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Report of the Czech Republic

Submitted by the Czech Republic,
Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre

CZECH REPUBLIC

CZECH OFFICE FOR SURVEYING, MAPPING AND CADASTRE

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names - 17th Session -

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Agenda item 9

Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.

The Czech Republic as a new state on the map of the world came into existence on 1st January 1993 by a division of the previous Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. In the field of the standardization of geographical names it has received the legislature and respective institutions of former federation, let's say the legislature of the Czech Republic as the former member state of the federation. Since 1st January 1993 the cadastre of the Czech Republic has included the settlement and non-settlement names. The works on the detailed legal regulation concerning the geographical names are continuing.

The national standardization of non-settlement names is carried out in accordance with the law by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, i.e. the central body of the state administration in the field of geodesy, cartography and cadastre. Since 1993 the said office has become the legal successor of the former Czech Office of Geodesy and Cartography. The advisory body thereof in the field of standardization of geographical names presented on maps is the Geographical Names Commission at the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre. In the Czech Republic the national standardization of the settlement names continues to be carried out by the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the local administrative bodies.

The geographical names are standardized by publishing in the Central Bulletin of the Czech Republic in the case of the names of geographic entities having an administrative function or in the case of the other geographical names by publishing in the Basic Map of the Czech Republic in the scale 1 : 10 000. The Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre administers and continuously updates the results of national standardization in a form of the basic toponymic data file, the so called Lists of Geographical Names. These lists file the names according to the sheet of the Basic Map and according to the administrative division of the state (districts, municipalities, cadastral areas). The lists file namely the graphical form of names, further more the data concerning the nature of named entities their localization, the date of standardization and appearance of variant names. At present the project on transition to automatized way of processing of the toponymic data bases is being worked out and the automatized Basic data base of the geographical datas (ZABAGED) created as a part of the state informational system.

The selected register of names "Geographical Names of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic" in the map scale of 1 : 750 000 was edited in 1990. The register contents 3 320 geographical names from the territory of the Czech Republic. It is scheduled that the enlarged edition of the Czech part of the publication shall be published in the near future in the detailed map in scale of 1 : 500 000. The number of relevant geographical names shall also be increased by means of computer processing.

A gazetteer of the geographical names "Major Geomorphological Units of the Czech Republic" is supposed to be published in 1995. The handbook is going to contain recommended principles for using names of geomorphological units from the territory of the Czech Republic in foreign languages and recommended foreign forms of these names.

Agenda item 12

Country Names.

In compliance with the resolution No. 4 of the First UN Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names and with the resolution No. 2 of the Third UN Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre published in 1993 the third amended edition of the publication "The Names of the States and their Territorial Parts". The publication contents the standardized names of 188 independent states, their territorial parts, dependent territories, etc. in relevant official form in Roman script as well as exonyms : Czech current and complete form of names, current names in UN-languages (English, French, Russian and Spanish) and in German. The names and coordinates of the capitals are also stated. In enclosure the publication is equipped by a map in scale of 1 : 40 000 and by other partial maps for federal states.

Agenda item 14

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and other Editors.

The Toponymic Guidelines for map editors and other users of geographical names has not yet been published in the Czech Republic. However it is still possible to use the Czech part of the "Toponymic Guideline for the Use of Geographical Names from the Territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic" published in 1987. The Guideline is written in Czech, English and Russian languages. It contents the list of graphemes and their corresponding phonemes of the Czech Roman script using the international phonetic transcription API-2 and standard English transcription. Moreover the transliteration into Russian alphabet is added. The part of the guideline dedicated to basic spelling rules and pronunciation of Czech phonemes gives among others an explanation of the meaning and the use of specific Czech diacritic marks, namely of the mark (). An important part of the guideline is the chapter dealing with the spelling of complex geographical names. In complex names as a rule, always the first word of a complex is spelled with capital initial and also the words which themselves are proper names - for example : the mountains "Český les"

(Bohemian Forest), but "Hrubý Jeseník" ("hrubý" i.e. "velký" = in English "great" and "Jeseník" it is the proper name). The exceptions are the complex names of localities where every word except prepositions is spelled with capital initials - for example : the names of cities "Nové Město na Moravě" (New Town in Moravia), "Ústí nad Labem" (Usti upon Labe/Elbe) and so on.

