
United Nations
Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

Working Paper
No. 21

Eighteenth Session
Geneva, 12-23 August 1996

Item 7
of the Provisional Agenda

REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

REPORT BY THE CONVENOR OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS

Submitted by Gerd Quinting, Ph.D., U.S. Board on Geographic Names
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Provisional Agenda: Reports of the Working Groups

REPORT BY THE CONVENOR OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON ROMANIZATION SYSTEMS

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This report covers the period since the seventeenth session of UNGEGN that was held in New York in 1994.

The information contained in this report is based mainly on correspondence conducted with the appropriate authorities in the countries concerned. This correspondence is in regard to recent developments on several romanization systems.

Korean

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea have cooperated to devise a single romanization system for Korean. A reply from Seoul to an inquiry on the status of this romanization system indicates that no progress in this endeavor has been made during the last two years.

Thai

Information has been received from the Royal Thai Survey Department that the Royal Institute has finalized work on the proposed transcription system and has submitted it to its government for consideration and approval. If it is approved in time for the eighteenth session of UNGEGN, it will be presented there.

Ukrainian

At the last session of UNGEGN, a provisional romanization system for Ukrainian Cyrillic was introduced in Working Paper No. 73. The system is still being used by the Main Administration of Geodesy, Cartography, and Cadastre. The principal proponent is the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. However, alternate romanization systems have been devised by Kiev State University, and the Institute for Standards and Certification. At present, the Ukrainian government has not yet adopted an official romanization system to be the national standard.

Byelorussian

At the First Meeting of the UNGEGN Baltic Division, held in Tallinn, Estonia, 26-27 October 1995, the participant from Belarus stated that the Committee of Geodesy of the Council of Ministers has employed a romanization system for mapping purposes that is based on the GOST 1983 system. However, the Academy of Sciences of Belarus has drafted a proposal of a different system. It was also reported that no decision has yet been reached regarding the adoption of an official romanization system as the national standard.

Other Matters

This Working Group continues to focus, as one of its goals, on the decisions made in the successor countries to the former Soviet Union regarding the adoption of various scripts. The countries which have made a change have moved mainly from Cyrillic script to Roman script. In this regard, a recent development in Uzbekistan is noteworthy. In 1993, the Uzbek president had decreed the changeover from Cyrillic to a Roman alphabet, consisting of 31 letters and the apostrophe. However, in May of 1995, this Uzbek Roman alphabet was amended by presidential decree, introducing several changes in the original tabulation. This amended alphabet now consists of 26 letters and three digraphs.

The date for full implementation of the Uzbek Roman alphabet has also been postponed, viz., from the year 2000 to 2005.