
**United Nations
Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

**Working Paper
No. 25**

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

**Item 5
of the Provisional Agenda**

REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Report of the Baltic Division

**Prepared by Vita Strautniece (State Land Service), Zinta Goba and Jurgis Kavacs
(University of Latvia)**

REPORT OF THE BALTIC DIVISION TO THE 20TH SESSION OF UNGEGN

New York, 17-28 January 2000

Each country within the division has pursued its national name standardization policy while in general closely following the recommendations of the United Nations Conferences and UNGEGN. The information of the activities of the Russian Federation in the standardization of geographical names will be presented in the report of the Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia Division of UNGEGN.¹

1. National standardization; names authorities

Estonia. The Place Names' Board of Estonia headed by the Minister of the Interior continued the reform of the list of populated places in the years 1998-1999. On 1 January 1998 a new list came into force that contained 4509 names with an increase of 1089 names in comparison with the former list. A more modest increase of about 100 names was achieved on the next stage, one year later. Currently the official list holds about 4600 names. There will be a temporary halt to the reform due to the planned census in the year 2000.

On various meetings of the Board other matters were discussed too, e.g. the list of names of islands, standardization of the names of real estate units, etc. All the materials concerning the Place Names Board have been published at its website (<http://www.eki.ee/knn/>), mainly in Estonian but with English summaries. News on the current activities of the Board are regularly updated in both languages.

Since 1998 the following administrative changes have occurred:

Amalgamated or renamed municipalities	New name	Date
town of Abja + parish of Abja	parish of Abja	11 June 1998
town of Antsla + parish of Antsla	parish of Antsla	29 June 1999
town of Karksi-Nuia + parish of Karksi	parish of Karksi	8 June 1999
parish of Kaarma + parish of Kuressaare	parish of Kaarma	15 June 1999
town of Lihula + parish of Lihula	parish of Lihula	13 May 1999
town of Otepää + parish of Pühajärve	parish of Otepää	17 March 1999
parish of Raja	parish of Kasepää	20 October 1999
parish of Vihula + parish of Võsu	parish of Vihula	8 June 1999

The former towns retained their title of towns after the amalgamation but they have no longer administrative functions. The term used to describe them is "inner-parish town".

Latvia. The Place Names Commission at the State Language Centre, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Latvia, has been functioning as an advisory board with recommendatory rights, based on the *Regulations of the Republic of Latvia Council of Ministers Place Names*

¹ Information for the report was supplied by Mr. P. Päll (Estonia), Ms. M. Razmukaitė, Mr. L. Bilkis, Mr. T. Dukša (Lithuania), Mr. O. Bušs, Ms. Dz. Hirša, Ms. L. Leikuma, Mr. J. Turlajs (Latvia).

Commission re-issued in 1995. The Place Names Commission is dealing with several practical standardization problems, e.g., renaming of municipalities due to their amalgamation, spelling of particular place names, naming and renaming of railway stations, streets etc. as well as drafting guidelines in writing foreign place names.

The Sub-commission of Latgale, a dialectally diverse area, proposes the use of genuine vernacular forms of place names in this region, mostly on the level of microtoponyms.

State Language Centre has adopted and published recommendations on spelling farm names and numbers of houses in urban and rural territories and regulations on spelling addresses. Both of them have been published in the issue "Īpašvārdu rakstība" /Spelling of Proper Nouns/.

Lithuania. The State Committee of the Lithuanian Language at Seimas (Parliament) functions as the names authority. A consultative subcommittee has been set up to deal with geographical names. It comprises linguists, cartographers as well as representatives of various governmental agencies. The subcommittee reviews all naming proposals, name lists, spelling rules, etc. prior to their approval by State Committee. The committee's decision is legally binding, adherence to the standards is supervised by language inspection.

The Law on Local Government Units and Their Boundaries stipulates that names of populated places, initiated by local governments and accepted by the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language at Seimas, are going to be approved by the Government. Local governments will be responsible for naming streets, squares and other local features within their boundaries.

2. Field collection of place names, mapping programmes and training courses

Estonia. Field survey of place names is being carried out in two directions. The collections of place names have been expanded by about 2,000 new records, mainly with the help of students and local enthusiasts at the Institute of Estonian Language. Cartographic enterprises, when preparing new basic map sheets, conduct their own field collections, consulting both the local governments and the collections held at the Institute of Estonian Language.

