



Minutes of the ICOS Board Meeting Teams, 12 February 2026, 5 pm CET

Present: Staffan Nyström (SN, Chair), Yolanda Guillermina López Franco (YGLF, Vice-President), Peter Jordan (PJ, Vice-President), Tiina Laansalu (TL, Secretary), Johanna Othén (JO, Treasurer), Daniel Solling (DS, Vice-Treasurer), Žaneta Dvořáková (ŽD, Assistant Secretary and Web Officer), Milla Juhonen (MJ), Fatemeh Akbari (FA), Erszébet Györfly (EG), Chrismi-Rinda Loth (CRL), Márcia Sipavicius Seide (MSS), Oliviú Felecan (OF, Editor-in-Chief of *Onoma*), Artur Gałkowski (AG, Chair of ICOS Terminology Group).

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair (SN) called the meeting to order on Thursday 12 February 2026 at 17:00 CET.

Mats Wahlberg (MW, Chair of the Editorial Board of *Onoma*) sent his apologies for absence.

2. Confirmation of the agenda

SN introduced the following agenda (also circulated via email before the meeting):

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The agenda was confirmed. An additional item, raised by EG, concerning support for printing the ICOS Congress proceedings, was added under item 4.2.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting (Teams, 28 August 2025)

The Board approved the minutes for publication.

It was also noted that minutes from the 2025 Board meetings should be available on the ICOS website. ŽD undertook to add the latest minutes, and TL offered to resend the relevant file if needed.

4. News from the Treasurer

4.1. Treasurer's report 2025

JO presented the Treasurer's report for 2025.

She noted that EUR 17,000 had been paid in advance for the ICOS Congress in Vienna. This sum should not be considered a cost, since it is a loan and is expected to be repaid in connection with the Congress. SN added that a written and signed contract exists between PJ, as organizer, and SN, as President of ICOS, confirming this arrangement.

PJ explained that, since the Austrian Academy of Sciences will not be the legal organizer of the ICOS Congress 2027, he is personally responsible for the organization and has engaged a congress management agency. The advance payments required by the agency are substantial, and the ICOS loan helped cover the first payment. PJ expressed his gratitude and confirmed that the amount will be repaid once registration fees are received.

JO reported that, excluding the Vienna Congress loan, the 2025 results were broadly in line with the budget and comparable to previous years. The result is formally negative because of the EUR 17,000

loan, with an outgoing balance of EUR -13,520. At the end of 2025, ICOS had total assets of EUR 52,752.

JO also reported that the increased membership fee had resulted in higher income from membership fees in 2025 than in 2024, despite a lower number of paying members. There were 240 paid-up members in 2025, compared with 263 in 2024. The invoice for 2026 was sent out on 19 January, and 136 members had already paid their membership fee. JO also noted an increase in new student members, probably related to the upcoming ICOS Summer School.

The Swedish tax report for 2024 was approved without questions. The tax report for 2025 will be submitted in spring 2026.

The Board thanked JO for her work.

4.2. Revised budget 2025–2027

JO presented the revised budget for 2026. She noted the following changes compared with the earlier draft:

- the loan and expected refund for the Vienna Congress had been included;
- the budget item for ICOS organizational costs had been slightly increased to allow for possible digital meeting solutions for Onomastics Online;
- the Zotero subscription fee had been removed, as it had not been paid for several years and is not currently needed.

JO noted that support for printing the proceedings of the Helsinki Congress had not yet been included in the budget, as no clear information had been available at the previous meeting. EG had now requested EUR 3,000 for this purpose.¹

After discussion, the Board agreed to add EUR 3,000 to the 2026 budget for printing the Helsinki Congress proceedings. EG will contact JO regarding the practical details of the payment.

FA raised the question of whether lecturer fees at ICOS Summer Schools should be paid or considered voluntary work, and suggested that a unified approach should be developed for future Summer Schools.

MJ reported that the current Summer School budget remains within the amount already allocated by ICOS, even with lecturer fees included. The lecturer fees follow the University of Helsinki's guidelines and amount to EUR 1,527 for 15 lectures. It was noted that lecturer fees had also been paid at the 2019 Summer School.

It was clarified that ICOS had already approved support of EUR 4,600 for the Summer School, and therefore no new vote was required. MJ agreed that after the Summer School she would present the final budget and experiences, so that they can serve as guidance for future Summer Schools.

¹ The ICOS 2024 Proceedings were published as volumes 16–20 of *Onomastica Uralica* – the onomastic journal that has been established as a collaboration between the Universities of Debrecen and Helsinki. EG was the editor of volume 20.

4.3. Subscribers of *Onoma*

DS reported on the number of *Onoma* subscribers who are not ICOS members. The number of active subscriptions had been revised after removing inactive subscribers who had not ordered recent volumes. He also reported that Heidelberg University Library had recently become a new subscriber.

5. News from the Web Officer

ŽD reported that the ICOS website is now available in all three languages. She thanked YGLF for her help with the translations.

