

The types of regional coordination that ECOWAS and the West African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization have effectively pursued in the fight against transnational organized crime?

The West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO) has been an ECOWAS specialized institution since 2003 and as such is an integral part of ECOWAS. It is made up of the Police Chiefs of the 15 ECOWAS Member States who become ex officio members as soon as they are appointed as heads of the Police Forces of their respective countries.

The Police Chiefs Committee is composed of the following bodies:

- The Permanent Secretariat which is represented by the Regional Security Division of the ECOWAS Commission. The Head of the Regional Security Division is the Permanent Secretary of the WAPCCO.
- The Technical Sub-Committee in charge of Operations and Training
- The Technical Sub-Committee in charge of studies and harmonization of legislation

All expenses related to the functioning of the West African Police Chiefs Committee shall be borne by the ECOWAS Commission.

Since 2009, ECOWAS has also set up the Committee of Chiefs Security Services (CCSS), which primarily comprises the heads of the Police forces and the Gendarmerie and which can include all the other security and intelligence services. The creation of the CCSS addresses the need to implement the integrated approach to security within ECOWAS.

The Annual General Assembly (AGM) of WAPCCO is convened by the current Chairman of WAPCCO who is the Police Commissioner of the country with the current Chair of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government. It shall be preceded, at least two months before it is held, by the meeting of the two technical subcommittees.

At the AGM, a full day shall be exclusively reserved for the meeting of police chiefs to discuss specific issues affecting the policing institution among themselves. The following day shall be devoted to the CCSS meeting during which the relevant security services are invited in accordance with the meeting agenda.

On the third day, the reports of the WAPCCO and the CCSS meetings shall be presented to the Forum of Ministers in charge of Security of the 15 ECOWAS Member States. The Ministers shall adopt the decisions of the previous meetings and the report of the Forum of Ministers in charge of Security shall be presented to the Mediation and Security Council, which makes the final decisions.

The Permanent Secretariat of the ECOWAS Regional Security Division (ECOWAS Regional Security Division) shall be in charge of ensuring the implementation of the decisions thus taken with the support of the two Technical Sub-Committees.

The joint operations thus decided shall be carried out with the support of the INTERPOL Regional Bureau in Abidjan. This same Regional Bureau is the place where the training of the region's

security services involved in the fight against transnational organized crime shall be organized every year.

The West African Police Information System (**WAPIS**) is an ECOWAS program, funded by the European Union and implemented by INTERPOL, to share criminal information developed since 2012 between the 15 ECOWAS member states, Mauritania and Chad. WAPIS is a program designed to modernize, digitize and share criminal information on three levels:

- In each country, under the authority of the national government, the aim is to create a criminal database in which all the country's law enforcement agencies participate. This database is then fully managed by the relevant State Party.
- This national database is then linked globally to INTERPOL's criminal databases via a secure I-24/7 connection;
- At the regional level, States should determine the types of data to be included in the database and how to use them in the study of criminal trends and the determination of common response policies.

The ECOWAS Regional Security Division is the WAPIS focal point within ECOWAS.