

**Twenty-third Session
Vienna, 28 March – 4 April 2006**

**Item 19 of the Provisional Agenda:
Implementation of resolutions and the
aims and functions of the Group of Experts**

Geographical names in various languages

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Geographical names in various languages (Norwegian *Geografiske navn i diverse språk*) is the working title of a book that is being produced by **Vigleik Leira**, former member of the staff of the Language Council of Norway, and that is intended for a Norwegian readership. A preliminary version of this project was presented at the Twenty-second Session of UNGEGN in New York 2004. The present WP gives a more detailed survey of different problems which have to be handled when establishing a comprehensive list of geographical names in various languages.

This list contains geographical names from all parts of the world. Alongside the Norwegian names, the forms in a varying number of other languages are given, deviating or not from the form in Norwegian. The list is by no means exhaustive. It refers to a selection of (relatively) well known names and for the most part to European languages of which some Norwegians have a knowledge to a greater or lesser degree. It is hoped that the list will be made accessible on the Internet.

[The following text is an English abridged rendering of a paper read at the conference on "Place names in a Scandinavian and international context" at the University of Oslo 21 October 2005.]

GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES

The state name of *Spain* is a good example of how different a geographical name can be treated in various languages:

Spain (English) state in Europe; Espagne (French), Espainia (Basque), *España* (Spanish), Espanha (Portuguese), Espanja (Finnish), Espanya (Catalan), Hiispania (Estonian), Hispania (Latin), Ispanía (Greek Ἰσπανία), Ispanija (Russian Испания), Ispanya (Turkish), Sefarad (Hebrew), Spagna (Italian), Španelsko (Czech), Spania (Faroese, Norwegian, Roumanian), Spánia (Saami), Spanien (Danish, German, Swedish), Spanija (Latvian), Spanje (Dutch), Spánn (Icelandic), Spanyolország (Hungarian)

The endonym *España* is marked by italics.

More than one exonym

Dependent on regional location many Spanish place names have now varying forms in addition to the Spanish ones (= Castilian) we traditionally know. Alongside *La Coruña* there is *A Corunã* (Galician), alongside *Guernica* there is *Gernika* (Basque). The *Islas Baleares* appear also as *Illes Balears* (Catalan) in atlases. From of old we know of Belgian city names with French and Dutch forms, of Swizz cantons and cities with French, German and Italian names.

Recently Norway has followed the Spanish example and has given official status to the Saami language on a municipal basis in some parts of northern Norway. The municipality of *Kautokeino* (Norwegian) has now *Guovdageaidnu* as official correspondent name in Saami.

Exonymic and endonymic name changes

In Norwegian *Venedig* (from German) was replaced by the endonym *Venezia* rather a long time ago. On the first of July 2005 the spelling *Corsica* was changed to *Korsika*. None of these changes had anything to do with changes in other languages. The endonymic forms were not affected, nor forms in other languages. Such changes may be called *internal* and can be defined as changes that are not caused by changes in other languages. In some cases an internal change may be a transition from an exonym to an endonym.

In other cases changes in a given language (= the endonym language) may give rise to changes in many other languages. It may be state name changes like *Dahomey* > *Benin*, *Haute Volta* (*Upper Volta*) > *Burkina Faso*, city name changes like *Bombay* > *Mumbai*, *Salisbury* > *Harare*, changes in Russian city names from Soviet forms back to czar-time forms. Such changes may be called *external*. They are changes that a given endonym language inflicts upon other languages. In many cases the result is that a lot of languages replace old endonyms with new ones.

The changes that the pinyin system of transcription from Chinese has caused, may also be characterized as *external*, although they belong to a slightly different type. So far as I understand the Chinese names, written with Chinese signs, are the same as before, but since 1979 the pinyin system has been fixed by Chinese authorities to be the official way of writing Chinese names with Latin letters.

In most languages the new names of external origin are accepted more or less voluntarily, often with a transition period where both the old and new name may be used. In Norwegian the freedom of choice between *Peking* and *Beijing* was abolished in 2001, when *Beijing* was established as the only correct spelling.

The transition into new names takes different time in different languages. Before the old names have vanished and the new ones are fully accepted, encyclopedias may differ in what they give as the current forms.

