

Minutes
of the
COBISS.Net Council Meeting

9 September 2020, online

The meeting took place via Zoom on Wednesday, 9 September 2020, between 10:00 and 11:23 AM CET.

In attendance:

COBISS.Net Council Members:

Dr Aleš Bošnjak; IZUM, Slovenia; (*director*)

Dr Ismet Ovčina; National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*director*)

Nevenka Hajdarović; National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*NCC head*)

Frymzim Dauti; National and University Library of North Macedonia »Sv. Kliment Ohridski« (*director*)

Žaklina Gjalevska; National and University Library of North Macedonia »Sv. Kliment Ohridski«; (*NCC head*)

Bogić Rakočević (left meeting early due to other obligations); National Library »Djurdje Crnojević« of Montenegro; (*director*)

Vjenceslava Ševaljević; National Library »Djurdje Crnojević« of Montenegro; (*NCC*)

Tatjana Dunović; National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*official representative of director*)

Vesna Stevanović; National Library of Serbia; (*NCC head*)

Arta Kqiku; Library of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo

Albana Velianj; Library of the Academy of Sciences of Albania (*director*)

Mirlona Buzo; Library of the Academy of Sciences of Albania

DDr Bhanu Neupane; UNESCO

Other invited guests:

Davor Šoštarič; IZUM, Slovenia

Petra Bridges (keeper of the minutes); IZUM, Slovenija

Excused:

Krasimira Aleksandrova; SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library Bulgaria; (*director*)

Rumyana Petrova; SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library Bulgaria; (*NCC head*)

Ljilja Petrović Zečić; National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*director*)

Željka Komlenić; National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*NCC head*)

Meeting agenda:

- Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting
- A brief introduction of the new member Bhanu Neupane (UNESCO representative)
- COBISS.net Action Plan (2020–2023)
- Proposal of possible future steps that can be realised in the next year, before COBISS Conference 2021 (Director of IZUM)
- Proposal for financial support of the COBISS.net project by the EU Commission (Bhanu Neupane, UNESCO)
- AOB

Ismet Ovčina as the president of the COBISS.Net Council moderated the meeting. In his introductory greeting, he thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed the new Council member, Bhanu Neupane. Next, the council members confirmed the meeting agenda. Item one of the agenda was the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting as of 27 August 2019. The minutes were confirmed.

The second item on the agenda was the introduction of the new Council member, Bhanu Neupane from UNESCO.

Bhanu Neupane thanked the Council for the invitation and said a few words about himself and the history of IZUM being appointed Category II centre under the auspices of UNESCO. He said that he had started dealing with COBISS.net shortly after joining the UNESCO head office in Paris. He holds two PhDs and has been working for UNESCO for 19 years. He said that he would help with fulfilling the goals of COBISS.net and that the Council members should e-mail him about their ideas; his e-mail address is available from Aleš Bošnjak.

The other Council members confirmed his membership in the COBISS.net Council and are looking forward to their cooperation.

The next item on the agenda was the action plan for the time period 2020–2023. Ismet Ovčina thanked Aleš Bošnjak and his co-workers for preparing the materials and asked him to briefly present the action plan's key points.

First of all, Aleš Bošnjak thanked his co-workers for their help with the preparation of the action plan and said that the document is a good summary of the goals for the COBISS.net network. Then he outlined a few tasks that are of key importance of the COBISS.net network. These are:

1. **network expansion** (the goal is to increase the number of users (several goals have already been fulfilled, but further efforts must be made) based on analysis and special offers (discounts etc.), preparing local tools (for this goal, Aleš Bošnjak asked the other Council members for help) etc.);
2. **training** (very important; preparation of COBISS Mentor programme, training should be re-established – second-cycle Bologna degree in librarianship as the graduates have positive impact on network expansion);
3. **enriching scientific bibliographies** (In Slovenia, there are 8 local repositories, harmonisation and implementation of joint repository register is taking place, which

will be similar to the union catalogue, for access to all data; opportunity for other countries to establish repositories with link to COBISS; in Slovenia, researchers' bibliographies linked to WoS; data for Slovene researchers added to COBISS, good opportunity to do the same within the COBISS.net network, which would be interesting for competent ministries; if financing is acquired for this activity, this would be a great step in the right direction);

4. **uniform open access infrastructure** (establishing connection with WoS, preparing national repository for research and archives, link to METADAT for data for scientific research bibliographies, acquisition of data from WoS and link to records in COBISS);
5. **promotional activities** (organisation of COBISS Days, co-financing COBISS conference, participation in UNESCO events in the region, invitation for social media collaboration (Facebook, Twitter, COBISS Blog).

Aleš Bošnjak asked for comments to the presented points. These can also be submitted by the members in writing.

Ismet Ovčina spoke favourably about the action plan and asked again if there were any remarks or suggestions.

Bhanu Neupane then offered help with the following two items in the action plan: uniform open access infrastructure and enriching scientific bibliographies. He was interested in how the enrichment would take place, especially on the national level. He asked the other members to provide their ideas. The project could be started immediately and would probably also get (partial) financial support from UNESCO, however, a document, i.e. a concept note would have to be compiled containing the key information. He asked who would prepare such a document and what the timeline would be.

Ismet Ovčina said that they would provide more concrete ideas in a few days time.

