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Geographical Names Network in Sweden

Submitted by Sweden **

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The Geographical Names Network (Sw. Namnvårdsgruppen) was established 2013 under the responsibility of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This network was created in order to be more aware and gain knowledge on how to use foreign names of countries and other important geographical locations in the world in a standardized way. The purpose of the group is to provide guidance on matters of principle, to give advice or recommendations in individual name issues, not just place names but also names on authorities and job titles in public service. We shall also develop the Swedish terminology on this and furthermore promote good place name practice.

The Geographical Names Network shall promote standardized uniformity regarding place name practice and give principal advice on how to use foreign place names in different official situations, such as news reporting and other official circumstances. Together with this, the group will provide foreign users of Swedish place names with correct names and advice how to use them. For example, when it comes to the use of diacritics used in Swedish and Saami languages.

Information, advice and recommendations are published on the internet.

The Geographical Names Network consists of the most relevant and important participants dealing with Swedish place name official activities: Lantmäteriet (the Swedish mapping, cadaster and real estate authority), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, The Institute for Language and Folklore including The Language Council of Sweden, University of Uppsala, The Swedish Centre for Terminology, Radio Sweden, Swedish Standards Institute, Swedish Translation Service in the General Secretariat of the EU Council and The Institute for the Languages of Finland.

The representative that are included in this working group represents a core team and together with network of their own we can ensure a broad anchoring in society for the consciousness of our ideas and recommendations.

The representative from the Institute for Language and Folklore is chairperson of the network and the secretary represents the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The network meets three to four times per year and the secretary summons the group. The Network is free to elect a new member at their meetings if they consider this necessary. They can also invite relevant experts and lecturers to participate at single meetings. The fellowship in the group is not personal, but connected to the head organization for each member. Any member who is prevented from continuing participation in the group is responsible for suggesting a replacement which the group then evaluates.

The Geographical Names Network shall be consulted in issues concerning questions of foreign names, for instance the publication *The Book of Foreign Names* (Sw. *Utrikes namnbok*) – the Ministry for Foreign Affairs official book about how to use foreign place names. The *Book of Foreign Names* is intended for employees at Government offices, authorities and organizations but also used by journalists and the general public. The *Book of Foreign Names* contains country-names and EU agencies. The publication also contains translations to English, German, French, Spanish and to a certain extent to Finnish and Russian on names of authorities and important organizations in Sweden. In addition to this, it also presents titles in state services.

The work of the group

The Geographical Names Network is, for example, working with the recommendations for the creation of names on state authorities and other institutions. Here follows an extract of our recommendations.

- Remember, understandable language belongs to the demands of the legal requirements for good service in the administration (stated in the *Language law*). For understandable language

also includes the names. A good official name is easy to remember, understand, write and pronounce.

- Proposals for new names shall rest on good linguistic arguments.
- Make sure that there are experts on language and onomastic in the working group planning the new names.
- Remember, the main language in Sweden according to the language law is Swedish. Authorities should therefore have a name in Swedish (which of course does not exclude names in other languages for international use)
- The name should reflect the agency's activities as much as possible.
- Make sure the names are suitable for those who need the names and those affected by the service that the authorities provide. Priority must be on civic contact before "sales potential".
- Short forms of the name or acronyms should be formulated so that they do not give rise to misunderstanding.
- Abbreviations of the name should be based on the Swedish name and retained in the text in another language. It is not advisable to create an acronym based on the name in a different language. Overall, one should be careful with abbreviations.
- Avoid fantasy names. Any kind of indication that it is about an agency should be included in the name of agency, board, authority, inspection etc.
- Compare with other official names and consider whether parallels can be made. Avoid reusing existing abbreviations. Patterns as "Agency for ...," "Inspectorate of ..."
- Choice of name should not be influenced by graphic elements (such as logos and other text form) but with current writing rules for names.
- Although the logo has the look "eHealthauthority" the name should be written "E-health authority"
- Consider whether additional nationality description required State, Sweden, the National etc.
- In controversial questions, contact The Geographical Names Network!

The Geographical Names Network was created to, on a national level, achieve consensus on how to handle questions regarding place names in a multilingual context. This can be achieved by working together towards a joint goal. In a global context, the same applies and it is by cooperation and an open discussion we can get a mutual base of awareness when it comes to render each country's official place names.