

COBISS.Net

Network of national library information systems
and current research information systems

Information infrastructure for education, science and culture

Slovenia, Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia

www.cobiss.net

Proposal for European Commission (DGs EAC, RTD and NEAR)

COBISS.Net project – phase III

***Supporting the development of national library information systems
in the countries of the Western Balkans and their integration
in a common educational, research and cultural area of the EU
(2025–2029)***

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Total funding requested: 15 Million Euro

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1. From COBISS system design to the COBISS.Net regional library network

For the knowledge-based information society, library information systems and current research information systems are an essential infrastructure, indispensable in advanced education and research, as well as in cultural, technological and economic development. However, libraries cannot take on their role if their work is not supported by modern information communication technology. Moreover, they are unable to function efficiently as isolated islands, so they must link with one another and provide conditions for dialogue and collaboration, which further provides the basis for the development of each country and the international community as a whole.

So far, only a few countries have succeeded in establishing a national library information system with shared cataloguing. In most cases, the establishment of such a system is made impossible not only because of the uncoordinated automation of individual libraries using different types of library software, but also because libraries fall under different ministries that fail to collaborate in the library development planning stage. Certain heads of libraries are not interested in cooperation with other libraries in terms of processing library material and meeting the information users' needs; furthermore, in the Western Balkans countries many libraries lack qualified staff with appropriate educational requirements in the field of librarianship. Slovenia has successfully solved such problems and is ready to share its experience with other countries.

In 1987, a shared cataloguing system was adopted by the then Association of the Yugoslav National Libraries as a common ground for the library information system and the system of scientific and technological information of Yugoslavia. The role of the information and bibliographic service, as well as that of the organisational solutions and software developer was taken over by the Institute of Information Science ([IZUM](#)) from Maribor, Slovenia. The establishment of the foundations of the system, including the development of a computer network with nodes in all Yugoslavia's republics and provinces, was financed by the Fund for Technological Development of Yugoslavia to the tune of over USD 10,000,000 by 1991. The internet did not even exist in those times!

At the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, IZUM promoted the COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services) as an upgrade of the shared cataloguing system, in which 55 libraries from all Yugoslavia's republics and provinces participated at that time. These libraries later excluded themselves from the common system, but almost all of them gradually renewed their cooperation with IZUM with the ambition to establish autonomous library information systems on the COBISS platform in their new countries. Only libraries in Croatia went their own way. The National and University Library (NSK) in Zagreb first entrusted the development of software for library operations to a Croatian company, which developed the CROLIST system, and in 2005 it decided on the Voyager system (made in the USA), with a subsequent switch to Aleph 500. At the same time, some libraries tried to continue their cooperation with IZUM (University Library in Pula until 2001), but had to comply with the official policy of the NSK, while other Croatian libraries chose a third way (ZAKI, METEL). The National and University Library in Pristina used COBISS software until the Kosovo war in 1999; in 2002, UNMIK proposed renewing cooperation with IZUM, but local decision-makers chose a different path – buying the more expensive Aleph 500 system.

The Agreement on the establishment of the COBISS.net network and the free exchange of bibliographic records created in autonomous library information systems of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia was signed in 2003. COBISS.Net was then technically launched on 11 November 2004.

IZUM in Maribor is a non-profit public institution with 120 employees (mostly IT and library professionals). Its activities are mostly funded by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, and since 2011 it has also been operating under the auspices of UNESCO as a regional centre for library information systems and current research information systems in the COBISS.Net network.

The COBISS platform is based on an original organisational model linking libraries into national library information systems and a regional COBISS.Net network with shared cataloguing, shared COBIB bibliographic databases and local databases of participating libraries as well as integrated management of library catalogues and bibliographies. The key features of the shared cataloguing with integrated management of library catalogues and researchers' bibliographies are:

- Substantially lower costs of processing/cataloguing library material,
- Advanced trainings of cataloguers,
- Higher quality of bibliographic records and multi-functionality of databases,
- Transparency of research results.

