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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 of Latvia

Summary**

The report covers the period since the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

Latvian institutions have taken part in European projects on data infrastructure development for geographical names and addresses.

There have been some slight changes with regard to the official geographical names authorities. The Saeima (Parliament), the Government, several ministries, the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency and municipalities have the authority to adopt official names. The State Language Centre is the oversight and advisory body. The Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, the Latvian Language Agency and the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia are consulting and scientific bodies.

Changes in legislation. In 2009, a new administrative and territorial division of Latvia was introduced, some addressing regulations were updated and the Geospatial Information Act was adopted. In 2012, regulations on toponymic data were adopted. The regulations consolidated almost all rules and principles for geographical names standardization as well as operative provisions for the preservation of geographical names as part of the country's heritage.

Toponymic data files and gazetteers. The principal repositories of geographical names are the Geographical Names Database of Latvia (130,000 geographical names), the National Address Register (243,600 names) and the Linguistic Card

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** The full report was prepared by Vita Strautniece (Latvian Geospatial Information Agency) and is available in the language of submission only from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEKN/ungegnConf10.html>.



Index of Toponyms of Latvia maintained by the Latvian Language Institute (approximately 1.5 million names). A dictionary of names of populated areas in Latvia (14,012 names) is available on the Internet.

Toponymic education. Toponymic education has been provided in the form of lecture courses on toponymics at universities, public lectures and presentations. In addition, a seminar on geographical names standardization issues was held during the fifteenth session of the Baltic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in Riga in 2012.

Geographical names in cartography and exonyms. The Latvian Geospatial Information Agency has continued its work on the topographic mapping of Latvia. The Agency's web map viewer offers a geographical name search function on current maps of Latvia on scales from 1:1,000,000 to 1:10,000. A private mapping company has published the World Geographic Atlas (in Latvian, containing over 90,000 geographical names — the rules for rendering geographical names into Latvian from 129 other languages were developed especially for this project with the assistance of the Latvian Language Agency); the World Political Reference Atlas (57,000 geographical names); and the Great Atlas of Latvia on a scale of 1:100,000 (over 100,000 geographical names). The State Language Centre has added a list of countries and regions of European Union member States to its register of country names. The rules for rendering proper names from Armenian and Croatian into Latvian were prepared by linguists and published in 2009 and 2011.