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United Nations  
Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names

Working Paper  
No. 58

Eighteenth Session  
Geneva, 12-23 August 1996

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Item 5  
of the Provisional Agenda

**REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS**

**REPORT OF THE NORDEN DIVISION**

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Submitted by Mr. Botolv Helleland, Chairman of the Norden  
Division

**Report of the NORDEN Division**  
**Submitted by *Botolv Helleland***  
**Chairman of the Division**  
**Eighteenth Session of UNGEGN, Geneva 12-23. August**

Since the Seventeenth Session of the UNGEGN in New York in June 1994 each country within the Division has pursued its national place-name standardization policy, mainly in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations Conferences and UNGEGN. The following report is an updated version of the Norden Division report presented at the 17th Session of UNGEGN in June 1994.

**National standardization; names authorities**

**Denmark.**

Since 1932 the Place-Name Committee in Denmark has drawn up lists of place-names for official use, authorized by the ministry responsible. This list, which is constantly updated, is to be found in a data base in the *Kort- og Matrikelstyrelsen* (National Survey and Cadastre), and it includes 25,000 names. State bodies are obliged to follow the spelling indicated in this list, while the municipalities use the authorized spelling on a voluntary basis. On maps published by the National Survey and Cadastre the authorized forms of names are used. Names that are not on the authorized list are written in accordance with the same principles.

The Place-Name Committee and the National Survey and Cadastre have started discussions with the municipal authorities in order to revise the spelling of the authorized place-name list and to make amendments to the list. A PC-version of the authorized place-name list is expected to be completed in 1996.

**Finland.**

Every governmental or municipal institution as well as any private organisation has the right to decide the names of things within their jurisdiction or sphere. But the officials who make decisions on names should, in accordance with the declaration of Parliament (1957) and some specific Acts passed later (e.g. the Distribution of Local Government Areas Act), request a statement from the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

Note that the English name of the Finnish Research Centre for Domestic Languages has been changed to the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

**Iceland.**

In Iceland place-names are standardized in conformity with current Icelandic spelling. The Place-Name Commission (Örnefnanefnd, established in 1935) or the Institute of Place-Name Research (Örnefnastofnun) may be consulted. As early as 1913 an Act was passed concerning new farm names and changes of farm names. A new Farms Names Act was passed in 1937, with amendments in 1953. The main principle is that such names shall be based on traditional Icelandic naming custom.

## **Norway.**

In Norway a Place-Names Act was passed on 18.5.1990. Regulations pursuant to the Act were issued on 5.7.1991, with amendments on 14.10.1993. The main content of the Act and Regulations is that place-names in public use shall be laid down on the basis of inherited, local pronunciation and in accordance with current spelling principles. The same principle applies to place-names in multilingual areas. The spelling is laid down by the public body which is responsible for the name of the thing concerned, e.g. the Public Roads Administration, Postal Administration, county, municipality. The vast majority of names on maps are laid down by the Norwegian Mapping Authority through the 18 county mapping offices. To implement the provisions of the Act five regional names advisory offices have been established together with an appeals board to decide appeals against the spelling of place-names.

## **Sweden.**

As of the 1st of January 1996, the National Land Survey of Sweden (NLS) merged with the Central Board for Real Estate Data to form a new government organization. Since 1974, the Geographical Names Authority has been the responsibility of the National Land Survey of Sweden (NLS). The function as place-names authority is exercised by the division of *GSD and place-names* (Sw. *GSD och ortnamn*). This division has the responsibility for the standardization of place-names at the NLS and for the content in the place-names database. The division also administers the Place-Names Advisory Board.

In order to meet the need for an advisory service as regards the care, preservation and spelling of place-names a position as place-name consultant has been established in Uppsala, at the *Institute for Language and Folklore Research* (Sw. *Språk och folkminnesinstitutet*).

