

**Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

**Eleventh Session
Geneva, 15-23 October 1984**

WORKING PAPER

No. 20

Item No. 7 of the
Provisional Agenda*

REPORT

**OF THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES
FOR MAP AND OTHER EDITORS ON THE PROGRESS MADE**

(submitted by the Dutch and German-speaking
Division. Prepared by J. Breu)

On 17 May 1984 the Co-ordinator has distributed a Circular Letter summarizing the main points of the programme of the "Guidelines", the contents of which as being of general interest may be reproduced in this paper:

Circular Letter distributed by J. Breu

Reference:

- (1) 4th U.N. Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1982, vol. I, New York 1983, E/CONF.74/3, pp. 10, 11, paragraphs 30, 31:

"Toponymic guidelines (item 5 (e))

30. The Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary gave a comprehensive report on the concept that leads to devising Toponymic Guidelines for Cartography. The guidelines are meant to help cartographers outside the country. The Chairman expressed the opinion that the toponymic guidelines represent an important step in international standardization. He raised the question of who would carry on the work of Mr. Breu, who was responsible for co-ordinating this activity during the last five years. The Committee decided to recommend that, if there were no volunteers, the Group of Experts should investigate the possibility of having Mr. Breu continue his valuable work as co-ordinator of the toponymic guidelines programme and in other areas of assistance needed by countries, perhaps as a correspondent with the United Nations.

31. There was unanimous support for continuing the development of toponymic guidelines for all countries. The United States suggested that the title for the toponymic guidelines be changed so as not to imply that they were useful only for cartographers. It was agreed that the title should be 'Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors'. Denmark raised the question of whether it might be of value to distinguish name elements (specific and generic on the one hand from descriptive terms on the other hand) in the toponymic guideline glossary. Denmark also suggested putting all the guidelines in one document, which would be useful to a variety of users. The Committee agreed with the suggestion, and so the means of publishing such a document was referred to the Group of Experts or the person who will take the job of being co-ordinator for the toponymic guidelines."

- (2) 4th U.N. Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1982, vol. I. New York 1983, E/CONF.74/3, pp.29, 30, Resolution 4:

"4. Publication of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors. The Conference, recognizing the desirability of international exchange of information concerning the main facts, measures and achievements in the field of national name standardization, noting that within the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names progress has been made in this respect since its eighth session,

1. Recommends that countries should be encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors which may enable cartographers of other countries to treat correctly all problems of cartographic toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines, and which may be of help to all users in interpreting maps;
2. Further recommends that those guidelines contain, inter alia and as appropriate, the following items:
 - (a) Legal status of geographical names in the respective languages of multilingual countries;
 - (b) Alphabets of the language or languages and furthermore, in the case of non-Roman alphabets and scripts, the officially introduced romanization keys;
 - (c) Spelling rules for geographical names;
 - (d) Aids to pronunciation of geographical names;
 - (e) Linguistic substrata recognizable in the existing place names, but only as far as their knowledge may be of benefit to the cartographer;
 - (f) Relationship between dialect (s) and standard language(s);
 - (g) Peculiarities of dialect and areal distribution of the main dialects;

- (h) Areal distribution of languages within multilingual countries;
 - (i) Names authorities and measures taken in names standardization;
 - (j) Source material;
 - (k) Glossary of words necessary for the understanding of maps;
 - (l) Abbreviations in official maps;
 - (m) Administrative division;
3. Recommends also that the Toponymic guidelines submitted by Austria should serve as a sample of format and contents;
 4. Further recommends that a correspondent should be appointed by the United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names to co-ordinate the work of developing national toponymic guidelines and to maintain communication with national experts involved in the development of such guidelines."

(3) Report of the U.N. Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 10th Session, 1982, ESA/RT/C/GN/8, 20 May 1983, p. 5, paragraph 13:

"Mr. Breu was invited to continue to co-ordinate the work relating to toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, and to act as a correspondent on behalf of the Group of Experts. The Secretary assured Mr. Breu that the Cartography Section would extend to him all possible assistance in that respect. The subject of amalgamating the national toponymic guidelines for map and other editors in a single volume is to be evaluated at the eleventh session of the Group of Experts."

In the following lines I should like to give a short survey of the "Guidelines" edited till now and to make some remarks to the further progress of work.

1. Toponymic Guidelines as produced till now:

Country	Presented at (F=1st edition, R=revised edition)			
	UNGEGN		U.N.Conf. 1982	Co-ordinator 1984
	8th Sess. 1979	9th Sess. 1981		
1. Austria	F	R	R	
2. Canada		F		
3. China			F	
4. Denmark			F	
5. Federal Republic of Germany		F	R	
6. Finland		F	R	
7. France		F	R	
8. German Democratic Republic		F		
9. Greece		F		

10. Guatemala	F		
11. Hungary	F		
12. Iceland		F	
13. Norway		F	
14. South Africa			F
15. Suriname	F		
16. Sweden	F	R	
17. Switzerland		F	
18. Turkey		F	
19. United Kingdom		F	
20. United States of America		F	

2. Further progress of work

At Geneva in 1982 many countries have declared their willingness to work out Toponymic Guidelines, and it is to be hoped that a great number of new Guidelines will be presented at the 11th Session of the UNGEGN at Geneva in 1984.

I invite all experts, who have any special questions to ask, to write to me. The demand for existing Guidelines have been great, and I have copied a great number of them for cartographers and map editors within Austria and abroad. This is very encouraging and shows that the information presented in the Guidelines is of great practical importance.