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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 Lithuania

Submitted by Lithuania**

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1. Background

1.1. Data, field collection and standardization tradition

The process of collecting geographical names has been completed before the Second World War. The standardization of the geographical names in Lithuania was carried out in the period of the independent republic of Lithuania (1918–1940), and the principles of the standardization have not changed. During fieldwork additional data were collected, and the spelling and accent of some place names were checked (the last expedition took place in 1986). During Soviet times some place names were dropped due to the processes of collectivization and land reclamation, and other reasons. After the re-establishment of the country's independence in 1990, some names, especially the names of settlements, are in use again. It is connected with the fact that land, woods and lakes, which had been nationalized by the Soviet authorities are claimed by their legal owners or their heirs. The owners express the wish to reestablish the old geographical names too. In cases like these the pre-war period data (a card file containing about 700,000 entries collected during fieldwork), which has been stored at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language are used.

1.2. Framework and national authorities

The official use of geographical names in the Republic of Lithuania is regulated by two main laws:

- The Law on the State Language (1995)
- The Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania (2001)

The place names in official usage should be written in the official language of the Republic of Lithuania and in correct standardized forms.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language functions as the geographical names' authority. A consultative sub-commission for Proper Names has been set up to deal with the geographical names.

The National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania functions as the national mapping authority.

The names of the districts of the Republic of Lithuania, their centers and municipalities are determined, amended and eliminated by the Seimas. The names of populated places (oiconims) initiated by local governments and accepted by the State Commission of the Language have to be approved by the government. The changes are entered in the Address Register managed by the state-run Center of Registers.

2. Changes during the period of 2007–2012

At the end of 2003, amendments were made to the provision of the Law on the Territorial Administrative Units of the Republic of Lithuania and their Boundaries stipulating that streets, buildings and other constructions under the jurisdiction of local governments should be given names by the resolutions of the local government councils with the approval of the State

Commission of the Lithuanian Language (Article 9). It has been established that names to such places should be given in accordance with certain criteria set by the government of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2004, the government approved the criteria for giving names to streets, buildings and other constructions (*Valstybės Žinios* / Official Gazette, No 88-3225), while the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language approved the Recommendations for the Forming and Spelling of Street Names.

At the end of 2009, Ministry of the Interior delegated to municipal administrations task to give deficient names of streets and other units of address, so the Commission of the Lithuanian Language receives about 200 requests (per year) for its opinion on new street names.

3. The main sources

3.1. Main toponymic sources:

- *Lietuvos TSR administracinių teritorinių suskirstymo žinynas* (Territorial Administrative Units of the Lithuanian SSR), Vilnius, 1974, P.1; Vilnius, 1976, P. (about 30,000 names of residential areas).
 - *Lietuvos TSR upių ir ežerų vardynas* (Names of the Rivers and Lakes of the Lithuanian SSR), Vilnius, 1963 (about 7,000 hydronyms).
 - *Lietuvos vietovardžių žodynas* (A–B) (Dictionary of Lithuanian Place-names, Vol. 1), Vilnius, 2008.
- Lithuanian place names constitute one of major parts of Indo-European onomastics. This is the first attempt ever made to systematically present all the names of places, existing in the living language, and to explain their origins. The Institute of the Lithuanian Language has started the Dictionary of Lithuanian Place-names in 2008. The dictionary will probably run into 10 volumes.
- List of Lithuanian Place Names, approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language on 28 August 1997 (last revision in 2011) <http://www.vlkk.lt/nutarimai/lietuviški-vietovardžiai.html>.
 - Lists of Ethnic Exonyms in the current territory of Belarus, Latvia, Poland, Russia (Kalininograd) approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language <http://www.vlkk.lt/lit/nutarimai/svetimvardziai/tradiciniai-lietuviški-vietovardziai.html> (pdf).
 - Lists of the Names of States (based on ISO 3166-1) approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language (last revision in 2012) <http://www.vlkk.lt/nutarimai/svetimvardziai/valstybiu-ir-sostiniu.html>
 - Modern Lithuanian Dictionary. List of place names <http://www.autoinfo.lt/webdic/> (about 2,500 place names).
 - *Pasaulio vietovardžių žodynas* (Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World), Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas: vol. 1, 2006; vol. 2, 2008; vol. 3, 2010; vol. 4, 2012.
 - *Vietovardžių žodynas* (Dictionary of Place Names. Editors Aldonas Pupkis, Marytė Razmukaitė and Rita Miliūnaitė, Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2002).

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language also has started (in 2007) the Geoinformational Database of Lithuanian Toponyms (LVvGDB), <http://lvvgdb.lki.lt>. This is the first database in Lithuania which jointly provides information about linguistic units – toponyms – and

geographic units – geographic objects. It is the first database that includes extinct onyms as well. LVvGDB is created for: 1) scientific research and applied scientific purposes; 2) satisfying the practical needs of inhabitants and Economy Subjects; 3) preserving toponyms as a cultural heritage. The database would provide an opportunity for linguists and geographers worldwide to reach all this information (authentic forms of toponyms, accentual paradigma, etymology, object description, etc.). At this time database consists from toponyms of 7 (from 60) municipalities.

