

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

23 July 2012

**Tenth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress
made in the standardization of geographical names since the Ninth Conference
(for distribution only).**

Report of Hungary 2007-2012

Submitted by Hungary**

* E/CONF.101/1.

** Prepared by Gábor Mikešy, Béla Pokoly and the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names

A. Jurisdiction on Geographical Names

A/1. Jurisdiction

Profound changes have taken place since 2007 in the sphere of government administration concerning geographical names.

It should be noted first of all that a new constitution (fundamental law) has entered into force by 1 January 2012, that defined the name of the country in the single form: Magyarország (English: Hungary). With the entry of this uniform name the previous formal name (Magyar Köztársaság – Republic of Hungary) has lost its validity. The form of government is not affected by this change: the constitution reaffirms that Hungary is a republic.

Decisions on names of independent communes (villages, large villages), towns and cities are made by the President of the Republic (Act LXV of 1990 on Local Governments in Hungary; Section 94).

“The name of a village or town shall be chosen in such a way that it cannot be confused with the name of another place in the country. Following the dissolution of a union of villages, the (emerging) villages shall generally take their names used prior to the union. The expert opinion of an organ competent with regard to geographical names should be sought in respect of new village names, prior to a decision by the population.” (ib. Section 58).

In 2011 the Government of Hungary passed a decree that amended to its present form the basic decree [Government Decree No. 303/2007. Korm. (XI. 14.)] on the establishment and recording of the official geographical names in Hungary. The new legal measure has set up a 15-member committee on geographical names, where all government bodies having a direct interest in geographical names have members, plus those of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, map science and the Central Statistical Office. The new decree states that in case of *significant public interest* geographical names are established by government decision. The name of the largest airport of the country was stated as *Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport* (Hungarian *Budapest Liszt Ferenc Nemzetközi Repülőtér*) by the government, so this is the present official name.

The Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names continues to be located in and supervised by the Ministry of Rural Development.

The new Act No. XLVI of 2012 on surveying and mapping activities, whose enactment was made necessary by the shift from dealing with paper maps to digital data, stressed the importance of the Database-Gazetteer of Hungary and its compulsory content.

The Act No. CLXXXIX of 2011 on local governments in Hungary continues to keep the naming of public spaces (streets, squares, parks) and of parts of settlements in the exclusive competence of municipalities (local governments). If asked the Committee on Geographical Names gives expert advice on naming these features.

A/2. Names of administration

Act No. XCIII of 2012 on the formation of districts (Hungarian *járás*: e.g. *Egri járás*, *Soproni járás*) is about to reorganize the 3rd level of administrative structure in the country. The 1st level is composed by the 7 statistical regions, while the 2nd level is made up by the 19 counties. The new districts, whose number is set at 168, will be a living part of administration by January 1, 2013.

A/3. Other names (physical features, transport etc.)

Decisions on these other types of names fall within the competence of the *Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names*. The existence of the Committee is also based on Government Decree No. 303/2007.

The Committee, having representatives from all government and non-government fields with an interest in geographical names (ministries of rural development, defence, economy and transport, education, self-governments, foreign affairs, minorities, official cartography, linguistics, cartographic higher education, geography, statistical office) is acting in the Ministry Rural Development, because this ministry is responsible for the major part of official mapping.

The Decree empowers the Committee to decide on the names of physical features (landscapes, relief and hydrographic forms), those of nature protection, communication as well as of small rural features.

In case of naming new independent settlements (e.g. when parts of larger municipal units choose to secede) the new name must have the expert opinion of the Committee by law.

B. Activity of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names 2007 - 2012

The Committee held 21 sessions since the 9th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Mr. András Dutkó, presiding over the Committee since 2004, was replaced by Mr Tamás Koós in March 2011. Secretarial duties are, as had been for many years, done by Mr. Béla Pokoly. Decisions of the Committee can be accessed in Hungarian on the website of the Ministry of Rural Development (<http://www.kormany.hu/hu/vidékfejlesztési-miniszterium/kozigazgatasi-allamtikarsag/hirek/foldrajzinev-bizottsag>)

The Committee has taken 162 decisions, with most of them on the correct and practical form of proposed names of parts of settlements and street names on the request of local governments. Concerning these name types the Committee was firm to reject name proposals to mark the name of businesses or trade mark sin official geographical names (e.g. the suggested name *Audi Hungária híd* (híd=bridge in Hung.) for a bridge crossing a rail line in the city of Győr was turned down). As to sheer numbers the second most populous group of feature type concerned names of railway stations. Most often new railway stops needed new names, but sometimes existing but incorrect names required to change for a new name (e.g. *Palotaiújmajor*, *Órhegy*, *Gönyű-Kikötő*, *Vasútmúzeum*).

The Committee gave expert opinion for names of would-be communes on 8 occasions. These decisions were easily brought because the communes in question had either been independent settlements at an earlier period (like *Mözs*, *Nádújfalu*, *Tekenye*), or had standardized names as parts of settlements (e.g. *Domonyvölgy*, *Nagyegyháza*), or had already been recorded as railway stops (as in the case of Balatonakarattya). In two occasions the distinguishing prefix was thought indispensable (*Mosonudvar*, *Mecsekszabolcs*). Of those mentioned only *Mosonudvar* and *Tekenye* achieved the status of independent commune in 2010. Names of settlements (communes) or parts of them should always have one-word names (e.g. *Andrássy negyed* (part of the town of Vecsés).

Much time was devoted to the correct Hungarian names of settlements for road transport development projects, and railway timetables. Names are based on traditional and locally used names, and they are found in the name register of towns with cross reference to the local official name, but not in the actual fields of timetables (Hung. *Őrihódos* of Slovenian *Hodoš*, Hung. *Sopronkeresztúr* of Austrian *Deutschkreutz* etc.)