ŽD reported that there had been an issue with members who had set up recurring subscription payments, because the previous amount could not be updated. Members had therefore been advised to cancel the subscription and pay the fee as a one-time payment. JO added that she may have found a new solution through Stripe and will discuss this further with ŽD.

DS asked whether the server issue involving Unni Leino had been resolved. ŽD confirmed that they had been in contact and that the matter was now working properly.

YGLF noted that the ICOS X account is functioning well for disseminating information and that cooperation with ORCID and ICOS helps spread information internationally.

A screenshot of the Board members present was taken.

5.1. Problems with spam emails

SN raised the issue of fraudulent emails that had recently circulated impersonating him and requesting money from ICOS members. He noted that he had received many messages from colleagues asking whether the emails were genuine.

ŽD explained that, since these messages are sent from external Gmail accounts and not from ICOS email addresses or the ICOS website, ICOS has limited possibilities to prevent them. She suggested that the only possible action would be to report the fake accounts to Gmail and request their removal.

PJ added that similar incidents occur in other international organisations and that the problem is not specific to ICOS.

SN concluded that members should simply remain cautious and verify suspicious emails before responding.

6. ICOS co-operations (liaisons)

6.1. Harmonizing ICOS/UNGEGN terminologies

PJ reported on the work to harmonize selected toponymic terms between the ICOS List of Key Onomastic Terms and the UNGEGN Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names.

PJ explained that he and Trent Palmer, Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Terminology, had selected eight terms as a first step. Four ICOS definitions were to be presented to the UNGEGN Working Group, and four UNGEGN definitions were to be presented to the ICOS Working Group on Terminology.

At a meeting of the ICOS Working Group on Terminology, concerns had been raised that the relationship between ICOS and UNGEGN is asymmetric, since ICOS covers several name categories, while UNGEGN focuses only on toponymy. PJ argued that this does not invalidate the harmonization effort, since it concerns only toponymic terms. Definitions for other name categories could be developed separately if needed.

FA suggested that, where appropriate, two definitions could be provided: a broader definition covering onomastics in general and a narrower definition specifically for toponymy. PJ agreed that parallel definitions may be possible, but emphasized that the harmonization with UNGEGN would concern only the toponymic definitions.

SN supported continuing the harmonization work and noted that even partial harmonization would be valuable. The Board agreed that the work should continue.

6.2. Collaboration with ISO

FA reported that there were no new developments concerning the collaboration with ISO.

On a separate matter, she reported that she had been in contact with a professor in Bhutan regarding Onomastics Online activities and that this contact might lead to future collaboration.

7. Working group activities

7.1. The Terminology Group

AG reported that the terminology work continues. He noted that ŽD is currently compiling a shared multilingual terminology database within the ICOS Terminology Group. The database already includes material in 17 languages, with further contributions and definitions still expected. The long-term aim is to create a consolidated interface for terminology, enabling users to retrieve equivalent terms in multiple languages with a single query. AG reported that the Italian part is being developed in cooperation with Enzo Caffarelli.

AG also noted that there are still questions regarding broader ISO terminology, especially in relation to terms such as *exonym*, and how these relate to onomastic and general linguistic usage.

AG reported that work continues on new onomastic terms, including *chrematonym*, *ideonym*, *ideonymy*, *literary name*, *poetonym*, and *literary onomastics*.

YGLF reported that Spanish terminology will be discussed the following week in the onomastics seminar, with the aim of preparing a short publication including the terms in Spanish.

TL reported that the Estonian terms have now been reviewed and should be submitted within the next weeks.

AG also mentioned the Slovak onomastic terminology dictionary, published in 2024, which had received third prize for the best scholarly dictionary in Slovakia.

7.2. The Bibliography Group

MSS reported that the members of the Bibliography Group continue to work on literature reviews.

She suggested that the working groups could cooperate more closely. For example, the Bibliography Group could support the Terminology Group by investigating the actual usage of terms such as *toponymy* and *toponomastics* in different countries and scholarly traditions.

PJ noted that UNGEGN terminology now distinguishes *toponomastics* as the study of place names and *toponymy* as the landscape or set of place names. SN added that ICOS terminology lists are recommendations intended to improve international communication, even if national traditions and usages will continue to vary.

7.3. The Working Group on Toponymy

PJ reported on recent and upcoming activities of the Working Group on Toponymy.

The 8th International Symposium on Place Names was held in Clarens, South Africa, at the end of November 2025. It was co-organized by the Working Group, with CRL as the main local organizer. PJ thanked CRL for the excellent organization. The symposium included paper presentations, two workshops, and a field excursion.

PJ also reported that the next toponymic event will be held in Hermagor, Austria in October 2026. The topic will be “The heritage value of microtoponyms”. A total of 56 paper proposals had been received. The symposium will be accompanied by meetings of UNGEGN working groups, resulting in a full week of toponymic events.

