

Agenda item 5

REPORT ON PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN STANDARDIZING GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN THE GERMAN  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC SINCE THE FIFTH UN CONFERENCE ON STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN 1987

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Economic and Social Council

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Geographical Names

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On item 5 of the preliminary agenda

Report

on progress achieved in standardizing geographical names in the  
German Democratic Republic since the fifth UN Conference on  
Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987

German Democratic Republic  
Berlin 1989

abridged version

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Report on progress achieved in standardizing geographical names in the German Democratic Republic since the fifth UN Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987

German Democratic Republic, Berlin 1989

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In particular, the following work for a further standardization of the spelling of geographical names was done in the GDR in the period under report:

- The "Instruction for the Spelling of Geographical Names in Cartographic Products of the GDR" was prepared for the tenth edition which will be published in the last quarter of 1989.
- The "General Guideline for the Spelling of Geographical Names of the German Democratic Republic" was comprehensively revised and will be published in its fourth edition at the end of 1989.
- General Guidelines for the spelling of geographical names were published for the Republic of Turkey, for the Italian Republic and for the Kingdom of Sweden.
- Concerning geographical names, the following treatises were published:

Ernst Eichler, Hans Walther: Book of City Names of the GDR,  
VEB Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig 1988,  
ISBN 3-323-00007-2

Dieter Bloch: Geographical Names - Short Explanations,  
VEB Hermann Haack, Gotha 1988, ISBN 3-7301-0641-4

Since the fifth UN Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal 1987) the following work for a further standardization of the spelling of geographical names has been done in the German Democratic Republic.

1. The document "Instruction for the spelling of geographical names in cartographic products of the GDR" (hereinafter referred to as Instruction) is the most important basis for the standard spelling of geographical names in the GDR. According to its significance this Instruction was continually updated and revised. The work for the tenth revised edition was finished in the period under report. It will be published in the last quarter of 1989 by the Ministry of the Interior, Surveying and Mapping Administration. The basic resolutions of the fifth United Nations Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names were an important source for the revision of the Instruction.

2. The uniform spelling of geographical names with regard to GDR territory is regulated by the "General Guideline for the Spelling of Geographical Names of the German Democratic Republic".

The fourth revised edition of this General Guideline will be published at the end of 1989. It has been largely revised. The review and completion of the Guideline covered both the introductory part and the lists of names.

The rules for the spelling of geographical names were elaborated according to resolutions of United Nations Conferences on Standardization of Geographical Names in form of "Toponymic Guidelines" and exemplified.

Hence, they are also more suitable for foreign editors of maps and book maps. A list of administrative units was newly included.

The list of physico-geographical names was extended and completed according to the topical state of topographic mapping. Simultaneously with reviewing the names of mountains and hills a specification of the height indications of these objects was carried through as well.

3. For a further standardization of the spelling of names of geographical objects outside GDR territory the work for the edition of the series of "General Guidelines for the Spelling of Geographical Names of Individual States" (hereinafter referred to as General Guidelines) started in 1967 was continued according to plan.

The first edition of the guideline for the Republic of Turkey and the second edition of the guidelines for the Italian Republic and for the Kingdom of Sweden were finished in the period under report.<sup>1</sup> The "Toponymic Guidelines" published by some states were of particular importance for the revision of these guidelines.

General Guidelines for the People's Republic of China (first edition), for the French Republic (second edition) and for the Hellenic Republic (second edition) are in preparation.

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<sup>1</sup> These General Guidelines can be obtained through the firm Buchexport, Volkseigener Aussenhandelsbetrieb der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Leninstrasse 16, DDR-7010 Leipzig

4. Moreover, two treatises on geographical names were published in the GDR in the period under report.

- Ernst Eichler, Hans Walther: Book of City Names of the GDR, VEB Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig 1988, ISBN 3-323-00007-2

- Dieter Bloch: Geographical Names - Short Explanations, VEB Hermann Haack, Geographisch-Kartographische Anstalt Gotha 1988, ISBN 3-7301-0641-4

The "Book of City Names of the GDR" deals with the origin and the development of names for these objects from a linguistic aspect.

"Geographical Names - Short Explanations" gives advice to the user of maps and books of maps concerning origin and meaning of names of settlements and of many other names for physico-geographical objects of all continents.

5. All in all it can be pointed out that in the period under report in the GDR the important resolutions of the fifth UN Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names could materialize. This applies especially to resolutions 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 16 and 25. According to resolution 4 of the above-mentioned Conference the GDR dealt with a questionnaire of the working party for the UNGEGN and for UN resolutions (~~president~~ <sup>chairman</sup> Randall) and sent it to the secretary of the United Nations Group of Experts for Geographical Names. GDR representatives took part as observers in a meeting of the regional language group East-Central and South-East Europe (Bratislava, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, 1989).

The work carried out under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, Surveying and Mapping Administration, considerably borne by its commission for the spelling of geographical names in GDR cartographic products has continued to contribute to the standardization of the spelling of geographical names in the GDR in the period under report. The work will be steadily continued according to plan in the future, as well. In this context it shall be eventually mentioned that the above-mentioned commission is going to celebrate its 30th anniversary in 1989.

prepared by E. Haack