Requiring proper names for bridges is a recent tendency in Hungary, which used to be the custom in cities with several bridges (e.g. in Budapest). Names of some of the larger bridges include *Pentele híd* on the Danube at Dunaújváros, *Móra Ferenc híd* on the River Tisza at Szeged, *Madách híd* and *Katalin híd* on River Ipoly (Slovak Ipel') and *Zrínyi híd* on the River Dráva (Drava) respectively. These three bridges on the border were named in agreement with the competent Slovak and Croatian authorities.

Several field names were approved with the purpose of displaying them on labels of wine bottles and for EU approval of protected designations of origin of recognized wine-growing areas. Most of them have long tradition of local use (e.g. *Ördögös*, *Varjas* in the commune of Verpelét in the Wine Region of Eger, but locally supported new names (as *Szarvas-tető* in the village of Alsónána, Szekszárd Wine Region) were also supported.

The Committee has prepared a detailed guide for the proper handling of geographical names for local governments (municipalities). Competences are fixed, terms (name types) are defined, processes outlined for civil servants of municipalities but also for all interested people. In case of doubt municipalities were encouraged to contact the Committee.

At the request of the board of geography teachers of grammar schools a list of toponyms of the world required in secondary school curricula was also revised.

The Committee has accepted a recommendation on the cartographic use of minority language toponyms (see C. Minority names in Hungary).

Concerning country names the board discussed on more than one occasion an interesting request by Georgian diplomacy. It calls for abandoning the use in the Hungarian language of the name *Grúzia* based on Slavic (Russian) form of the country name, and encourages the exonymic form *Georgia* broadly used in many languages. Though Hungarian diplomacy supports the request and widely uses on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, linguists have pointed to the difficulty of introducing this unfamiliar name to the Hungarian language.

C. Minority names in Hungary

The Fundamental Law (Constitution) of Hungary states in Article XXIX that " (1) Nationalities living in Hungary shall be constituent parts of the State. Every Hungarian citizen belonging to any nationality shall have the right to freely express and preserve his or her identity. Nationalities living in Hungary shall have the right to use their native languages and to the individual and collective use of names in their own languages, to promote their own cultures, and to be educated in their native languages."

According to the Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the rights of Nationalities in Hungary (further: Act), the following qualify as nationalities: Bulgarian, Greek, Croatian, Polish, German, Armenian, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene and Ukrainian. Though no recent research has been made on the impact of minority languages on geographical names, it can be still stated that only Croatian, German, and Slovak may appear in a considerable number on detailed topographic maps.

Hungary was among the first signatories of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992 and ratified it in 1995 in favour of the following minority languages: Croatian, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene. These languages also have a role in the use of geographical names.

Despite the legal possibilities, due mostly to a lack of cartographic specialists well versed in minority languages, application of minority toponyms on official maps had very little progress in recent years. This prompted the Committee to pass an encouraging recommendation in 2010:

"The Committee on Geographical Names regards it important that toponyms of maps reflect the use of geographical names rooted in the history and culture of local communities. Therefore it recommends that on areas inhabited by national minorities maps (also) display well-established geographical names used by those communities, provided that recognized sources prove the existence of those names. The recommendation refers to both national base maps and to other commercially sold (tourist, road and other) maps as well. Maps of scales of 1:100.000 and smaller should also display the minority language forms of locality (village and town) names based as source on the latest Gazetteer (of localities) of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Maps of larger scales should display, depending on scale, minority language names of other features, together or without their Hungarian name forms, according to the actual local name use. Their source should be the recorded names in the upgraded Gazetteer-Database of Geographical Names of the Institute of Geodesy, Cartography and Remote Sensing (FÖMI), revised by experts of the national boards of the given minorities and approved by the local minority self-governments. "

Field names of the Sopron Wine Region (north-west Hungary) approved as protected designations of origin in 2011 (German and Croatian names in italics):

Sopron Wine Region	
Commune, city, town	Field name
Sopron <i>Ödenburg</i>	<i>Dudles</i>

	<i>Frettner</i>
	<i>Hard</i>
	<i>Harmler</i>
	<i>Kogl</i>
	<i>Rotheperer</i>
	<i>Steiger</i>
	<i>Steiner</i>
	<i>Weidengrund</i>
Ágfalva <i>Agendorf</i>	Pótlék-dűlő
	Vasút-dűlő
Harka	<i>Kogl</i>
	Nap-hegy
Kópháza <i>Koljnof</i>	<i>Hard</i> (része: <i>Šipkolje</i>)
Nagyecenk	<i>Hard</i> (része: Nagy-akácós)
Fertőboz <i>Holling</i>	Apollónia-földek
	<i>Gradina</i>
	Uradalmi-birtok
Fertőszentmiklós	Arany-hegy
	Közép-dűlő
	Új-hegy
Fertőszéplak	Szentháromság
Fertőrákos <i>Kroisbach</i>	Savanyú-kút / <i>Sauerbrunn</i>
	Új-hegy / <i>Neuberg</i>
Vaskeresztes <i>Großdorf</i>	Vas-hegy (részei: <i>Bargl, Hummerberg, Niederberg, Waller</i>)
	<i>Kfangen</i>
	Stirgrom
Felsőcsatár <i>Gornji Četar</i>	Vas-hegy
	<i>Glavica</i>
Kőszeg	Borsmonostori-dűlő
	Guba-hegy
	Kövi-dűlő
	Napos-tető
Csepreg	Bene-hegy
	Hanga
	Rámok