Aleš Bošnjak added that they have lots of experience on this subject in Serbia, where they already link COBISS records with researchers' bibliographies. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have also already started doing this. If financing could be acquired, this would speed up the preparation of researchers' bibliographies for the most prominent scientists in the individual countries. In Albania, researchers' bibliographies for some of the most important Albanian scientists have already been prepared.

Mirlona Buzo then said that E-CRIS is already established in Albania but is dormant at the moment as they would like to re-organise and better harmonise the data. In the past they already had a project for preparing researchers' bibliographies, but they didn't have a way of motivating the librarians and also couldn't align with other institutions (E-CRIS.AL). They hope that they will be able to continue with similar projects in the future as the libraries should understand what an important task this is.

Aleš Bošnjak then suggested that the actual steps that should be taken by each country with regards to researchers' bibliographies (creating a typology, acquiring records) should be written down. With such a document it might be possible to convince the ministries about the necessary support.

Vesna Stevanović added that some directors have a greater or smaller influence on the ministries. This issue should be talked about as much as possible at the ministries and the situation should be presented well to them.

Vjenceslava Ševaljević said that an autonomous system has been used in Montenegro 2018, and, consequently, data is no longer entered into E-CRIS. A solution must be found.

Žaklina Gjalevska added that they do not cooperate well with the ministry for science and education in North Macedonia. Libraries only enter data into E-CRIS based on the interest of individuals, so there have only been about 2000 entries since 2007, which is very little. Libraries do not have enough staff to enter this data. Until now they only had one request by a researcher who had to submit a report to the ministry of science, which required a bibliography from COBISS. She hopes that things will improve with the new government. Contact must be established with the new ministry as soon as possible.

Aleš Bošnjak summed up that the preparation of sample bibliographies would be a good start. The bibliographies could be presented to the competent ministries and could also help with the habilitation process. An official document (content note) must be prepared.

Ismet Ovčina asked if everyone agreed with the action plan. The action plan was confirmed unanimously with the raise of hands of all members.

Bhanu Neupane proposed that the description of the issues related to the respective E-CRIS systems in the countries should be included in the action plan.

This concluded this item on the agenda.

The next item on the agenda was the proposal of possible future steps to be taken before the COBISS 2021 conference. Aleš Bošnjak said that this year's COBISS conference had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 epidemic. He asked the members to provide their suggestions about the steps for the upcoming year. IZUM is also willing to help with these steps.

Ismet Ovčina added that suggestions can also be provided in writing.

Aleš Bošnjak then mentioned a proposal he received before the meeting. It is about changing the payment system. The user evaluation could be changed, and the prices would be different if the users could only access COBISS3/Loan. He asked the others for their opinion and proposed a vote on the proposal, which could not be put into effect immediately but would be included in the work plan for next year.

The proposal was approved, they will analyse the situation at IZUM and attempt to materialise the idea; the task could be completed next year.

The next item on the agenda was the proposal for financial aid to the COBISS.net project from EU institutions. Bhanu Neupane provided a short historical overview of the events related to this and gave his suggestion on how to approach EU institutions and acquire co-financing. In 2015, when Davor Šoštarič was the director of IZUM, Bhanu Neupane

was invited to Slovenia to discuss the issues related to COBISS.net and help find new ways of acquiring EU funding. Then he was invited to Brussels along with Tomaž Seljak. The EU was willing to co-finance the COBISS.net project if the project had the support of the countries within the network (not on the level of an individual library, but on the national level). They tried to gain support and place the item on the agenda at the ministerial conference, but due to the summer holidays the ministers were unwilling to cooperate. Next, they tried to get letters of support from the competent ministries that they could present to the European Commission. They received only one letter which was not enough to convince the European Commission about the importance of the project. Good relations with the competent ministries must be established (in some places, the ministry of culture is competent, in others, the ministry of education) as strong governmental support is required (only the national library's support is not enough). Bhanu Neupane is also of the opinion that the current proposal is still not convincing enough; the proposal should benefit the whole country, not just the libraries that are COBISS.net members. In 2015, the European Commission was prepared to invest up to 10 million USD, but if we wish to acquire this amount, the proposal must be updated and improved.

Aleš Bošnjak thanked Bhanu Neupane for clearing up the situation and asked Davor Šoštarič to add some information. Davor Šoštarič once again emphasised that solid support by the countries and other official government institutions is the most important. In Slovenia they had started cooperating with other ministries, but there was very little interest from the other countries. UNESCO tried to organise a meeting with ambassadors, but the response was very small. He once again asked the Council members to present the issue to their competent ministries and other governmental institutions and organisations in their countries. He also stressed that we need a good and realistic plan with concrete and doable goals to present to the European Commission.

Vesna Stevanović asked a question via chat regarding the other members' experience with online training.

Aleš Bošnjak said that IZUM prepared a one-day online training course without too many exercises and will shortly also hold a course for COBISS3/Holdings (as a combination of Zoom and Moodle). IZUM will share their experiences after the course. Training is very important for spreading knowledge about COBISS. He also asked the other members to think about holding online courses.

Ismet Ovčina said that we are important for the society and that he believes that we will be even stronger with the new member. Once again, he stressed the importance of contacting the competent ministries and other institutions.

Aleš Bošnjak emphasised that the minutes for this meeting should be compiled as soon as possible along with an official document that could be sent to the competent ministries.

Everyone approved this idea.

There was no discussion related to AOB.

Ismet Ovčina and Aleš Bošnjak thanked everyone for their participation.

The meeting was concluded at 11:23 CET.