National library information systems on the COBISS platform are co-created by national COBISS centres and libraries as members of COBISS.XX systems. In Slovenia, the tasks of the national COBISS centre are carried out by IZUM, while in other countries these are usually departments of national libraries with which IZUM has concluded umbrella agreements to provide the following:

- Proven organisational solutions and COBISS software support for the automation of library functions with shared cataloguing within the COBISS.Net network, and access to the global catalogue WorldCat (OCLC), as well as user interfaces in national languages.
- Proven methodology and software to manage researchers' bibliographies within the COBISS system, applications for setting up a national research information system (E-CRIS), and evaluation of research results.
- A variety of training programmes (for librarians and IT professionals), the organisation of specialised workshops and international COBISS conferences.
- Server capacities for the COBISS as well as E-CRIS applications and services.

The main tasks of the National COBISS Centres (NCCs) in national libraries are:

- management of the national COBISS.XX system and the COBIB.XX shared database,
- organising training and professional help to libraries,
- verification of suitability of library staff qualification for shared cataloguing purposes.

Libraries become members of the national COBISS.XX system by signing an agreement with the national COBISS centre. For libraries outside Slovenia, the fee to IZUM for the implementation of COBISS per library is generally EUR 1,000 and the fee for the use and maintenance of the software is EUR 25.00 per month per simultaneous user.

The situation is specific in Albania and Kosovo, where for irrational reasons the national libraries have not yet decided to join the COBISS.Net network; the COBISS.AL and COBISS.KS systems are organised in an improvised way in cooperation with the academies of arts and sciences and all related costs have been covered by IZUM for more than 15 years.

2. COBISS.Net Project results – phase II: Support to knowledge and intercultural dialogue

In March 2006, when there were 380 libraries in the COBISS.Net network (293 from Slovenia, 44 from Serbia, 21 from North Macedonia, 13 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 9 from Montenegro), the directors of the national libraries from these countries and the director of IZUM, at a meeting in Skopje, adopted the "Phase 2 of the COBISS.Net project" entitled "Support to Knowledge and Intercultural Dialogue" with the following objectives:

1. To enhance the automation and inclusion of libraries of already participating countries in the national library information systems and in the COBISS.Net network.
2. To attract the interest of libraries in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Kosovo to the opportunity to evolve more rapidly by becoming part of the COBISS.Net network.
3. To harmonise cataloguing rules with international recommendations and standards.
4. To set up compatible research information systems (E-CRIS) in the participating countries (databases on researchers, research organisations and research projects).
5. To attract the interest of the competent ministries and universities of the participating countries to accept the concept of managing researchers' bibliographies within the national library systems in order to ensure the transparency of the research results.
6. To increase the use of research results for the purpose of stimulating innovation processes and economic and social development in the region.

They also signed the CALL TO LIBRARIES OF THE REGION, from which we highlight the following: "This is why we invite libraries, those in the countries that have already been using COBISS as the national library information system and those in the countries of South Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans where COBISS is not yet present to reconsider their development strategies and take part in the joint COBISS.Net project. We believe that this is the way that the libraries in the region would ensure the infrastructure in order to most quickly achieve the level of library and information services offered in the EU, and to allow the exchange of bibliographic information essential for research, education and culture. What we offer are broad experience and readiness for collaboration and support."

In November 2006, IZUM and the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS) organised the [COBISS 2006](#) conference "The Role of Libraries in Providing Transparency of Bibliographic Indicators to Identify Scientific, Professional and Pedagogical Performance in Higher Education and Research Institutions", which brought together 421 participants from 14 countries, most of them from the Western Balkans. In addition to a wide range of experts in library and information science, participants included representatives of relevant ministries from the Western Balkan countries, as well as representatives of the Directorates-General of the European Commission and various international organisations. Participants called for more concerted and generous development support from the international community for the modernisation of librarianship in the region, with the expansion of COBISS.Net identified as the most effective way forward. Representatives of three European Commission Directorates gave the project the highest marks, but also said that the project went beyond the narrow sectoral focus of the European Commission's standard calls for tenders and that another route to European funding should be found. The final round table, organised by IZUM and the Danube Rectors' Conference, unanimously adopted a document on the role of libraries in the evaluation and accreditation of universities, which was entitled "[Maribor Declaration](#)". During the conference, Bulgaria joined the five countries already using COBISS by signing an agreement on the exchange of bibliographic records.

Phase II of the COBISS.Net project was substantially co-financed by various ministries of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and ARRS from 2006 to 2013 (maximum in 2007 – EUR 750,000 and in 2009 – EUR 858,000), with smaller contributions again from 2021 onwards (maximum in 2024 – EUR 45,000). IZUM also allocates some of its own funds each year for development assistance to libraries in the COBISS.Net network. All with the aim of providing the conditions for the implementation of COBISS and E-CRIS (equipment, training and other incentives) in the target countries. Some of the activities, problems and results are presented below.

