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**Ninth United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names**

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations  
resolutions on the standardization of geographical names**

**Measures taken in Finland to implement United Nations resolution  
VIII/2. Commemorative naming practices for geographical features.  
The recommendation on commemorative naming practices in Helsinki, Finland**

Submitted by Finland\*\*

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## **The recommendation on commemorative naming practices in Helsinki, Finland**

In 2002, the extent to which commemorative names could be adopted in the planning of new place names in Helsinki, as well as the grounds for their adoption generated lively discussions both in public and in the Place Names Committee of the City of Helsinki.

Especially intensive were the discussions on long street names with personal names and titles. Other topical issues included the extent to which the persons honoured by a commemorative name were known to the public in general, and the share of commemorative names as compared with all names in use, as well as the length of the waiting period before a commemorative name could be given.

Following these discussions, the Place Names Committee of the City of Helsinki drafted a report of the Finnish and foreign practices and principles of commemorative names. This report was used by the Committee as a basis for the recommendation on the use of commemorative names in the Finnish capital Helsinki.

The recommendation and its justifications, issued by the Place Names Committee of the City of Helsinki 15 September 2004, were reported in Working Paper No. 45 of the 23rd session of UNGEGN, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/gegn23wp45.pdf>. They are in harmony with both the UN resolution VIII/2, Commemorative naming practices for geographical features, and the recommendations of the Finnish Language Board.

The main points of the recommendation are:

1. **A street, square, park, or other place can be named after an individual, or to commemorate him/her, if the individual and his/her actions have been generally acknowledged as worth commemorating and**
  - a. **The individual is associated with the place to be named in a significant and positive manner, or represents its historical layering, or**
  - b. **The individual was born in Helsinki and lived there for a significant part of his/her life, or if he/she carried out his/her life's work in Helsinki, or**
  - c. **The individual is a Finn whose life's work is significant nationally or internationally.**

The individual shall be respected and acknowledged also beyond his/her own time, area of expertise, and political frame of reference.

2. **A street, square, park, or other place cannot be named after a living individual.** An individual's name can only be considered for use in a planned name **after a minimum of five years from his/her death.**
3. **A street, square, park, or other place cannot be named after public utilities, companies, or public corporations that are still in operation.** The name of a company or public corporation can be considered for use in a planned name if it operated under the same name for several generations in the same place, and if it had high local significance.
4. **Names given solely to commemorate individuals shall not be gathered in dense groups within an area.**