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**Eleventh United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 8-17 August 2017

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the  
progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference  
(for distribution only).**

**Report of Austria**

Submitted by Austria\*\*

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The activities of Austria since the Tenth Conference are indicated below, under the headings of relevant resolutions accepted by UNCSGN.

#### **Res. I/4: National standardization**

In the Austrian federal state Styria [Steiermark] a reform of the administrative-territorial structure reduced at the local level the number of municipalities [Gemeinden] from 542 to 288 and merged also at the regional level 8 districts [Politische Bezirke] into 4. The intention to name the newly created administrative-territorial units according to the seat of administration was in many cases not accepted locally. Instead, most municipalities and all districts preferred a double (sometimes even triple) naming or a new name not specific for one of the former administrative-territorial units. According to Austrian legislation it is indeed in the hands of municipalities to define their name. To avoid at least triple naming and other choices not desirable under the aspect of toponymic standardization, the Styrian Board on Geographical Names [Steirische Ortsnamenkommission], in permanent contact with the Austrian Board on Geographical Names [Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde, AKO], elaborated guidelines for the naming of administrative-territorial units taking into account UN resolutions and models in other countries and entered then into consultations with municipalities and districts. It finally succeeded in convincing local administrations of solutions acceptable also under the aspect of toponymic standardization in all cases, although two new district names (*Murtal, Südststeiermark*) correspond to names for concepts of wider regions, while the relevant districts are only sections of the region in question.

#### **Res. V/12: Collection of basic information on the standardization of geographical names**

The project WippDigital – an investigation into field names supported by GIS techniques in a valley of the Austrian federal state Tyrol [Tirol] – has been completed and presented at an international workshop organized to this end. At the workshop, also similar projects in Switzerland and Germany were introduced. All papers are available at <http://onomastik.at/content/wipppdigital>

The Salzburg Board on Geographical Names [Salzburger Ortsnamenkommission, SONK] presented in 2015 the first volume of the Historical-Etymological Lexicon of Salzburg Place Names [Historisch-Etymologisches Lexikon der Salzburger Ortsnamen, HELSON], i.e. the volume on the city of Salzburg and Flachgau, the region surrounding the city, edited by the linguists Ingo Reiffenstein and Thomas Lindner. The Lexicon is conceived to comprise five volumes of all historical-cultural regions (at the same time administrative districts) composing the Austrian federal state of Salzburg. Each volume presents all names of populated places included in the place-name data base of the Austrian Federal Agency of Surveying and Metrology as well some additional names of individual farmsteads, abandoned names and historically interesting field names. A selection of names of mountains and water bodies is also included. The volumes start with an introduction into toponomastic and linguistic-historical essentials. In the main part follow name entries in alphabetical order noting local pronunciation, historical name proofs, etymology and major secondary literature on name and place. A bibliography and several indices complete the volume.

By its 16<sup>th</sup> instalment containing names of the Austrian federal state Vorarlberg the Old-German Names Gazetteer [Altdeutsches Namenbuch], edited by Isolde Hausner and Elisabeth Schuster, has been completed in 2015.

#### **Res. V/15: Establishment of national geographical names authorities**

The Austrian Federal Agency of Surveying and Metrology [Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen, BEV], a main actor in Austrian cartography in general and not less in the field of geographical names as well as the successor of the former Institute of Military Geography

[Militärgeographisches Institut] in Vienna [Wien] celebrated in 2014 the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of topographical surveys in Austria by a festive symposium.

#### **Res. VIII/1: Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names**

The Slovenian Ethnographic Institute Urban Jarnik in Klagenfurt am Wörthersee is leading a consortium of institutions and persons documenting Slovenian names of fields and farmsteads in the bilingual part of the Austrian federal state Carinthia [Kärnten]. They are published on maps of the cultural heritage in the framework of an EU-funded project in cooperation with the Slovenian Academy of Sciences. In addition, maps for hikers and cyclists as well as posters for tourists with bilingual naming were published or implemented, respectively.

