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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Report of the East Central and Southeast European Division on
Activities Performed in the Standardization of Geographical
Names in the Period 1992-1994

Paper presented by the East Central and Southeast European
Division*

Prepared by Béla Pokoly, Chairman of the Division

Hungary undertook the task of chairmanship of the East Central and Southeast Europe Division on the 16th session of UNGEEN (4 September, 1992, New York), following the decision of the 11th session of the Division (5-7 May, 1992, Bratislava). In its function it convened the Division for its 12th session on 6-10 September, 1993 in Budapest. The session was attended by representatives from Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine

Albania was represented at the first time on the session of the Division. Among others it reported on the existence since 1973 of the Geographical Names Commission working with the Academy of Sciences. Work is under way on an Albanian etymological dictionary.

Postal address of the Albanian geographical names agency:

Geographical Studies Centre
Rr. "Myslym Shyri" Nr. 11.
Tirana - ALBANIA

Bulgaria primarily informed on the Decision No. 83 of 1993 of the Council of Ministers ordering the setting up of new a council responsible for orthography and transcription of geographical names. The council will start work beginning next year, and its rulings will be binding within Bulgaria. Standardization of forms of geographical names used in Bulgaria will have especially great importance.

Cyprus reported that the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names continues to be the competent authority and was set up in 1977 following a decision by the Council of Ministers. The UN-approved romanization system ELOT 743 has been in obligatory use in Cyprus on all documents, including maps, since 1989.

Detailed information on all related activities was given in the paper presented by Cyprus on the 6th UN Conference.

The Czech Republic informed the session that the Geographical Names Commission at the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre remained the advisory body for the said office in the field of standardization of geographical names in the new situation following the establishment of the Czech Republic. The relevant part of the Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors published in the former Czechoslovakia in 1987 is still valid for the Czech Republic. Work on the computerization of a toponymic database has temporarily stopped; the 3rd edition of the "Names of the States and their Territorial Parts" was published in 1993.

Hungary gave detailed information in four subthemes:

- it gave a report on the use of geographical names in multilingual areas of hungarian nationalities,
- prepared and presented the new edition of the Hungarian toponymic guidelines for map and other editors,

- presented information on the Hungarian toponymic database (FNT) with a technical tour to demonstrate in practice its operation,
- it worked out its latest remarks on the UNGEGN Dictionary of Toponymic Terminology (Ed. by Naftali Kadmon, Version 2.0)

Poland informed on the work of its two geographical names commissions (Commission for Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographical Objects in the Council of Minister's Office, Committee for Standardization of Geographical Names Outside Poland) and the Department of the Surveyor General of Poland. The volume "Short Gazetteer of Poland", presented on the 1991 (Prague) session of the Division will be sent to the countries not represented on the last two sessions. A toponymic database is in the planning stage; a toponymic guide for maps and other publications was drawn up in 1993.

The Slovak Republic reported on the names authorities within the newly independent country. Its Ministry of Interior plays key role in the naming of administrative features, while standardization of non-residential feature names in the territory of the Slovak Republic as well as of names of geographical features outside Slovak territory is handled by the Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of the Slovak Republic. Slovak cadastral maps also contain names of the Hungarian minority language in ethnically mixed regions.

The Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors was published in 1993 and presented at the session. The process of publishing gazetteers of Slovakian districts has continued. The following nine new volumes have been completed since the last session: Bardejov, Rimavská Sobota, Lučenec, Prešov, Dunajská Streda, Spišská Nová Ves, Galanta, Zvolen, Svidník. The toponymic database based on the 1:10 000 topographic series is being completed rapidly.

Slovenia informed on activities of its Commission on geographical names. It gives expert opinion for defining both administrative and physical features in Slovenia. Bilingual names in the linguistically mixed areas of Italian and Hungarian minorities are given considerable attention. Work on a toponymic database was started in 1992.

Ukraine had the chance of presenting its detailed information on the subject the first time, since it joined the Division only in 1992. Standardization of geographical names is done at present by the new Geographical Names Standardization Department of the "Kartografiya" Research and Production Enterprise, initiated by the Main Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre working under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The establishment of a National Council on Geographical Names will shortly be accomplished.

The recently passed law on languages allows reproduction of toponyms in the languages of the ethnic majorities of the respective localities.

For the transliteration of Ukrainian geographical names a provisional system was presented at the session.

The representative of Ukraine expressed its pleasure to join

the work of the Division and asked for methodological and technical assistance in the activity of standardizing geographical names.

Postal address of the Ukrainian geographical names agency:

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The Division's special problem of relatively large number of geographical name changes was also addressed. Delegates were encouraged to send information in this respect to the Secretary of UNGEGN to be published in UNGEGN Newsletter.

Another large difficulty facing cartographers of the Division (but also of others) is the romanization of toponyms of the former Soviet Union. Pending UN-recommended (and locally supported as well as implemented) single romanization systems for the new republics, a valuable source of information remains the US Board of Geographical Names Foreign Names Information Bulletin sent along the UNGEGN Newsletter.