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National standardization

b) Office treatment of names

Recommendation on the use of former municipality names
after municipal mergers

Submitted by Finland**

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Recommendation on the use of former municipality names after municipal mergers

Institute for the Languages of Finland, the Finnish Language Board 2012:

Tammisaari or Raasepori, or Raaseporin Tammisaari?

Between 2001 and 2012, a total of 74 municipal mergers have taken place in Finland. In these mergers, up to 126 independent municipality names have disappeared. In the next few years, the number of municipal mergers is expected to increase still. The areas in the new municipal alliances are often so vast that the name of a major municipality does not provide sufficient information on the location.

New municipalities and names have emerged in such vast volumes that it is hard for the ordinary citizen to know and remember all of them. Especially in the media, the change has caused much confusion about how we should talk about places: can a smaller location be referred to using its old name at all; can the old name be used together with the name of the major municipality; or should we only use the name of the major municipality.

The Finnish Language Board considers the situation problematic for language users. Although many municipalities have lost their independent administrative status, the places still exist. And even if many of the names are not official municipal names, it is still possible and appropriate to use them in many connections. After all, a place name's most important task is to localize its referent.

The Finnish Language Board recommends that

- 1) former municipality names should be used to refer to the areas within the former municipality and even to the former central villages of the municipalities, unless the village has another name. We can, e.g., talk about events in *Lammi* and *Tuulos*, although they are currently part of the municipality of Hämeenlinna.
- 2) former municipality names should also be used in the names of, e.g., associations, societies, local papers, churches and other buildings, as well as in work for the local heritage and names of events, since place names are also part of the inhabitants' identity.
- 3) it is particularly important to have unambiguous names when guiding people to a given place or informing about a danger. In such cases it is best to use the established name that is marked on the basic map and specifies the location as well as possible.
- 4) The name of the new administrative major municipality is necessary when informing about issues that concern the entire new municipality or all of its inhabitants, such as elections, taxation, health care, or other respective public tasks, services, or obligations. In such connections, the normally used forms *Tuulos* or *Tammisaari - Ekenäs* can be localized according to the new major municipality (here *Hämeenlinna - Tavastehus* as "Hämeenlinnan Tuulos" [Tuulos of Hämeenlinna] or "Raaseporin Tammisaaressa" [in Tammisaari of Raasepori]).