

**Ninth United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries  
and on the progress made in the standardization of  
geographical names since the Eighth Conference**

**Report of Denmark**

Submitted by Denmark\*\*

---

\* E/CONF.98/1.

\*\* Prepared by Bente Holmberg, University of Copenhagen and John Jensen, National Survey and Cadastre, Denmark.

## **REPORT FROM DENMARK ON THE SITUATION THERE AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE**

### **Summary**

*In a community such as Denmark there is a growing need for some simple and clear guidelines for the standardization of geographical names. Efforts are being made to fill this need and these may result in the promulgation of a law about geographical names. The task of standardizing geographical names in Denmark has been entrusted to the Place-Name Commission, which will be able to celebrate its one hundredth anniversary in 2010. There is thus a long tradition for the standardization of Danish place-names. A reform of the system of local government, which took effect on 1. January 2007, has resulted in the loss of many of the old names of local councils and that new names have been brought into use. At the National Survey and Cadastre the names on the new charts for Greenlandic waters are being converted to the new Greenland spellings. In collaboration with Oqaasileriffik the gazetteer of Greenland place-names is being improved and in the future it will be published on the Internet.*

### **A law about place-names**

In a community such as Denmark where an increasing number of official systems are being digitalized, the need for uniform and authorized name-forms is becoming increasingly urgent. In Denmark the forms taken by geographical names are fixed by the Place-Name Commission and subsequently authorized by the Minister of Culture. There is, however, a growing need for some simple and clear guidelines for the standardization of geographical names and in the Ministry of Culture efforts are also being made to meet this need, possibly in the form of a law about place-names. Remarkably enough, Denmark – unlike the other Nordic countries – has never had a law about place-names.

### **The Place-Name Commission**

In Denmark work was begun on the standardization of place-names in 1910. The task was entrusted to the Place-Name Commission, which is still the authority that is responsible for the orthography of Danish place-names. In connection with the one hundredth anniversary of the Place-Name Commission in 2010 a commemorative volume is being prepared and it is possible that a conference will also be held then on the standardization of place-names.

### **The names of Danish local councils**

On 1. January 2007 a reformed system of local government came into force in Denmark. As a result of this reform 14 counties were abolished and replaced by 5 regions, while 275 local councils were amalgamated and reduced to 98 local councils. Some of the old names of the local councils have naturally been reused in the new regional structure but a good many new names have also been brought into use. From a typological point of view the new council names resemble the old ones. Most of the new names are, like the old ones, compounded with a settlement name (Hillerød Kommune, Holstebro Kommune etc.) but there are also some names which are compounded with a name for a natural feature (Guldborgsund Kommune, Odsherred Kommune and Rudersdal Kommune).

### **The place-names of Greenland**

In connection with the new and improved charts over Greenlandic waters the names on the charts are being converted to the new Greenland spelling. Since the charts contain not only place-names at sea but also on land, a revision of the present gazetteer of Greenland names is contemplated. The new and improved Greenland gazetteer is intended to be published on the Internet. The place-names are being treated in collaboration with Oqaasileriffik (The Greenland Language Council) under which belongs Nunat Aqqinik Aalajangiisartut (The Greenland Place-Name Committee).

### **Web addresses**

[www.navneforskning.dk](http://www.navneforskning.dk)

The Name Research Section at the University of Copenhagen, home for the Place-Name Committee

[www.kms.dk](http://www.kms.dk)

The National Survey and Cadastre

[www.oqaasileriffik.gl](http://www.oqaasileriffik.gl)

The Greenland Language Council with the Greenland Place-Name Committee

[www.fmn.fo](http://www.fmn.fo)

The Faroese Language Committee

<http://levende.kms.dk/su/sunavn/htm>

The Authorized Danish Place-Name Register