooperation:

- The WACAP contact points have **improved knowledge and skills for the drafting of MLA requests** and they consult other jurisdictions prior to sending formal requests.
- As a result of the direct contacts and trust made through the network, **obstacles to requests for MLA and for extradition were resolved**.
- **Central authorities were established** in Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Senegal and Togo. This institutionalization leads to an enhanced capacity of a country to make and respond to requests for all forms of international cooperation in criminal matters. **Central authorities were strengthened** in Cape Verde, Ghana and Nigeria.
- **Judicial cooperation laws** were updated in Burkina Faso and Mali.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.wacapnet.com

WACAP Information Exchange Tools



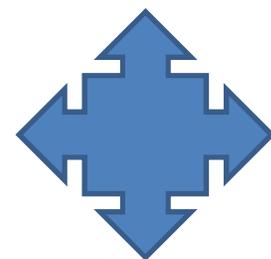
Regular newsletters



www.wacapnet.com : A website with a list of contact points, updates on network activities and useful information on mutual legal assistance



Various WhatsApp groups spontaneously created after train-the-trainer sessions in countries



A secure communication portal to exchange drafts of requests (to be developed)

Relaunching CASC

The Network of Prosecutors and Central Authorities from Source, Transit and Destination Countries in response to Transnational Organized Crime in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus (CASC) is being relaunched after some months of inactivity due to the absence of a coordinator.

Central Asia is one of the **key transit corridors of heroin and opium trafficking** linking Afghanistan, a lead global opium producer and cultivator, to the huge markets of the Russian Federation and Western Europe. Organized crime groups in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus have developed strong and diversified networks across ethnic and national lines in order to transport and distribute quantities of heroin, Afghan opiates and hashish through the so-called "Northern Route". Other goods that are smuggled across Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus borders include **falsified**

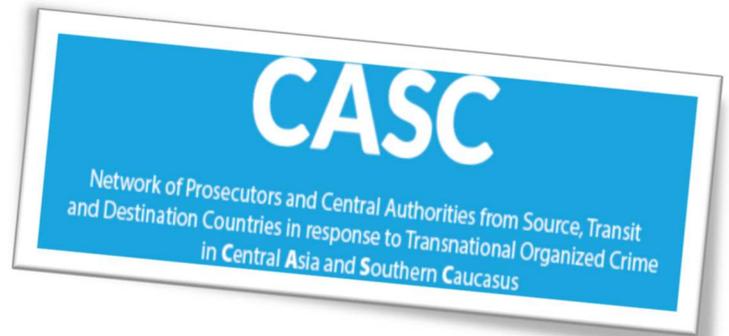
medical products. Furthermore, Central Asian states are mainly origin and transit countries for **trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.**

In order to combat these various forms of organized crime, regional and international cooperation is crucial. Central authorities are the formal channels to facilitate judicial cooperation, but they are not sufficient: **coordination between counterparts, mutual trust and informal help are also needed to complement formal channels.** In this regard, judicial cooperation networks created in different regions of the world show that they are operational and powerful tools to facilitate mutual legal assistance (MLA). **Revitalizing CASC into an operational MLA network in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus** will

foster regional and inter-regional coordination as well as the **cross-border sharing of information and/or evidence on organized crime cases.** It will also facilitate the exchange of practices, contacts and execution of MLA requests.

A further step will be to **connect CASC with other MLA networks and agencies outside the region,** such as the European Judicial Network (EJN).

CASC members are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but the network is also open to other countries within the region and to observers.



Operationalizing GLJCN

This network of 12 States (Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia) is implemented with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in coordination with the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch, the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and UNDP. Its terms of reference were agreed in November 2016 and the network was launched in November 2017. First activities will start in 2018.

Priorities:

- Establishment and increase of the **effectiveness of central authorities;**
- Creation of a **website** and a **newsletter;**
- **Data collection** on mutual legal assistance and extradition cases as well as on central authorities in the region;
- **Domestication of ICGLR protocols** and **ratification of the UNTOC** by two non-members;
- Supporting the prosecution of **priority crimes in the region,** such as trafficking in natural resources, wildlife crime, migrant smuggling, terrorism, maritime and cyber-related crime.





Sixth WACAP Plenary Meeting in Niamey, Niger, in November 2016

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