Basic Map of Estonia (1:10,000, printed version 1:20,000). 78 sheets of the map have been printed by October 1999 covering parts of Central Estonia (from Rapla up to Türi), South East Estonia (eastern half of Võrumaa) and areas on the west coast of Lake Peipsi. In addition, many more sheets of the basic map (1:10,000) have been prepared; the work is being done by several cartographic enterprises.

Base Map of Estonia (1:50,000). 94 sheets of the total of 112 have been printed by October 1999. The only uncovered parts remain near the eastern border of Estonia.

Map of Estonia (Eesti kaart, 1:50,000) is a new series of general topographic maps based on defence maps. 4 sheets of the series have been printed by October 1999.

Navigation charts. The National Maritime Board has published revised editions of 4 sheets (1:100,000) and prepared a number of sheets at the scale of 1:50,000.

Other maps. In 1999 a new administrative map of Estonia (1:300,000) was published that contained all the officially approved names of populated places and is the most up-to-date map at present.

The most comprehensive privately produced cartographic work is the Estonian Road Atlas 1999 (1:150,000) by AS Regio, an updated version of the atlas of 1997/98. The atlas includes an index of over 11,000 place names, it is also available on a CD. An online-version (<http://atlas.regio.ee>) includes a search engine with about 4000 place names.

There have been courses for onomastics at the University of Tartu and the Tallinn Pedagogical University which deal with topics like applied toponymics and names standardization.

Latvia. Field collection of place names has been carried out at the Toponymy Laboratory of the Cartographic Board (1994-1999 Toponymic Section of the Cartographic Division), State Land Service for the *Satellite Map of Latvia*, scale 1:50 000, from 1994 till 1998. The Satellite Map of Latvia, consisting of 131 sheets, comprises from 20-1300 place names per sheet, depending on the area of land on a map sheet. It's publication started in 1998. At present ~ 90 sheets of the map have been published already.

Field collection of place names is being carried out at the Toponymy Laboratory for *Topographic Map of Latvia*, scale 1:50 000, since 1998. This field collection encloses mainly consulting local governments about the names of villages, hamlets, farms, etc.

Delimitation maps of the state border Latvian Republic- Russian Federation, scale 1:50 000, have been published. *Demarcation maps* of the state border Latvian Republic- Lithuanian Republic, scale 1:10 000 are in a preparatory stage. *Demarcation maps* of the state border Latvian Republic- Estonian Republic, scale 1:50 000 have been compiled, but not published yet.

For the time being the cartographers and toponymists of Latvia closely collaborate only within the framework of the framework of the mentioned state mapping programs.

Field collection of place names of Latvia is continuing at the Institute of Latvian Language and at the Scientific Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy, University of Latvia.

The private map publishing company "Jāņa sēta" is continuing the production of regional maps of Latvia, scale 1:100 000. The maps of Talsi and Daugavpils districts have been published in 1999.

A lecture course on Toponymy is being delivered at the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences and the Faculty of Philology, University of Latvia. Student's papers on toponymic topics are being compiled at both above mentioned faculties and at the Faculty of Pedagogics and Psychology, University of Latvia.

Lithuania. Several maps of Lithuania have been published from 1997 up to 1999 by the National Service of Geodesy and Cartography. They are the following:

1. *Topographic Map of Lithuania*, scale 1:10 000 and 1:50 000;
2. *Orthophotographic Map of Lithuania*, scale 1:10 000 and 1:50 000;
3. *Delimitation Maps of the Lithuanian Republic*, scale 1:10 000 and 1:50 000;
4. *Navigation charts*, scale 1:225 000;
5. *Administrative maps* of 4 districts (Kaunas, Vilnius, Telšiai and Klaipėda) of Lithuania, scale 1:200 000.

All the place names on those maps have been checked by the specialists of the Institute of Lithuanian Language. The State Committee of the Lithuanian Language has approved the

rules determining the use of special terms on maps and their legends. The first explanatory dictionary of the terms of geodesy and cartography is being compiled.

3. Registers, gazetteers and toponymic data files

Estonia. The National Place Names Register envisaged by the Law on Place Names was officially endorsed by the Government on 30 November 1998 but the actual launching of the register has been hampered by inadequate financing.

