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CONVERSION OF THE GREEK ALPHABET INTO LATIN
CHARACTERS

Paper presented by Greece

This paper was prepared as a Greek standard by the Greek Standardisation Organization, following the recommendations of an ad hoc committee.

The standard was also endorsed by the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The Greek Government endorsement, however is still pending.

* E/CONF.74/1

0 INTRODUCTION

The conversion of the words of a language into "words" written in characters of another alphabet may have two aims :

- the as exact as possible phonetic representation of a word in the characters of the other alphabet and
- the possibility of absolutely consistent reversibility to the original writing of the word.

When the first aim is achieved there is only transcription of the original alphabet to the new one, while when the second aim is achieved there is transliteration of the original alphabet.

Transcription is especially useful in cases of names, identity cards items and geographical names.

Transliteration is used in cases as librarianship and documentation, where the possibility of reconstitution of the text in its original form by people who do not know the original language or by machines is necessary.

Long time efforts both within the International Organization for Standardization and by national standardization organizations have not yet led to^a transliteration system accepted by Greece, too, to meet the needs of transcription.

The need for a simple conversion system without exceptions and special cases led to the adoption of this system, which takes into consideration -as far as possible- the tradition and provides for the absolutely consistent reversibility to the original writing using only one diacritical mark (underline).

This system has been approved and is used by the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names.

1. SCOPE AND FIELD OF APPLICATION

This Hellenid Standard describes

- a. A non-reversible method for transcription of the Greek alphabet into Latin characters, used at the most in the following cases :
- In writing toponyms on maps and road signs in Latin characters
- In transcribing into Latin characters personal items of identity cards, i.e. in transcribing names, surnames, father names, mother names, husband/wife names, wives' birth surnames and birth places.
- In transcribing into Latin characters commercial names of legal entities when the original names are written in characters of the Greek alphabet.
- b. A reversible method of transliteration which is applied in all cases and particularly where the possibility of absolutely consistent reversibility of the name etc being transcribed is needed into its original form in characters of the Greek alphabet by people who do not speak Greek or by machines, as for example in documentation and librarianship.

The difference between the two methods lies only in the use of only one diacritical mark apart from the characters of the Latin alphabet.

2. CONVERSION OF CHARACTERS

The systems of transcription and transliteration of the characters of the Greek alphabet into Latin characters are shown at the conversion Table.

The combination of characters which are not shown in the table are converted according to the rules of characters of which they consist.

In case of conversion of commercial names of legal entities the characters are transliterated one by one and not as a combination.

It is self understood that for the conversion of a text either the reversible or the non-reversible system shall be used from the beginning to its end.

3. TRANSCRIPTION OF PUNCTUATION MARKS, BREATHING AND SPECIAL SIGNS

The following table shows the way of transcribing of stress accents, punctuation breathing and special signs, marks of the Greek language.

Sign name

Symbol

Transcribed as

ACCENTS

Acute	· (᾿)	· (optionally)
Circumflex	~ (᾿)	· (optionally)
Grave	`	· (optionally)

SPECIAL SIGNS

Spiritus len	˘	is not transcribed
Spiritus asper	˘	”
Apostrophe	’	”
Decimal point	›	·
Diaeresis	¨	¨
Hyphen	-	-
iota subscript	ι	is not transcribed

PUNCTUATION MARKS

Period	·	·
Single point high	·	;
Comma	,	,
Interrogation mark	;	?
exclamation mark	!	!
colon	:	:
parenthesis	()	()
Points of omission
Dash	-	-
Double dash	--	--
Quotation marks	“ ”	“ ” or “ ”

(᾿) When the combination of characters eu, ou, nu are stressed in Greek and the stress is transcribed, in the Latin writing the stress is set on the vowel (ie év, éf, áv, áf, iv, if)

4. WORDS TO BE TRANSCRIBED AND TRANSLATED

When applying this standard, special attention should be paid to distinguish the words that should be translated into the proper foreign language from those that should normally be transcribed into the characters of the Latin alphabet (10)

5. SPECIAL CASES

5.1 The words "street" and "avenue" for the indication of roads in living areas can be either transcribed or omitted but should not be translated.

In this case the word "square" is always transcribed.

5.2 Names, surnames, toponyms, street names of foreign-not Greek- origin are transcribed normally without taking into consideration their original writing in Latin characters.

5.3 Laws, decrees and other documents that are numbered in Greek letters are transcribed in Arabic numbers according to the correspondence shown at the table below.

ΠΙΝΑΚΑΣ ΑΝΤΙΣΤΟΙΧΙΑΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ-ΑΡΑΒΙΚΩΝ ΑΡΙΘΜΩΝ

Α α' = 1	Ι ι' = 10	Ρ ρ' = 100
Β β' = 2	Κ κ' = 20	Σ σ' = 200
Γ γ' = 3	Λ λ' = 30	Τ τ' = 300
Δ δ' = 4	Ν ν' = 40	Υ υ' = 400
Ε ε' = 5	Ξ ξ' = 50	Φ φ' = 500
Ζ ζ' = 6	Μ μ' = 60	Χ χ' = 600
Ζ ζ' = 7	Ο ο' = 70	Ψ ψ' = 700
Η η' = 8	Π π' = 80	Ω ω' = 800
Θ θ' = 9	Ϟ ϙ' = 90	Ϡ ϡ' = 900
.Α.α=1000	.Ι.ι=10000	.Ρ.ρ=100000
.Β.β=2000	.Κ.κ=20000	.Σ.σ=200000
.Γ.γ=3000	.Λ.λ=30000	.Τ.τ=300000
.Δ.δ=4000	.Μ.μ=40000	.Υ.υ=400000
.Ε.ε=5000	.Ν.ν=50000	.Φ.φ=500000
.Ζ.ζ=6000	.Ξ.ξ=60000	.Χ.χ=600000
.Ζ.ζ=7000	.Ο.ο=70000	.Ψ.ψ=700000
.Η.η=8000	.Π.π=80000	.Ω.ω=800000
.Θ.θ=9000	.Ϟ.ρ=90000	.Ϡ.ϡ=900000

(10)

An example in this case are the road signs for railway stations, busstops, national roads etc.