## **Office treatment of place-names**

All the onomastic departments within the Division have given a great many statements and answers concerning name standardization, name usage and etymology. These services are given by letter, phone, radio programmes and press. In this respect the figures supplied by **Finland** (1994-95) may serve as an example:

New or altered Finnish, Swedish or Sami names on 342 revised sheets of the Basic Map (1:20 000), on other maps or atlases and some municipal plans of the road names have been checked at the Research Institute. The Onomastic Planning and Guidance Unit, the Swedish Department and Sami Language Planning and Guidance of the Research Institute have provided about 70 statements concerning geographical names in Finland and offered guidance on name usage as well as other information requested on Finnish, Swedish and Sami names, or names used in foreign countries, by phone and letter (concerning about 5,000 names) by radio programmes and through the press.

## **Field collection of place-names and training courses**

### **Denmark.**

In the Faröes the Faröese Academy and the Cadastre Office are in the process of collecting and recording approx. 80,000 place-names. Of these it is expected that 15,000

will be included on a new base map with a scale of 1:25,000 and recorded in a data base. The field work was finished in 1995, and the data base will be completed in 1997. The responsibility for maintaining the register lies with the Farøese.

#### **Finland.**

The systematic field survey of place-names organized by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland continued in 30 municipalities. The collection of names was completed in 3 municipalities. About 38,000 new records were added to the files of the Archives of Names of the Research Institute. The training courses on the collection of names in the field have been arranged by the Research Institute together with the Finnish departments of the universities. The field survey will be continued.

#### **Norway.**

To follow up the Place-Names Act the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has arranged several courses and conferences in which the names advisory services, the Norwegian Language Council and the Norwegian Mapping Authority have participated. The Norwegian Mapping Authority and the names advisory services have for their part continued organizing courses for municipalities and other public services to help them tackle their tasks in a more satisfactory manner. Several local courses have also been arranged for the collecting and recording of place-names. Both types of courses will continue throughout the next couple of years.

### **Registers, gazetteers and toponymic data files**

#### **A Nordic toponymic data base.**

The mapping authorities in the Nordic countries have decided that a common Nordic toponymic data base be produced. A detailed plan for the project will probably be laid down this year. The data base will contain approximately 20,000 geographical names and cover Denmark with the Farøe Islands and Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway with Jan Mayen and Svalbard, and lastly Sweden. The work will be done in respect of the UNGEGN resolutions concerning the use of exonyms and endonyms and of names in multilingual areas.

#### **Denmark.**

The register of place-names of the National Survey and Cadastre, established in the years 1976 to 1981, contains today approx. 120,000 place-names, which are continually updated. At the end of 1994 the register will be transformed into a relational data base for the purpose of being able to serve users of geographical information systems. The base will be completed in 1996.

#### **Finland.**

The topographic data base of the National Land Survey now contains about 59 % of the Basic Map (a map series of 3,750 sheets covering 10 x 10 km) with 600,000 toponyms. The digitalizing of the map will be completed in 1997. The data files of the GT-Map (1:200,000) covering the entire country contain 68,000 toponyms.

#### **Iceland.**

During the last 3 years the earlier place-name register on card index files at the Iceland Geodetic Survey (Godætisk Institut) has been replaced by a digital system (partly as a result of the UNGEGN recommendations) comprising name, type of locality, ID-number (which refers to map sheet number), specifications of size and type of letters etc. Excel software has been used to make the information available in digital form. About half of the surface of Iceland has so far been covered by this system.

### **Norway.**

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs has given the Norwegian Mapping Authority the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a central data base of all place-names that have been decided in pursuance of the Place-Names Act (the Central Register of Place-Names/SSR). The base is to be available to the public. The base now includes about 350,000 place-names, most of them found in the series of main maps 1:50,000. Since the Act came into operation in 1991 the Norwegian Mapping Authority mainly, but also municipalities and other official authorities, have made decisions on approx. 50,000 names. These are all to be added to the base. The base now (June 1996) is updated in 7 of the 18 Norwegian counties, and will probably be updated throughout the country by the end of the year.

