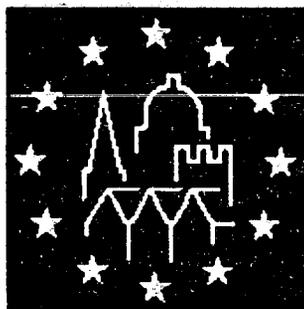


**Twentieth Session  
New York, 17 – 28 January 2000**

**Item 5  
of the Provisional Agenda**

**REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS**

**Place Names □ The Memory of Places  
The theme of the European Heritage Days in Finland 1999**



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Helsinki. □ The picture is the symbol of The European Heritage Days**

## **Place Names – The Memory of Places, the theme of The European Heritage Days in Finland 1999**

Finland became a member of the Council of Europe in 1989. The Council has now over 40 countries as its members. One of the aims of the Council is to strengthen and promote European culture and to do this, it has set up a Cultural Heritage Committee. Among the Committee's projects, there are The European Heritage Days (Les Journées européennes du Patrimoine), which have gradually become rather popular. The European Heritage Days are organized in all the European participating countries.

**The aims of the European Heritage Days according to the Council of Europe are**

- \* to improve the knowledge of our heritage and that of others and to get to know each other better as Europeans, through this cultural heritage which is both common and diverse at the same time**
- \* to protect the cultural heritage which is often threatened: its protection concerns, above all, public authorities but also involves private bodies**
- \* to play a key role in our search for identity and in the affirmation of our collective memory; it should also allow us to open ourselves up to others and help us to combat racism, xenophobia and intolerance effectively**
- \* to regard cultural heritage not only as a look back at the past, but also as a vision towards the future. We must reclaim it, reinterpret it and place it again in relation to its political, social and economic implication.**

The very first Heritage Days were held in France in 1985 on the initiative of the Council of Europe. At the time, the name of the Days was "Cultural Heritage". In 1991, the Council gave this event the name "European Heritage Days". The Days have a special theme each year. In Finland, some of the earlier themes were market places and squares, and churches and holy places. The subject of the Days in 1998 was the era of reconstruction. In 1999, the theme of The European Heritage Days in Finland was *Paikannimet – paikan muisti* (Finnish), *Ortsnamnen – minnen i miljön* (Swedish), "Place Names – The Memory of Places".

### **Organizers**

The European Heritage Days in Finland are organized by The Ministry of Environment, The Finnish Association for Local Culture and Heritage, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, The National Board of Education, The National Board of Antiquities and each year, a special body with the expertise on the theme in question. In 1999, the expert body was The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, who suggested the theme in the first place. The task of the Research Institute was to compile and adapt name material for general use. To do this, the Research Institute set up a working team whose members represented the Finnish onomastic research (Ritva Liisa Pitkänen) and the treatment of Finnish names (Sirkka Paikkala) as well as the Swedish onomastic research and the treatment of Swedish names (Peter Slotte). On a local level, the event was organized by municipalities (the fields of town planning, schooling, culture, and museum) and associations for local history and culture.

## Why place names?

The aim of the Heritage Days is to awaken people to see and evaluate the environment that is built around them, and to make them value the beauty and the variety of it. The Heritage Days also aim at making people show interest in the planning and protection of the built environment.

During the past decades, the Finnish nomenclature has gone through the same kind of changes as the society in general. The migration of the 1960's made the countryside desolate and working people moved to Sweden or to the cities in the southern Finland. During the last years, the migration has centered in the largest cities and other densely populated areas. The great change that faced the Finnish society can be seen in the change of the Finnish place names as well. Town planning and the governmental name giving in general have produced a noticeable addition to the Finnish nomenclature in a few decades: there are approximately 300 000 names that – except for the names of districts – cannot be seen in our topographic maps. (There are about one million names in the Finnish topographic maps altogether.) The new names that have arisen in a short time – the names of streets, roads, parks, squares, day care centers, schools, hospitals, suburbs and other districts – are, however, the most actively used names.

Due to the changes in our living environment, the names that surround us are more often names that are officially planned. Municipalities, different bodies of the government, and enterprises give many names these days. The number of vernacular names has decreased in the colloquial language. In municipalities, it is the technical field that takes care of the naming of public places, that is, the naming of streets, roads, parks, etc. In some of the municipalities, temporary committees have been set up to name places, while in other municipalities, the names are given by a town planner with a technical education (an architect, an engineer, often a land surveyor), or by the municipal manager, for example. This being the case, many municipal employees are faced with linguistic matters without actually having the required knowledge on the subject. Before a name can be written on a sign board or a street sign there are many matters, the word and name formation and correct spelling, for example, that have to be carefully contemplated. The linguistic dimension manifests itself in the names on sign boards and street signs.