Trakų didžiųjų ežerų vardynas (Onomastics of the Grand Lakes of Trakai: Cultural Depths of Trakai Landscale) was prepared by Management of Trakai Historical National Park (published in 2010) under the patronage of Lithuanian Nation Commission for UNESCO. Considering the multicultural Trakai environment (Trakai – medieval capital of Lithuania), in the list alongside the heading reconstructed Lithuanian place names forms (the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language assisted in this part of preparing) there are also the forms from the sources recorded in other languages – Polish, Russian, and Belorussian, even some Tartar and Karaim language. Toponyms of this historically special area reveal an exceedingly expressive and colourful image of Trakai culture.

The Database of Historical Toponyms is available <http://www.lki.lt/tevi> (the Institute of the Lithuanian Language project, 2004–2010).

3.2. Main maps:

- *Georeference Vector Database GDB10LT, scale of 1:10 000 on the basis of Orthophoto Maps of Lithuania, all territory (over 30 000 geographically referenced place names, LKS-94; coordinates' system);*
- *Gazetteer based on Georeference Vector Database GDB10LT data implemented in www.geoportal.lt (in 2012 averagely 40 searches per day);*
- *GDB250LT database (new names of relief forms have been collected and added to this database in 2012);*
- *Base of toponyms on maps of Lithuania - first topographical surveying at scale 1:10000 in field (1949–1954), and (an updated edition) in 1970-1990;*
- *Digital color raster (scanned) topographic maps, scale 1:10 000, all territory, LKS-94 coordinates' system;*
- *Topographic maps at scale 1:10 000 (near boundary);*
- *Topographic maps at scale 1:50 000 – all territory, 131 sheets, LKS-94 coordinates' system;*
- *Digital color raster topographic maps at scale 1:50 000, all territory, LKS-94 coordinates' system;*
- *Aeronautical charts at scale 1:250 000, all territory, WGS-84 coordinates' system;*
- *Digital color raster aeronautical charts at scale 1:250 000, all territory, WGS – 84 coordinates' system;*
- *Navigation Baltic Sea charts at scale 1:200 000 compiled by the Hydrographic Service of the Lithuanian Maritime administration;*
- *Navigation chart of the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas delta at scale 1:75 000, compiled by the Lithuanian Inland Waterways Authority.*

Lithuania is also participating in the project of European Geographical Names. EuroGeoNames Project has been carried out in 2006–2009 creating a web service for Lithuanian place names. The Lithuanian part encompasses 30251 place names (settlements, hydrography, forests and others). The application hosted by the Project consortium has been made available at the web-site www.eurogeonames.com.

The portal of Lithuanian Spatial Information Infrastructure has been launched in 2009 and continuously developed, providing search by place names.

3. Names of Countries

On the basis of the changes to Standard ISO 3166-1 Part 1 *Country codes* (the information is provided by the Department of Standardization), the State Language Commission amends the List of the Names of Countries (their Lithuanian equivalents; last revision in 2012).

4. Usage of Foreign Place Names

The Commission recommends that in academic literature, advertising, information publications and special texts the original spelling of foreign place names are retained, except for common popular place names, which are mostly adapted, while in fiction, popular and juvenile literature the spelling of foreign place names (in the Latin alphabet) should be adapted to the norms of the Lithuanian language.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language has initiated the publication of *Pasaulio vietovardžių žodynas* (Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World). Edited and published by the Institute of Science and Encyclopedias. At this time have been printed 4 volumes of the dictionary: *Europa* ('Europe'), 2006, *Amerika* ('America'), 2008, *Afrika. Antarktida. Australija. Okeanija* ('Africa. Antarctica. Australia. Oceania'), 2010, *Azija: Afganistanas–Jungtinai Arabų Emyratai* ('Asia: Afghanistan– United Arab Emirates'), 2012.

This dictionary is important since in the pre-war time the use of endonyms in their original form had not become the norm. Therefore foreign geographical names in popular publications are used in an adapted (Lithuanian-type) form. There are several reasons why the use of original foreign forms is still being opposed. One of them is the peculiarity of the Lithuanian letters (based on the Latin alphabet which has no letters q, w and x, but has letters with diacritic signs, e.g., č, š, ū, ė, į, ū and others). Another one is the peculiarities of Lithuanian grammar (grammatical categories of proper names, such as gender, number and case are shown by inflexions). And finally, it was customary to adapt foreign names in the Soviet period (1940–1990), i.e., to transcribe in the Lithuanian letters according to an approximate pronunciation. Some consumer protection organizations think that a law should be passed according to which the original (endonomic) form would be used in brackets next to the lithuanized (adapted) variant. The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is for a compromise in this situation.

5. Exonyms

At the instruction of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Language Commission approved the lists of traditional place names of the ethnic Baltic lands, i.e. in the Kaliningrad

(Karaliaučius) Region, in 1997 about 450 place names), in Poland (in 1998, about 300); in Belarus (in 1999, about 1,150); and in Latvia (in 2000, about 70).

6. Plans for the Future

Lithuania has developed a project on a database of portal of geographical information infrastructure (LGII), with the aim of harmonizing all the databases of geographical information available at various public institutions of Lithuania. The portal is under permanent development enabling more efficient search using place names. Database of place names compliant to INSPIRE specifications is under development.

The linguistic sources – vol. 2 of the Dictionary of Lithuanian Place-names and the last vol. of the Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World ‘Asia. Part 2’ – is expected to come out in 2013. The Geoinformational Database of Lithuanian Toponyms lvvgdb.lki.lt is under development.

Abbreviations

LGII – Lithuanian Geographical Information Infrastructure

LKS-94 – Lithuania Coordinates System 1994

INSPIRE – Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe

Further information may be obtained from:

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