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**11<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the  
Standardization of Geographical Names**

New York, 8 -17 August 2017

Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

**Reports on the work of the United Nations Group of Experts  
on Geographical Names, its divisions, working groups and  
task teams since the Tenth Conference**

**Report of the Baltic division of the United Nations Group of  
Experts on Geographical Names**

Submitted by the Baltic Division \*\*

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\*\* Prepared by Vita Strautniece, Vice-Chair of the Baltic Division (Latvia), on basis of the previous reports of the Baltic Division and divisional meeting minutes prepared by Marina Morozova (Russian Federation), in collaboration with divisional members

## Report of the Baltic division

The report covers the period since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (2012).

### 1. Composition of the Division

The Baltic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) formed in 1992, comprises five member states now: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation and Poland (joined in 2012). The chairs or Representatives of the division have been elected for a period between United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names. The Russian Federation acts as coordinator of the Baltic Division since 10th UNCSGN (2012). Divisional Chairperson – Ms. Marina Morozova (Russian Federation) divisional Vice-chair – Ms. Vita Strautniece (Latvia). Due the retirement of Ms. Marina Morozova in late 2016 Ms. Vita Strautniece as the Vice-chair (accordingly with the Statute of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names) has overtaken the duties of chairing the Baltic Division.

### 2. Divisional meetings

Three meetings of the Baltic Division were held during the reporting period. Participants of the meetings exchanged information on different aspects of geographical names standardization: status of legal, methodical and organizational basis of national standardization, the status and development perspectives of national toponymic databases cadastres, registers, card indexes etc.; standardization of urban and natural feature names, use of geographical names on maps, preservation of geographical names as part of a cultural and historical heritage, geographical names research work, exonyms, multilingual and dialectal names, Romanization, toponymic guidelines etc. Improvised exhibition of cartographic production, toponymic glossaries, dictionaries and geographical names related literature published in the participating countries have become a good tradition enriching the meetings.

All meetings have been well attended – not only by permanent participants, but also by a quite wide circle of persons from the country hosted the meeting whose professional duties or interests cover geographical names.

**The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN** jointly with the **Norden Division Meeting** took place on September 18, 2013 in Tallinn (Estonia) at the invitation of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior. Co-organizers of the event were also the Estonian Land Board, Place Names Board of Estonia and the Institute of Estonian Language.

Experts from all member states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russian Federation), observers from Belarus and the Norden Division (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – took part in the meeting. Altogether there were 60 participants. 13 papers have been presented and discussed.

**The 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Baltic Division** was held in June 29 to July 01, 2015 in Warsaw (Poland) at the invitation of the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography. The meeting was attended by 32 experts and specialists from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russian Federation. Experts from Belarus and Ukraine participated as observers. 25 papers have been presented and discussed.

**The 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Baltic Division** was held on August 23-25, 2016 in Saint Petersburg (Russian Federation) at the invitation of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography. Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences was co-organizer. 35 participants - experts and specialists from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russian Federation and observer from Belarus took part in the meeting. 17 papers have been presented and discussed.

Accordingly with the rotation principle, the decision was taken to hold **the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting** during the 11<sup>th</sup> UNCSGN in New York, UN Headquarters (in case if participants from all member states will be there) or in Lithuania in 2018.

### 3. Cooperation between Divisions of the UNGEGN and other cooperation

In conjunction with the **joint Baltic and Norden Division Meetings** (Tallinn, September 18, 2013, see above), a **Baltic-Nordic Workshop on the Integration of Onomastic Data into Geo-Spatial Data Infrastructure** (co-organized by the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers) was held in the facilities of the Estonian Land Board (Tallinn, September 19, 2013).

Experts of the Baltic Division participated as observers in the **11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia UNGEGN** (Yalta, Ukraine, April 2013).

Experts of the Baltic Division member states participated in the **10<sup>th</sup> UNCSGN** and the **27<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN** (New York, USA, 2012), **28<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN** (New York, USA, 2014), **29<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN** (Bangkok, Thailand, 2016). Besides different UNGEGN Working Groups (WG) and other activities organized as side events during the UNCSGN and UNGEGN sessions they have participated in the continuous work of **WG of the Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers**, **WG on Romanization Systems**, **WG on Exonyms** and **WG on Country Names**.

Experts of the Baltic Division took part also in WG meetings and geographical names related events held during periods between the sessions and conferences:

**the meeting of the WG on Romanization Systems** (Prague, Czechia, 2017);

**the meeting of the WG on Exonyms** (Hermagor, Austria, 2014; Zagreb, Croatia, 2015; Prague, Czech Republic, 2017);

**joint meeting of the WG on Toponymic Terminology and WG on Exonyms**, (Korfu, Greece, May 2013);

**joint meeting of the WG on Exonyms and WG on Romanization Systems** (Gdańsk, Poland, 2012)

**Czech-Polish Meeting on Terminology of Standardization of Geographical Names** (Prague, Czech Republic, 2013);

**Czech-Polish-Slovak Meeting on Terminology of Standardization of Geographical Names** (Warsaw, Poland, 2014; Bratislava, Slovakia, 2015; Prague, Czech Republic, 2016); meeting of Eastern Europe, Central Europe and South-East Europe Divisions (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2015);

**German-Polish Meeting on Geographical Names**, jointly organized by Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN) and the the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland (Görlitz, Germany, 2014);

**the meeting of the WG on Toponymy of the International Geographic Council** (Krakow, Poland, 2014; Moscow, Russia, 2015);

Session of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy “Place Names as Social Constructs” during the 33rd International Geographical Congress (Beijing, China, 2016).

Baltic Division members have participated in the project *EuroGeoNames* developing the European geographical names data infrastructure and services.

Experts from Russian Federation took part as observers in the work of the **26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the General Bathymetric Chart of Oceans (GEBCO) Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN)**, dealing with issues for establishing names of objects in the World Ocean outside the jurisdiction of specific countries for use in graphics and digital editions of the General Bathymetric Chart of Oceans (Tokyo, Japan, September 2013).

#### **4. The website**

Website of the Baltic Division <http://eki.ee/knn/ungegn> is maintained by Estonia. It contains records of all meetings of the Baltic Division since 1992 (minutes, agenda, list of participants, reports, photos).

#### **Conclusion**

The Baltic Division of UNGEGN has held meetings three meetings during the reporting period. Experts from all the member states have participated actively in UNGEGN and geographical names related other activities. Although there are currently no joint projects of the division, the active exchange of information inside the division, with other divisions and parties outside UNGEGN has contributed significantly to the success of national standardization of geographical names in each member country and helped to promote awareness about the importance of the geographical names standardization.