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CONDITION AND PROBLEMS OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA 1972-1977

Paper presented by the People's
Republic of Bulgaria

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

**Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names
under the General Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre**

**CONDITION AND PROBLEMS
OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA 1972 - 1977**

Paper presented to the III UNO
Conference on the Standardiza-
tion of Geographical Names,
Athens, August 17 - September 7,

The People's Republic of Bulgaria takes an active part in the work done by the UNO in the field of standardization of geographical names. International cooperation in that field not only plays an important role in the further development of the problems connected with the standardization of geographical names, but also exerts a positive influence on the cultural intercourse and rapprochement among nations. Our country supports this international cooperation and has made its contribution to it as participant in its First Conference in 1967, in Geneva, in its Second Conference in 1972, in London, and in its forthcoming Third Conference now, in 1977, in Athens.

The resolutions taken by the conferences thus held are exceptionally important and guiding documents for the future activity of the national institutions along such important lines as the unification of geographical names and geographical terminology, the compiling of gazetteers of maritime, underwater and extra-terrestrial features, the making of lists of exonyms, etc.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Second UNO Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names and of the conferences of the VII and VIII Regional Groups in Budapest, the activity of the People's Republic of Bulgaria on the standardization of geographical names for the period of 1972-1977 was aimed at the fulfilment of the following main tasks:

1. RESEARCH WORK ON QUESTION OF ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

Systematic elaborations are carried out at the Univer-

Academy of Sciences, Institute of Bulgarian Language, of problems connected with the etymology, toponymy, onomastics and transcription of names in the different languages and for overcoming the difficulties arising from the differences in the phonemic systems. Their results have been reflected in a series of publications and monographs. Worth mentioning in this connection is the work entitled "Pronunciation and Transcription of Foreign Names in the Bulgarian Language", Sofia, 1974.

The problems which have been elaborated are not only of theoretical importance, but have also a practical application in cartography and in different other fields of science and culture.

2. THE MAKING OF LISTS OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE TERRITORY OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND THEIR TRANSCRIPTION IN THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE.

This activity is carried on by the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names under the Central Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre. The council has super-departmental functions and its decisions on matters of orthography and transcription of geographical names are obligatory on a national scale, not only in the field of small-scale cartography, but also for the Television and Radio Services, for all educational establishment and the press.

Considerable work has been done in the period of 1972-1977 on questions of the orthography and transcription of geographical names. Lists have been made out and have been transcribed for the following countries: Andora, Afar and

cialist Republic, German Democratic Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Iran, Spain, Democratic Republic of Yemen, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia, Monaco, Norway, Pakistan, People's Republic of Poland, Portugal, USSR, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, FRG, France and Czechoslovakia.

With the transcription of the geographical names in the above countries and the publication of the respective lists, the task was completed of transcribing the geographical names in the territory of Europe, the Near and Middle East.

For the establishment of a correct written form of the foreign names, a great number of sources have been used, such as maps, atlases, dictionaries, onomastic directories, etc. The transcription has been made on the basis of a General Instruction which determines and systematizes into a single system the main principles of orthography and Transcription in accordance with the peculiarities of our language and our system of writing. All lists begin with brief indications of the principal rules of transcription, making it possible independently to transcribe names that are not contained in the list.

What has been stated so far shows that a considerable amount of transcription work has been done of geographical names over large territories in accordance with the Bulgarian phonetic and graphic system.

In view of the great volume of work required for the making out of the alphabetical lists of transcribed names, a programme has been worked out for the use of an electronic

computer, as a result of which the automatic systematization and arrangement of geographical names became possible.

3. TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSCRIPTION OF BULGARIAN GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES FROM THE CYRILLIC INTO THE ROMAN ALPHABET.

The rendering of the Bulgarian geographical names in the Latin alphabet is a very complicated task. Many organizations have worked for many years on the establishment of a universal system of transliteration.

In 1971, a system for transliteration of geographical names from Bulgarian into Latin was devised by the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names. The monographic principle underlies the system of transliteration, the tendency being of rendering our letter system with Latin characters, by using the same signs and letters for all corresponding signs and letters. A list of geographical names has been made and issued for general use in the People's Republic of Bulgaria on a scale of 1: 300,000 on the basis of the General Geographical Map of Bulgaria.

Our system of transliteration has certain common features with some of the variations of the ISO system, with the system of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and with the project which is being developed within the framework of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance.

The main efforts are focussed on improving the system for the purpose of its universal application in the countries using the Cyrillic alphabet, with due consideration for national peculiarities and traditions.

4. MAKING OUT LISTS OF THE TRADITIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES (EXONYMS).

tion of Geographical Names has been guided by the recommendation of the Second UNO Conference that it should take as a basis for standardizing the geographical names the national official names. This recommendation, envisaging a maximum curtailment of exonyms, is perfectly reasonable, because it aims at establishing unified written means of communication in the interest of broadening international intercourse in the sphere of scientific, cultural and economic relations.

The complete riddance of exonyms, however, is impossible, due to certain historical circumstances and to some other factors, such as the different systems of writing, to phonetic and grammatical peculiarities. As a result of our intercourse with the other nations through the ages, some names whose spelling or pronunciation differs from the original, have in different ways entered the basic stock of words of our people. These traditional names require greater attention, because they substantially impede international contacts in all spheres of social and political, cultural, scientific and economic life.

At present, a list of exonyms is being prepared at the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names. The list will comprise the names of countries, capitals, larger cities, hydrographic and orographic features. The list will contain the traditional form of the name, its national official form and its normal Bulgarian form. After a detailed discussion of the list, it will be established which traditional names will be preserved and which of them will be replaced with the corresponding national official form.

The list of exonyms which is being thus prepared, should be considered as initial stage in determining a more detailed

In accordance with the recommendations of the Second UNO Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, work is being done in the People's Republic of Bulgaria also on some other problems, such as the compiling of a dictionary of special terms, a dictionary of terms contained in the geographical maps, the compilation of an International Gazetteer, the naming of extraterrestrial features, the working out of a draft for compiling a unified dictionary of geographical names in the region of the valley of the Danube River, etc.

The Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical names continues editing a Collection of Materials for the Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names, which is a specialized publication for the elaboration of theoretical and practical problems connected with the standardization of geographical names and for generalizing and popularizing of the experience gained in this field. Issue 2 and 3 have come out. Issue 2 contains publications by some distinguished linguists, such as Professor I. Douridanov, Professor T. Tomov and Professor M. Mladenov on different questions of topographic toponymy, peculiarities in the transcription of Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian geographical names. Issue 3 is devoted entirely to the Second International UNO Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names will submit with pleasure pages in the Collection to foreign authors for the insertion of materials on the standardization of geographical names.

The Council is intensifying its activity on the exchange

This brief account of the work done by the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names for the period of 1972-1977, as can be seen, reveals a versatile and useful activity.

We can say with satisfaction that international cooperation in the standardization of geographical names is marking an ever expanding development and progress, which promotes a mutual exchange of experiences, and helps to elucidate the tasks and trends in our future activity. Our country will continue in future to take an active part, within its possibilities, in the development of the useful activity in the field of standardization of geographical names.