8. *Onoma* business

OF reported that the latest volume of *Onoma* had been published on time: the online version in December and the printed version in January. Copies are being distributed to subscribers and will later be sent to ICOS members.

OF noted problems with incorrect or institutional addresses, since uncollected parcels are returned and may be damaged. As in previous years, he will also bring copies of *Onoma* to members at conferences in order to reduce postal costs.

OF reported difficulties in finding reviewers for certain articles, especially on specialized geographical or linguistic areas. FA offered to help with reviewers for Middle Eastern, Kurdish and Persian topics.

The Board discussed whether the Editorial Board might need to be revised or expanded to include more specialists in areas such as Chinese, Arabic and the Muslim world.

SN asked about the AI policy for *Onoma*. OF reported that the AI policy is now available on the *Onoma* website.

PJ reported on the forthcoming *Onoma* volume 61/2026, for which he is guest editor. The themed issue will focus on bi- and multilingual place names as markers of national, regional and local space-related identity. It will include papers presented at the IGU Congress in Dublin in 2024. The issue is expected to contain ten articles, seven of which have already been peer reviewed and edited. Three further articles are still in progress. OF added that three papers and one book review had already been received for the non-themed section.

FA raised the issue of manuscripts apparently produced with AI. OF noted that this is difficult to detect reliably, especially in English and on niche topics, but that reviewers and editors must do their best. He added that some papers had already been rejected partly for such reasons.

9. Onomastics Online

CRL reported on Onomastics Online. She had previously suggested creating a professional ICOS account to consolidate communication and access, but after further investigation she concluded that this would require too much restructuring at present. She therefore withdrew the proposal for the time being.

CRL reported that seven proposals had been received for Onomastics Online lectures. She suggested that, if the series starts in April, five lectures could be held between April and December, approximately every second month. November is a difficult month in the South African academic calendar, and therefore an April start was preferred.

CRL showed statistics for the ICOS YouTube channel. The number of views has not reached the level seen during the lockdown period, and visibility often depends on whether the speakers themselves share the recordings with their own networks.

CRL noted that the current proposals are strongly focused on toponomastics. FA asked whether there was still time to propose additional speakers. It was agreed that further proposals could be submitted until the end of February, after which CRL will circulate the abstracts and a poll to the Board.

FA suggested adding the link to the ICOS YouTube channel to the speaker proposal form. CRL agreed to do so.

10. ICOS Congress 2027 in Vienna

PJ reported on preparations for the ICOS Congress 2027 in Vienna.

The Congress website has been completed and will go online the following week. PJ asked ŽD to add the link to the ICOS website. At the same time, the call for workshop and session proposals will be launched. PJ asked TL to disseminate the call to ICOS members and affiliated organizations. He will also ask the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy to circulate the call.

PJ explained the difference between workshops and sessions: workshops are organized by the proposer, who invites contributors, whereas sessions are proposed thematic sections to which individual papers will later be assigned.

PJ further explained the financial situation. Since the Austrian Academy of Sciences is not the legal organizer, an event management agency has been engaged. Advance payments are required. ICOS has already provided a loan of EUR 17,000 towards the first payment. Additional advance payments will be due in 2026 and 2027, although by 2027 registration fees should begin to cover expenses.

SN asked whether there is a budget showing that income and expenses will balance. PJ confirmed that a preliminary budget exists, but that the registration fees still need to be finalized. The aim is to keep the fees close to those of the Helsinki Congress, if possible.

FA asked whether PJ had contacted the City of Vienna regarding possible support. PJ confirmed that he is aware of this opportunity and expects to apply at the appropriate time. The possible support could amount to EUR 16,000. DS also asked about other potential Austrian funding sources. PJ mentioned possible support from banks and confirmed that he will pursue available options.

11. ICOS Summer School 2026 in Helsinki

MJ reported that planning for the ICOS Summer School 2026 is proceeding well. The information letter and programme were published at the beginning of December, and the application form was open in January.

A total of 34 applications were received. The organizers have reviewed the applications and will inform applicants of the results by email. The Summer School will have the maximum number of in-person participants, 25, and 7 online participants.

MJ raised a question concerning budget payments. She asked whether ICOS could transfer the budgeted amount to the University of Helsinki, which would then handle payments to lecturers, food services, excursion companies and other service providers. This could be more convenient and, in some cases, cheaper, especially for payments within Finland and within the university system.

SN and JO noted that they did not know how this had been handled at previous Summer Schools. JO will ask Alexandra Petrulevich, ICOS's former Treasurer, for information. SN suggested that, from the ICOS perspective, direct invoices to ICOS would be simplest, but acknowledged that larger costs might be more efficiently handled by the University of Helsinki. MJ, JO and SN will continue the discussion by email.

12. Any other business

No other business was introduced.

13. Next Board meeting

The next Board meeting was set for 27 August 2026 (17:00 CET).

SN thanked everyone for participation and closed the meeting at 18:45.

Tiina Laansalu

Secretary

(12 February 2026)