A symposium on minority toponyms in Slovenia, adjacent bilingual areas and the German-speaking countries was organized in Graz, Austria, 4 March 2016, by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names [Ständiger Ausschuss für geographischer Namen, StAGN], the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) and the Styrian Provincial Archive [Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv] in conjunction with a session of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. It saw three papers from Slovenia, three from Austria and one from Germany presented. They have been published in the Catalan onomastic journal *Onomàstica* edited by Joan Tort i Donada (<https://www.onomastica.cat/names-a-journal-of-onomastics/>)

#### **Res VIII/2: Commemorative naming practices for geographical features**

Based on empirical research on regulations and practices with the naming of urban traffic areas in Austria, the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) has passed recommendations in this field discouraging commemorative naming. If commemorative naming can by no means be avoided, they suggest evading commercial names as well as names after persons still alive. The recommendations also postulate that the person commemorated is to have had a relation to the place (e.g. place of birth, work location), that names after persons are to comprise first and surname to enable unambiguous identification and to promote naming after females on the background of the historically explicable asymmetry between naming after males and females.

#### **Res VIII/4: Exonyms**

The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms took place in Hermagor, Austria, 5-7 June 2014. The meeting was hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) and attended by 28 experts from 17 countries. The meeting saw a sequence of three sessions with in total 18 papers as well as a general debate on the definitions of endonym and exonym.

#### **Res VIII/5: Joint meetings of the linguistic/geographical divisions and working groups of the UNGEGN**

Upon invitation by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) and the University of Innsbruck a joint meeting of the UNGEGN working groups on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, on Publicity and Funding and on Evaluation and Implementation took place in Innsbruck, Austria, 19-22 April 2017.

#### **Res VIII/15: Support for training and publications**

The toponymic book series “Name & Place” co-edited (together with Paul Woodman) and exclusively financed by the chair of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) Peter Jordan, has since 2012 seen the following new issues published:

JORDAN Peter, ORMELING Ferjan (eds.) (2013), *Toponyms in Cartography. Proceedings of the Toponymic Sessions at the 25<sup>th</sup> International Cartographic Conference, Paris, 3-8 July 2011* (= Name

& Place, 2). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač, 127 p. Link: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-6700-9.htm>

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2014), The Quest for Definitions. Proceedings of the 14<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Corfu, 23-25 May 2013 (= Name & Place, 3). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač, 295 p. Link: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-7747-3.htm>

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2015), Confirmation of the Definitions. Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Hermagor, 5-7 June 2014 (= Name & Place, 4). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač, 244 p. Link: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-8422-8.htm>

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2016), Place-Name Changes, Proceedings of the Symposium in Rome, 17-18 November 2014 (= Name & Place, 5). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač, 492 p. Link: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-8423-5.htm>

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2016), Criteria for the Use of Exonyms, Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Zagreb, 14-16 May 2015 (= Name & Place, 6). Hamburg, Verlag Dr. Kovač, 170 p. Link: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de/978-3-8300-8946-9.htm>

#### **Res. IX/7: Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names**

Following the model of the American Names Society (ANS) and with the aim of stimulating consciousness of the symbolic power and significance of geographical names, the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) elected in 2016 for the first time a “place name of the year” 2015 in the sense of a name of a place in Austria symbolizing significant political and societal directions, trends or events in this same year. The election of *Spielfeld*, the name of a border station at the Austrian-Slovenian border, where in 2015 many refugees and migrants from Syria and other countries had crossed the border on their way to Germany culminating in some dramatic events, was justified by the explanation that it was a “synonym for the Austrian and European dilemma of finding a balance between helpfulness opposite refugees and people persecuted on the one hand and the practical requirements of state security as well as economic and political carrying capacities on the other.” Most Austrian media reported on this election in the next few days. The election in the following year (2017 on the name for 2016) had much less media reflection.

The journal “Austrian Name Research” [Österreichische Namenforschung, ÖNf], earlier published by the Austrian Society for Name Research [Österreichische Gesellschaft für Namenforschung] and edited by Heinz-Dieter Pohl is now published by the Association for Linguistic and Name Research in Austria [Verein zur Erforschung von Sprache und Name in Österreich, VESNA] and edited by Peter Ernst (<http://www.vesna.or.at/>).

The Onomastic Symposium in Kals [Namenkundliches Symposium in Kals], annually organized by Heinz-Dieter Pohl, celebrated in 2016 its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and will be continued.