

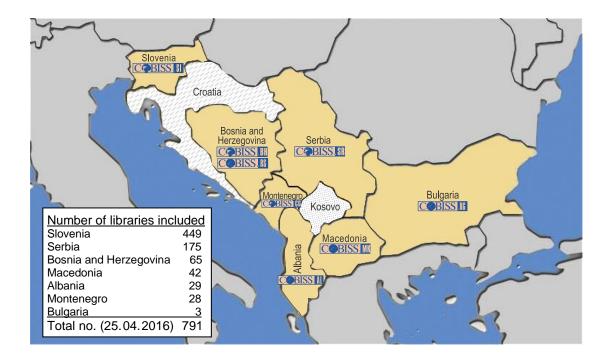
Proposal for European Commission (DGs EAC, RTD and NEAR)

# **COBISS.Net**

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

(Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia)

# 2016-2018



Slovenia, Maribor, 25 June 2015 (Updated 25 April 2016)

# **COBISS.Net**

Network of national library information systems and current research information systems

Information infrastructure for education, science and culture

Support to knowledge and intercultural dialogue

# **TARGET COUNTRIES**

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo\*, Croatia

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

## LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE

Enable target countries to establish national library information systems and national current research information systems

### **STEPS**

Motivate competent ministries, research and educational organizations as well as libraries to accept the concept of national systems, linked into the COBISS.Net network

Qualify the national COBISS centres and national E-CRIS centres as well as libraries for the implementation of organizational solutions and the COBISS/E-CRIS software

Co-finance the development of the national COBISS and E-CRIS systems until the establishment of the said systems in the target countries

### To the European Commission (DGs EAC, RTD and NEAR)

#### To Whom It May Concern

For more than 25 years, several educational, research and cultural institutions in the Western Balkans countries have endeavoured to develop the national library information systems and current research information systems within the COBISS.Net regional network. The COBISS.Net network (www.cobiss.net) is an information infrastructure, which is indispensable in advanced education and research, as well as in cultural, technological and economic development.

Since 1987, the project has been managed by the Institute of Information Science (IZUM) in Maribor, Slovenia, a public infrastructural institution, which in a quarter of a century has gained a great deal of trust in the SEE countries with its professional and innovative initiatives. IZUM has become an important regional centre for the development of library information systems and current research information systems and has been operating under the auspices of UNESCO since 2011. Because COBISS.Net is a regional project, the extension of the IZUM building and the energy-saving renovation of the existing building in the period 2014/2015 was partially funded by the European Regional Development Fund in the amount of EUR 7,200,000. More than 110 employees in IZUM now have better working conditions and a new modern data centre was built.

Activities in the participating countries are coordinated by:

- the national libraries, which organize the national COBISS centres and manage relations with other libraries (members of the national library information systems), and
- institutions, which upon the authorization of the competent ministries develop and maintain the national registers of research organizations and researchers.

So far, more than 790 libraries from seven countries (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Albania) have joined the non-commercial COBISS.Net regional network, while libraries from Kosovo and Croatia have also been invited to participate in the project. Libraries in countries where national library information systems are already established need four times less time (and human resources) to build up their databases and catalogues than those that automate library operations by themselves (in isolation). An important added value of the project is the transparency of research results in the participating countries; furthermore, the project promotes mutual understanding and dialogue, which is another important contribution considering the region's history.

The development of national systems and the COBISS.Net network 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. Within the programme of international development cooperation, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and IZUM provided EUR 3,000,000 within the last ten years for development assistance to Western Balkans countries for the establishment of the national library 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 in the region 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.

Up until now, IZUM has explored the possibilities of acquiring means for the purpose of the project through various programmes and calls for application of the European Commission several times, but it has proved time and time again that the COBISS.Net project exceeds the limitations and organisational approaches defined in the terms for application (Example: Erasmus+). At the same time it remains undisputed that the project follows several goals of the European Commission as, through its results, it directly encourages mutual cooperation and the accelerated development of the countries in the region of the Western Balkans and SEE.

