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REPORTS OF THE LIAISON OFFICERS, REGIONAL MEETINGS AND
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Report on the 19th Congress of Onomastic Sciences
Aberdeen, Scotland, 4-11 August 1996

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The 19th Congress of Onomastic Sciences was held in Aberdeen, Scotland, 4-11 August 1996. Approximately 220 scholars participated and nearly 170 papers on different aspects of onomastics were read. Several UNGEGN experts participated in the congress. Most of the papers dealt with place-names and personal names from a linguistic, literary or methodological points of view. There were also some scholars who contributed with more practical and pragmatic presentations, such as "Fieldwork in Place-Name Research" (Marje Joalaid, Estonia), "Toponymy in a University Curriculum" (Naftali Kadmon, Israel), "Tentative Romanised Spelling Reform of Japanese Place-Names" (Akikatsu Kagami, Japan), and "The Standardisation of Geographical Names in a Changed Society" (Peter Raper, South Africa). The papers will be published in a Congress Report in several volumes, presumably within the next couple of years.

The Congress was hosted by the University of Aberdeen and organised by professor W.F.H. Nicolaisen in cooperation with the Board of ICOS.

To those who are not familiar with the abbreviation ICOS, I should like to mention following:

Before 1993 ICOS stood for the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences. Quite a large group of name scholars from different countries were members. At the 18th Congress in Trier in April 1993 the statutes were altered and ICOS became the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, open to all name scholars. The membership fee is 700 Belg. Frs.

Professor Nicolaisen was elected the first president of the new ICOS. At the general assembly at Aberdeen Professor Rob Rentenaar from the Netherlands was elected the new president. The Board of ICOS consists of 11 members: The president, two vice presidents, the treasury secretary, the vice secretary and 6 board members. The secretary is Dr. Willy Van Langendonck, who also is the leader of the International Onomastic Centre at Louvain, Belgium.

ICOS, in cooperation with the secretariat at Louvain, publishes the international name journal Onoma.

As to the relationship between ICOS and UNGEGN it should be noted that ICOS is a private society, whereas UNGEGN has an official status under the auspices of the United Nations. However, the activities and the achievements of ICOS should have considerable interest for the experts of UNGEGN as a whole, taking into account that onomastic insight plays an important part when dealing with national and international standardisation of geographical names.