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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 THIRD UNITED
CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Report on the work of the East Central and South-East Europe
Division of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names for the period 1977 to 1982

Paper presented by the East Central and South-East Europe Division
of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

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The Division of East-Central Europe was called into being on the 1st Conference of the United Nations on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which was held in Geneva in 1967. The members of this body, known then as the 7th Division, were: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. Subsequently, Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey were co-opted at the 8th Conference of the Group of ^{the} United Nations Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and the Division got its present name, i.e. the 10th Division of East-Central and South-Eastern Europe. Though approached through diplomatic channels the new-elected member-countries did not establish any contact with Poland, which following the 3rd Conference of the United Nations on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Athens in 1977, took over the leadership of the Division from Hungary.

From 1977 to 1982 three meetings of the representatives of the countries from East-Central Europe (i.e. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland) and a representative of the German Democratic Republic as an observer were held, namely in 1979, 1981 and 1982. Neither Yugoslavia nor the countries of the eastern part of the Mediterranean, incorporated in 1979, took part in any of these meetings.

In East-Central Europe the matters of the standardization of geographical names are dealt with by various institutions.

In Poland, there exist two state commissions: 1) the Commission for the Naming of Localities and Physiographic Objects at the Minister of Administration, Local Economy and Environmental Protection, headed by Professor Mieczysław Szymczak since 1977,

and 2) the Commission for the Standardization of World's Geographical Names at the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology, headed by Professor Jerzy Kondracki, who took over the post at the end of 1978 after the premature death of the former chairman, the late Professor Lech Ratajski.

The Commission for the Standardization of World's Geographical Names represents Poland in the agencies established by the United Nations. It fixes geographical names for places outside Poland's boundaries for home needs, whereas the Commission acting at the Ministry of Administration, Local Economy and Environmental Protection gives names to geographical places within Poland's boundaries for the use at home and abroad. Both Commissions co-operate closely and are participated largely by the same persons.

In the remaining member-states which took part in the meetings of the Division for East-Central Europe, the standardization of geographical names is carried out by their Central Offices of Geodesy and Cartography, which are helped by respective committees or councils for the matters of geographical names. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, names of settlements are given by the Ministers of Internal Affairs of the Czech and the Slovak Republics, and other names within and outside the Czechoslovak territory by the Offices of Geodesy and Cartography.

The following matters were dealt with on the meetings held by the Division in 1979 and 1981:

1. The specialized terminology used by the United Nations when standardizing geographical names. The 1981 meeting decided that a literal translation from English was incorrect and that every country should propose its own definitions. Respective materials should be sent to Poland not later than at the end of 1981.

However, this postulate has not been realized.

2. The exchange of information on national gazetteers and progress in the standardization of geographical names in separate countries. This subject will be dealt with later on.

3. The compilation of the dictionary of geographical names for the Danube basin. Preparatory work in this respect was completed in Bulgaria. However, since no interest had been expressed by other countries, work was discontinued following the decision taken on the 1981 meeting.

4. The principles of the marking of geographical names on school maps and atlases. It was found that transliteration and transcription were the methods generally adopted in East-Central Europe.

5. The compilation of an international dictionary of geographical terms used in general geographical maps. The project was prepared in Czechoslovakia, and other countries sent their comments.

6. The orthography of geographical names to be used in national gazetteers. It was recommended to follow methods described in the materials submitted by Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, as well as by the group of United Nations experts.

As far as progress in the standardization of geographical names in separate countries and the preparation of national gazetteers are concerned, the present state - according to the reports sent - is as follows:

In Bulgaria, the Council on the Transcription and Orthography of Geographical Names at the Central Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre completed the following tasks in 1977-1982:

1. The lists of names for 24 states and the general principles of transcription were completed. Thus, the task to prepare transcription of geographical names for almost all parts of the world

was fulfilled.

2. The National Gazetteer was prepared and published. It is based on a 1:300 000 map and includes 18 types of objects (settlements, mountains, elevations, uplands, peaks together with their heights, passes, lowlands, plains, islands, capes, territories, rivers, lakes, bogs, falls, barrier lakes, lagoons and seas), the position of which is given. A second edition of the Gazetteer is planned, in which the number of objects and their characteristics will be increased, and their location will be more precise.

3. A list of exonyms was prepared for publication; it includes the names of states, capitals and cities with populations of over 500 000 inhabitants. The Council on the Transcription and Orthography of Geographical Names is planning to enlarge the list by including the biggest hydrographic and orographic objects.

4. The compilation of a uniform dictionary of geographical names of the Danube basin was put off following the decision of the 5th meeting of the Division though Bulgaria had fulfilled the task and sent off a project of the dictionary to all interested countries at the fixed time.

In Hungary the Institute of Geodesy and Cartography completed the following tasks:

1. The National Hungarian Gazetteer, part II, was prepared in 1976-1981 and published in 19 volumes according to the internal administrative division. The Gazetteer lists 62 000 names marked on the 1:150 000 maps; the names refer to 25 types of objects with the exception of large spatial units. The names were co-ordinated with the local authorities and analysed by the Committee of Geographical Names.