At the Eesti Kaardikeskus state company there is a toponymical database formed on the basis of digital maps of 1 : 50,000, currently containing about 10,000 entries. Another database of place names (appr. 50,000 entries at present) is being compiled at the Institute of Estonian Language. The Institute has also the largest collection of Estonian place names, containing about 500,000 entries, collected in field work.

No new gazetteers have been issued since the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

Latvia. The Coverage of Place Names of the Satellite Map of Latvia is used as the basis for the Date Base of the Place Names of Latvia, being formed in the Toponymy Laboratory, State Land Service. The theory and methodology of the Date Base are being worked out since 1998. The first 3000 experimental entries have been already made.

The Card Index of Physiogeographical Place Names of Latvia is being compiled at the Scientific Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy (since 1995 at the Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences), University of Latvia.

The Card Index of Place Names at the Institute of Latvian Language, University of Latvia is being compiled, too. Both indexes are on cards, not in a digital form and suffer from inadequate financing.

1997-1999 two regional toponymic dictionaries have been published in collaboration between the Scientific Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy, University of Latvia and the Toponymy Laboratory of the State Land Service:

- Kovaļevska O. Krāslavas rajons. Ģeogrāfisko nosaukumu vārdnīca /Dictionary of Geographical Names. Krāslava District/.
- Avotiņa R. Madonas rajons. Kalni. Upes. Ezeri. Purvi. Meži. Ģeogrāfiska vietvārdu vārdnīca /Geographical Dictionary of Place Names. Madona District. Hills. Rivers. Lakes. Bogs. Forests/.

Lithuania. Register comprising the names of administrative units and populated places of Lithuanian Republic has been compiled by the Institute of Agriculture of Lithuania. The names have been linguistically checked by the specialists of the Onomastic Section, Institute of Lithuanian Language.

Index of place names of Lithuania comprising the names of cities, towns, villages, hamlets etc. has been approved by the State Committee of Lithuanian Language at Seimas. Index has been published in "Lietuvių kalbos komisijos nutarimai 1977-1998" /Decisions of the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language 1977-1998/ (Vilnius, 1998).

Another Index of Place Names of Lithuania is being compiled. It would be approved by the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language and published.

4. Standardization of names in multilingual or dialectally diverse areas

Estonia. The Law on Place Names recognizes the right of historical minorities to use place names of their own language, in some cases two parallel names are allowed. Parallel names in Estonian and Swedish have been officially approved for the parish of Noarootsi, in the parish of Vormsi most names of populated places are in Swedish. During the reform of the list of populated places parallel names in Estonian and Russian have also been suggested for the parish of Raja (Kasepää) but these have not been proposed yet by the parish itself.

In South East Estonia the dialect of Võru is acquiring the status of a literary language with some literature published in it. The names of populated places in several parishes of the Võru and Põlva counties have been standardized in their local form, i.e. in the Võru variety. The Basic Map of Estonia uses only for natural features local name forms.

Latvia. The names of villages, hamlets, natural features etc. for maps and gazetteers are being standardized concerning the local, dialectal forms of place names, especially in the territories with alive dialect, for example, in the North Western part of Latvia - Kurzeme (Kurland), and Eastern part of Latvia, called Latgale.

5. Exonyms and principles of writing foreign place names

Estonia. In 1999 a dictionary of foreign geographical names (*Maailma kohanimed*) was published containing about 4200 name articles with name variants in multiple languages. The choice of name spellings was previously discussed by the Estonian Language Committee with the participation of various institutions (Geography Institute at the University of Tartu, Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers). A short version of the list was also published as annex to a new orthographical dictionary.

On 25 March 1998 the Government issued a decree on the romanization of Russian names. The amended Estonian transcription table was accompanied by the international romanization system, approved by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1987). The so-called GOST 1983 system is also used on official maps. In May 1998 also a modified Estonian-Russian transcription table was approved by the Minister of Education.

Latvia. ISO-3166-1:1997 "Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country codes", comprising short and official country names, their letter and numeral codes, has been adopted in the status of Latvian National Standard LVS ISO 3166-1:1997. Latvian forms of the official names of countries and their subdivisions were checked by the specialists of geographical names.

