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REPORT OF NORDEN DIVISION

Submitted by E. M. Närhi, Chairman of the Norden Division



**Report of the Norden Division  
Submitted by E.M. Närhi\*  
Chairman of the Division**

After the 14th meeting of UNGEGN work concerning the standardization and use of place names in the Nordic countries has primarily aimed at achieving the national onomastic objectives set by each country. The results thus obtained have, of course, also meant the realization of the aspirations of UNGEGN, since an effort has been made to have the projects presently under way take the final recommendations of United Nations conferences into consideration.

**National standardization; names authorities**

**Denmark.** - The Place-name Committee currently treats matters concerning orthography, alterations in place-names, and authorization of names. The general public takes a great interest in place-names, and, in particular, the problem of writing the Scandinavian letter å as aa, as well as the difficulties presented by the letters æ and ø will be discussed before the Common Market in 1992.

The right to authorize the ortographical forms of names is still with the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

**Finland.** - Since the 14th session of UNGEGN, held in Geneva in 1988, 427 sheets of the 1:20,000 scale Finnish Basic Map and 81 sheets of the 1:20,000 scale Topographic Map have been updated, with all the c. 119,000 names they contain revised. Only Finnish names were found on 425 sheets, only Swedish names on 34 sheets, Finnish and Swedish names were found on 13 sheets, while Finnish and Saami names were found on 36 sheets.

In 1990 Parliament decided that the decision on a new name for, or a change in, the name of a municipality is to be made by the municipal council, the relevant organ having previously been the Council of State. Before making a decision, the municipality must hear the viewpoint of the Research Centre for Domestic Languages. As of now there has not been a single case involving the name of a municipality.

During the past few years the role played by the Onomastic Division of the Research Centre for Domestic Languages as an organ providing advice and checking the official written form of names when planning the names to be used by the municipality for its residential areas, roads, streets, and similar objects.

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\* In cooperation with B. Hjort Pedersen (Denmark), Þórhallur Vilmundarsen (Iceland), B. Helleland (Norway), and A.-Ch. Mattisson (Sweden).

Norway. - The new law on the standardization and treatment of place-names in Norway was put into effect on July 1 this year. The law states that all administrative bodies should use the correct spelling of the place-names in question.

In order to ensure the correct spelling of place-names advisory secretariats with two advisers and a secretary have been established at each of the four Norwegian universities. An additional advisory staff has been created for Finnish and Saami place-names.

The different state administrative bodies such as the Post, the Telegraph, the Road Board, and the State Office of Cartography are responsible for the authorization of the spelling of place-names used by those bodies. Once a place-name has been authorized, it should be used in this form by all administrative bodies.

The local authorities decide upon the names of streets, schools etc. A committee on complaints about the spelling of place names has been established to decide upon matters of dispute.\*

Generally, it can be said that the law has been based upon the goals and principles of United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names.

Sweden. - In 1988 the National Land Survey made a decision in principle concerning the introduction of Lule Saami orthography on the official maps. This decision is a consequence of an earlier decision from 1982 about introducing Northern Saami on maps. The first maps with the new orthography are being produced throughout 1991.

In the new real estate register the Saami names in Saami spelling will be presented beside the names spelled in the traditional way. This is partly due to technical problems with the diacritics.

Furthermore, the National Land Survey has made decisions upon setting out names in several languages on all maps where the scale would permit this. In the eastern part of northern Sweden that means Finnish and Swedish names, while in the western part it means Saami, Finnish, and Swedish names. The principle "one object one name" has been abandoned, but the traditional name is still the official one, and it is placed on top.

#### Field collection of place names, and training courses

Finland. - The systematic field collection of geographical names was continued from 1988 to 1990, and a total of 62,700 cards of topographical information on names has been archived in the collections of the Onomastic Division of the Research Centre for Domestic Languages.

Each year the Research Centre has, together with the University of Helsinki, arranged two practise courses in field work. On the average, the courses have had about ten

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\* A more complete outline of the law on standardization of Norwegian place-names will be given separately by the Norwegian representative of UNGEGN, Mr. Botolv Helleland.

participants, these being students majoring in Finnish as well as individuals already holding a master's degree in it. A video film has been produced for use in teaching, and an English language version of it, *Onomastic Fieldwork in Finland* (18 min.), also exists. Copies of the film can be ordered, the price is FIM 400 + the costs of material and postage.

**Norway** - Field collection of place names is continuing in different regions of the country. Training courses have been organized by the universities to ensure the scientific quality of the work. A special comprehensive collection of local place names has been initiated in connection with the projecting of a new main airport at Gardermoen.

#### **Gazetteers and toponymic data files**

**Denmark.** - The authorized lists *Fortegnelse over stednavne i amterne øst for Lillebælt* and *Fortegnelse over stednavne i amterne vest for Lillebælt* have been stored on magnetic tapes and installed on the large computer system of the National Survey and Cadastre/Denmark. This means that it is now possible to compare the authorized names with the names in the National Survey and Cadastre database *Stednavneoplysninger* (i.e. the names with all available topographic information).