Based on all the information above, we think that it would be more than justified and certainly necessary for the European Commission to recognise the extraordinary importance of the COBISS.Net project and place it among those projects that require special attention and centralised co-financing; the project results are predictable, reliable, measurable and sustainable (financially autonomous).

Our suggestion to DG NEAR is to financially support the three-year programme of development of national library information systems for the countries of the Western Balkans that are getting ready to join the EU with the goal of integrating a common educational, research and cultural area in the EU (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and to ensure a higher level of transparency of research potentials and research results.

We are certain that, with the implementation of the development assistance instruments that are presented on pages 9–11, libraries in the abovementioned countries could achieve the same results within three years, that might (or not), without any international financial and professional assistance, be achieved in ten years.

For this purpose, it would be reasonable to provide at least EUR 10,000,000.00, which is similar to 1988, when we started the project with over USD 10,000,000.00 of national funds.

Yours faithfully,

Tomaž Seljak, MSc COBISS.Net project coordinator

### **COBISS.Net - Support to knowledge and intercultural dialogue**

#### Libraries in the information society

Knowledge is the driving force of development. 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 each other 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.

#### From the mere concept of the COBISS system to a regional library network

COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic Systems and Services) is an organizational 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,
- Higher quality of bibliographic records and multi-functionality of databases,
- Transparency of research results.

The COBISS system was designed in 1987 by IZUM, which established itself as a development actor of library information systems in the former Yugoslavia; after the social changes in the 1990s, a wider community of countries in South-East Europe accepted IZUM as such. In 2003, an Agreement was signed on the establishment of the COBISS.Net network and the free exchange of bibliographic records that are created within the autonomous library information systems of the participating countries. So far, over 500,000 bibliographic records have been exchanged between the systems. At the end of 2015, there were more than 10 million bibliographic records in the seven COBIB shared databases (union catalogues); and there were more than 23 million bibliographic records in the local databases of 780 libraries. In 2015, libraries originally created merely 25% of records, on average, and they downloaded 75% of records, which shows that a great deal of time and money was saved. At the same time, COBISS.Net is also a form of cultural cooperation, which is especially appreciated in the region, as it contributes to mutual understanding and dialogue.

#### **Goals of the COBISS.Net Project (2006)**

In March 2006, the directors of the National Libraries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia as well as the director of IZUM adopted "Phase 2 of the COBISS.Net project" entitled "Support to Knowledge and Intercultural Dialogue", inviting libraries in the region to join. The National Library of Bulgaria joined the project in November 2006; in December 2012, based on a special agreement with IZUM, the library of the Academy of Sciences of Albania joined the project; and after that, more libraries from Albania joined. Project goals:

- 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.

#### What does IZUM offer the libraries within COBISS.Net?

Within the COBISS.Net network, IZUM – Regional centre for the development of library information systems and research information systems under the auspices of UNESCO offers libraries:

- 1. Know-how for organizing and managing national library information systems.
- 2. 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.
- 3. Proven methodology and software to manage researchers' bibliographies within the COBISS system, applications for setting up a national research information system (SICRIS, E-CRIS), and evaluation of research results.
- 4. A variety of training programmes (for librarians and IT professionals), the organisation of specialised workshops and international COBISS conferences.
- 5. Server capacities for the COBISS as well as SICRIS and E-CRIS applications and services.
- 6. Support in acquiring financial resources for development activities (international development cooperation).

Closer cooperation plans between IZUM and OCLC will give the libraries a better chance of efficiently meeting their needs and the needs of end users of information resources and services.

# **COBISS.Net project results in numbers**

	Libraries within the COBISS.Net network – 31 December 2015									
Library type	Slovenia COBISS.SI	Serbia COBISS.SR	Macedonia COBISS.MK	Montenegro COBISS.CG	Bosnia and H COBISS.BH	d Herzegovina Bulgaria H COBISS.RS COBISS.BG		Albania COBISS.AL	Total	
National	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	8	
Public	61	77	26	12	17	7	1	8	209	
University	81	68	8	10	28	6	0	18	219	
Special	130	24	7	4	4	1	0	3	173	
School	172	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	173	
Total	445	171	42	28	50	15	2	29	782	

	COBIB shared databases – 31 December 2015								
	COBIB.SI	COBIB.SR	COBIB.MK	COBIB.CG	COBIB.BH	COBIB.RS	COBIB.BG	COBIB.AL	Total
Monographs	2.755.368	1.917.602	413.429	298.991	395.406	93.503	498.264	78.553	6.451.116
Component parts	430.016	134.168	27.230	9.480	992	289	31	373	602.579
Serials	130.689	72.424	11.719	3.533	8.056	209	39.924	2.377	268.931
Articles	1.280.659	782.058	118.599	80.946	15.200	6.947	429.137	8.130	2.721.676
Performed works	125.420	2.405	350	158	319	0	0	55	128.707
Other	7.934	3.938	249	0	488	2	2	35	12.648
Total	4.730.086	2.912.595	571.576	393.108	420.461	100.950	967.358	89.523	10.185.657
With researcher's code	1.526.383	178.451	4.275	19.801	13.088	290	0	873	1.743.161

	Local databases of libraries – 31 December 2015									
	COBISS.SI	COBISS.SR	COBISS.MK	COBISS.CG	COBISS.BH	COBISS.RS	COBISS.BG	COBISS.AL	Total	
Records in total	13.306.050	6.335.241	965.345	560.263	548.070	115.270	968.242	95.129	22.893.610	
Created in 2015	173.462	115.435	12.595	16.500	10.659	3.633	26.359	9.770	368.413	
Downloaded in 2015	394.794	375.394	41.932	33.182	29.440	34.666	1.035	4.261	914.704	
% downloaded in 2015	69%	76%	77%	67%	7 <b>3</b> %	91%	4%	30%	75%	

Total	93.303	381.601	27.141 Tete1 1e	14.408	<b>22.18</b> 5 cords in 2013		1.591	32	341.49
COBISS.AL	2.212	5.827	16.962	670		1.232	231	-	25.98. 541.49.
					81	3		0	34
COBISS.RS	60	42.100	119		9	3	1	0	
COBISS.RS	807	42.100	246	1.436	625		10	0	66.05
COBISS.BH	13.089	59,923	455	1.018	-	0	16	0	74.50
COBISS.CG	9.396	198.247	1.574	-	3.744	127	56	4	213.14
COBISS.MK	18.162	47.586	-	287	635	0	308	0	66.97
COBISS.SR	49.220	-	5.626	7.077	13.705	1.053	942	14	77.63
COBISS.SI	-	13.456	1.454	655	1.195	49	32	14	16.85
COBISS.Net	Downloaded from COBIB.SI	Downloaded from COBIB.SR	Downloaded from COBIB.MK	Downloaded from COBIB.CG	Downloaded from COBIB.BH	Downloaded from COBIB.RS	Downloaded from COBIB.BG	Downloaded from COBIB.AL	Total

	Current Research Information Systems – 31 December 2015								
Number of entities	SICRIS	E-CRIS.SR	E-CRIS.MK	E-CRIS.CG	E-CRIS.BH	E-CRIS.RS		E-CRIS.AL	Total
Research organisation	981	279	98	45	78	84		9	1.574
Researchers	14.371	10.827	2.380	1.272	2.055	1.099		683	32.687

# Number of linked libraries (31 December 2015)

SLOVENIA		(reference system	n)	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.SI	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	61	61	-	100 %
- academic	81	81	-	100 %
- special	130	130	-	100 %
*	273	273		
CEDDIA				
SERBIA Libraries	Total	COBISS.SR	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	2		Uninked	Linked / Unlinked
- national - public	218	2 77	- 141	35 %
- public - academic	218	68	141	33 %
- special	204	24	222	10%
- special	670	171	499	
MACEDONIA	070	1/1	477	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.MK	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1	-	
- public	34	26	- 8	76 %
- academic	49	8	41	16 %
- special	49	7	33	17 %
- special	124	42	82	17 /0
MONTENEGRO	124	42	02	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.CG	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	10101	1	UIIIIIKeu	Linked / Olimiked
- public	21	12	9	57 %
- public - academic	18	12	8	56 %
- special		4	<u> </u>	50 %
- special	8 48	27	21	50 %
BOSNIA AND HE			21	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.BH	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	10121	1	UIIIIIKeu	Linked / Olimiked
- public	60	17	43	28 %
- academic	56	28	28	50 %
- special	63	4	59	50 %           6%
- special	180	50	130	070
BOSNIA AND HE			130	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.RS	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	1		Linked / Offiniked
- public	49	7	- 42	14 %
- academic	49	6	35	15 %
- special	17	1	16	6%
- special	108	15	93	
ALBANIA	100	15	23	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.AL	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	10121		Jiiiikeu	
- public	41	8	33	20 %
- public - academic	31	18	13	58 %
- special	10	3	7	30 %
- special	83	29	54	50 /0
KOSOVO	03	27	J <del>4</del>	
Libraries	Total	COBISS.KS	Unlinked	Linked / Unlinked
- national	1	COD1007K0	1	
	34		34	
- public				
- academic	17		17	
- special	9		9	
TOTAT	61	224	61	
TOTAL	1274	334	940	

# Development Assistance to Libraries in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (2016–2018)

Development assistance instruments	AL	BH	KS	MK	CG	SR
1. 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	Х
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. As a rule, libraries are falling behind schedule regarding the creation of bibliographic databases, which can be overcome only if creating, editing, and downloading bibliographic records is intensified (by increasing the productivity of skilled librarians for shared cataloguing and the reinforcement of staff in certain libraries).						
2. Harmonising national databases /catalogues of libraries with the global catalogue WorldCat (OCLC)	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	х
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. Software for a periodical synchronisation and linking of the national catalogues with the global catalogue WorldCat must be developed.						
3. Assistance to national COBISS centres in national libraries in providing technical and staff conditions for performing their tasks	X		X			
Appropriate equipment and staff in the national COBISS centres are of key importance for the development of national library information systems. In the existing centres, where in the beginning the basic equipment was provided and the work of staff in some libraries was co- financed by IZUM, must be modernized. Organizing new centres (X) depends on ensuring appropriate premises and equipment. During the duration of this project, financing of at least one extra position of employment must be ensured to all the centres.						
4. 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. Costs of translating into Serbian and partially into Bosnian are covered by the national COBISS centres when paying for the use of the COBISS software to IZUM. However, costs of translating into						

Development assistance instruments	AL	BH	KS	MK	CG	SR
Albanian and Macedonian until 2018 must be covered by the international development assistance to target countries. For the purposes of translating user interfaces and other documents into any of these languages two translators would be needed. Both translators could be employed in IZUM (optimum solution) or one could be employed in IZUM and the other in the national COBISS centre (Albania, Macedonia).			1			
<ol> <li>Training of leading instructors for COBISS Shared Cataloguing and other COBISS applications</li> </ol>	X		X			
Based on experience, one of the colleagues from the new national COBISS centre should be trained for shared cataloguing in the COBISS system while being employed in IZUM for at least two years. This would enable the new colleague to get to know IZUM employees, which would make it easier to communicate and resolve any issues in the future.						
6. Training of librarians for COBISS Shared Cataloguing	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	х
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).						
<ol> <li>Co-financing purchase of workstations (PCs) and other peripheral equipment in libraries</li> </ol>	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	х
Intervention is needed where libraries cannot purchase the required equipment themselves.						
<ol> <li>Part-time postgraduate study of librarianship at the University of Shkoder (AL) following the curriculum of the University of Ljubljana (SI) or the University of Zadar (CR), and preparing the 1<sup>st</sup> level study programme to be carried out in Albania.</li> </ol>	X		X	X	X	
Because there is no study of librarianship in the target countries (X), the library staff have no formal education in librarianship. Furthermore, the number of librarians in most libraries is critically low, which makes it hard for libraries to function properly. For comparison: in Slovenia, which according to population is roughly the same size as Kosovo, there are more than 600 librarians who have at least a university degree in librarianship, while in Kosovo there are 12. On the basis of an agreement concluded in 2007 between IZUM and the University of Pristina, University of Skopje, University of Zadar, and University of Ljubljana, a part-time postgraduate study of librarianship (once following the curriculum of the University of Ljubljana) was organized for librarians with a university degree in any field. Without a doubt, this is the fastest way for the reinforcement of library staff. It is planned to organize a part-time postgraduate study in the academic year 2016/2017 at the University of Shkoder, following the curriculum of one of the aforementioned universities. 30 scholarships are planned to be issued						

Development assistance instruments	AL	BH	KS	MK	CG	SR
for candidates who already have a university degree and are under 35 years of age. The candidates must be guaranteed employment in libraries in advance. In parallel, a 1 <sup>st</sup> level study programme of librarianship according to the Bologna process for accreditation and performance in Albania must be prepared.						
9. 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 specialized 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.						
10. Co-financing access to selected international e-resources, when such access is essential also for the verification of the classification of bibliographic units and their evaluation	x	X	X	X	X	X
Libraries in some target countries do not yet have access to international e-resources (e-journals and other databases).		•	•	•		
11. 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	Х
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.						
12. Annual International COBISS Conferences (organization and covering selected participants' travel expenses)	X	X	X	X	X	Х
Participation of librarians, representatives of universities and the relevant ministries at the international COBISS conferences is of great importance for raising the awareness on the importance of a systematic development of national library information systems and an oportunity to exchange experience and get acquainted with global development trends.						
13. Planning, coordination, consulting and promotional activities	X	X	X	X	X	Х

CG = ME - Montenegro

Suggested financial framework: at least EUR 10,000,000.00

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About COBISS.Net		Library	
COBISS - the platform		Library information syste research informa	ems and
Journal Organizacija znanja			network
COBISS Conferences			
IZUM		over 750	libraries in the region
COBISS is not software, COBISS is a system	COBISS.Net - Support to I	knowledge and intercultural dia	_
Shared cataloguing	BULGARIA	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	MONTENEGRO
statistical indicators 31.12. 2015	<u>COBISS.BG - home page</u> <u>COBIB.BG union catalogue</u>	COBISS.BH COBISS.RS COBIB.BH COBIB.RS	COBISS.CG - home page COBIB.CG union catalogue
ime and money savings!	COBIB.BG union cataloque	<u>E-CRIS.BH</u> <u>E-CRIS.RS</u>	E-CRIS.CG
Support to managing esearch activity	3 libraries	50 libraries 15 libraries	28 libraries
Achieving higher quality esearch activity with COBISS	MACEDONIA	SLOVENIA	SERBIA
esearch activity with CODISS	COBISS.MK - home page	COBISS.SI - home page	COBISS.SR - home page
ews	COBIB.MK union catalogue	COBIB.SI union catalogue	COBIB.SR union catalogue
Feb 2016	E-CRIS.MK		E-CRIS.SR
st installation of COBISS3/Cataloguing			
tware in COBISS.BH in the following aries: Nacionalna i univ. biblioteka BiH, rajevo (National and university library of	42 libraries	449 libraries	175 libraries
l, Sarajevo), Mašinski fakultet u rajevu (Faculty of Mechanical gineering, Sarajevo), Medicinski fakultet	KOSOVO	ALBANIA	CROATIA
arajevu (Faculty of Medicine, Sarajevo) d Gradska biblioteka Ključ (Public	Call to Libraries 2006	COBISS.AL - home page	Invitation to Cooperation
rary Ključ)	Offer 28 September 2015	COBIB.AL union catalogue	
Feb 2016	E-CRIS.KS	E-CRIS.AL	
000 000th record created in BISS Net local databases			
DISS.Net local databases			