Agenda item 15

Exonyms

In principle the Czech Republic respects the preference of endonyms in the cartographic production. Along with endonyms, the exonyms are referred to within the necessary extent in the cartographic production intended for the instruction given at low level schools only. In the form of an exonym the names of states, continents and large natural units (choronyms) are used on the maps edited in the Czech Republic as well as the names of large geographical objects, rivers and water areas which are spreaded into several countries, and finally the names of oceans, seas and other objects which are beyond the sovereignty of a respective state.

Generally, we can say that the world-wide tendency to reduce the using of exonyms in international and national communications is also applied in the Czech Republic. Almost exceptionally this tendency has prevailed in the names of settlements on the maps and also on the half-official or official bearer of informations (traffic marks, official documents). In this context it should be pointed out that the similar positive approach in the countries behind the Czech Republic state borders is sometimes missing. This fact might be caused by a lack of exact interpretation and usage of a definition of exonym. It is clear that for example the name "Konstantinopolis" for many centuries used to have been the Greco-Latin endonym of the town on the Bosphorus. However has it become an exonym after the conquest of the town by the Turks in the 15th century or after the World War I when the town was abandoned by most of its Greek inhabitants ? And similar question : is the German name for the famous Czech spa "Karlsbad" (in Czech "Karlovy Vary") an exonym or an endonym ? The former possibility

is supported by a fact that the town nowadays is situated on the territory of the Czech Republic where the German ethnic forms only the half of one percent of the population, the latter one by another fact that in its history (till the year 1945) the town had been German as far as the language is concerned. The opinion of the Czech Republic's researchers on that point is that a conversion from the original endonym to present exonym can be found in both cases; obviously it is necessary to consider each category of a name diversely with regard to different historical periods. For it is controversial to state the dividing line endonym/exonym for the names of settlements on the language neighbourhood, it is recommended to respect an official or unofficial status of the name in each concrete state. Every unofficial name (as far as the language point of view is concerned) is from such point of view an exonym.

"The List of Current Czech Geographic Proper Names" published in 1981 by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre is giving a list of more than 3200 of Czech exonyms from all the world. For the time being the publication is out-of-dated and is supposed to be amended and reedited. Many of registered names given in the publication are now belonging to the sphere of Czech historical exonyms.

Agenda item 16

Standardization in multilingual areas

The Czech Republic has about ten million inhabitants, 94 per cent of which are belonging to the Czech nationality. National minorities are Slovaks (4 %), Poles (0,7 %), Germans (0,5 %), Hungarians (0,2 %), Ukrainians and Russians (0,1 %) and others from which the Roma minority prevails (0,5 %). It is rather difficult to investigate the number of the Roma minority members, because large number of them has acquired the Czech or Slovak nationality. On the whole territory of the state the geographical names are standardized in the Czech language only because the national minorities do not inhabit a certain area in such dense concentration that the standardization of respective geographical names also in the language of relevant

minority would be necessary.

The Slovak minority constituted last year after the division of Czechoslovakia is quantitatively prevailing and has the specific position. It has been established naturally by a migration (job opportunities, mixed Czecho-Slovak marriages) during last 75 years of common state. The Slovaks are living nowadays in all regions of the country and are gradually assimilated in natural way. Both ethnics are very closed as far as the language is concerned which helps to speed up the process of assimilation.

Classical autochthon national minority are on the other hand the Poles living in the far east part of the Czech Republic in so called Těšín s Silesia (according to the name of the town "Těšín") along the borders with Poland. At present this region is unevenly inhabited by the Czech, Polish and partially also Slovak ethnics. Most of the local population has until today spoken Czech-Polish transitional dialects. The effects of the language boundary-line of closed slavonic ethnics also cooperated in producing the present diversity of geographical names of this region.