Economic and Social Council

**Tenth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**
New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012
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 the Netherlands

Submitted by The Netherlands**

Report of the Netherlands 2007-2012

1. In accordance with the procedure in use within the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of UNGEGN, the various relevant actions and achievements have been reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions adopted by the consecutive United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN).

Here are a few important trends that are worth highlighting in this overview:

- *EuroGeoNames (EGN)*, a web (gazetteer) service implemented for providing official geographical names data in Europe together with European National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies, remains an essential part of the DGSD activities:
    - In 2011, databases from all European Member States of the DGSD will be connected;
    - Within EGN, the *Exonyms and Other Variant Names Database (EVN-DB)* for European geographical names has been developed and currently includes the exonyms and variant names of all European Member states of DGSD.

- Dutch experts are still strongly involved in the organization of training courses in toponymy (Burkina Faso (2008), Romania (2008), Kenya (2009), Cameroon (2010), Indonesia, (2010)).
- The language of the Frisian minority group received wider attention..

Report of the Netherlands 2007-2012

2. In accordance with the procedure in use within the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of UNGEGN, the various relevant actions and achievements in the field of geographical names standardization have been reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions adopted by the consecutive United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN).

Res. I/7 and II/19 Regional meetings

3. Meetings of the Dutch- and German-Speaking Division were held in:
   - Vienna, Austria 20-05-2008
   - Nairobi, Kenya 11-05-2009
   - Tainach, Austria, 26-04-2010
   - Vienna, Austria 03-05-2011

Res. V-15 Organization of geographical names standardization

4. In the Netherlands the *Adviescommissie aardrijkskundige namen in Nederland* (Advisory commission on geographical names in the Netherlands) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences is consulted regularly on behalf of new geographical names to be created, because of mergers of municipalities. This advisory commission has built a website in order to better publicize the results of its advisory activities, and produced a brochure that can also be downloaded. See http://www.plaatsnamenadvies.nl . In 2011 the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society (KNAG) took over from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences as umbrella organisation for this commission.

   The *Werkgroep Buitenlandse aardrijkskundige namen (*Working Group on Foreign Geographical Names) of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Dutch Language Union, a supranational body in charge of language matters for Belgium, the Netherlands and Suriname) is in charge of standardizing Dutch exonyms. It meets regularly in order to deal with new names. The standardized exonyms are available at http://taaladvies.net/taal/aardrijkskundige_namen/ (in Dutch)

5. In 2007, the Netwerk Naamkunde (http://www.naamkunde.net/) was initiated. This Onomastical Network has a mailing list, shows what kind of onomastical research participants engage in, as well as their yearly results, and has an overview of the workshops held. It is organised from the Meertens Instituut (P.O.Box 94264, 1090 GG Amsterdam) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

   In 2008 the Network organised a workshop on Onomastics and Geography, in which microtoponymy and the problems of studying toponyms through databases were discussed. Its papers (in Dutch) can be downloaded at http://www.naamkunde.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=110&Itemid=59#worksh04

In 2011 the Meertens Institute of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences decided, because of retrenchments, to discontinue its involvement in toponymy. Activities might be transfered to the Central Bureau for Genealogy in The Hague.

Res. VI/7: Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

6. The *Toponymic Guidelines* for the Netherlands have been revised, thanks to the input of the *Fryske Akademy* (Academy for the Frisian Language of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences), the *Dutch Language Union* and the *Kadaster* (the national mapping organisation). It has been made available in digital form as 5th edition in 2011. This new edition can be downloaded from the website of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* ("Dutch Language Union") at http://taaladvies.net/taal/aardrijkskundige_namen/downloads/toponymic_guidelines.pdf .

Res. VIII-1 Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

6. In 2008 Arjen Versloot defended his PhD thesis on the Mechanisms of Language Change; Vowel Reduction in 15th Century West Frisian, on the premises of the former Franeker University in Frisia. He was appointed to the newly inaugurated chair for the Frisian language at Amsterdam Municipal University in 2011.

    In 2008 Arjen Versloot and Ferjan Ormeling wrote an extensive overview of the role of Frisian place names as cultural heritage (Friese plaatsnamen als cultureel erfgoed), *It Beaken* vol 70, no ½, 2008, pp 3-22).