The data base of place-names at the Norwegian Mapping Authority is to be gradually enlarged to include names from other public series of maps such as charts and economic maps. The number of names may then reach approx. 1.5 million.

The Norwegian Mapping Authority has gone through the different ISO standards to arrive at the character set that is as complete as possible for Sami characters. In this connection it seems to be most natural to take as a basis ISO 8859-10 - Latin alphabet, which was published for the first time in 1992. It has been adapted for the following languages: Danish, English, Estonian, Finnish, Færøese, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Farøese, Sami (North, Lule and South Sami), Swedish and German. This is an 8-bit character set in conformity with ISO 2022 or ISO/IEC 4873. The data are stored in a relational data base on a Unix machine and are accessed from client programmes on the users' PCs.

At the Norwegian universities as part of the labour market measures a documentation project was set up in 1991 with a view to transferring collections of place-name material on cards and other paper formats to a data base. The work is being conducted through cooperation with the universities and local registration centres. Up to now some 1,350,000 entries have been computerized.

### **Sweden.**

In September 1995, the computerization of the new Swedish real estate register was completed. More than 3,2 million real properties are stored in this register, each with its unique designation. Such a designation always consists of the name of the municipality and the name of the area where the unit is situated (village, farm, urban district or block). The register contains nearly 120,000 area names (other than block names), all of them linguistically examined and adopted before being stored in the database. The spelling of some of the names has been altered and some of the names have been changed. Most of the names in the real estate register are the names of villages and farms, and therefore, most of the settlement names in Sweden are stored in this register.

The place-names database of the NLS contains up to now all 450,000 place-names shown on the Topographic map 1:50 000. This year a project will begin to store the

remaining names on the official maps of Sweden. When this work is completed the database will contain approximately 1 million place-names in their standardized form. The database serves as a reference source for the official maps and for other purposes.

The Institute for Language and Folklore Research is planning to computerize its collections of place-names, starting this year at the Institute of Place-Name Research in Uppsala. Information about several millions of place-names will thus by means of scanning and indexing be made more readily available.

## **Names in multilingual areas**

### **Denmark.**

With respect to *Greenland* the full responsibility for naming and spelling has, with effect from 1993, been transferred to the Greenlanders themselves. A collaborative agreement has been entered into by the National Survey and Cadastre and the Directorate for Culture, Education and Research which means that everything to do with Greenland place-names will be dealt with by a separate name committee (Grønlands Stednavnenævnet) including research linguists. From 1996 "European" names will disappear from the Greenland place-name register if there is a Greenlandic name from before. In the case of personal names in which a part of the name is an appellative, this element is to be replaced by the corresponding Greenlandic word. For the adoption of new "European" names the same guidelines will be followed. The National Survey and Cadastre functions in an advisory capacity and has a copy of the name data base, which contains 26,000 names. The base is now completed and is also available in a PC-version.

### **Finland.**

The language guidance of Swedish names takes place in the Swedish Department of the Research Institute. In addition to place-names on the Basic Map has the correcting of new street names in municipalities entailed a lot of work. The inconsistent handling of Finnish and Swedish names on some bilingual maps in Finland has been discussed by the representatives of the publishers of maps in some meetings.

Questions of language usage and names in the Sami language are handled by the native Sami expert of the Research Institute in Utsjoki, in Finnish Lapland.

### **Norway.**

The Place-Names Act 1990 and the Regulations issued in 1991 with amendments in 1993 have laid down the principle that place-names in multilingual areas shall be used in conformity with inherited name usage, and the spelling of place-names in these areas is in the main in the process of becoming stabilized. Yet there are still problems of a legal, practical and linguistic kind when it comes to real equality of status between majority and minority languages, which include North Sami, Lule Sami, South Sami and Finnish.

Discussions have taken place between the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the Norwegian Mapping Authority and the Norwegian Defence Authority. The Mapping Authority produces maps for both civil and military use, and the Defence Authority claims that the maps should have only one name for each geographical item, not two or three, which is stated as the main rule in the Place-Names Act.

