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

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress  
made in the standardization of geographical names since the Ninth Conference  
(for distribution only).**

**Report concerning the progress made in Romania in the standardization  
of geographical names between 2007 - 2012**

Submitted by Romania\*\*

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## **Report concerning the progress made in Romania in the standardization of geographical names between 2007 - 2012**

The constant presence of Romania at the United Nations Conferences on the standardization of geographical names confirms the will of our country to consequently put into practice the resolutions adopted by the previous conferences, to contribute to a better international cooperation.

Romania set off the principle supported since the first United Nations Conference held in Geneva in 1967, stating that standardization at international level can only be successful if based on each country's efforts to solve its internal problems concerning the geographical names in accordance with the United Nations recommendations.

In 2008, Romania held in Timișoara, with the extraordinary participation of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), of the West University of Timișoara (the host of the event), of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Ministry of National Defence, through the Military Topographic Directorate and of the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, a training course in cartographic toponymy (*UN/ICA Week of Geographical Names in Timișoara*). Presentations were given by expert members of the UNGEGN staff – Dr. Helen Kerfoot, Prof. Ferjan Ormeling, Prof. Peter Jordan, Henri Dorion, Dr. Paul Woodman, Pierre Jaillard, Béla Pokony, Pier-Giorgio Zacchedu, Élisabeth Calvarin, Bogusław R. Zagórski and others. We deem that a more thorough informing of the stakeholders would have brought a larger participation of the trainees within the Western Balkans multicultural area. The training course was successfully continued by the meetings of the Working Group on Exonyms – under the aegis of UNGEGN and of the Working Group for National and regional atlases – under the aegis of the International Cartography Association (ICA), as well as by a field trip in Timiș county, from Timișoara to Lugoj, with the participation of experts coming from 18 countries.

A Governmental authority in the field of standardization of geographical names is not yet established in Romania. However, following the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, New York 2007, the Working Group for the establishing of the National Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names made up of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Romanian Academy, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the National Agency of Cadastre and Real Estate Registration and the National Institute for Statistics, whose secretariate is held by the Ministry of National Defence, through the Military Topographic Directorate, who is working on promoting a draft regulation and on regulating the national responsibilities with respect to geographical names standardization.

Moreover, starting with 1996 the activity of the Ministry of National Defence is seconded by the Commission for the Standardisation of Geographical Names within the Romanian Academy, an interdisciplinary body with advisory role, made by experts from various domains as well as by public bodies. This commission is the scientific forum that provides, upon the request of the Government, the graphical appearance of the inscriptions in 12 other languages for a number of 1241 localities, villages and towns (less than 10% of the total number of the localities in our country). Between 2007 – 2012, it was monitored the strict observance of the Government Ordinance no. 1206/2001 concerning the inscription in mother language of the names of the localities in which the national minorities count more than 20% of the total population. For setting the final graphical appearances, cultural organizations of the respective minorities as well as their representatives in the Chamber of Deputies were sought for advice.

Preliminary to the approval of the regulation and the setting up of the National Commission for the Standardisation of Geographical Names, the Ministry of National Defence assumes national

responsibility through the Military Topographic Directorate, which is legislated by the Government Ordinance no. 4/2010 establishing the National spatial information infrastructure in Romania, subsequently approved and supplemented by Law no. 190/2010 for the implementation of the EU INSPIRE Directive in Romania, which specifically includes the „Geographical names” topic.

To this end, the Ministry of National Defence, through the Military Topographic Directorate, generated a database with the geographical names for the Romanian territory collected from the military topographical maps on a scale of 1:25,000, compliant with the United Nations recommendations, which will be submitted to the United Nations on the occasion of the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The database with geographical names for the Romanian territory contains 88,598 entries (*oronyms, oikonoms, hydronyms, phytonyms, hodonyms etc.*), which will be available in digital format on the Web page/geo-portal of the Military Topographic Directorate by the end of 2012, and will be periodically updated. Moreover, in order to comply with the Resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council no. 131 (VI) of February 19, 1948 (E/695) on the coordination of cartographic services of specialized agencies and international organizations, respectively of the United Nations Geographical Information Working Group, in 2009, Romania, through the Military Topographic Directorate, provided the United Nations, free of any charge, the vector map of Romania VMap level 2 (1:50.000) showing order I, II and III administrative limits, a map which contains the standardised geographical names.

As over 100 years have passed since the previous work, the Great Geographical Dictionary of Romania, a 5 volumes monumental opera, drawn up by the Romanian Geographical Society and the Military Geographical Institute between 1898 and 1902, according to the Recommendation no. 4 of the 1<sup>st</sup> United Nations Conference on the standardisation of geographical names, Geneva – 1967, concerning the elaboration of a national “Gazetteer” by each Member State, including the most important geographical names of the country, in a standardised format, Romania – who took part in all the United Nations Conferences – through the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, since 1999, has initiated the elaboration of this work, included ever since 1944 in the strategic research program of the Institute, as of the setting up thereof. The current “Gazetteer” was published in two volumes (vol. I, 2008, vol. II, 2009), including on approximately 1,400 pages over 40,000 geographical names, of which 14,000 oikonoms, 5,000 hydronyms, 1,800 oronyms, 1,000 phytotonyms, 900 protected areas, as well as numerous micro – toponyms (place names).

The experts of the specialised institutions of the Romanian Academy carried further the academic research work in toponymy and published several dictionaries:

- *geographical – by counties*, some of which limited to physical – geographical elements (Arad), historical – geographical elements (Timiș) or general elements (Mehedinți), while other undergo drafting (Alba);

- *toponymical – from a linguistic perspective*, focusing on historical provinces (Muntenia, 3 volumes) or hydrographical reservoirs (Transylvania).

A recent publication, “States of the 2011 contemporary world”, records with equal care the official names of the states and of the main cities and specifies the most common exonyms in the Romanian language. The same rigour is encountered in school books, atlases and other common cartographic works.

A special focus was put on disseminating and implementing Recommendation no. 2 of the Eight United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Berlin 2002, which regulates the assigning of commemorative names to social – cultural objectives – fields where, especially in the fugacious world of sports and even of politics, an improper rush is felt. Prevention measures were imperative.

Romania is for continuing the large exchange of ideas, information and documentation in this dynamic field. Thus we appreciate the *UNGEGN Newsletter*, able to reveal the interest of larger parts of the public opinion.

On the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> jubilee Conference of the United Nations on the standardization of the geographical names, held at New York, in 1992, the 16 nations participating to all the conferences, our country included, were mentioned. Romania would like to confirm its status of founding member of these United Nations meetings, receptive to the public image that the standardization of geographical names gives.