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ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR  
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

The Standardization of Latvian Toponymy

(Submitted by Latvia)\*\*/

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## THE STANDARDIZATION OF LATVIAN TOPONYMY

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The official language of Latvia is Latvian (as it is provided by the Language Law of 1989). Latvian is a Baltic language using the Roman alphabet.

### TOPONYMIC DATA BASES (data files, card indexes).

There are two card indexes of toponyms in Latvia. First of them is a rich collection (about 1,5 mln. units) in Latvian Language Institute of Latvian Academy of Sciences. This collection was started at the end of XIX century, there are also excerpts from old historical documents and old maps. This file includes also the materials of field collections of place-names (such expeditions of field collecting are organizing every year). But this collection suffers from one-sidedness -- it is mostly a linguistic collection with all diacritical notes, with dialectical forms etc., there are no exact geographical coordinates of the topoobjects (only rural district or nearest village is indicated). At the present time this collection undergoes computerization.

The other collection of Latvian physiogeographical place-names is formed in the Department of Geography at the University of Latvia. The formation of this standard place-names index was started only in 1970. This toponymic data bases contains more than 20 000 units. The place-names in the data bases are standardized and mapped. The toponymic data bases contains the information about the objects' localization in nature, the objects' characteristics and all the place-names and their variants concerning the denotate. It is the only data bases of this kind in Latvia, but it has no linguistic notes.

THE NATIONAL GAZETTEERS AND THE OTHER PUBLICATIONS ON PLACE-NAMES

The first publications of Latvian toponyms was at the end of the XIX century (A.Bilenstein). Two volumes must be mentioned there published by J.Endzelīns (E n d z e l ī n s J. Latvijas vietu vārdi. I. d.: Vidzemes vārdi. -- Rīga, 1922, 118 p.; 2. d.: Kurzemes un Latgales vārdi. -- Rīga, 1925, 190 p.) and two volumes published by J.Plāķis (P l ā ķ i s J. Latvijas vietu vārdi un latviešu pavārdi. I. d.: Kurzemes vārdi. -- Latvijas Universitātes Raksti. Filoloģijas un filozofijas sērija, 4. sēj., Nr.1. -- Rīga, 1936, 305 p.; P l ā ķ i s J. Latvijas vietu vārdi un latviešu pavārdi. 2. d.: Zemgales vārdi. -- Idem, 5. sēj., Nr.5. -- Rīga, 1939, 213 - 528 p.).

J.Endzelīns was the main author of the Dictionary of Latvian Toponyms (Latvijas PSR vietvārdi. I. sēj., I. d., 1956, 426 p. (A - J); I. sēj., II d, 1961, 506 p ( J - O). At the present time at the Latvian Language Institute this Dictionary is supplemented with new material and the other volumes (from letter P to Ž) are prepared for publishing.

In Latvia we do not have one all-embracing gazetteer of Latvia's place-names. Therefore there are several publications of normative character which function like gazetteers. The main among them are the following:

- The administrative territorial division of Latvian SSR (Latvijas PSR administratīvi teritoriālais iedalījums 1984). It describes the situation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in 1984 (there are names of 1262 cities, towns and villages, yet there are several mistakes in the names of villages, but a few names of towns, villages and administrative regions of Riga have been changed already).

- Gazetteer of Latvia's lakes and other water bodies (Latvijas PSR ūdenstilpju nosaukumi, Rīga, 1984). It contains 2456 place-names.

- Gazetteer of Latvia's rivers' and brooks' (Latvijas PSR ūdensteču nosaukumi, Rīga, 1986). It contains more than 2200 place-names.

- Names of Latvian villages and inhabitants (D a m b e V. Latvijas apdzīvoto vietu un iedzīvotāju nosaukumi, Rīga, 1990).

- Gazetteer of the names of Latvia's villages is prepared for acceptance in the Supreme Council of Latvia. It contains about 6000 place-names and will be a document of normative character.

Besides that the Gazetteers of 6 rural districts are ready. These Gazetteers comprise all the place-names of a rural district and a map (1:25 000 scale). At the present time the toponymic - geographical gazetteer "Latvijas āru vārdi" ("The names of physiogeographical objects of Latvia") with a cartographic supplement in the scale 1:100 000 is being prepared by the Department of Geography.

Before the last war to a certain extent a foundation of the standardization of Latvian geographical names was built, but during the years of Russian occupation, the cartography was oriented in Russian language, there existed standards, set up in the USSR. They envisaged to treat all geographical names in kirilic, irrespective of original transcription in the respective language. For this reason to a high degree the standardization of Latvian toponyms must be started from the very beginning.