

IASSIST Regional Secretary Report for Europe, 2024-2025

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May 2025

Membership:

In 2025 the IASSIST has 72 European members. This is a slight increase, likely due to the IASSIST conference in the UK in 2025. Members in Europe are mainly affiliated with national data services (former data archives) or governmental institutions. The libraries are less well represented than in North America. They have different organizational networks or are not organized at all. A high number of members are located in the UK or in Germany. In sum, and with respect to the 47 states in Europe, the number of members is not high enough to generate European networks based on the IASSIST membership. Still members benefit from contacts to the North American members, and they become an idea of what is going on in Africa and, less, in Asia/Pacific.

Putting it together European IASSST members can benefit from the network of IASSIST itself, but there is a bias for North America and not enough networking within Europe.

General remarks

Activities in Europe follow national roadmaps and are based on national funding activities. At the same time, national activities are built around the EU (European Union; and especially around the funding activities belonging to HORIZON Europe). In particular, the national activities connect to European activities around the developments regarding the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). While in the beginning EOSC was planned as a centralized infrastructure for research in Europe further developments helped to position the EOSC better in the existing science system in Europe. First, different domains of EOSC were developed. One example regarding the social science is the Social Science & Humanities Open Cloud (SSHOC ESS) project. This project was running from 2019 to 2022. Most of the member organizations of SSHOC ESS had staff members that were also IASSIST members.

Currently the EOSC, as central node in Europe, is aiming to connect with national nodes in the European countries. This is an important process in both directions. EOSC needs the connection to the local nodes for accessing the regional science activities and data sources, and the other way round the national nodes need to be connected to the European network to enrich scientific research. For Switzerland, as one example, the activities are coordinated by the ETH Zurich and national nodes for EOSC are the already existing institutions. For social science it is for example FORS in Lausanne. In other words, nodes are not newly established. Existing institutions, regarding domain and region, are stepping up to take over the role of national nodes. Still, there is a likelihood for the national activities to become more part of European activities by participating in the EOSC. Besides the technical connectivity this may also lead to a more European research landscape. If so, the question is how IASSIST can participate in this process and bring more benefits to their European and also to their non-European members.

IASSIST in Europe

Activities to make IASSIST stronger in Europe failed so far. Ideas of a stronger connection between IASSIST and CESSDA on a regular basis or to set up a European centered version of IQ were not sustainable yet. Also, coordination with other Regional Secretaries was not successful. It was not even able to find a time for a meeting. The very important exchange canal of IASSIST, the listserver, is in general discussing topics with focus on North American. European members can only benefit indirectly.

In the next years activities to ask European members for their needs are planned.