



## Economic and Social Council

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

New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and  
task teams since the Ninth Conference**

#### Report of the Baltic Division

Submitted by the Baltic Division\*\*

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\*\* Prepared by Aule Kikas (Chair of the Baltic Division) and Peeter Päll in collaboration with divisional members.

### Report of the Baltic Division<sup>1</sup>

The Baltic Division was formed in 1992 at the 6th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN). Members of the Division are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation, several other countries have taken part at the meetings as observers. During the period since the 9th UNCSGN Estonia has coordinated the activities of the Division.

#### MEETINGS

The Baltic Division of UNGEGN has held five meetings since the 9th UNCSGN, including those that have been held in conjunction with UNGEGN sessions or UN conferences.

On 24 August 2007 the **11th meeting** was held in New York, at the 9th UNCSGN. This was for procedural questions mainly. Ms. **Aule Kikas** from Estonia was elected Chair of the Division, and Mr. **Vladimir Boginskiy** from the Russian Federation was elected Vice-Chair of the Division.

The **12th meeting** was held on 16–18 September 2008 in Kaliningrad (Russian Federation) on the invitation of the Federal Agency of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia. There were 19 experts from 5 countries (Estonia, Latvia, Russian Federation; observers from Poland and Ukraine), also representatives of the Kaliningrad region. The **13th meeting** was held on 9 October 2009 in Vilnius, Lithuania on the invitation of the National Land Service of Lithuania and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. There were about 45 participants from 6 countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation; observers from Poland and Ukraine), including some 30 participants from different state institutions and enterprises in Lithuania.

The **14th meeting** was held on 6 May 2011 in Vienna, at the 26th session of UNGEGN. There were 9 experts from the four member countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation) and 2 observers from Ukraine. The **15th meeting** was held on 27–29 March 2012 in Rīga, Latvia on the invitation of the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency. There were 59 experts from 7 countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation; observers from Belarus, Poland and Ukraine), including some 40 participants from different state institutions and enterprises in Latvia. It was decided that during the period from the 10th till the 11th UNCSGN the Russian Federation will coordinate the activities of the Division. Ms. **Marina Morozova** from the Russian Federation was elected Chair of the Division; Latvia will propose the candidate for the Vice-Chair of the Division before the 10th UNCSGN.

#### TOPICS OF COMMON INTEREST

Although the Baltic Division has not launched any common projects, there has always been a lively exchange of views on different issues of geographical names standardization at the divisional meetings. Traditional topics of discussion have been legislation on geographical names, geographical names databases and preservation of geographical names as cultural heritage. Relatively less discussed topics include exonyms, multilingual and dialectal names, romanization and toponymy courses.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Aule Kikas (Chair of the Baltic Division) and Peeter Päll in collaboration with divisional members.

Often the meetings are accompanied by an exhibition of cartographic and other publications on geographical names, also an excursion into toponymically/historically interesting regions of the host country. The regularity of the meetings is also noteworthy; undoubtedly it has also contributed to the national standardization of geographical names.

## **WEBSITE**

The Baltic Division website maintained by Estonia at <http://www.eki.ee/knn/ungegn/index.htm> continues to be updated regularly. It contains all reports of the Division meetings since 1992, many of the papers presented, and photos.

## **INTER-DIVISIONAL AND OTHER COOPERATION**

Members of the Baltic Division have participated in several meetings of other UNGEGN divisions, e.g. the meetings of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division (2008 in Sofia), Norden Division (2010 in Uppsala), and East Central and South-East Europe Division (2011 in Zagreb).

Divisional members are also active in various working groups: WG on Country Names, WG on Exonyms, WG on Romanization Systems, WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, WG on Toponymic Terminology.

## Summary

The report covers the period since the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (2007). Four countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation – were members of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN. During the period five meetings were held consecutively in member countries of the Division, also in conjunction with UNGEGN sessions or UN conferences. Estonia coordinated the activities of the Division.