State Language Centre has adopted and published recommendations on spelling Latvian place names in English and a short list of country names (short and official names) in English. Both of them have been published in the issue "Īpašvārdu rakstība"/Spelling of Proper Nouns/.

A manuscript of the new edition of Orthographic Dictionary of the Latvian Language has been compiled comprising more exonyms than the previous one.

Recommendations on spelling Polish and Hungarian proper names, including place names, have been worked out and published.

Issues concerning the spelling of Chinese, Korean, Turk and Arabic personal names enclose the corresponding transcription tables.

Consultations concerning spelling foreign geographical names etc. are available at the State Language Consulting Service, Institute of Latvian Language.

Lithuania. In 1997 the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language has adopted several decisions on spelling foreign geographical names in Lithuanian texts, maps etc., for example, on using foreign personal names and place names in Lithuanian, on spelling long vowels and endings in foreign geographical names. In 1999 the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language has adopted a decision on using foreign place names in schoolbooks, and on using traditional place names in transport information.

Lists of place names of Poland, Belorussia, Kaliningrad region in Lithuanian have been adopted by the State Committee of the Lithuanian Language and are published.

7. Participation in other UNGEGN activities

A representative of **Lithuania** T. Dukša participated with a report "National Standardization in Lithuania, 1997-1999" at the Third Meeting of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of UNGEGN, held in Moscow in 22-24 June, 1999.

8. The main publications

Estonia.

- Dictionary of Estonian Language ÕS 1999 (*concise dictionary with a list of geographical names*). Tallinn 1999, pp. 971-1020. In Estonian.
- M. Kallasmaa, Estonian place names and other peoples. — Eesti rahvaste raamat. Tallinn 1999, pp. 112-119. In Estonian.
- M. Kallasmaa, Personal names in Estonian place names. — Akten des 18. International Kongresses für Namenforschung. Trier, 12.-17. April 1993. Bd. IV. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 1999, pp. 199-202
- P. Päll, Geographical names of the world. Tallinn 1999, 632 pp. In Estonian.
- P. Päll, Non-Estonian place names in Estonia. — Eesti rahvaste raamat. Tallinn 1999, pp. 340-347. In Estonian.

Latvia.

- Avotiņa R. Madonas rajons. Kalni. Upes. Ezeri. Purvi. Meži. Ģeogrāfiska vietvārdu vārdnīca /Geographical Dictionary of Place Names. Madona District. Hills. Rivers. Lakes. Bogs. Forests./- R.: Latvijas Universitātes Reģionālās ģeogrāfijas un toponīmikas zinātniskā laboratorija, LR VZD Nacionālais mērniecības centrs, 1999, 237 lpp. In Latvian.
- Balode L. Latvian hydronyms of anthroponymic origin. – Akten des 18. International Kongresses für Namenforschung. Trier, 12.-17. April 1993. Band IV: Personennamen und Ortsnamen, 1999, S. 76.-81.