2. Another gazetteer (I), which includes the names of the regions, forms of relief and hydrographical objects, was published in 1981.

Its second, revised edition will appear in 1982 and will contain a 1:500 000 map. It gives 732 geographical names, which were also analysed by the Committee of Geographical Names, and explanations in Hungarian and English.

3. The list of the names of states will be published in 1982 by the publishing house 'Cartographia'. It contains the abbreviated and full names of independent states and other territories. The names are given in Hungarian, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish, and also in the language of the respective country. The Hungarian adjectival names of the country and of its people are also included; there is also a world map.

4. The preparation of a world map on the 1:2 500 000 scale can also be recognized as a contribution to the international standardization. The instruction on the method of naming will also be revised in the current year during the preparation of the map.

5. The representative of Hungary to the group of ^{the} United Nations experts is responsible for the activity of the working group dealing with the system of Latinization (Romanization) of other types of orthography.

In Poland the Commission for the Standardization of World Geographical Names, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, revised and amended the official and Polish names of states and capitals; their list will be published this year.

In 1979-1981 over 1 000 places in European countries (the USSR excluded) were given Polish exonyms. The list of the most important exonyms, containing approximately 500 items, is included in the material submitted to the group of ^{the} United Nations experts appointed to the 10th conference in Geneva. The list provides the Polish name, the official name, the type of object, and the country (the symbols of the name of the state). The official names of certain objects are given in several languages.

The State Enterprise of Cartographical Publications is working now on a National Gazetteer including over 20 000 names to be marked on a 1:500 000 map of Poland; the names have been verified by the Commission for the Naming of Localities and Physiographic Objects. However, the completion of the work is delayed.

In 1980 the Ministry of Administration, Local Economy and Environmental Protection together with the Central Statistical Office published one volume (out of planned three volumes) of the 'Official List of Localities in the Polish People's Republic'. The whole work will contain approximately 100 000 names which will be given the official, ministerial approval.

In Czechoslovakia the following was achieved in the field of the standardization of geographical names:

1. The official names of cities and villages were published as early as 1974 in the 'Statistical Dictionary of Settlements in the CSSR' and since only amendments have been introduced, resulting from administrative changes (amalgamation of small settlements, naming of new settlements, etc).

2. The standardization of the names of the objects which are marked on the 1:10 000 map is continued. So far 173 000 places (130 000 in the Czech Republic and 43 000 in the Slovak Republic) on 70% of the whole territory of Czechoslovakia were given names.

3. Names were fixed for marking on a 1:50 000 map for the whole area of Czechoslovakia; the list of the names of uninhabited places was published in four volumes of 'Cartographical Information', namely in volume 8 for eastern Slovakia (1976), in volume 9 for Central Slovakia (1977), in volume 10 for western Slovakia (1979) and in volume 11 for the whole of Slovakia. The standardization was carried out for thematic groups of objects; the names of Slovak caves were published in volume 12 (1979).

4. In 1980 a list of cadastral units was published for the Federal Statistical Office.

5. Names of protected territories in both republics, names of geomorphological units of the higher rank and names of the main geological units were fixed.

6. In 1980-1981 a list of names of all the states and their territorial parts was prepared and published in 1982. The lists for the territories of Bulgaria, China, India and Turkey were published in 1982.

7. The preparation of the publication 'Geographical Names of the CSSR' was started in 1982; this national gazetteer is destined for use abroad and based on names marked on the 1:750 000 map.

8. A project of the international dictionary of geographical terms marked on general maps was prepared and sent off for consultation to interested geodetic services in the socialist countries; on the basis of opinions received the number of the headwords is brought down to 961.

On the 1981 meeting of the 10th Division for the Standardization of Geographical Names a proposal was made to confer the leadership of the Division to Bulgaria for 1982-1987. This was accepted by the Central Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadaster of Bulgaria in a letter of 11 May 1982, signed by Rizo Dmitrov.

The 6th meeting of the 10th Division took place on 28 July 1982, a day before the opening of the International Cartographic Conference in Warsaw. The agenda was as follows: 1) report on the Division's work in the last five years, 2) discussion on the principles of work in 1982-1987, and 3) matters concerned with the 4th Conference of the United Nations and the 10th Conference of the Group of Experts on Standardization of Geographical Names.

The chairman's report for 1972-1982 and guidelines on work

of the 10th Division, prepared by the representatives of Czechoslovakia in co-operation with Bulgaria and Hungary, were approved with a few amendments suggested during the meeting. The material will be presented at the 4th Conference of the United Nations in Geneva.

Dr E. Haack informed the meeting that - on behalf of the German Democratic Republic - he would submit two resolutions to the conference in Geneva.

In the summing up of the work of the 10th Division it should be emphasized that contrary to the recommendations of the Group of the United Nations Experts Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia had not joined in the work. However, it should also be mentioned that Cyprus, Greece and Turkey had previously been included in the Roman-Hellenic group. Possibly they are still active there. To hold a meeting every two years is undoubtedly useful since this makes it possible to exchange experiences, though the unsatisfactory exchange of publications, national gazetteers in particular, and internal organizational difficulties in certain countries, are a handicap.