With the aim of strengthening libraries in countries without an organised library science study programme, in June 2007 IZUM, the University of Ljubljana, the University of Zadar, the University of Pristina and the University of Skopje concluded an Agreement on the organisation of a part-time graduate study in information science – librarianship (second Bologna cycle) for librarians with a university degree in any other subject. In the academic year 2007/2008, the study of library science was then organised according to the programme of the University of Zadar, and in the academic year 2009/2010 according to the programme of the University of Ljubljana. The study was financed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and delivered in different locations (two weeks each in Zadar and Ljubljana, and one week each in Maribor, Skopje/Ohrid and Pristina). Of the 80 participants in this course, 58 completed their Master's degree.

The National Library of Bulgaria already faced competition during the preparations for the implementation of COBISS.BG. In 2009, a US donor provided USD 4,000,000 to academic libraries in Bulgaria to set up the National Academic Library and Information System (NALIS) on the Aleph 500 platform, but the National Library of Bulgaria did not have the financial capacity to encourage these and other libraries to co-create a national COBISS.BG system. In this context, public libraries targeted two local library app providers. NALIS has been based on the Koha platform since 2016 and today connects 40 libraries, while COBISS.BG connects only three libraries.

In June 2007, IZUM and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Albania concluded a Cooperation Agreement on the Development of Information Infrastructure to Support Research and Educational Activities in Albania, which, among other things, agreed on cooperation in the establishment of an information system on research activities in Albania, using the E-CRIS application, and in the implementation of COBISS for automation and the connection of university libraries in Albania to the COBISS.Net network. All further efforts to get the National Library of Albania to join the Agreement on the free exchange of bibliographic records in the COBISS.Net were unsuccessful:

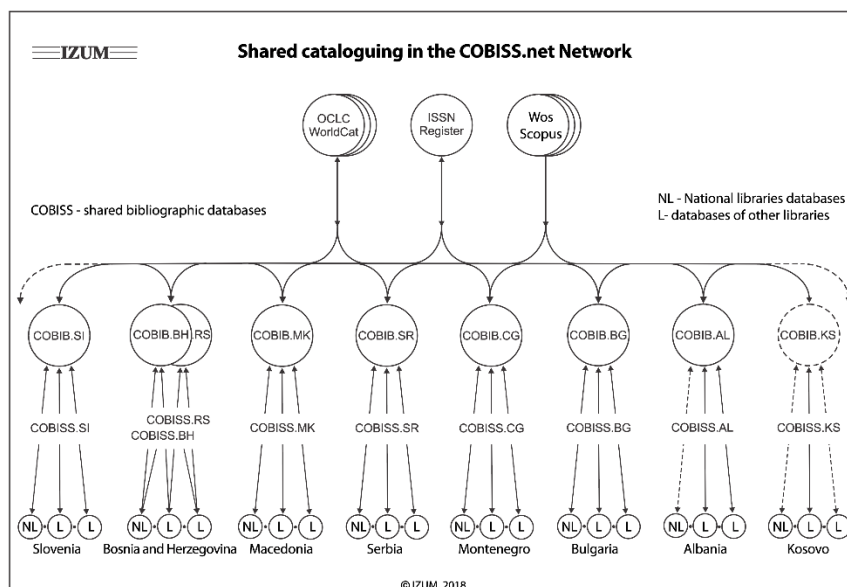
- At the initiative of the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Slovenia, the Director of IZUM visited the National Library of Albania in May 2010 and informed the Library Director about the possibilities of cooperation. The latter categorically rejected the possibility of exchanging bibliographic records in the COBISS.Net network and the possibility of organising a national COBISS centre within the National Library of Albania.
- In December 2010, the directors of most of the national libraries in the COBISS.Net network attended the conference "The Role of Libraries in the Information and Knowledge Society", organised in Tirana by the Albanian Librarians Association and co-organised by the Albanian Academy of Sciences and IZUM. On this opportunity, they wanted to meet the Director of the National Library of Albania, but he refused.

In 2013, several ministers of the Albanian government proposed to solve the problem by concluding a protocol between the governments of the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Albania on the implementation of COBISS in Albania, but the Government of Slovenia did not respond.

The long-standing efforts of IZUM and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in Kosovo to integrate the National Library of Kosovo into the COBISS.Net network were similarly unsuccessful. This was not changed even by the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo on cooperation in the fields of culture, education and science, signed in 2010, which contains the following provision: "The Parties agree to continue to create the conditions for cooperation in the framework of the COBISS.Net project".

In the meantime, IZUM developed cooperation with the Academies of Arts and Sciences of Albania and Kosovo, as well as with a number of libraries in these countries that expressed interest in implementing COBISS and joining the COBISS.Net network, but has signed agreements on cooperation only with the Academy of Sciences of Albania and the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Kosovo. Other libraries only signed declarations of adherence to the general terms and conditions of participation in the COBISS.Net network.

In 2019, the National Library of Albania replaced the library automation software system Adlib with a new system from a local provider. In August 2023, the National Library of Kosovo launched a call for tenders for the "Establishment of a network of libraries in Kosovo". The call was cancelled due to a complaint from a local provider, relaunched at the beginning of January 2024 and cancelled again after receipt of tenders. Both times, IZUM also applied.



In the meantime, all Slovenian libraries, including all school libraries, have joined the national system COBISS.SI and the COBISS.Net network. In the Western Balkan countries, 523 (40%) of the total 1,300 national, public, academic and special libraries, as well as a few school libraries, were connected to national systems and COBISS.Net as of 31 December 2023. In countries with more libraries in the national system, libraries originally create on average only 25% of the new records and download 75% of the records, which is a huge saving in time and money.

COBISS.Net in numbers

Libraries within the COBISS.Net network – 31 December 2023										
	COBISS. SI	COBISS. SR	COBISS. MK	COBISS. CG	COBISS. BH	COBISS. BG	COBISS. AL	COBISS. RS	COBISS. KS	Total
National	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	8
Public	62	105	33	17	21	1	12	22	6	276
University	83	98	10	13	40	0	24	16	1	285
Special	139	47	23	7	11	1	3	2	3	236
School	644	9	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	670
Total	929	261	73	49	73	3	39	41	10	1478
2023	7	8	2	1	12	1	0	1	0	32

COBIB shared databases – 31 December 2023										
	COBIB.SI	COBIB.SR	COBIB.MK	COBIB.CG	COBIB.BH	COBIB.BG	COBIB.AL	COBIB.RS	COBIB.KS	Total
Monographs	3.455.534	2.619.256	507.876	462.792	562.551	620.915	127.299	342.609	28.665	8.727.497
Component parts	584.649	238.895	36.058	23.297	3.913	10.692	1.247	2.603	701	902.055
Serials	169.235	80.598	12.161	7.615	10.654	42.378	2.825	4.473	515	330.454
Articles	1.691.907	967.753	144.821	150.303	39.308	479.239	14.363	24.423	2.341	3.514.458
Performed works	220.614	1.315	517	396	408	1	89	1	5	223.346
Other	12.569	6.422	220	51	555	3	35	370	4	20.229
Total	6.134.508	3.914.239	701.653	644.454	617.389	1.153.228	145.858	374.479	32.231	13.718.039
With researcher's code	2.168.889	371.973	10.807	42.319	36.443	0	10.053	5.470	1.932	2.647.886

Local databases of libraries from 1 January to 31 December 2023										
	COBISS.SI	COBISS.SR	COBISS.MK	COBISS.CG	COBISS.BH	COBISS.RS	COBISS.BG	COBISS.AL	COBISS.KS	Total
Created records	151.733	105.893	12.337	11.955	19.230	7.997	26.421	9.708	7.146	352.420
Downloaded records	465.544	310.905	29.490	26.572	55.387	44.472	2.818	4.749	5.854	945.791

Exchange of bibliographic records between systems to 31 December 2023										
COBISS.Net	Downloaded from COBIB.SI	Downloaded from COBIB.SR	Downloaded from COBIB.BH	Downloaded from COBIB.MK	Downloaded from COBIB.CG	Downloaded from COBIB.BG	Downloaded from COBIB.AL	Downloaded from COBIB.RS	Downloaded from COBIB.KS	Total
COBIB.SI	5	23.696	3.282	2.850	2.919	387	81	1.216	29	34.465
COBIB.SR	92.347	0	23.176	18.237	14.771	3.792	1.410	9.706	413	163.852
COBIB.BH	27.767	78.279	0	2.268	5.682	151	94	3.414	72	117.727
COBIB.MK	24.746	59.735	2.840	0	2.535	2.132	780	1.553	153	94.474
COBIB.CG	20.313	261.876	11.891	5.946	0	317	231	10.021	24	310.619
COBIB.BG	469	922	47	428	91	0	15	106	2	2.080
COBIB.AL	2.892	6.259	152	17.113	732	274	0	48	278	27.748
COBIB.RS	11.113	215.379	16.794	5.682	22.673	165	72	0	0	271.878
COBIB.KS	426	283	166	275	97	16	2.640	24	0	3.927
Total	180.078	646.429	58.348	52.799	49.500	7.234	5.323	26.088	971	1.026.770

Current Research Information Systems – 31 December 2023									
Number of entities	SICRIS	E-CRIS.SR	E-CRIS.MK	E-CRIS.CG	E-CRIS.BH	E-CRIS.AL	E-CRIS.KS	E-CRIS.RS	Total
Research org.	1.116	328	210	45	148	9	8	99	1.963
Researchers	47.227	25.880	4.323	1.290	2.777	757	70	1.261	83.585

Legend: SI – Slovenia, SR – Serbia, MK – North Macedonia, MN – Montenegro, BH – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
AL – Albania, KS – Kosovo, RS – Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina

https://www.cobiss.net/doc/Statistike_eng.pdf

Libraries in the Western Balkan countries connected and unconnected to COBISS.Net

31 December 2023

SERBIA				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.SR	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	2	2	-	
- public	218	105	113	48 %
- academic	204	98	106	48 %
- special	246	47	199	19 %
- school		9		
Total	670	261		
NORTH MACEDONIA				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.MK	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	34	33	1	97 %
- academic	49	10	39	20 %
- special	40	23	17	57 %
- school		6		
Total	124	73		
MONTENEGRO				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.CG	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	21	17	4	81 %
- academic	18	13	5	72 %
- special	8	7	1	87 %
- school		11		
Total	48	49		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – Federation of B&H				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.BH	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	60	21	39	35 %
- academic	56	40	16	71 %
- special	63	11	52	17 %
- school				
Total	180	73		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – Republic of Srpska				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.RS	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	49	22	27	45 %
- academic	41	16	25	39 %
- special	17	2	15	12 %
- school				
Total	108	41		
ALBANIA				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.AL	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	-	-	
- public	41	12	29	29 %
- academic	31	24	7	77 %
- special	10	3	7	30 %
- school				
Total	83	39		
KOSOVO				
Libraries	Total*	COBISS.KS	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	-	1	
- public	34	6	28	18 %
- academic	41	1	40	2 %
- special	11	3	8	27 %
- school				
Total	87	10		
All without school	1300	523 (40 %)	777 (60 %)	

* Some of the data on the number of libraries are from previous years and may differ from today's situation.

3. Reference Library Information System of Slovenia on the COBISS platform

The National Library Information System of Slovenia – COBISS.SI connects all Slovenian libraries and is directly linked to the national research information system SICRIS.

Libraries in the COBISS.SI system	Number of libraries	Number of employees	31 Dec 2023	Entities in the SICRIS system	Number of entities
- national (NUK)	1	137		Researchers (total)	47,227
- public	62	1243		Researchers (active/employed)	20,322
- academic (no NUK)	83	346		Research organisations	1,116
- specialised	139	154		Research groups	1,650
- school	644	589		Research projects	1,064
Total	929	2,469		Research programmes	363
With librarian examination passed		1,409		Research equipment	1,381

Normative bases for the development, efficient operation and use of COBISS.SI and SICRIS:

- Librarianship Act and Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act
- Order on Core Library Services (Government of the Republic of Slovenia)
- Rules on the Conditions for the Provision of the Public Library Service (Ministry of Culture)
- Rules on the Librarian Examination (Ministry of Culture)
- Rules on the implementation of the public lending right (Ministry of Culture)
- Rules on indicators and criteria for measuring scientific and technical efficiency (ARIS)
- Minimum standards for appointment to titles of higher education teachers, scientific staff and higher education staff at higher education institutions (NAKVIS)
- Licensing procedure for mutual cataloguing (IZUM and NUK – National Library)

The study of library science is delivered by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana (Department of Library and Information Science and Book Studies). Since the start of the renewed (Bologna) programme (2006/2007), 431 students have graduated from the first cycle, 231 students have graduated from the second cycle and 15 students have completed their doctoral studies. So far, 266 librarians have completed advanced studies in library science.

[IZUM](#) (Institute of Information Sciences in Maribor) is defined as a library information service in the national bibliographic system COBISS.SI under the Librarianship Act, and as a public infrastructure institution providing information and communication support for scientific research activities under the Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act. IZUM employs over 120 IT specialists, librarians and staff with other educational profiles.

A special role in ensuring the credibility of bibliographic indicators of research performance is played by the operators of the central specialised information centres by scientific discipline, who monitor the appropriateness of the classification of the bibliographic units of researchers according to the current typology of documents/works for the management of bibliographies in the COBISS system. Their activities are funded by [ARIS](#).

Libraries have full membership agreements with IZUM in the COBISS.SI system, but only libraries of private higher education institutions and special libraries of companies pay membership fees. All other libraries are exempt from paying membership fees and only cover the costs of training, because IZUM is mainly financed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

4. EU Development Assistance Programme for libraries (phase III) and expected results

The development of national library information systems in the countries of the Western Balkans is almost entirely depends on the international (technical and financial) development assistance; this is the only way that the local limitations and commercial interests of providers who offer only partial solutions can be overcome.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia and IZUM have so far allocated over EUR 4,000,000 for development assistance to the Western Balkan countries for the establishment of national library information systems and research information systems. Years ago, some of the activities within the COBISS.Net project were also co-financed by various international organizations (Open Society Institute, CEI, UNESCO, OOSI, British Council, OCLC), whereas some universities also obtained a part of the financial means to update their library networks within the TEMPUS programme. Over the years, development assistance to individual countries has been very diverse: investing in facilities and equipment for the national COBISS centres, purchasing library equipment, purchasing library material (literature), paying for licences to access e-resources, funding the postgraduate study of librarianship and other forms of professional trainings, funding participation at conferences, translating the international library standards and COBISS manuals into different languages, co-financing the creation of new bibliographic records, etc.

IZUM and UNESCO have so far repeatedly explored the possibility of obtaining funding for this purpose under various European Commission programmes and calls, but the COBISS.Net project has proved time and again to be beyond the constraints and organisational approaches of the various EC calls for proposals and requires a specific approach. However, when DG EAC and DG NEAR proposed in 2015 to solve the problem by political agreement at the 4th Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training (Vlorë, Albania, 2-3 July 2015) or at The Western Balkans Summit (Vienna, 27 August 2015) and again at the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training (Sarajevo, 27-28 June 2016), the noises in communication between the potential proponents of the project "COBISS. Net – Support for the development of national library information systems of the Western Balkan countries and their integration into the common EU education, research and cultural space (2016–2018)" prevented an agreement from being reached. However, on 8 July 2016, the directors of the national libraries and representatives of some ministries, agencies and universities from the WB countries signed a [Letter of Support for the project](#). Eight years have passed since then!

The initiative is now being taken by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ([NAKVIS](#)) with the definition of Phase III of the COBISS.Net project and with a proposal to the European Commission (DG EAC, RTD and NEAR) to financially support an updated programme of further development assistance to libraries in the Western Balkan countries – aiming to connect all higher education and research organisations and academic, special and public libraries in the Western Balkan countries to the COBISS.Net network as soon as possible, and to establish compatible information systems for monitoring, evaluation and transparency of research and teaching activities in these countries. Results are predictable, measurable and lasting (financially autonomous). Given the region's history, the project's contribution to mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue and coexistence is also important.