Res VIII/4: Exonyms
Netherlands:
For the EuroGeoNames project, current exonyms in the Dutch language have been made available and are incorporated in the EGN Exonym database.

Res VIII/6: Integration of geographical names into national and regional spatial data infrastructures

8. Co-funded by the eContentplus programme of the European Union, a web (gazetteer) service infrastructure – called *EuroGeoNames (EGN)* – has been implemented for providing official geographical names data in Europe together with European National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies (NMCAs) since 2009. The overall management of the EuroGeoNames infrastructure is conducted by *EuroGeographics* (the membership association of the European national mapping authorities), together with the *Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie* (the German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy). From the Netherlands names data from the 1: 10 000 core topographic data file have been made available for the EGN service. This has now been upgraded to also be conform to INSPIRE regulations.

Res. VIII-6 Integration of national names into national and regional spatial data infrastructures

9. For the first time in the Netherlands, place name collection has been mentioned in a law passed in 2007. In the law on creating the Topografisch basisbestand (Basic topographical database of the Netherlands) the collection of geographical names was mentioned as the responsibility of the National Mapping Agency. The new object-oriented version of the Basic topographical database of

the Netherlands (TOP10NL) was completed in 2007. One of the object attribute categories is geographical names, so that names are linked in the files to objects as well, instead of to coordinates only. Simultaneously, street addresses (as well as some other names of geographical objects including place names within municipalities) have been registered and standardised by municipalities according to the BAG act (wet Basisregistratie Adressen en Gebouwen, the Act on standardised basic registration of street addresses and buildings), and it is hoped that the spelling of the place names collected and standardised by the topographers from the Cadastre will not be compromised by the street address spelling standardization efforts of these municipalities.

EuroGeoNames project

10. Since 2004 Utrecht University and the Topografische Dienst/Kadaster in the Netherlands participated in initiating and conducting the EuroGeoNames project which aims at establishing a Europe-wide virtual geographical names database and service. A report resulting from a workshop organised in Utrecht University to define the User/business requirements of an EGN geographical names service, as well as an information model produced as the basis for further programming, was made available in 2007. Both the Dutch geographical names and the Dutch exonyms are now accessible through this EuroGeonames names service.

Res VIII/7: Toponymic data exchange formats and standards
Changes necessary in order to make the geographical names database of the Netherlands, made available for the EGN names service, compliant to the new INSPIRE regulations, were implemented.

Res VIII/12: Standardization of names of countries
The list of country names contained in the EGN exonym service files has been updated.

Res. VIII-15 Support for training and publications
11. In the 2007-2012, lecturers from the Netherlands participated in toponymy training course organised in Timisoara, Ouagadougou, Yaoundé and Nairobi. They also participated in a geographical names seminar held in Bali, Indonesia in 2010.

Together with the Institute of Cartography of the Eötvös Lorand University in Budapest, Hungary, the Netherlands extended the toponymy course for the International Cartographic Association (ICA) webcourse, accessible at the website of the ICA Commission on Education and Training, chaired by David Fraser (Australia) (http://lazarus.elte.hu/cet/). Thanks to support from the UN Statistical Division, Nicoline McCarthy from the Netherlands was able to add modules on Reference Systems, Languages, Writing Systems, Conversion Systems, Names Placement, Legal Status of Names, Editorial Issues for Atlases, Toponymical Planning and Names as Cultural Heritage. Existing modules (Introduction, the Naming Process, Functions of Geographical Names, National Agencies, Field Collection Systems, Office Processing, Multilingual areas, UN Role, Exonyms, Toponymical Guidelines and Toponymical Datafiles) were homogenized with the new chapters, updated and extended. The module on Toponymic datafiles was

Res. IX/4: Geographical names as an intangible cultural heritage

12. To highlight the importance of the preservation of geographical names, a special publication was issued by the *Adviescommissie aardrijkskundige namen in Nederland* (Advisory Commission on Geographical Names in the Netherlands) targeted at all municipalities who under the Municipality

Act and Basic Registration Act have now been put in charge of deciding on the spelling of the names of all geographical objects within their territory, and have to provide all addresses within this territory.