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## Exonyms

### The definition of the terms 'exonym' and 'endonym'

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## The definition of the terms "exonym" and "endonym"

### 1. Exonym

- 1.1. The term and concept "exonym" in the definition of 1972<sup>1</sup> should be maintained in conformity with H.A.G. LEWIS' and P. RAPER'S proposal of 1995 and 1996, respectively,<sup>2</sup> as worded under their paragraph "Exonym: 2" (repeat: "2", not "Exonym: 1").
- 1.2. It should be recalled that according to the 2nd UN Conference of 1972<sup>3</sup> - when the above definition was adopted - "the term 'exonym' had advantages for international use in that, as a relatively recent coining, it was free of special connotations in the various languages, unlike the term 'conventional name', which might have different implications in [...] other languages as compared with English".
- 1.3. The expression "conventional name", being idiosyncratic of one language only, does not seem amenable to definition on an international level.
- 1.4. UNGEGN is to be credited with having adopted the term "exonym" before international onomastic sciences came to use it widely in various languages (e.g. Fr. *exonyme*, Sp. *exónimo*, R. *ekzonim*, Dutch *exoniem*, Gm. *Exonym*, Gr. *εξώνυμο*), presumably following UNGEGN's example.

### 2. Endonym

- 2.1. The definition in LEWIS' and RAPER'S proposal of 1995 and 1996, respectively,<sup>2</sup> under "Endonym: 1" (repeat: "1") ought to be modified so as to bring it into alignment with their definition of "Exonym: 2" (cf. 1.1.) and, at the same time, to add some necessary complements. The following wording is recommended:  
"Endonym: For the purposes of international standardization, an endonym is regarded as being a geographical name used in one of the officially recognized languages of a sovereign STATE, or part of such STATE, for an entity situated within the area where that language has official status."
- 2.2. It is understood that the text under "Endonym: 2" (repeat: "2") is intended as an explanatory note for special cases, rather than part of a definition.

### 3. Endonyms and exonyms within one country

- 3.1. In a given sovereign State a language officially recognized only in part of the entire national territory may use its own names for certain geographical entities situated beyond its boundaries of official recognition but within the national territory of the sovereign State. For example, German, officially used along with Italian in the Italian province of Bolzano/Bozen, has names for several geographical entities in Italy outside that province, such as *Venedig*

(Ital. *Venezia*, Fr. *Venice*), *Neapel* (Ital. *Napoli*, Fr. *Naples*). It goes without saying that German *Venedig*, *Neapel* etc. are exonyms, not endonyms. The same applies to analogous situations in other countries.

- 3.2. A similar situation is to be found in countries with more than one language used by the central authorities, e.g., Switzerland: Names such as Gm. *Genf* for Fr. *Genève*, or Ital. *Zurigo* for Gm. *Zürich* cannot be regarded as endonyms but as exonyms.
- 3.3. On the other hand there are cases where a geographical entity does have local official names in more than one language. Such names are endonyms, e.g. for the capitals of Belgium and Finland: Dutch *Brussel* and Fr. *Bruxelles*, Finn. *Helsinki* and Swed. *Helsingfors*.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, London, 10-31 May 1972, vol. II: Technical Papers, United Nations, New York, 1974, Agenda Item 12, Conventional Names, pp. 195-196.
- <sup>2</sup> United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, Newsletter No 15, May 1995, p. 16; No 17, May 1996, p. 7.
- <sup>3</sup> See <sup>1</sup>, vol. I: Report of the Conference, chapter II, item 12, no 49, p. 7.