The problem is, that name planning has not been too highly respected. Though the planning of names certainly is an essential part of community planning, it is first and foremost a special branch that requires thorough knowledge of the language and culture. The technical education in Finland has not paid any attention to this so far. The contents of technical education should consist of a course or study material on the principles of name planning and linguistic and cultural matters.

By the help of the theme Place Names – The Memory of Places we in Finland aim at bringing out the value of the names of the built environment, and the importance of the planning of names. We do not, however, want to neglect traditional names, which make the prime source material when forming new names. In many European countries, whole historical town centers, castles, fortresses, old buildings and different monuments have been preserved, and they offer bottomless sources for those eager to learn and deepen their knowledge. In Finland, the buildings are considerably younger: less than twenty per cent of the buildings have been built before the year 1945. It is thus justified to say that place names, some of which can be thousands of years old, are the Finnish "monuments"; they bear the memory of places. With the theme Place Names – The Memory of Places we aim at getting people realize not only the value of place names but also the fact that people – those who plan names because of their position and those who work in municipalities as teachers or cultural workers as well as the ordinary people – can influence name giving.

The planning of names includes the choosing between different ways of spelling, and the documenting of name decisions, too. Therefore, we have given a lot of information on correct spelling. We have also emphasized that it is essential to register all the name decisions and their grounds. Names and the documents concerning them must be saved in municipal or inter-municipal databases.

During the project, the organizers have arranged national events and prepared material that is suitable for the general public. Municipalities, schools, museums, cultural institutions etc. have used this material and adapted it to their needs.

### **What has happened so far**

- ◆ The Research Institute for the Languages in Finland wrote instructive articles that were published in language planning bulletins (*Kielikello* 1/1999 and *Språkbruk* 1/1999).
- ◆ In the autumn of 1998, the Research Institute and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities compiled a questionnaire which was mailed to every municipality (452 altogether) in order to get information on the state of name planning (how the planning is organized and what kind of principles the municipalities have). At the same time, we asked for the names in the municipal guide maps (streets, roads, etc.). The results of the questionnaire will be published later in a special research report. The report will also include a review on the correctness of the names in the address maps.
- ◆ In April 1999, the Research Institute and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities arranged a nation-wide name seminar for municipal employees. Eighty-five persons, who work with municipal planning and naming streets and roads, or with local history and culture, participated. The lectures handled the cultural values of place names, name planning, correct spelling, documenting name decisions, and results of a recent inquiry on name planning in Finnish municipalities. The meeting was reported in the main national newspaper (*Helsingin Sanomat*) and in the prime TV newscast.
- ◆ In April 1999, the Research Institute arranged a one-day workshop on names in municipal name planning. Thirty-four scholars and students from universities, from the Research Institute and elsewhere were invited to read and discuss papers.
- ◆ In May 1999, a TV program called *Paikan nimi □ paikan muisti* ["Place Names – The Memory of the Place"] was completed. The Research Institute produced the program in co-operation with the MTV Academy of Finland. The program was broadcast twice on a Finnish-speaking channel. The length of the program is thirty minutes, and it was edited on a video, which is for sale with Swedish or English subtitles. (The length of the video is twenty minutes.) The program is about the names of the built environment, and the perpetuation, demise, and planning of these names. The film concentrates on the cities of Turku and Helsinki, and the surroundings of the city of Hämeenlinna. The video is sold by Oy Fenris Ab:

