

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.53/L.68
6 September 1967

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
Geneva, 4-22 September 1967
Item 7 of the agenda

Dual distribution

REPORT ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
(Submitted by the Government of Romania)

The Government of Romania welcomes the initiative and the action taken by the United Nations concerning the standardization of geographical names.

It also fully agrees with the principles stated in the paper submitted to the Conference, according to which:

- the adoption and standardization of geographical names is a matter within the exclusive competence of each State, and
- national geographical names form the basis for international standardization.

In the Socialist Republic of Romania, the question of geographical names is the concern of the National Geographical Committee which, through its Commission on Geographical Nomenclature, composed of geographers, linguists, cartographers, historians and others, co-operates with organs of the State in solving all problems arising in this field.

Romania has long been concerned with the national standardization of geographical names, but it was only after 1875, when the Romanian Geographical Society was founded, that the work was properly organized. In 1882 the Society drew up, for the purposes of an extensive survey, a 19-point questionnaire intended to obtain information for the publication of a geographical dictionary of Romania.

This undertaking, besides resulting in the publication of the first regional Gazetteers, led to the appearance, in 1887, of the Index of Romanian rural and urban communes.

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Twelve years later, in 1897, the work of preparing the regional gazetteers was concluded, and in 1898 there appeared the first volume of the large Geographical Dictionary of Romania. The publication of this work was completed fifteen years later, in 1902, with the issue of the fifth volume.

At the beginning of this century, the training of geography teachers for higher education at Bucharest, Lassy and then Cluj, stimulated geographical research in the field, and consequently local documentation on the problem of geographical names. Fruitful research on Romanian toponymy was carried out not only by geographers, but also by linguists, historians, geologists and others.

We may also mention the early decades of this century and the work of St. Hepites, the Vice-President of the Romanian Geographical Society, who in 1921, submitted to the Society a paper on geographical names in which, invoking the decisions of the 31st Congress of French Geographical Societies held in 1913, he showed that a State has the sovereign right to decide the names of all places within its territory.

The younger generation of experts assigns an important place to this problem in its scientific work, which includes:

- the production of medium and large-scale maps;
- the production of the Atlas annexed to the Geographical Monograph of the Socialist Republic of Romania;
- the production of regional linguistic atlases;
- the production of regional geographical and linguistic monographs;
- the production of the National Geographical Atlas;
- the compilation of a preliminary glossary containing some 1,500 classified Romanian geographical terms;
- the compilation of a preliminary glossary of generic geographical terms with their French and English equivalents;
- the publication of toponymic dictionaries;
- the publication of the Romanian Encyclopaedic Dictionary and the Technical Lexicon, in which geographical terms have an important place.

With regard to the names of inhabited places, the Decision of the Council of Ministers of 1950 concerning the administrative division of the country and the improvements made in it by the decrees of 1952, 1956 and 1964, the object of which was "the continuous improvement of the territorial distribution of the forces of production and the increase of the economic potential of the less developed regions, districts and towns", have led to practical results in solving the problem of names of places and administrative units, from the village up to the administrative region.

As to the and (names of bodies of water and forms of relief), it may be said that our future research can be directed towards the following objectives:

- the identification of names which, as a result of being wrongly transcribed on topographical maps, have suffered distortion of their historical, geographical or ethnographical significance;
- the standardization of the names of certain geographical sub-units which sometimes differ in the works of different geographers;
- the establishment of a standard name for the same object (river, mountain, etc.) where its designation differs from one locality to another;
- the preparation, through extensive collaboration with historians, linguists, geologists, sociologists and others, of an inventory of geographical names used in Romanian territory, with special reference to the compilation of the large Geographical Dictionary of Romania;
- the compilation of a bibliography on the problem of Romanian geographical terms.

As a result of this prolonged activity, it may be said that the standardization of geographical names is no longer a problem. This state of affairs is also partly due to the absence of Romanian dialects which might lead to differences in spelling and pronunciation.

At the same time, special attention is given to the precision of certain geographical names, which raise problems for international standardization. An example is provided by the Romanian Carpathians which, divided as they now are on the maps into the Western Carpathians, Eastern Carpathians and Southern Carpathians, give rise to confusion when related to the whole range of the Carpathians, as in the case of the Eastern Carpathians which acquire a special meaning.

For this reason, it is proposed to revert to the names adopted long ago by the geographer S. Mehedinti, namely: the Dacian Carpathians instead of the Eastern Carpathians, the Getsean Carpathians instead of the Southern Carpathians and the Roman Carpathians instead of the Western Carpathians - which names have historical significance.