

# UNITED NATIONS

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Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names  
Seventeenth Session  
New York, 13-24 June 1994

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WORKING PAPER 71

Agenda item 5

## REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Report on Standardization of Geographical-Names in Russia

(Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia)

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## STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN RUSSIA

(Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia)

During the last years standardization of geographical names in Russia within the framework of the Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia (Roskartografia) - a right-successor of the former GUGK of the USSR - was aimed at fulfilling the following tasks.

1. To collect and study information on changes of geographical names and their spelling taking place in Russian Federation and outside the country. A particular attention has been paid to the analysis of an intensive process of renaming geographical objects which began in the middle of 80s - to restore their former names, in particular, many settlements' names lost during the post-October revolution period.

Some results of the work done were published in the article "Returned names", in "Geodesy and Cartography", 1992, (Nos 3,6,9, 11-12) and 1993 (Nos 4,7). In future this information is supposed to be published as separate information bulletins.

2. To prepare materials for the future law of Russian Federation about geographical names and to set up a Russian Commission on geographical names.

After the USSR disintegration into separate independent states all the union and republican legislative acts to control and regulate the establishment and use of geographical names have become invalid. The Union Joint Committee on Geographical Names coordinating work in this field has also ceased its activity. Thus, an urgent necessity has appeared for Russian Federation to adopt its own law about geographical names and to set up its own Committee on geographical names.

Hence, Roskartografia has already worked out concrete proposals for the character of the said law and the foundation of Russian Committee on geographical names, its status, membership and basic functions, as well as draft statute of the Committee and instructions on its formation. Now the question of the Committee foundation is under consideration of the RF government, and there is no doubts that it will be decided positively.

3. To update and republish the existing normatives and methodological instructions on standardization of geographical names.

In 50-80s a whole series (more than 100) of the mentioned documents (instructions, guides and others) was elaborated and put into service. Among them there were documents relating to the collection and establishment of geographical names, to naming and renaming of geographical objects, to Russian orthography and Russian rendering of foreign names, to transliteration of non-Latin spelled names with the help

of Latin letters, (the complete list of the documents is given in the book by G.I. Donidze "Standardization of geographical names". Annotated index of normatives and methodological issues of 1939-1990, M., 1993).

During the years when the mentioned instructions were in force significant changes took place on the political map of the World; new factual material appeared, new approaches to solution of some problems in standardization of geographical names were emphasized. All this, naturally, cannot help requiring some corrections to be made in the said documents, many of which now have become bibliographic rarities.

Working out of new normative documents started at Roskartografia in 1991, and by the present time instructions on Russian rendering of Moldavian and Belorussian geographical names have been already revised, updated and prepared for publishing (in connection with transition to Latin graphics and because of the instructions were issued very long ago). A renewal of "Guide to normalization of geographical names of Antarctica" (M., 1984), is under completion in view of the development of work for compiling international gazetteer of geographical names of Antarctica under the aegis of SCAR.

4. To work out new normative dictionaries of geographical names of various countries and regions.

It is necessary to mention some dictionaries of the latest editions. They are as follows:

"Dictionary of names of hydrographic objects of the CIS and of other republics".

This dictionary is considered as a continuation of the series of thematic dictionaries of geographical names, first of them is "Dictionary of names of orographical objects in the USSR" published in 1976, and the second one is "Dictionary of geographical names of underwater relief forms", published in 1993.

The dictionary comprises more than 12500 names normalized in Russian and official Latin graphics, of the most big and important rivers, lakes, seas, water reservoirs, bays, straits, channels and other hydrographical objects of the USSR former republics which now are independent states, excluding Baltic republics; and also about 4000 variants of names and spellings, now obsolete, but encountered in some original sources.

Each normalized name has a special reference to the kind of a geographical object and to its location, has a list of name and spelling variants provided that such variants exist. There are additional articles referred to name variants which make references to normalized names.

"Dictionary of geographical names of foreign Europe".

It comprises about 15000 names normalized in Russian and original spelling, of states and administrative-territorial units of the first order, and also of the most important populated areas and physical-geographical objects in the states of foreign Europe (with respect to Russian

Federation), including Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Normalized names are accompanied with references to the kind of objects and their location, and also with some other information to facilitate objects identification.

Name variants fixed in originals are shown in the dictionary too.

"Dictionary of geographical names of Russian Federation" consists of more than 12000 names normalized in Russian and official Latin, of republics, territories, regions, districts, areas, cities, settlements of a town-like type, a number of other populated sites as district centres, or of other well-known towns of historical, cultural or other value, and also of the largest and the most important physical-geographical objects of Russian Federation.

Normalized names are given with references to the kind of objects and their location in geographical coordinates with an accuracy of 2-3 minutes.

The variants of names and their spellings the most often used in originals are also shown in this dictionary as in previous ones.

The above said dictionaries are expected to be published within two nearest years.

It should be added that in 1995 the development of "Dictionary of name changes of populated areas of Russian Federation in XX century" will be completed, and, as we hope, it will be met by specialists and general public with interest.

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