Oy Fenris Ab  
Ekebyntie 120  
FIN-02400 Kirkkonummi  
FINLAND

- ◆ In May 1999, the organizers presented two European Heritage Days publications, which came out in Finnish and Swedish:
- ◆ *Paikkanimet – paikan muisti. Euroopan rakennusperintöpäivät 11. – 12.9.1999.* (Ympäristöministeriö, Suomen Kotiseutuliitto, Suomen Kuntaliitto, Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus, Museovirasto, Opetushallitus). Helsinki, 36 pp. Finnish.
- ◆ *Ortnamnen – minnen i miljön. Dagarna för Europas byggnadsarv 11.–12.9.1999.* Miljöministeriet, Finlands hembygdsförbund, Finlands kommunförbund, Forskningscentralen för de inhemska språken, Museiverket, Utbildningsstyrelsen, Finlands svenska hembygdsförbund. Helsingfors. 36 pp. Swedish.
- ◆ In both the booklets, there are nine articles, and six of them concentrate expressly on the contents or the planning of names. The booklets, 9,000 copies in Finnish and 1,500 in Swedish, were handed out free of charge.
- ◆ The organizers published also a poster with information on place names. Six thousand posters were printed in Finnish and one thousand in Swedish.
- ◆ The main event of the year was held at the Faculty of Architecture at the Helsinki University of Technology (in the City of Espoo, near Helsinki) on September the 10th and 11th. On the first day of the event, there was a seminar for invited guests and experts. One hundred people took part in the seminar. Several lectures about place names were given, and the lectures were divided into three groups according to their theme. The themes were: “Language and Mind”, “Values and Times”, and “Authority and Responsibility”. The general public took part in the two-day event (open door) on the second day: at Espoo Cultural Centre in Tapiola, there was an entertaining “Name Square” where people could familiarize themselves with place names and the planning of them. People had the chance to see different kinds of exhibitions, they could examine slang names, for example, or take part in a quiz, and there were a group of experts to answer people’s questions. There were approximately two thousand visitors at the event. The name exhibition was open from September the 1<sup>st</sup> till the 14<sup>th</sup>, and each day there were about three hundred people to see it.
- ◆ At the event, the organizers released a guidebook for professional writers and those who plan and use place names:

*Yhteinen nimiympäristömme - nimistönsuunnittelun opas* (toim. Sirkka Paikkala - Ritva Liisa Pitkänen - Peter Slotte). Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 110. Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus, Suomen Kuntaliitto. [Our Common Name Environment – a guide to the planning of names, edited by Sirkka Paikkala, Ritva Liisa Pitkänen, and Peter Slotte. Published by The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.] Helsinki, 225 pp.

- ◆ There are twenty-nine articles in the book that deal with the background, planning, legislation, and treatment of names. There is also a comprehensive bibliography in the book. Most of the articles are in Finnish, some in Swedish. The guidebook can also be used as study material. The book is sold by the Finnish Local and Regional Authorities:

Number: 505669. Price: 180 FIM.

Orders by fax: +358 9 771 2331

- ◆ In addition to this, the Research Institute has compiled teaching material about the planning of names. The material consists of transparencies and background information. The material has not been printed yet.
- ◆ Information on place names has been displayed by the organizers in various ways. The organizers have written about names on their home pages in the Internet, they have given lectures on the subject, and they have talked about names in radio shows and magazines.

[www.domlang.fi](http://www.domlang.fi) (Research Institute for the Languages of Finland)

[www.vyh.fi](http://www.vyh.fi) (Ministry of Environment)

[www.kuntaliitto.fi](http://www.kuntaliitto.fi) (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities)

[www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi) (National Board of Education)

[www.nba.fi](http://www.nba.fi) (National Board of Antiquities)

### Local events

A summary of the events of the year cannot be made until the end of the year. What we do know now, in October 1999, is that all over Finland there have been seminars, lectures, and exhibitions about the planning and history of names. Different kinds of excursions have taken place; there have been bus, bicycle, and walking trips to places with special onomastic interest. According to the estimates of the Finnish Association for Local Culture and Heritage, approximately three hundred events took place during the year. The number of visitors was ten thousands altogether. Traditional names in our home districts as well as unofficial names used by schoolchildren have been collected, and at schools teachers and pupils have prepared video programs, writings, art exhibitions, and workshops on place names.

National and local newspapers have written about place names in the view of the theme, and local radio stations have produced radio serials about names. Some of these serials consisted of as many as dozens of parts. The general interest in names could be seen in newspapers' Letters to the Editor where people debated, rather lively, in some cases, about the standardization of local names in topographic maps. People would like to see the names in their home districts spelled in more dialectal forms.

**Appendix: Information about The European Heritage Days on the home pages of The Research Institute for The Languages of Finland (<http://www.domlang.fi/huolto/lerp-eng.htm>)**

**THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS IN FINLAND 1999**

The theme of the European Heritage Days in Finland 1999 is "Placenames - The Memory of Places". The aim of the Heritage Days is to awaken people to see and evaluate the environment that is built around them, and to make them value the beauty and the variety of it. The Heritage Days also aims at making people show an interest in the planning and protection of the built environment. In the European way of thinking, the cultural heritage and the maintenance of traditions are regarded as a way of guaranteeing democracy and independence.

The very first Heritage Days were held in France in 1985 on the initiative of the Council of Europe. At the time, the name of the Days was "Cultural Heritage". In 1991, the Council gave this event the name "European Heritage Days". The Days have a special theme each year. In Finland, some of the earlier themes were market places and squares, and churches and holy places. The subject of the Days in 1998 was the era of reconstruction.

