

Ninth Session
New York, 17-27 February 1981
Agenda Item No. 6

Standardization of Geographical Names in Greece

Work carried out since the Eighth Session of the Group of Experts

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PAPER PRESENTED BY GREECE

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1. Since the eighth session of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names, further work has been carried out in Greece in the fields of collection, office treatment and standardization of geographical names. The main agencies involved were : The Center for the Historical Dictionary of the Greek Language and the Medieval Hellenic Research Center, both of the Academy of Athens; the Departments of Linguistics of the Universities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Ioannina; the Hellenic Military Geographical Service; the Hellenic Hydrographic Service; the Committee of Toponyms of the Ministry of Interior, and the National Statistical Service.

2. The Committee of Toponyms of the Ministry of Interior on the occasion of the national census of population scheduled to take place in March 1981, has concluded its project for naming all unnamed inhabited places of Greece. A complete list of new names will be published in the Government Gazette. New names are drawn by local government authorities on the basis of local history, terrain morphology, local products, or local hagionyms (names of local saints of churches). Names thus selected are forwarded to the Committee of Toponyms of the Ministry of Interior for approval.

3. The following specialized publications or studies, dealt with Greek toponyms, in the period under consideration :

- a. Bibliography of Greek toponyms for 1978-1980 has been compiled by Dr. Dikaios Vayacacos of the Academy of Athens for publication in Onoma.
- b. Work has continued on a study of the names of islands of the entire Mediterranean region, as

they appear in various works and publications from antiquity to the present. Already, the compilation and cataloguing of such names for the 3,304 islands and rock formations in the waters surrounding Greece has been completed.

- c. Another study is underway for the collection and classification for present and past names (since antiquity) for all Greek capes and gulfs. These names are collected from both published sources and oral tradition.

4. The Greek Standardization Organization (ELOT, 15 Didotou St., Athens), has started a systematic procedure for the adoption of a transcription system of the Greek alphabet into Latin. The system already adopted by a specialized working group set out by ELOT, will soon be presented for public discussion according to the rules and procedures of the Greek Standardization Organization. Once it is finalized - after discussions with the competent authorities of the Cyprus Republic - it will receive wide application, especially as Greece's entry into the European Economic Community makes it even more pressing for a standardized system of transcription for the Greek alphabet. The system adopted by the Greek specialized working group appears in Working Paper A. Comments by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names will be welcome. It should be noted that the ELOT group has recommended for bibliographical purposes, a second romanization system might be worked out, based mostly on the traditional principles for the transliteration of the Greek alphabet.

5. Following the decision of the Eighth Session of the Group of Experts, a draft for toponymic guidelines for Greek cartography has been prepared by the competent Greek authorities and will be submitted as Working Paper B. These guidelines include an abbreviation glossary of cartographic terms in the Greek language, transcribed into the Latin alphabet, with their abbreviations.

6. In response to a circular letter (November 5, 1980) by the Convenor of the Working Group on Undersea and Maritime Feature Names, a committee was formed in Greece representing the following institutions and agencies : The Hydrographic Service, the Institute for Geology and Mining Research, and the Institute for Oceanographic and Fishing Research. This committee has prepared a collection of undersea and maritime feature names, already in existence, for the waters surrounding Greece, and has placed them on a map for interational usage.