Types of endonyms

From a geographical point of view the endonyms can be looked upon either as administrative names, such as state names, city names and names of entities below state level, or as names of natural phenomena like mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, peninsulas, forests etc. The Italian endonyms *Italia*, *Roma*, *Toscana*, *Po*, *Lago Maggiore*, *Penisola Salentina* are examples of both types.

From a linguistic viewpoint the names can be characterized as “clean” names, e.g. *Oregon* and *Texas* in USA, as mixed names with a describing component part, such as *North Dakota* and *New York*. Furthermore there are names consisting only of ordinary words from the language in question: *Great Salt Lake* and *Salt Lake City*.

Especially the “clean” names are apt to be adopted in their endonymic forms by other languages than the endonym language. Names like *North Dakota* may be adopted in full or the describing part *North* may be translated. In Norwegian both possibilities are often accepted: *North Dakota* or *Nord-Dakota*.

The names consisting of ordinary words tend to be translated if they refer to natural phenomena, while as administrative names they tend to keep their endonymic form. The treatment of *Great Salt Lake* and *Salt Lake City* is illustrating:

Great Salt Lake (English, Dutch, Faroese, Saami) lake in Utah, USA; Bolsjoje Soljonoje ozero (Russian *Большое Солёное озеро*), Grande Lago Salgado (Portuguese), Grand Lac Salé (French), Gran Lago Salado (Spanish), Gran Lago Salato (Italian), Greitsoltleiks or Lielais Salsezers (Latvian), Grosser Saltsee (German), Iso Suolajärvi (Finnish), Megáli Almyrí Límni (Greek *Μεγάλη Αλμυρή Λίμνη*), Nagysóstó (Hungarian), Stora Saltsjön (Swedish), Stóra-Saltvatn (Icelandic), Store Saltsjø or Great Salt Lake (Norwegian), Store Saltsø (Danish), Suur Soolajärv (Estonian)

Salt Lake City (English, Danish, Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish) the capitol of Utah, USA; Soltleiksitija (Latvian), Solt Leik Síty (Greek *Σολτ Λεϊκ Σίτυ*), Solt-Lejk-Siti (Russian *Солт-Лейк-Сити*)

Diacritics

In a resolution UNGEGN has recommended to fully respect diacritical signs in geographical names. Sometimes it can be difficult to produce the correct signs from a keyboard, but apart from that the advice seems plausible and rational. However, in certain cases the doubt may arise whether the presence of a sign is due to a true reproduction of the endonym, or if the sign is part of the ordinary letter use in the language in question. For instance, is Hungarian and Icelandic *Setúbal* a reproduction of the Portuguese endonym *Setúbal* (where the acute marks the stress), or is the use of *ú* in correspondence with the spelling rules in Hungarian and Icelandic, i.e. to mark different vocal qualities in *u* and *ú*?

In the matter of use or non-use of diacritics The Language Council of Norway is on a par with UNGEGN. In geographical names from languages using the Latin alphabet it is recommended to use all the diacritics present in the endonyms. There are two general exceptions: diacritics are omitted in Vietnamese names, and the Turkish *i* and *ı* are merged into the ordinary Norwegian (and European) *i* (and *I* as the capital counterpart). Furthermore there are some few single exceptions, e.g. the state names *Mexico*, *Panama*, *Senegal* with such spellings without accents.

Transcription and retranscription

Transcription is used when words and names in one language is transferred to a language with another writing system, e.g. Greek names in English or Norwegian names in Russian.

Retranscription can be said to occur when transcribed forms are transferred back to the original writing system. In accordance with the Norwegian system of transcription from Greek the Greek name *Γάνα* (i.e. Ghana) has to be retranscribed as *Gána*. The Greek name *Σαρτρ* (covering both the author *Sartre* and the city *Chartres*) will reappear as *Sartr*.

Transcription from Greek and Russian is necessary when names in Greece and Russia are treated in languages using the Latin alphabet. Retranscription from Greek

and Russian is necessary in explaining how names written with Latin letters are treated in Greek and Russian. To tell that Chartres is *Sa?t?* in Greek or that the Norwegian city Bodø is *????* in Russian may suffice for linguists, but is not very informing to ordinary readers.

Transcription is to a high degree dependent on pronunciation. Therefore retranscription can often give a better picture of how the pronunciation really is than the original name. The Greek and Russian versions of the French city *Calais* provide a good example. In retranscription Greek *?a?a?* and Russian *???e* give Kalé and Kale respectively. Especially the Greek *?a?a?* is interesting here. The Latin *C* has been replaced by the Greek kappa and the mute *s* at the end has been omitted. In the last syllable the latin *a* and *i* have been replaced by the Greek alpha and iota. Both vowel sequences, *ai* and *a?*, have the same [e]-pronunciation (for French compare the pronunciations of *je* and *j'ai*). The accent over the Greek iota takes care of the stress on the last syllable in the French name.

Geographical names in large encyclopedias

Both from the side of the ordinary public and from scientists there should be put forward certain demands concerning the information on geographical names in large encyclopedias. Domestic and foreign names should be given according to the official orthography (where such is present). If the name is an exonym, the endonymic form should also be stated. On each form in addition to the boldface form it should be stated clearly what the form refers to.

When names originating from other writing systems than the Latin alphabet are treated the endonyms should be given both in transcribed and untranscribed form. The transcribed form is necessary for ordinary readers, the original non-Latin form is/can be informative for scientists.

To state untranscribed forms in writing systems far from the Latin alphabet (such as Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Georgian, Japanese, Thai) is not easily done, but it should be a task to strive to accomplish.

A superior demand is of course that all the forms an encyclopedia gives are correct with regard to what they refer to.

Athens in some encyclopedias

STORE NORSKE LEKSIKON (Large Norwegian Encyclopedia) says in its latest edition (2005):

“**Athen**, Athínai [nygr. utt. aþine] hovedstad og største by i Hellas, ...” (capital and largest city in Greece)

Here it is concealed that the Norwegian orthography allows you to write either *Aten* or *Athen*. Furthermore it is not stated explicitly what Athínai refers to, but the parenthesis with information on the pronunciation in modern Greek makes it reasonable to conclude that Athínai is the Greek endonym in transcription. That simply is not correct. The Greek name of today is *????a*, which in Norwegian transcription gives *Athína*.

Den Store Danske Encyclopædi (The Large Danish Encyclopedia) is concise:

“**Athen**, (gr. Athenai), Grækenlands hovedstad; ...”

Nationalencyclopedia (The National Encyclopedia, Swedish) has more to say:

“**Athen**, *Aten* (grek. *Athenai*, nygrek. *Athínai*), huvudstad ...”

None of the three large Scandinavian encyclopedias is aware of the fact that the present Greek name is *????a*, which cannot be transcribed as *Athinai*. Many other encyclopedias are not better:

- Le Petit Larousse (French, 2001) states *Athínai* as Greek form.
- El Pequeño Larousse (Spanish, 2001) states *Athenaia* as Greek form.
- Enciclopedia Zanichelli (Italian, 2001) states *Athínai* as Greek form.

A better introducing line in a Norwegian encyclopedia could be:

Aten el. **Athen**, gr. *????a* (*Athína* i no. transkr.), gmlgr. *????a?* (*Athenai* i no. transkr.), hovedstad i Hellas ...

English translation:

Aten or **Athen**, Greek *????a* (*Athína* in Norwegian transcription), old Greek *????a?* (*Athenai* in Norwegian transcription), capital of Greece ...

From the first page of the main list:

A

Aachen (ty., da. eng., est., isl., sv., ung.) by i Tyskland; **Áakhen** (gr. *?a?e?*), **Ahene** (latv.), **Aix-la-Chapelle** (fr.), **Aken** (ned.), **Akhen** (ru. *Á????*), **Akwisgran** (po.), **Aquisgrán** (sp.), **Aquisgrana** (it.), **Aquisgrana** el. **Aquisgrano** (port.), **Aquisgranum** (lat.), **Cáchy** (tsj.)

Aalst (ned., da., eng., sv., ung.) el. **Alost** (fr., port.) by i ned.spr. Belgia

Aare (ty., it., sv., ung.) elv i Sveits; **Arole** (fr.)

Aargau (ty., da., eng., est., sv., ung.) ty.spr. kanton i Sveits; **Argau** (ru. *Á????*), **Argovia** (it., reto., sp.), **Argóvia** (port.), **Argovie** (fr.)

Aarlen (ned.) el. **Arlon** (fr.) by i fr.spr. Belgia; **Arlon** el. **Arlen** (port.), **Orolaunum** (lat.)

Aasiaat (grøn., fær., isl., ung.) el. **Egedesminde** (da., sv., isl., ung.) kommune og by på vestkysten av Grønland

Abadan (da., eng., fi., fr., fær., it., ned., sv., ty., ru. *???????*) havneby i Iran; **Abadã** (port.), **Abadán** (gr. *? μpad??*), **Abadan** (per., est., isl., sp., ung.), **Abadana** (latv.)

Abakan (da., eng., est., fi., fr., isl., it., sv., ru. *???????*, gr. *? μpa???*) by i Russland, hovedstaden i Khakasia; **Abacã** (port.), **Abakán** (sp., ung.), **Abakana** (latv.)

Aberdeen (eng., da., est., fi., fr., fær., isl., it., ned., port., sp., sv., ty., ung.) grevskap og by i Skottland; **Aberdín** (gr. *? μpe??t??*, ru. *???????*), **Aberdina** (latv.), **Devana** (lat.), **Eberdina** (latv.), **Obar-Dheadhain** (gæl.), **Obar Dheathain** (irsk)

Abidjan (fr., da., eng., est., fi., fær., isl., it., ned., sam., sv., ty., ung.) by i Elfenbeinskysten;

Abidzjan (ru. ???????), Abidján (sp.), Abidžana (latv.), Abijão el. Abidjan (port.), Abitzán (gr. ? μρ?t??)

Abilene (eng., da., fr., isl., it., ned., sv., ung.) by i Texas, USA; Abilin (ru. ???????)

Abkhazia (eng.) republikk i Georgia; Abcásia (port.), Abchasién (ty.), Abchazien (sv.), Abhaasia (est.), Abhasia (fi., it.), Abházia (ung.), Abhazija (latv.), Abjasia (sp.), Abkhasía (isl), Abkhasien (da.), Abkhazie (fr.), Abkhazija (ru. ?? ?á??), Apsny (abk.)

Abruzzene/Abruzzane fjell-landskap i Italia; Abrutstsi (ru. ???????), Abruzos (port., sp.), Abruzzen (ty.), Abruzzerna (sv.), Abruzzerne (da.), Abruzzes (fr.), *Abruzzi* (it., isl.), Abruzzit (fi.)

Abruzzi (da., eng., ung.) region i Mellom-Italia; Abroútsi (gr. ? μρ??ts?), Abrutstsi (ru. ???ý??), Abruzos (port., sp.), Abruzzen (ty.), Abruzzes (fr.), Abruzzit (fi.), *Abruzzo* (it.), Abruzzo el. Abruzzi (est., sv.)

Abu Dhabi (da., eng., est., fi., fær., isl., it., ned., port., sv., ty.) hovedstaden i De forente arabiske emirater; Aboú Dabí (gr. ? μρ?? ?taμρ?), Abudabi (latv.), Abu-Dabi (ung., ru. Á??-? á??), Abu Dabi (latv.), Abu Zabi el. Abu Dabi (sp.), Abu Zaby (arab.)

Abuja (eng., da., est., fi., fr., fær., isl., it., ned., port., sv., ty., ung.) hovedstaden i Nigeria; Abudzja (ru. ? ?ý? ? ?), Aboúja (gr. ? μρ????a)

Acapulco (sp., da., eng., est., fi., fr., fær., isl., it., ned., sam., sv., ty., ung.) by i Mexico; Acapulco de Juárez (port.), Akapoúlko (gr. ??ap????), Akapulko (latv., ru. ? ????????)

From Greek to Norwegian:

??t??t??t ?a? ??μp???? > Trinidad og Tobago
??p??? > Tripoli
??t > Trier
??sta? ?ta ?????a > Tristan da Cunha
????a > Troja
??μse > Tromsø
????t?a?μ > Trond heim
?sa?t > Tsjad
?s???est?? > Charleston
?satta????a > Chattanooga
?se???? > Cheyenne
?s??t > Celje
?se???μp??s? > Tsjeljabinsk
?se????ss? > Tsjerkassy
?se?????fs? > Tsjernjakhovsk
?se????fts? > Tsjernovtsy
?s?s?e ? p??de???β?tse > České Budejovice
?s?s te? > Chester
?sest???βa > Czestochowa
?s?t???e > Cetinje
?sefa??? > Cefalù
?se?à > Tsjekkia
?s ?????a > Chihuahua
?s t? > Tsjita
?s tta????? > Chittagong
?s?e? > Cres
????s?a > Tunisia
????da > Tunis
??????? T??assa > Tyrrenhavet
??f?ða > Tbilisi
?eμ?? > Jemen
Fad??ts > Vaduz
Fa??μpa??s > Fairbanks
Fa?s??aμpa?t > Faisalabad
Fa?st?? > Festós
F????? > Falun
F??ste? > Falster
Fe????a > Ferrara
F???t ?da > Fthiiótida
F??ad??f eða > Philadelphia
F???pp??e? > Filippinene
F???a?d?a > Finland
F????a > Fyn
F?t?? > Fiji

F???d?a > Flandern
F???sup???? > Flensburg
F???e? > Flores (2)
F?????ta > Florida
F???e?tà > Firenze
F???da > Florida
F????? > Phoenix
F????st?? > Folkestone
F???? > Forlì
F??μe?t??a > Formentera
F??ta???a > Fortaleza
F?t?a > Foggia
F??e?teβe?t??a > Fuerteventura
F??t????μa > Fujiyama
F??μp???? > Freiburg (im Breisgau)
F????f??t > Frankfort
F?a??f??t? (t?? ? ? ??) > Frankfurt am Main
F?a??f??t? (t?? ??te?) > Frankfurt an der Oder
F????? > Fresno
F?e?d???? ?s?? > De frisiske øyer
F??μa?t? > Fremantle
F??ta??? > Freetown
F?? > Fyn
F???da > Fokída
F????a?t ??s?? > Falklandsøyene
??a??eμ > Haarlem
?aβ?? > Hawaii
??β?? > Le Havre
???? > Haag
?ad?aμa??t > Hadramawt
?a?? > Jaén
?a?de?β???? > Heidelberg
???-?a? > Hainan
? aī?te?aμp??t > Hyderabad
? a?ó(?)?? > Haiphong
??f a > Haifa
?a? > Hull
?a??p? > Aleppo
???f a? > Halifax
?a??d??? > Khalkidikí
??μe?fest > Hammerfest
??μ ??t?? > Hamilton
?aμpa??fs? > Khabarofsk
??μpe? > Humber
????? > Hanko
?apa????ta > Haparanda

From Cyrillic to Norwegian:

?? ????? > Asjkhabad	?????? > Batumi
?????? > Ayacucho	?????????? ?????? > Baffinøya
????? > Ajaccio	???????????????? > Basjkortostan
?????? > Anglesey	????? > Béarn
?i?????i? (ukr.) > Hviterussland	????????? > Besançon
???-??-? ?????????? ?????? > Bab el-Mandeb	????-????? > Betlehem
????????? > Bayern	????? > Bekaadalen
?????????? ??????? > Bahamas	????????????? > Hviterussland
?????? > Bahamas	?????????? (hvru) > Hviterussland
?????? > Bagdad	????????? > Hviterussland
????????? > Badajoz	????????? > Beograd
?????-????? > Baden-Baden	????? > Belize
?????-????????????? > Baden Württemberg	????????????? > Bellinzona
?????? > Basel	????? ????? > Kvitsjøen
????????????? > Basilicata	?????????????? > Balutsjistan
????????? > Bairiki	????-????????? > Belo Horizonte
????-?????? > Bahía Blanca	????????? > Belfast
?????? > Bajkal(sjøen)	?????? ?? > Hvitnilen
????????? > Bayonne	????????? > Belgia
????????? > Bayreuth	????????? > Benghazi
????? > Baku	?????????? > Bengal
????????? > Balaton	?????????????? ?????? > Bengalbukta
????????????? ??????? > Balearene	????????(?) > Tighina
????????? > Balearene	????????????? > Benevento
????????? > Baltijsk	????? > Benin
????????? > Baltimore	????????? > Bergamo
?????? > Balkhasj(-sjøen)	????????? > Bergen
????????? (kir.) > Issyk-Kul	????? ?????????? ?????? >
????????????? ?????? > Østersjøen	Elfenbeinskysten
?????? > Bamako	?????????? > Berezina
????? > Bangui	?????????? ?????? > Beringstredet
????????? > Bangkok	????????????? ?????? > Beringhavet
????????-? ???-????????? > Bandar Seri Begawan	????????? > Berlin
????????? > Banjul	????????? > Bermuda
????????-? ?????????? > Banská Bystrica	????? > Bern
?????-? ??? > Banja Luka	????????? > Beskidene
????????? > Barbados	????????? > Beslan
????????????? ?????? > Barentshavet	????????? > Biarritz
????? > Bari	????????? > Bizerte
????????????? > Barcelona	????? > Biel
?????? > Basra	????????? > Bilbao
?????? > Basseterre	?????? > Burma
???-??? > Basse-Terre	????????????? > Birmingham
????????? > Bastia	????????????? > Birobidzjan
????????????????? > Tsjerkessk	?????? > Bissau
?????-??? > Baton Rouge	????????????? ?????? > Biscayabukta
	????????? > Vizcaya
	????????? > Bismarck

From names in Latin letters to Norwegian forms:

Alma Ata > Almaty
Alma-Ata > Almaty
Al-Madinah > Medina
Al-Maghrib > Marokko
Al-Manamah > Manama
Almanya > Tyskland
Al-Mawsil > Mosul
al-Munastir > Monastir
al-Najaf > Najaf
Al-Nasira > Nasaret
Al-Nil > Nilen
Aloankomaat > Nederland
Alpafjöll > Alpene
Alpen > Alpene
Alperna > Alpene
Alperne > Alpene
Alpes > Alpene
Alpes Venetae > Dolomittene
Alpi > Alpene
Alpid > Alpene
Alpis > Alpene
Alpit > Alpene
Alpok > Alpene
Alps > Alpene
Alpy > Alpene
Al-Qahirah > Kairo
Al-Quds > Jerusalem
Al-Qumur > Komorene
Alsacia > Alsace
Al-Sahra > Sahara
Alsatia > Alsace
Alsazia > Alsace
Alsen > Als
Alsir > Algerie
Also-Ausztria > Niederösterreich
Alt > Olt
Alta Austria > Oberösterreich
Alta Baviera > Oberbayern
Alta elv > Altaelva
Altafjord > Altafjorden
Altafjørður > Altafjorden
Altai > Altaj
Altajs > Altaj
Alto Adidzje > Sør-Tyrol
Alto Adige > Sør-Tyrol
Alto Palatinado > Oberpfalz
Alto Palatinato > Oberpfalz
Alto-Adigo > Sør-Tyrol
Alttæatnu > Altaelva
Al-Uqsur > Luxor
Al-Urdun > Jordan 2
Aluta > Olt
Alvania > Albania
Alvernia > Auvergne
Al-Yaman > Jemen
Alzeeria > Algerie
Alziir > Alger
Alzir > Alger
Alzira > Alger
Alzirija > Algerie
Alzirska > Algerie
Alzjir > Alger
Alzjir > Algerie
Ama > Amman
Amasoná > Amazonas
Amasonfljót > Amazonas
Amazon > Amasonas
Amazona > Amazonas
Amazonfloden > Amazonas
Amazonios > Amazonas
Amazonka > Amazonas
Amberes > Antwerpen
Ambianum > Amiens
Amburgo > Hamburg
Ameerika > Amerika
Ameerika Samoa > Amerikansk Samoa
Ameerika Úhendriigid > USA
America > Amerika
America Central > Mellom-Amerika
America centrala > Mellom-Amerika
America centrale > Mellom-Amerika
America de Nord > Nord-Amerika
America de Sud > Sør-Amerika
América del Norte > Nord-Amerika
América del Sur > Sør-Amerika
América do Norte > Nord-Amerika
América do Sul > Sør-Amerika
America Latina > Latin-Amerika
America meridionale > Sør-Amerika
America settentrionale > Nord-Amerika
American Samoa > Amerikansk Samoa
Amerihká Ovtastuvvan Státhat > USA
Amerihka Samoa > Amerikansk Samoa
Amerika Birlesik Devletleri > USA
Amerika Samoa > Amerikansk Samoa