## **PLACENAMES - THE MEMORY OF PLACES**

### **Why placenames?**

Names surround us. For example, when you go out you see a lot of names: there are signposts and name boards, and the names of shops, hotels, restaurants, and other enterprises can be seen in large letters or in neon lights. In your mind, there may be an address you are going to, or the name of an art museum, concert hall, or a sports centre where you are going to meet a friend of yours. We separate different bus stops, stations, harbours, and airports from each other by their names. Without names, it would be difficult if not impossible to manage.

Names are such a natural part of our built environment that we hardly even think about their meaning, necessity, or planning. It is not until a name is given against the will of the inhabitants, or does simply not seem to fit, that we wake up. Names make a central part of the history and identity of a locality. In order to be able to fulfil this function of theirs, placenames have to be carefully planned. People are often interested in knowing the background of placenames as well. The story of the name of one's home street may increase the affection towards one's residential environment.

When choosing or planning new placenames, it is wise to make sure that the history and the old, established names of the area in question come along. The planning is successful when the names not only help people locate places both linguistically and geographically but also give some information on the history of the place. When it comes to the question of whether to maintain or to demolish, the choice is ours. We have a say in the matter of our environment of names.

### **Things you can do**

Names interest many people. This year, you can for instance take a general review of the names in your living area, or study place names as one part of the national, common cultural property. You can take a look at the planning of the street names in cities and/or in areas of scattered settlement, or you can study the planning of the names on town plans. You could familiarize yourself with the principles and procedure of the planning of names, or you can discuss some of the decisions that have already been made. The names of the built environment consist of the names of public buildings, traffic points, and settlement names.

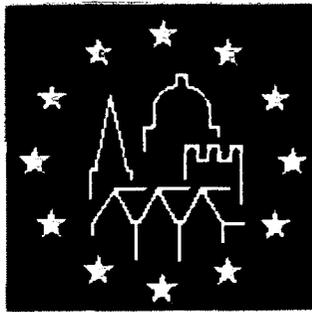
Names can be brought out by the help of exhibitions and publications. In schools, students can study the placenames of their living surroundings via teamwork, school magazines, video shows, or even short plays. You may also think about the possibility of using the variety of placenames to express

the cultural picture of your town or commune. Can people really see the history of your commune and the wealth of your language in the names of the streets and squares?

## **ORGANIZERS**

The European Heritage Days in Finland are organized by The Finnish Association for Local Culture and Heritage, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, The National Board of Education, The National Board of Antiquities, The Ministry of Environment, The Finnish Literature Society and the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

For more information, please contact Mr. Juhani Railo (at the Finnish Association for Local Culture and Heritage) by phone 358 9 643207 or by fax 358 9 643292. The post address is Kalevankatu 13 A 5, 00100 Helsinki, Finland.



## PLACE NAMES — THE MEMORY OF PLACES

This video deals with the Finnish theme for the European Heritage Days. This is an event which has been organised by the European Council since 1985. Today there are more than 40 member states involved, and each year every member state is given a particular theme. The purpose of these days is to bring European cultures closer to each other; to protect those cultural traditions which are threatened; to strengthen a nation's cultural identity; to preserve the collective memory and foster cultural traditions. This programme was first broadcast by MTV-Akatemia on 9 May 1999.

The programme is about the origins of the oldest settlement names in Finland, the influence of the changing environment on the naming of places, and the conscious planning of our nomenclature. Three regions are represented in the video: Turku, Hämeenlinna, and Helsinki.

Names are an integral part of our constructed environment; without names we could not manage. Most of the names of roads, streets, bridges, parks, schools and other public buildings are created as a result of city (or other) planning. This is also where their information contents and linguistic integrity are determined. Names are an intrinsic part of a city's image.

It is up to us whether we wish to destroy all that is old and create a name-environment which only reflects contemporary phenomena or whether we want to maintain a window to the past by preserving some of the older names. Names tell us what we value. So what are our values?

This video — PLACE NAMES — THE MEMORY OF PLACES — is available from the producers at the following address:

**Helsinki University**  
**Tiedotus**  
**Yliopistonkatu 3**  
**FIN-00140 HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO**  
**FINLAND**

**fax: +358 9 1912 3008**

The price is FIM 250 (42 EURO) which includes VAT and postage. The programme lasts about 30 minutes and has been produced in cooperation with the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.

The Finnish version — PAIKAN NIMI — PAIKAN MUISTI — is available at the following address:

**Oy Fenris Ab**  
**Ekebyntie 120**  
**02400 Kirkkonummi**  
**FINLAND**

**Telephone and fax: +358 9 221 7553**

The price is FIM 150 (25 EURO) which includes VAT and postage. The programme lasts about 30 minutes and has been produced in cooperation with the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland.