



Minutes of the COBISS.Net Council Meeting

The meeting was held via Zoom on Wednesday, 1 July 2026, between 13:00 and 14:00 CET.

Present:

Members of the COBISS.Net Council

Adisa Žero; National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina; (director)
Angelina Grujić; National Library of Serbia; (head of NCC)
Arjeta Sadiku; IZUM, Slovenia
Bojan Kundačina; National Library of Serbia; (deputy director)
Daniela Vasileva; St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Bulgaria; (head of NCC)
Davor Bračko; IZUM, Slovenia; (COBISS.Net coordinator)
Dr. Aleš Bošnjak; IZUM, Slovenia; (director)
Dr. Xianhong Hu; UNESCO; (Programme Specialist, Division for Digital Inclusion, Policies and Transformation Communications and Information Sector)
Đurđa Martinović; National Library of Montenegro; (head of NCC)
Guilherme Canela de Souza Godoi; UNESCO (Director for Division for Digital Inclusion and Policies and Digital Transformation (CI/DPT) and Secretary of the Information for All Programme (IFAP))
Ivan Radulović; National Library of Montenegro; (director)
Jovica Nikčevski; National Library of North Macedonia "Sv. Kliment Ohridski"; (director)
Mirlona Buzo; Library of the Academy of Sciences of Albania; (head of QKPISH)
Sonja Prža; National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tamara Butigan Vučaj; National Library of Serbia, Head of the Digital Library Department at the National Library of Serbia – COBISS.Net Council President
Vjenceslava Ševaljević; National Library of Montenegro; (Acting Assistant Director for Development)
Žaklina Gjalevska; National Library of North Macedonia "Sv. Kliment Ohridski"; (head of NCC)
Željka Komlenić; National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina; (head of NCC)

Minutes

Petra Bridges; IZUM, Slovenia

Meeting agenda:

1. Opening statements by Tamara Butigan Vučaj, COBISS.Net Council President, and Dr. Aleš Bošnjak, Director of IZUM.
2. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting.

3. Presentation and confirmation of the COBISS.net Action Plan.
4. Development assistance for the expansion of the COBISS.Net network for 2026.
5. Any other business (AOB).

Tamara Butigan Vučaj welcomed everyone and asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves. Three directors of national libraries were in attendance (Adisa Žero, Ivan Radulović and Jovica Nikčevski), along with one deputy director (Bojan Kundačina) and two UNESCO representatives, one of them being Guillermo Canela, representative of UNESCO's director-general.

Dr. Aleš Bošnjak mentioned that Slovenia is undergoing some changes due to the newly appointed government. Due to the merger of some ministries, it is currently unclear which directorate will be in charge of IZUM, but no major changes are expected.

Tamara Butigan Vučaj then requested to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved. Guillermo Canela did not participate in the approval of the minutes as he had not seen them and was not present at the previous meeting.

The next item on the agenda was the strategic 4-year action plan for the COBISS.Net network. Davor Bračko briefly presented the document. The document is a strategic guide for the next phase of development of the network with the aim to strengthen its role within the region even further. It has one clear long-term objective: to establish national library and current research information systems that operate within the network and connect them efficiently within the network. The key areas to focus on are the expansion of the network and inclusion of new libraries, training (uninterrupted transfer of knowledge), enrichment of research bibliographies and improvement of the visibility of research output, the establishment of open access infrastructure (e.g. dCOBISS), and promotional activities to inform the professional community, decision-makers and the wider public about the strategic importance of the network. Davor Bračko asked everyone to support this plan throughout the next four years. Any comments and suggestions are also welcome and may be sent by e-mail, if you wish.

Dr. Aleš Bošnjak added that in order to get the financial support from the competent ministries, it is better to have a long-term plan as it is easier to integrate and justify the funding appointed for the project.

The action plan was put to the vote. Everyone was in favour and the action plan was approved.

Under any other business (AOB), Davor Bračko presented a proposal by the national library of Serbia. The proposal is to share authority records from the CONOR authority database in the same way that bibliographic records are already shared within the COBISS.net network. These records for personal and corporate body names could then be used by all the libraries within the network which would make cataloguing work not only more precise, but also easier and faster. IZUM will prepare a draft legal agreement to be signed by the national COBISS centres. The first version of the software could be ready by the end of the year, so sharing of records could begin at the end of 2026. After the national COBISS centres review the draft agreement, actual agreements could be signed at the next COBISS.Net Council meeting in November 2026 (at IZUM).

Dr. Aleš Bošnjak added that IZUM was already sharing CONOR records with VIAF, but that Slovenian law states that personal data is individually protected and must be excluded from the exchange (e.g. the date of birth to distinguish between two authors that share the same name and surname). Maybe a separate document could be drafted to clarify this and meet national legal criteria. Another option would be to add a clause in the main agreement that states that protected personal data must not be shared.

Davor Bračko then said that the next meeting of the COBISS.Net council will be held in person on 17 November 2026 at IZUM in Maribor. He then also added that due to the government changes there is still no information available regarding this year's development aid for the COBISS.Net expansion, but that the centres will be informed as soon as there is some news.

In the closing remarks, Guillerme Canela said that it was interesting to see the development of the system and that IFLA was one of UNESCO's strongest partners. They are trying to connect the work of libraries with the current development in a multilateral system. They are open to assist IZUM with advancing IZUM's strategies in connection with global challenges and added the policy brief with IFLA in the chat (document: IFAP ISSUE BRIEF: Global Network of Libraries and Local Impact; A Policy Roadmap to Build an Inclusive Digital Future, available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396214.locale=en>).

Davor Bračko then provided more information about this year's COBISS conference. It will take place between 18 and 19 November 2026 in Maribor. Invitations and details about co-financing the attendance were already sent out. This year's topic will be materials in electronic form and AI.

Dr Xianhong Hu then added some interesting information regarding AI in library management systems. UNESCO is working closely with IFLA and they are jointly conducting research about how libraries should harness AI in their work in line with UNESCO's ethical recommendations for the use of AI. This may be useful as a contribution to the COBISS conference. She requested more information about the conference to be shared with UNESCO. She also mentioned an upcoming workshop with IFLA to discuss the role of libraries and how they globally contribute towards bridging the digital divide, as well as promote the need for access and the technical challenges and opportunities of including new technologies, including AI. She would be happy to share more information about the meeting. UNESCO will be present at the annual IFLA congress in Busan, the representatives of the Beijing office will be there in person or at least online. Maybe Dr. Aleš Bošnjak who will also be attending the congress could meet them and present to them IZUM's work, which could be referred and duplicated in other regions with a similar coordination mechanism like COBISS and maybe thus advance the automation systems in other regions. This would be a good opportunity to share IZUM's work in Asia.

Tamara Butigan Vučaj thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 14:00 CET.