### **Sweden.**

In 1996, approximately 4,700 Sami names in the Swedish Lule-Sami area have been examined and written in the Lule-Sami orthography. These names will be printed in the map 1:250 000, which will be revised in 1996 and 1997. To ensure continuity between the old and the new edition of the maps, many of the names will be shown also with the old orthography.

## **Exonyms**

### **Finland**

A data base of exonyms excerpted from the greatest and most representative atlases published in Finland 1960-90 has been founded in the Research Institute. The work is not yet finished. A revised list of toponyms with parallel names has been edited for the Swedish-Finnish Dictionary.

### **Norway.**

The Norwegian Language Council is continuing its work on a revised edition of the list of foreign names (Geografilista). For the new edition consideration is being given to a certain reduction of diacritics, among other things for the sake of electronic data processing, even though this may mean increased use of exonyms.

## **Meetings and conferences**

Representatives of the Norden Division met in Oslo on 10th June 1995 to discuss among other matters the reduction of exonyms, the Nordic place-name data base and the dissemination and implementation of United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names.

### **Denmark.**

The 24th NORNA symposium on names was held in Copenhagen on 25-27 April 1995. The topic was "Place-names in Urban Areas".

### **Finland.**

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and the National Land Survey have arranged three national meetings where the treatment of place-names on maps in Finland was discussed. Regular contacts have been kept between the organizations and researchers working on the standardization of place-names in the Nordic countries, as well as in Estonia and Latvia.

The 23rd NORNA-Symposium was held in Svidja 15-17 September 1995. The topic was "Structure and Chronology of Field Names".

### **Norway.**

At the end of May 1997 a Nordic conference on foreign names/exonyms within the Norden Division will be organized in Oslo.

### **Sweden.**

For the past two years, a governmental committee has been working on the question of a Swedish Act for the preservation of inherited place-names in official use. The committee was appointed because some people thought that old place-names should be statutorily preserved. The committee will finish its work this summer (1996).

## Publications

### Denmark.

Jørgen Schack (ed.): Names of States and Words for Nationalities (Statsnavne og nationalitetsord). *Dansk Sprognævns skrifter* nr. 21. Nordisk sprogsekretariats skrifter nr. 17. Oslo 1994. -Jørgen Schack: Foreign Place-names in Linguistic Advice (Udenlandske stednavne i den sproglige rådgivning. *Språk i Norden* 1993. Nordisk sprogsekretariats skrifter nr. 15. Oslo 1993, p. 80-87.

Fellows-Jensen, Gillian: *The Institute of Name Research*. (Folder presenting the institute and its activities in English.) Institut for Navneforskning. Coopenhagen 1995. 18. pp.

### Finland.

Nähri, Eeva Maria (ed.): *Country Names in six Languages, in Finnish, Swedish, Sami, English, French and German*. (The Sami names ed. by Samuli Aikio.) The Research Institute of the Languages of Finland. Helsinki 1994. 163 p.

Nähri, Eeva Maria: *Language legislation and language planning in bilingual Finland*. Seirbhís Phoiblí. Vol. 14 No. 4 Lúnasa, 1994. Dublin, p. 34-47.

About 15 articles on the maintenance, planning or collection of place-names were published in Finland 1994-1995.

### Norway.

Harsson, Margit & Botolv Helleland (ed.): *Den 7. nasjonale konferansen i namnegransking. Blindern 19. november 1993. Stadnamn og kulturlandskapet (Place-names and the Cultural Landscape)*. University of Oslo 1995. 172 pp.

### Sweden.

In 1992 the NLS published the first issue of a series dealing with geographical names and the preservation of names (*Ortnamn och namnvård*). This year number 4 *The real property designation reform (SW. Fastighetsbeteckningsreformen)* has been published.

Brylla, Eva (ed.): *Behövs en ortnamnslag? (Is there a need for a place-name act?)*. Handlingar frå ett endagssymposium i Uppsala den 20 april 1994. Uppsala 1995.

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