



## Minutes of the COBISS.Net Council Meeting

13 June 2023, online

The meeting took place via Zoom on Tuesday, 13 June 2023, between 10:03 and 10:48 CET.

### In attendance:

#### *COBISS.Net Council members:*

Bhanu Neupane; UNESCO

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

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

Azra Smajić Gačević; National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina; (*NCC head*)

Dr. Vladimir Pištalo; National and University Library of Serbia; (*director*)

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

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

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

Daniela Vasileva; SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library Bulgaria; (*NCC head*)

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

Angelina Grujić; National and University Library of Serbia; (*NCC head*)

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

Mirlona Buzo; Library of the Academy of Sciences of Albania

#### *Other invited guests:*

Davor Bračko; IZUM, Slovenia; (*COBISS.net coordinator*)

Petra Bridges; IZUM, Slovenia; (*keeper of the minutes*)

### Excused:

Gašper Hrastelj; Head of UNESCO Office and Secretary-General of the Slovenian National  
Commission for UNESCO

Dragica Lompar; director of the National library »Djurdje Crnojević« of Montenegro

## Meeting agenda:

- Opening statements from Dr Ismet Ovčina, COBISS.Net Council President; Bhanu Neupane, UNESCO officer; Dr Aleš Bošnjak, director of IZUM
- Confirmation of the minutes from the previous meeting
- Overview of work report for COBISS.net for 2022
- Project of the development help for the expansion of the COBISS.net network in 2023

Ismet Ovčina greeted everyone and checked attendance. Gašper Hrastelj had excused himself and could not attend the meeting. The agenda was adopted as the majority of COBISS.Net Council members were present.

Ismet Ovčina gave the floor to Bhanu Neupane. He said that it was necessary to look at what had been done in the last 2.5 years and what still needed to be done. He reiterated that he had offered funding for projects but had not been contacted and that this offer was still valid.

Ismet Ovčina then suggested that a meeting could be organised at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Bhanu Neupane agreed with the proposal, but this would only be feasible in 2024. Ales Bošnjak then added that activities could be planned in a broader sense and then finalised at the meeting in Paris.

Aleš Bošnjak then took the floor. He said that at least EUR 20,000 in funding would be available again. IZUM prepared a report on last year's activities. The report was well received by the governing board and the Ministry, and the competent Ministry will again provide EUR 20,000 for 2023. Similar projects will have to be prepared again. Last year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also contributed EUR 20,000 for COBISS.net, which was proposed again this year, but the budget for 2023 is still awaiting a rebalancing. An additional problem is that the competent Ministry split into two ministries and contacts have to be re-established.

Bhanu Neupane made some suggestions on how to strengthen cooperation with UNESCO and better implement their mission. National libraries should be involved and become models for other libraries. It is not only important to have regional cooperation, but also cooperation at national level. IZUM, as a UNESCO centre, should act as a model for the democratisation of knowledge in other regions of the world, which is not yet the case. A way must be found to implement COBISS on a global level, e.g. also in Africa. The network should also be expanded in the region and EU funding should be obtained for this purpose.

Aleš Bošnjak added that the expansion in the region was carried out last year and that a more comprehensive report on this could be prepared for UNESCO.

Davor Bračko gave a brief report on COBISS.net activities in 2022. The Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have jointly contributed EUR 40,000 in

development grants. The funds were distributed among the countries in the network according to the number of libraries included in the system. In Albania, a conference was organised, several libraries were visited and a cooperation agreement with the Academy of Sciences is being prepared. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, COBISS Days were organised on the implementation of the system in university libraries and scientific institutions. In the Republic of Srpska, we visited a celebration in honour of the National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska. In Bulgaria, we co-financed the preparation of reports for Bulgaria and co-financed a visit to the COBISS conference. In North Macedonia, COBISS Days were organised, a meeting with ministries was organised and a diagnostic of the records was carried out. In Montenegro, a presentation of the dCOBISS repository was organised and all libraries in Montenegro have transitioned to cataloguing with authority control. In Serbia, all school libraries that were included in the pilot project in Čačak in 2021, started working in the COBISS system in 2022. In addition, the E-books project was developed. In total, 32 new libraries joined the network, 66 courses were organised with more than 500 participants, and 162 licences were granted. Part of the costs were also covered by IZUM from its own resources.

Aleš Bošnjak added some information about Serbia and the eNauka (E-science) project that IZUM was involved in. In Serbia, they discovered that COBISS and SICRIS have the best quality databases and that all researchers and their data are gathered in one place. The National Library also supported this excellent project and helped IZUM to get in touch with the government. Vladimir Pištalo added that the project was a continuous learning process, and in the end, it produced a great result.

Bhanu Neupane asked for the report on the COBISS.net work mentioned earlier. The report will be forwarded.

Davor Bračko gave some more pointers on the preparation of projects for 2023. The money will again be used for the expansion of the system and to increase the use of lesser-known functionalities of the system (e.g. authority control, digital repository, training of instructors for new courses, translation of materials, etc.).

Aleš Bošnjak added that e-books are a current topic and that in Slovenia, they are working on a project on this together with the Ministry of Education. Following this example, perhaps a similar project could be prepared for COBISS.net for 2024.

Ismet Ovčina said that 2022 saw the first COBISS conference after the COVID-19 pandemic. We can congratulate ourselves for a well-organised system that runs smoothly despite the specific requirements of the individual countries.

Aleš Bošnjak will inform the members when the funding is confirmed. Davor Bračko will send an e-mail by the end of June with instructions on how to prepare project proposals. The deadline for invoicing and completion of projects is October 2023. Aleš Bošnjak added that they should prepare proposals for more activities than would be covered by the planned

funding, as IZUM can also co-fund interesting and topical projects, or the funding can be redirected if any of the submitted projects might not be implemented.

Finally, Ismet Ovčina provided two more pieces of information. A conference of national library directors will be held in Paris from 18 to 20 June. In early October, the National Library of North Macedonia »Sv. Kliment Ohridski« will organise a meeting of directors of national libraries in Europe, location not yet decided. He suggested that the next COBISS.Net Council meeting should be organised at that time, which was in principle approved. He thanked everyone for a successful meeting.

The meeting was finished at 10.48.