E/CONF.105/21/CRP.21

23 June 2017

Original: English

11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8 -17 August 2017
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*
National standardization

Recommendations for the naming of urban traffic areas

Submitted by Austria **

* E/CONF.105/1

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Introduction

A diploma work by Marlene Krapf completed in 2015 at the University of Vienna, Institute of Geography and Regional Research, and supervised by the author of this paper titled "Naming of urban traffic areas – An investigation in relevant regulations and practices in Austria in international comparison" [Namengebung von Verkehrsflächen im urbanen Raum – eine Untersuchung der einschlägigen Regelungen und Praktiken in Österreich im internationalen Vergleich] had revealed a remarkable lack of regulations at all administrative levels as well as significant inconsistency in practical procedures. The author of the diploma work had documented all relevant regulations and conducted interviews with a representative number of officers responsible for the naming of streets, roads, squares, paths and other categories of urban traffic areas in urban municipalities of Austria. The diploma work also showed that in fact only Vienna [Wien], Austria's capital, was applying a more detailed regulation, while other Austrian cities and towns were occasionally using it as a model. The diploma work compared Austrian regulations and practices also with other countries, especially Canada, Sweden and Finland, and noted significant discrepancies between regulations and practices in these countries and in Austria.

Based on these findings, the Austrian Board on Geographical Names [Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde, AKO] decided to elaborate recommendations for the naming of urban traffic areas in Austria. The UN Resolution VIII/2 on commemorative naming practices was taken as a point of departure; regulations in Canada, Sweden and Finland were regarded as models; and the regulations for Vienna, later up-dated, were also taken into account.

The recommendations to be found below were not only developed and discussed in several meetings of the Austrian Board, but also presented and discussed in meetings of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names [Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen, StAGN), the expert forum for place-name standardization in Germany with co-ordinative functions for all German-speaking countries. In fact, StAGN experts contributed essentially.

The "Recommendations" have been disseminated to all urban municipalities in Austria as well as to umbrella organizations such as the Association of Austrian Cities and Towns [Österreichischer Städtebund] and central institutions concerned with populated places, statistics and cartography.

Recommendations for the naming of urban traffic areas

Based on United Nations Resolution VIII/2, passed by the 8th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 2002 in Berlin and quoted below,

UN resolution VIII/2 Commemorative naming practices for geographical features

The Conference,

- *Noting* that the use of names of persons or events to designate features for commemorative purposes or as geographical reminders constitutes an active practice,
- *Recognizing* that the attribution of a personal name to a geographical feature during the lifetime or shortly after the death of a person is a widespread practice,
- *Recalling* that, during a meeting of 1960, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names acknowledged that naming or renaming of a geographical feature to include the name of a living person could be a source of problems,
- *Recognizing* that this practice is generally disadvantageous, as this type of designation is subject to subsequent changes not recommended by the Conference,
- *Noting* that little guidance exists on the practice of adopting a personal name during the lifetime or shortly after the death of a person,

1) *Recommends* that the appropriate national authorities discourage the use of personal names to designate a geographical feature during the lifetime of the person in question;

2) *Also recommends* that the appropriate national authorities include in their guidelines clear statements on the length of the waiting period they wish to establish before using a commemorative name.

the Austrian Board on Geographical Names [Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde, AKO] as the expert body responsible for the standardization of geographical names in Austria recommends to respect with the naming of urban traffic areas (new namings as well as renamings) the following criteria:

(1) Names of traffic areas are in the first line to comply to the function of orientation.
(2) Well-established names are not to be changed without good reason.
(3) With renamings the aftereffects of the former name in practical use are to be taken into account.
(4) Similar names or names easily to be mixed up with existing names are to be avoided within a municipality.
(5) With new namings field names and/or other names in local use are to be applied.
(6) If nevertheless commemorative names, i.e. names reminding of persons and events, are applied, this is to be done with caution and restraint.
    a. Commercial names, i.e. names of companies and their products, are to be avoided.
    b. Namings after persons still alive are to be avoided. A break of at least five years after the fading away of the person commemorated is recommended.
    c. The person commemorated is to have had a relation or (also) importance for the place (e.g. place of birth, work location).

d. Taking into account the name length, names after persons are to comprise first and surname (e.g. *Karl-Schweighofer-Gasse*) to enable an unambiguous identification of the person. Titles (*Ing*., *Dr*., *Prof*. etc.) are to be avoided.
e. Taking into account the historically explicable asymmetry of namings after males and females it is recommended to especially consider females with new namings.