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Item 5  
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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Report of the Republic of Cyprus

REPUBLIC



OF CYPRUS

**UNITED  
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**REPORT**

**REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

## INTRODUCTION

Cyprus is the third largest island in the eastern Mediterranean with an area of 3572 square miles (9251 square kilometers). Its population is about 750,000 of which 80% are Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots and 2% Armenians, Maronites, Latins and others.

Cyprus was declared an independent sovereign Republic on 16th August, 1960 and in September on the same year it became a member of the United Nations, in 1961 a member of the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Cartography and Geographical names have developed in Cyprus for the last 3500 years. There is a wealth of toponyms, which originated in antiquity and have survived to the present day unaltered. Homer was the first to mention the island by its present name KYPROS. Clavdios Ptolemeos in his monumental work "Geografiki Ifigisi" dating back 160 AD mentions that he mapped Cyprus.

A milestone in the history of Cartography of Cyprus was Lord kitchener's mapping of the island in 1878-1882. It was the first scientific map at a scale of one inch to one mile and covered the whole island in 15 sheets. It was produced in English which at the time was the official language of the administration.

Since independence the maps of Cyprus are being issued in both Greek and Turkish, the two official languages of the Republic as well as in English. Geographical names adopted are in the language of publications and include the names of towns, villages mountains, plains, rivers, capes, gulfs and all locality or place-names appearing both on maps and cadastral plans.

Competent authority

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the standardization of Geographical Names was set up on 21st April, 1977 by decision 15769 of the Council of Ministers and was authorized to act as the official body and as the relevant authority was entrusted with the standardization, transliteration, and transcription of all geographical names of Cyprus. The main task and the bulk of work was undertaken by the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Cyprus Research Centre.

In 1982, two thousands of the main geographical names of the island were included in THE CONSISE CAZETTEER OF CYPRUS which was submitted and discussed at the Fourth Conference.

In 1987 the Permanent Committee prepared A COMPLETE GAZETTEER OF CYPRUS which contains about 67000 entries. These toponyms were collected from the cadastral plans, the official maps, Land Registers and other sources. This work was produced utilizing Computers. The field checking was carried out by officers of the Department of Lands and Surveys and were processed by glossologists of the Cyprus Scientific Research Center and submitted to the Committee for scrutiny and approval.

During the preparation of these Gazetteers and of other relevant work performed by the Committee the cultural linguistic heritage of all communities living in Cyprus has been fully respected and will continue to be so in future. The final field checking for verification of the material collected and used for preparation of the above mentioned Gazetteers and other maps was not possible because nearly 40% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus has been for the last 20 years under Turkish military occupation and therefore inaccessible to the competent names authority.

Further, it is regrettable indeed that Turkey through its occupying forces and its organ the so call "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" has attempted to change toponyms in the occupied area. Such attempts amount to an unauthorized interference in the affairs of an independent State, and constitutes an illegal action against the Republic of Cyprus. Further, it violates resolutions of the United Nations Conferences such as resolution 16 of the Third Conference, which states:

"it is recommended that any changes made by other authorities in the names standardized by the competent national geographical names authorities should not be recognized by the United Nations".

#### Romanization of the Greek Alphabet for Geographical Names

Eversince the Second United Nations Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names, the conversion of the Greek alphabet into Latin characters has been on the agenda of the United Nations Conferences and UNGEGN sessions.

The Cyprus Republic had agreed with Greece on a common system of transcription and transliteration from Greek to the Roman alphabet with the objectives:

- (a) to meet the basic requirements of the United Nations whereas for each topographical feature in a non-Roman script area, an internationally acknowledged name form in Roman script should exist in addition to the standardized name in non-Roman script.

- (b) to respond to the needs of both the donors and users;
- (c) for equitable service of the requirements of phonetic transcription and reversible transliteration and
- (d) for the application of absolute reversibility, obtainable by electronic processes with a minimum use of diacritics.

This conversion system was sanctioned by the Greek Government by virtue of an act published in the Official Gazette under No579B on 7.10.1983. Furthermore, the Ministry to the Prime Minister issued circular No. YAP/F06.3/3480 dated 16.4.1987 to all ministries and other agencies instructing them to apply the system where appropriate.

The conversion of the Greek alphabet into Roman letters had been extensively discussed at United Nations Conferences on the standardization of Geographical Names and at sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Eventually at the Fourth Conference in 1982 a positive opinion was expressed, on the standard No.743 (ELOT 743) of the Greek standardization prepared by Greece and Cyprus.

Ultimately, at the Fifth Conference in 1987 at Montreal, Canada, having been recognized among other things that the system in question is linguistically sound and suitable for the transcription and transliteration of Greek names, approved it and recommended it to be adopted as the international system for the romanization of Geographical Names, in the Greek alphabet.

There followed the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus by virtue of their decision No31.075 dated 15.12.1988, published in the official Gazette 2375 of the 7.1.1989 by which the system was approved and instructed its obligatory application to all official and semi-government editions and publications.

The system has been successfully implemented to cartographic products such as Town Plans, Administration and Road Maps, Aeronautical Charts, thematic maps; to the two Gazetteers referred above; to the administrative documents such as passports, identity cards, street name signs, postal codes etc; and to the documentation of Greek names and texts of both classical and modern Greek.

Finally, to facilitate the use of the system by the recipients it is mentioned that both the Republic of Cyprus and Greece have conversion packages available which can be provided on request.



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