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Country names

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Submitted by the Czech Republic **

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** Prepared by Pavel Boháč, Commission on Geographical Names, Czech Republic

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Since the year 2003 the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre brought out two specialized gazetteers collecting geographical names. Those handbooks were worked out mostly by specialists of the Commission on Geographical Names, which have continued in publishing standardized geographical names. The gazetteers are written in Czech and available only as a hardcopy. There are added English summaries, notices and indexes to make the reading possible also for foreign readers.

The issues concern exonyms and the authors tried to differ and explain endonymic and exonymic name forms very precisely. This method has seemed to be useful in a period of time when man is likely to become confused in an usage of both endonyms and exonyms.

This paper would like to introduce the one of them, which is called “Names of the States and their Selected Territorial Parts – Part I. Europe”.

Among other difficulties there is one thing causing problems in publishing such a gazetteer as the book I am going to refer to. Although in many countries changes in official names of states and their subdivisions are issued regularly and many similar lists appear, there are sometimes variants to be chosen from. Consequently, full or short names are used in a confusing way on a different level of a communication, eg. Australia’s full name “Commonwealth of Australia“ did not enter the UN usage and therefore is not given officially in the new ISO 3166-1 edition as well.

In the gazetteer “Names of the States and their Selected Territorial Parts – Part I. Europe”, we focused on the names of administrative subdivisions of European countries. Smaller territorial units of a state administration like districts were omitted. After analysis of a few European countries the space statistical units were preferred to the administrative ones. We tried to collect and stress those entities whose endonyms are often substituted by exonyms that exist as counterparts inside the contemporary Czech language or that are completely/partially translated into Czech. The second way of the adaptation from the source language into the target language is mostly used among languages that are from a linguistic point of view similar. In the case of the Czech standardization of geographical names, there is a permanent experience of dealing with the

interesting name conversions from the Polish, Russian, Croatian, Slovenian and/or other Slavonic languages to Czech.

For a better comprehensibility of the handbook, full names of state territorial units have been included in a case that they differ widely in the form from the short ones. The entries *Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg* and *République et Canton de Genève* are two samples. There is adopted another users friendly policy as well: For geographical features in multilingual areas the authors added also name forms in minority languages to names in principal official languages. How is a gazetteer entry like then? The *Evrejskaja atonomnaja oblast'* (Jew Autonomous Region) in the Russian Federation could be mentioned to show principles of elaborating. It is called *די יידישער אווטאָנאָמע געגנט* (*Jidischer awtonome gegnt*) in the Hebrew alphabet) in Yiddish and this name has been joined to the gazetteer entry. In a similar way, *Friuli-Venezia Julia* is a multilingual region in Italy where Italian as well as Friulian and Slovenian languages are spoken. The name forms in all three languages appear in our gazetteer.

Despite the fact that the gazetteer is not huge it was not easy to collect and prove all data included. Now it is not sure that works will continue and other continents will be elaborated in a near future.