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WP. 12

STANDARDIZATION IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

Information on minority language geographical names in
Hungary

Paper submitted by Hungary*

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Resolution No. 4 of the 1967 Conference serves as a basis for almost all activities in connection with national standardization. This resolution gives several useful advises as to the standardization of geographical names in multilingual areas. Just a few excerpts:

"B. Collection of geographical names

... it is recommended that

(a) The field and office research be as complete as possible in order to provide information on the following points:

(i) Written and spoken form of the name .. according to the local inhabitants; ...

(b) The local spoken form of the name be recorded on tape and written in the phonetic notation approved by the national names authority;

C. Principles of office treatment of geographical names

It is recommended that each names authority formulate, adopt and define the guiding principles and practices that it will normally apply in the course of operation. These principles and practices should cover ...

(b) Factors that the authority will take into account when considering name proposals, such as

(i) Current usage

(iii) Treatment in multilingual areas ...

D. Multilingual areas

It is recommended that in countries in which there exist more than one language, the national authority as appropriate:

(a) Determine the geographical names in each of the official languages, and other languages as appropriate;

(b) Give a clear indication of equality or precedence of officially acknowledged names;

(c) Publish the officially acknowledged names in maps and gazetteers.

E. National gazetteers

It is recommended that each names authority produce and continually revise, appropriate gazetteers of all its standardized geographical names. ... In particular, it is recommended that the following be included:

...(e) All officially standardized names for a feature, if there are more than one; ..."

In the activity of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names we tried to apply the above recommendations. The results can be seen in the volumes of the Gazetteer of Hungary II. (Földrajzinév-tár II.).

Baranya megye (1978, in brackets the name of commune): Croatian geographical names: *Céria, Cerik, Gilencsa, Rasztina* (in the town of Versend); *Slivik, Svincsina, Szelistye* (Töttös);

German geographical names: *Cimmerplac, Strejkvald* (Szágy), *Mülgrund* (Véménd), *Groszerazen, Kirhenvald, Langteiler* (Geresdlak).

The Hungarian orthography applied for minority names seemed as a simple solution at the time the gazetter was prepared. In the present circumstances this policy should be revised. On the basis of new legal circumstances, and discussions with representatives of the minority unions as well as with other experts, the standard orthography of each minority language should be used in the standardization of geographical names.

According to §. 61, Law LXXVII/1993. on the right of nationalities and ethnic minorities, the following minorities are acknowledged in Hungary: Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Gipsy, Greek, Polish, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene, and Ukrainian. Though no recent research has been made on the impact of minority languages on geographical names, it can be still stated that only Croatian, German, and Slovak may appear in a considerable number on detailed topographic maps.

As to the use of minority languages, the introductory text of the Law cited above, contains the following statement: "The language, material and intellectual culture, historical traditions as well as other characteristics of minorities living on the territory of the Republic of Hungary, and having Hungarian citizenship, are parts of their individual as well as their common self-identity. All these are of special worth, their preservation, care-taking, and enrichment is not only the fundamental right of the national and ethnic minorities, but it is also the interest of the Hungarian nation, and ultimately of all states, of the community of nations." Another item, § 53 of the same Law gives the following rule:

"The local government, according to the requirements of the local minority representative body acting in the area under the competency of that government, must ensure that

... c) names of cities, towns, and villages on sign-posts, names on street-plates, names of institutions as well as statements on their activities on tables showing offices that provide public services, should be read also in the mother tongue of the minority, beside the Hungarian text, with the same content, and in the same form."

A more detailed regulation can be found in § 6 of the Order 71/1989. (modified by the 19/1992 Government Order): "... (4) A minority language name can also be established based on the rules given in the previous point (1). A minority language name for features belonging to point a), and d) to h), § 3, can be established parallel with the Hungarian name." This means that in case of names of the the relief and regions, names of nature reserves, names of the transport and communication, names of built-up areas of cities and communes, names of outskirt settlements, and street names only parallel minority language names can be applied. In all other types of geographical names a single minority language name can be given as an official name. It should be noted that administrative names are decided upon separate orders, which do not mention the possibility of giving single official minority language names. However, minority names of cities, towns, and villages can be found on sign-posts all over country (see the above citation from § 53, Law LXXVII/1993).

Minority language geographical names appear on the present topographical and other large scale maps, written in the Hungarian alphabet. Preparations have been made to change minority geographical names into the respective orthography. Difficulties arise from the fact, that some minorities use the names in a dialect form, while in most cases, standard forms are required.

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