

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

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names on the situation in their divisions and
on the progress made in the standardization of geographical
names since the Eighth Conference**

Report of the UNGEGN East Central and South East Europe Division

Submitted by the Czech Republic **

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The Czech Republic has chaired the UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Division since the Eight UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names, which was held in September 2002. After taking over the chairmanship, it was decided to prepare two divisional meetings in the meantime between the past and the present UN Conference and thereby to create the framework for the cooperation of member countries in the field of the standardization of geographical names. The first meeting was held in 2003 with the participation of experts from 8 member countries. The second one followed in 2007. The delegates of 11 countries (Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine) attended the meeting so that the participation increased. The representatives of some divisional countries took part in sessions of other linguistic/geographical UNGEGN divisions as well, e.g. Polish experts participated in sessions of the Baltic Division and the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division. Besides, many countries also became member countries of other UNGEGN divisions.

Since 2005 the national mapping and cadaster agencies from 6 member countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey) have been members of the Reference Group of the EuroGeoNames (EGN) Project. The Surveying and Mapping Authority of Slovenia became the partner of the EGN Project Consortium.

In 2002 the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms was newly established. Because the agenda of the Working Group is a matter of interest for many experts from the division countries, some of them joined this group as members. The expert from one of those countries - Mr Orožen-Adamič from Slovenia - even became the first convener of the WG on Exonyms.

Although the delegates from all member countries are expected to attend the UN Conferences, it has to be considered that representatives of some countries are unable to do so due to the political situation in their countries and the reorganization of their names standardization bodies.

The establishing of national names authorities is the most important act of law enabling the standardization on the national level. While they have been established in the most countries, the

establishing of the national authorities has not yet been completed in the western part of the Balcanic Peninsula because of recent military activities. Since 2002 new organizational changes have been accomplished in several countries (Turkey, Ukraine) while the changes in other countries are partially in the process (Poland). Details are described in national reports and other conference working papers in question.

The agenda of divisional meetings was oriented towards two goals: on one hand to the exchange of information and searching for common work ideas and on the other hand to the implementation of UNGEGN resolutions and principles in various activities of member countries. The chairman of the division tried to implement the Conference Resolution VIII/5 to the practice as well. That is why the both divisional meetings were joined to the meetings of the WG on Exonyms. This way of collaboration is to be recommended because it enables to achieve more results in standardization processes.

One of the huge disadvantages of the East Central and South-East Europe Division is the geographical and linguistic variety within the member countries. It causes that linguists, cartographers and geographers from countries interested in the names standardization often solve incomparable expert questions and problems. It makes many common activities impossible. It is e.g. very difficult to aim for issues as divisional gazetteers, common lists of exonyms, terminology handbooks etc. We can say that there are two different geographical groups inside the division – the northern one and the southern one. It will be necessary to compare essential differences in contemporary scientific basis and in ideas heading towards the future as well so that the divisional body becomes more vital.