**Finland.** - The new GT 1:200,000 scale road maps of Finland in digital form will be published by Karttakeskus (Map Centre) this year. Its toponymic data base contains about 50,000 names. Two sheets of the 1:400,000 scale general map covering Finnish Lapland will also be published in 1991. The general map sheets will contain a large number of names in standard Northern Saami. The digital mapping process of the 1:10,000/1:20,000 Basic Map of Finland is being begun at the National Board of Survey. The toponyms for the map will be digitized together with the other textual information regarding the authentication of the names as they were when the former basic map was being revised. There is a separate project going on to introduce a digital gazetteer of the toponyms in the Basic Map, approximately 900,000 names, within the next seven to ten years.

At the Finnish Research Centre for Domestic Languages work has been started on the production of a toponymic data file intended especially for onomastic studies. The first stage, which will take from six to seven years, will see the name collections of forty municipalities in different parts of the country, approximately 300,000 toponymic records, computerized.

**Iceland.** - The production of a general computerized register of place names is in progress.

**Norway.** - This year the State Office of Cartography is publishing Vol. II of *Index to Names on 1:50 000 Scale Maps of Norway. Series M711 (topographic Main Series)*. Vol. I appeared in 1990, and vol. III is expected to appear in 1992. The complete gazetteer will contain some 400,000 computerized entries.

A computerized register of all names which have been authorized has been created in cooperation with the State Office of Cartography. The register is based upon the gazetteer of the topographic map series (1:50 000) and will be continuously updated.

At the Department for Name Research at the University of Oslo the card files containing some 700,000 place names will be computerized over a period of from five to ten years.

Sweden. - The Swedish toponymic data base is being revised. In the course of the revision work the classification of the entity categories will be reformed. The work is now under way in Oracle-milieu.

Discussions concerning the production of a printed gazetteer are in progress. The Gazetteer of Great Britain and the recently produced Norwegian Gazetteer are regarded as models.

#### List of names and other guidelines for use of place names

Denmark. - Lists of corrections for the authorized lists Fortegnelse over stednavne i amterne øst for Lillebælt and Fortegnelse over stednavne i amterne vest for Lillebælt have been compiled. The lists are continuously updated, and the lists of corrections are given to the institutions particularly affected by the updating. For the time being, the Place-name Committee is not planning any new edition of the two lists.

An article "Stednavnepleje - praksis i Danmark" (Maintenance of Place-names - Practice in Denmark) has been published in Skrifter utgivna av Dialekt-, Ortnamns- och Folkminnesarkivet i Göteborg, 2 1989.

Finland. - Alastarolla Ylistarossa - Suomen asutusnimet ja niiden taivutus, a register of the names of inhabited places (ISBN 951-9475-72-9) was published by the Finnish Research Centre for Domestic Languages. It consists of about 20,000 place names with information about the entity, the location of the place, and the declension of the name. It also contains the indices of reference to the Swedish or Saami names if one exists.

Two lists of Saami place-names have been published: Leif Rantala: Sámegiel Báikenammalogahallan. Samisk ortnamnsförteckning. Samisk stednavnsfortegnelse. Saamenkielinen paikannimiluettelo. Ukazatel saamskih toponimov. 1988 (ISBN 952-90013-3-9) 40 pg. This booklet contains about a thousand place-names in Northern Saami orthography, as well as the corresponding names which are used in Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, or Russian.

The most important place names in Northern Saami have also been published as an appendix to Pekka Sammallahti's Saami-Finnish dictionary, Sámi-suoma sátnegirji, 1989 (ISBN 951-8939-03-9). This list contains about 700 geographical names from Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish Lapland as well as a few names from other countries and names of features beyond a single sovereignty.

Norway. - Early next year the Norwegian Language Council will publish a list on foreign geographical names (exonyms and endonyms) to be used in Norway.

Sweden. - A pronouncing dictionary of Swedish geographical names was published in 1991: Svenska ortnamn. Uttal och stavning (ISBN 91-1-915051-2). It was produced by the National Land Survey and the Swedish Language Committee, and it contains about three thousand geographical Swedish, Finnish, and Saami names within the borders of Sweden.

### Conferences

The 17th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was arranged in Finland in 1990 by the Finnish Research Centre for Domestic Languages and the University of Helsinki in agreement with the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS). The participants came from all continents, and thirty-one countries were represented. The general theme of the Congress was Name Systems. The number of papers given was 133, 17 of which dealt with topics close to UNGEGN's field of specialization such as treatment and maintenance of names, official names in bi- or multilingual areas, official naming procedures, compatibility and structure of onomastic data files. In addition to the papers, the scientific program of the Congress also included an international exhibition of publications in onomastics as well as an exhibit devoted to onomastics in Finland.

The proceedings of the Congress, edited by Eeva Maria Närhi, were published in 1990: Proceedings of the XVIIth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences. Volume I, (ISBN 951-9475-76-1), 501 pages, and Volume II (ISBN 951-9475-77-X) 494 pages.

The 6th Norwegian Conference on Names Research was held in Oslo on November 23, 1990. A series of place-name projects was discussed.

At a Nordic conference on lexicography held in Norway in 1991 the treatment of place-names in dictionaries was discussed by some of the speakers.

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