

Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names

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Provisional Agenda\*

DEVELOPMENT OF TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR  
CARTOGRAPHIC AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS IN  
THE USSR

( Submitted by the USSR )

The development of toponymic guidelines comprising rules of geographical names spelling and use by all countries is a very beneficial initiative of the UN Group of Experts on geographical names.

However, this is not a simple task for countries with multinational population and respectively multilingual toponymy. And it is hardly possible for such state as the USSR to cover all necessary data on languages and toponymy of all its nation in single guidelines.

Until recently the development of similar guidelines for place-names of federal and autonomous republics and autonomous regions with non-Russian population was the subject of attention and activity of the Permanent Joint Commission on Geographical Names - the USSR national body on names. It should be noted, that general rules for spelling of the USSR geographical names and guidelines for initial collection of names were prepared in the first turn. Guidelines for individual languages were developed on the basis of the "General Instruction for Rendering of Geographical Names in Maps". These guidelines (we call them "Instructions for Russian rendering of geographical names of...", see Annex) are normative documents. They have been displayed at the UN conferences on geographical names as methodic aids on the basis and with the help of which standardization of geographical names in the USSR is being carried out. As it has been already mentioned during the previous meetings, national standardization of geographical names in this country is based upon the Russian language, thus, guidelines described contain rules for Russian rendering of geographical names from other languages. Yet nevertheless, their actual contents is much wider. They comprise the majority of items, recommended by Resolution 4 of the Fourth UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names (Geneva, 1982), namely:

- indicate the legal status of geographical names in respective languages within and outside given admini-

- strative unit (item a);
- contain the alphabet of the language (item b);
  - provide with the general rules for spelling of geographical names (spelling of toponyms consisting of more than one word, capitalization, spelling and use of geographical terms, rules of accent etc.) (item c);
  - provide with the aids on the pronunciation of names by keys where the pronunciation of the letters of a given language is indicated by corresponding Russian letters, as Russian rendering of names is usually based on their sound image (item d);
  - indicate toponymic strata, pertaining to other languages, if there are such, and give appropriate recommendations (item e);
  - indicate dialects, their arealdistribution, their peculiarities in comparison with the literary language and provide with recommendations on treatment of dialectal forms of names (items f, g);
  - cite basic source materials useful for work on place-names of a given area (item j);
  - include short glossaries of geographical terms and other words, forming the toponymy of a given area, with their pronunciation, language affiliation (if necessary), basic grammatical forms (if necessary) and their meaning in Russian (item k);
  - in some instructions the abbreviations used in maps are listed (item l).

Moreover, the principal information on phonetics, morphology and grammar of a given language, necessary for treatment of geographical names, has been included into the guidelines in recent years. Along with that a brief review of toponymic patterns and models inherent for a particular language or area is incorporated.

Thus, now when the publication of the whole series of the guidelines has been accomplished, they can be recommended for map and other editors though some items of Resolution 4 of the UN Conference, for instance, official Romanization system, areal distribution of languages within the country, administrative division are not covered.

As for the official Roman alphabet for non-Roman languages of the USSR, now it is developed and adopted for Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian (state standard N° 16876-71).

It is hardly reasonable to list administrative units in toponymic guidelines as administrative division is apt to variance, and, besides, official reference documents on administrative division are regularly issued in all countries. That is why it seems necessary only to cite existing or systematically published official documents on the matter, as it is done in our guidelines.

In the nearest future when we start re-edition of the guidelines it will be possible to arrange their contents in accordance with Resolution 4 of the Fourth UN Conference.

We are likely to adhere to the basic principle of developing such guidelines, that is, to issue separate guidelines for each language or territory. In the future development of guidelines for groups of kindred languages or vast territorial complexes is planned.

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List  
of current toponymic guidelines in the USSR

Rules for spelling of the USSR geographical names in maps, 2nd edition, Moscow 1967;

Guidelines for initial collection and recording of geographical names under topographic survey, Moscow 1971;

General instruction for rendering of geographical names in maps, Moscow 1955;

Instructions for Russian rendering of geographical names of:

Azerbaijan SSR, 2nd edition, Moscow 1972;

Armenian SSR, M. 1974;

Byelorussian SSR, M. 1972;

Georgian SSR, M. 1972;

Kazakh SSR, M. 1971;

Kirghiz SSR, M. 1975;

Abkhazian ASSR, M. 1977;

Bashkir ASSR, M. 1983;

Buryat ASSR, M. 1978;

Gorno-Altai AO, M. 1977;

Kara-Kalpak ASSR, M. 1976;

Komi ASSR, M. 1974;

Mari ASSR, M. 1978;

Mordovian ASSR, M. 1971;

Latvian SSR, M. 1972;

Lithuanian SSR, M. 1971;

Moldavian SSR, M. 1971;

Tajik SSR, M. 1976;

Turkmen SSR, M. 1971;

Uzbek SSR, M. 1981;

Ukrainian SSR, M. 1971;

Estonian SSR, M. 1972;

Tuva ASSR, M. 1975;

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Udmurt ASSR, M. 1973;  
Khakassian AO, M. 1977;  
Yakut ASSR, M. 1977.