Development assistance instruments	AL	BH	KS	MK	MN	SR
1. Ensuring that librarians receive appropriate formal training	Y	X	Y	X	Y	X
International evaluation and accreditation of existing first- and second-cycle library science study programmes. Organisation and implementation of advanced study programmes in library science for at least 500 librarians with a first- or second-cycle degree in other disciplines (according to an accredited programme of the University of Ljubljana or another EU university). With restrictions for school librarians too! At least 10 scholarships for doctoral studies in library and information science and habilitations in the subject areas of library and information science. Preparation of a first-cycle study programme in library science and provision of other conditions for the implementation of this programme at the University of Shkoder.	In some countries (Y), because there is no study of library science, library staff generally do not have formal library training. For comparison: In Slovenia, more than 600 librarians have a university degree in library science, while in Kosovo only 10 librarians have this qualification. The situation is the same in Albania.					
2. Assistance to national COBISS centres in providing technical and staff conditions for performing their tasks	Y	X	Y	X	X	X
Appropriate equipment and staff in the national COBISS centres are of key importance for the development of national library information systems. The existing centres (X), where basic equipment was initially provided and the work of the staff in some libraries was co-financed by IZUM, need modernisation and additional staff. The cost of all new jobs and training costs must be covered for the duration of the project. The organisation of new centres (Y) is conditional on the provision of adequate premises, equipment and staff, including the recruitment of instructors already trained in COBISS applications.						
3. Employing additional staff in academic, public and special libraries	X		X	X	X	
Recruitment of at least 100 graduates with a first- or second-cycle degree in the field of activity of the institutions wishing to reinforce their libraries and committing to gradually assume the cost of the new librarians' posts (e.g. 0% in the first year, 50% in the second year, 100% in the third year and onwards). New librarians first follow a programme of advanced studies in library science at the University of Ljubljana or another EU university, followed by a training course with a librarian examination organised by the national libraries.	The number of librarians in most libraries is far below the minimum required for the normal functioning of a library.					
4. Co-financing purchase of workstations (PCs) and other peripheral equipment in libraries	X	X	X	X	X	X
Intervention is needed where libraries cannot purchase the required equipment themselves. This may include the purchase of furniture and air-conditioning for librarians.						
5. Training of librarians for COBISS Shared Cataloguing and other COBISS system applications	X	X	X	X	X	X
In all the countries, libraries that are located in remote regions are having problems with covering the travelling costs of librarians for their training in the national COBISS centres (transportation, accommodation, daily allowances).	Equal training opportunities for librarians should be ensured, regardless of the location of their library.					

Development assistance instruments	AL	BH	KS	MK	MN	SR
6. Co-financing the creation, editing and download of bibliographic records when establishing bibliographic databases and catalogues (based on the number of new, edited or downloaded/linked records).	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bibliographic databases are the basis of every library information system and a source of metadata for various digital document repositories. In order for national bibliographic databases to be optimally (multi)functional they must include bibliographic records for the complete national intellectual production (retrospectively and current) as well as records for the library material available in participating libraries. For various historical reasons, not all bibliographic records in the local databases of certain libraries are linked to the national COBIB shared database and the irregularities can only be corrected manually by comparing and linking the records. Libraries are usually far behind schedule in building bibliographic databases, which can only be overcome by intensifying the creation, editing and downloading of bibliographic records, which also requires adequate financial motivation.						
7. Organising specialised information centres for monitoring the adequacy of classification of researchers' bibliographic units according to the valid typology for bibliographies in the COBISS system	X	X	X	X	X	X
In managing researchers' and university lecturers' bibliographies in national library information systems it is necessary to monitor classifications of bibliographic units according to the valid typology for bibliographies in the COBISS system (scientific article, professional article, scientific conference contribution, etc.). In Slovenia, six specialised information centres carry out this task. In other countries, these types of centres, financed by the relevant national agencies and ministries, still need to be established.						
8. Harmonising national databases /catalogues of libraries with the global catalogue WorldCat (OCLC)	X	X	X	X	X	X
The national bibliographic databases must also be linked to the global catalogue WorldCat, which consistently ensures global access to information on the national intellectual production.						
9. Translating COBISS user interfaces and manuals as well as other material into Albanian and Macedonian	X		X	X		
Language equality is one of the fundamental principles of European integration. The costs of translation into Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin are covered by IZUM's national COBISS centres by paying for licences to use the COBISS software. However, the costs of translation into Albanian and Macedonian have to be covered for a certain period of time by international development aid to the target countries.						
10. Co-financing the inclusion of libraries in the national library information system and the conversion of local databases (catalogues) from other systems (if justified)	X	X	X	X	X	X
As a rule, costs of installing and implementing the COBISS software amount to EUR 1,000, which is a big burden for some libraries. In some cases, conversions of local databases (catalogues) from other systems would be necessary.						
11. Planning, coordination, consulting and promotional activities and assisting the relevant ministries and agencies in updating the normative bases for the operation of national systems	X	X	X	X	X	X

Recipients of aid must commit to permanently fund increased library capacity.