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Item 12 (e) of the Provisional Agenda\*

Toponymic data files:

(e) Compatibility and structure of systems

**Status report on the Project EuroGeoNames (EGN) –  
developing a European geographical names infrastructure & services**

Submitted by Germany\*\*

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## **Status report on the Project EuroGeoNames (EGN) – developing a European geographical names infrastructure & services**

### **Summary**

The EuroGeoNames (EGN) project started successfully on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006 and will last for 30 months until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009. EGN is co-financed by the European Commission (contributing 50% of the total costs) within the so-called *eContentplus Programme*. The project budget amounts to 1,9M € and is coordinated by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG).

The EGN project was presented as Working Paper No. 49 at the Twenty-third Session of UNGEGN in Vienna, Austria [UNGEEN1, 2006]. A status report on the EGN project was given in March 2007 in the UNGEGN Information Bulletin #33 [UNGEEN, 2007].

### **1. Rationale**

In most of the European countries databases exist which are already including geographical names data. They are mostly used by surveying and mapping authorities supporting processes in cartographic map production and they mainly consider national linguistic specifics. But, in some cases various feature categories of geographical names (e.g. populated places, administrative units, etc.) are very often not yet based on the same data model and are therefore not yet compatible with each other. Additional toponymic attributes to geographical names, e.g. exonyms, the pronunciation, the gender, the language or script of geographical names are very often not linked to the databases of the surveying and mapping authorities or very rarely available.

According to United Nations Resolution VIII/6 [UNCSGN, 2002] as well as to the Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council [INSPIRE, 2007], EGN will address the aforementioned problems by implementing an internet service that will link and provide access to the official, multilingual geographical names data held at the national level across Europe [UNICODE, 2007]. Access will be provided by a Web Feature Service (WFS) interface implemented at each data provider's database [OGC, 2005] [ISO, 2001]. A reference Web Service will access these distributed WFS to query the EGN infrastructure and return standardised result sets to the inquirer. Single searches for geographical names within the EGN infrastructure will be free of charge.

The user as well as 'value added service' providers - will have access to this EGN infrastructure and searching will be enabled by using names in all official European languages, including minority languages (if the data is available).

## 2. Participants & roles

The project Consortium brings together partners from the public (3 National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies – NMCAs from Austria, Slovenia and Germany), academia (Utrecht University, EDINA National Data Centre) and the private sectors (Geodan IT Holding, GeoTask/ProDV Group, ESRI Geoinformatik GmbH) as well as the association of European NMCAs, EuroGeographics, embracing the full 'value chain' from data providers > technology partners > value added service applications. These partners have well established working relationships based on other work, including the Survey/Inventory on European Geographical Names data (SI-EGN) that was completed in advance of the project proposal in 2005 and that was presented as Working Paper No. 50 at the Twenty-third Session of UNGEGN in Vienna, Austria [UNGEEN2, 2006].

Fifteen countries, i.e. 15 National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies – NMCAs from Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands, Turkey – form the *EGN Reference Group*. The NMCAs have all signed a 'Declaration of Participation', testifying to their cooperation in providing access to their geographical names data sources, thus populating the EGN infrastructure.

Furthermore, the EGN project established a so-called *EGN Group of Interest*. This group is comprised of the aforementioned stakeholders and provides a conduit by which their views can be incorporated into the evolution of the EGN infrastructure. So far 24 GI stakeholders have indicated their willingness to be registered as a member in the *EGN Group of Interest* by signing a '*Letter of Support*'.

## 3. Status of work

The establishment of the EGN infrastructure and associated services consists of four periods, the *initiation phase* (month 1 to 8), the *development phase* (month 9 to 17), the *implementation phase* (month 18 to 26) and the *completion phase* (month 27 to 30). Accordingly, this status report comprises the *initiation phase* as well as the major part of *development phase*.

### 3.1 Meetings & workshops

Several meetings and workshops were conducted for the broader stakeholders and/or for the EGN partners listed above under (1.) so far. Amongst others, a workshop on user/business requirements (15<sup>th</sup> January 2007, Utrecht, The Netherlands), a workshop on business models (4<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Dortmund, Germany) as well as two workshops of the EGN Consortium with the EGN Reference Group (23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006, Frankfurt am Main, Germany and on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007, Madrid, Spain). The latter one was conducted jointly with the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the UNGEGN. Furthermore a joint meeting with the Working Group on Exonyms of the UNGEGN, with the East, Central

and Southeast-East Europe Division of the UNGEGN and with members of the EuroGeoNames Project was held (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007, Prague, Czech Republic). The objectives of the workshops as well as all presentations and their outcomes were described in the UNGEGN Information Bulletin #33. This information is also available through the EuroGeoNames website: [www.eurogeonames.com](http://www.eurogeonames.com), under 'Workshops / Meetings'.

### 3.2 Deliverables

Several documents – so-called “deliverables” – were prepared and submitted to the European Commission. Deliverables of status “public” are available through the EuroGeoNames website: [www.eurogeonames.com](http://www.eurogeonames.com), under 'Downloads'.

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