- Balode L., Bušs O. *-o- un -uo- Latvijas vietvārdos /Vowel -o- and diphthong -uo- in Latvian Place Names/*. – *Linguistica Lettica*. 1999 (Nr. 4), 211.-222 lpp. . In Latvian.
- Bušs V. *Eine Streitfrage der Lettischen Namenkunde (Ontsinnen mit Paun-)*. – *Baltistik: Aufgaben und Methoden*. – Heidelberg, 1998, S. 371-378
- Goba Z. *Latvijas ģeogrāfisko nosaukumu vārdnīcas, to sastādīšanas principi, saturs un uzbūve /Dictionaries of the Place Names of Latvia, the Principles of Compiling, Contents and Structure/* // *Latvijas Vēstures institūta žurnāls* 1997, Nr.1. - R.: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds, 1997, 108.-134. lpp. In Latvian.
- Goba Z. *Toponymic Synonyms and How They Originated: Selection of the Preferred Names of Physiogeographical Features of Latvia*. // *UNGEEN Newsletter* Nr.22, January 1999, p. 22 - 25.
- Īpašvārdu rakstība */Spelling of Proper Nouns/*. - R.: LR Valsts valodas centrs, 1998, 53 lpp. In Latvian.
- Kavacs J. *Latvijas vietvārdu juridiskā normēšana /Jurisdiction of Latvian Place Names/* // *Cilvēks. Vide. Resursi. Latvijas 56. zinātniskā konference. Ģeogrāfijas un Zemes zinātņu sekcija*. - R.: Latvijas Universitāte, 1997, 48. lpp. In Latvian.
- Kovaļevska O. *Krāslavas rajons. Ģeogrāfisko nosaukumu vārdnīca /Dictionary of Geographical Names. Krāslava District/*. - R.: Latvijas Universitātes Reģionālās ģeogrāfijas un toponīmikas zinātniskā laboratorija, LR VZD Nacionālais mērniecības centrs, 1997, 173 lpp., pielikumā 15 kartoshēmas (M1:10 000 - 1:50 000) un karte "Krāslavas rajona vietvārdi" (M1:100 000). In Latvian.
- Rudzīte M. *Izloksne vietvārdos /Dialect in Place Names/* // *Savai valodai*. - R.: Latviešu valodas institūts, 247.- 259. lpp. In Latvian.
- Turlajs J., Milliņš G. *Latvijas apdzīvotās vietas /Populated Places of Latvia (with cartographic supplement)/*. - R.: Apgāds Jāņa sēta, 1998, 272 lpp., pielikumā kartes "Latvija. Apdzīvotās vietas" M 1:400 000 un "Austrumlatvija. Apdzīvotās vietas" M 1:200 000. In Latvian.

Lithuania.

- Pēteraitis V. *Mažosios Lietuvos ir Tvankstos vietovardžai /Place Names of Lithuania Minor and Tvanksta/*. - Vilnius.: Mažosios Lietuvos fondas, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 1997, 607 p.

8. Further information may be obtained from:

ESTONIA

AS Eesti Kaardikeskus
 (Estonian Map Centre)
 Mustamäe tee 33
 EE-10616 TALLINN
 (Mr. Marko Pikkor, tel +372-2-527998;
 Ms Meeri Lakson, tel +372-2-529976)

Eesti Keele Instituut
(*Institute of Estonian Language*)
Roosikrantsi 6
EE-10119 TALLINN
Fax: +372-2-442076
(Mr. Valdek Pall, tel +372-6448362;
Mr. Peeter Päll, tel +372-6446153)

Kohanimenõukogu
(*Place Names Board*)
Pikk 61
EE-15065 TALLINN
Fax: +372-6125101
(Ms. Elvi Sepp, secretary, tel +372-6125108)

Maa-amet (*National Land Board*)
Mustamäe tee 51
EE-10621 TALLINN
Fax: +372-2-528401

Regio, AS
Riia 24
EE-51010 TARTU
Fax: +372-7-387301
(Mr. Jüri Jagomägi, tel +372-7-387330)

L A T V I A

LU Latviešu valodas institūts
(*Institute of Latvian Language*)
Akadēmijas laukumā 1
LV-1050 RĪGA
Fax +371-7227696
E-mail: latv@laciis.lza.lv
(Mr. Ojārs Bušs, tel. +371-7213606)

LU Reģionālās ģeogrāfijas un toponīmikas zinātniskā laboratorija.
(*Scientific Laboratory of Regional Geography and Toponymy, University of Latvia*)
Raiņa bulvāris 19
LV-1586 RĪGA

Valsts zemes dienesta Kartogrāfijas pārvaldes Toponīmikas laboratorija
(*Toponymy Laboratory, Board of Cartography, State Land Service of the Republic of Latvia*)
11. novembra krastmala 31
LV-1050 RĪGA
(Ms. Vita Strautniece, tel. +371-7213971
fax. +371-7227858)

“Jāņa sēta Map Publishers”
83/85 Elizabetes Street, bl.2
Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
tel.: +371 7092277
fax: +371 7092273
e-mail: kartografi@js.parks.lv
<http://www.kartes.lv>

LITHUANIA

Lietuvių kalbos institutas (Institute of Lithuanian Language)
Antakalnio 6, 2055 Vilnius, Lithuania
Fax: +370-2-226573
E-mail: LKI@ktl.mii.lt
(Ms. Marija Razmukaitė, Ms. Vitalija Maciejauskienė, tel.: +370-2-226358)

Valstybinė geodezijos ir kartografijos tarnyba prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės
(National Service of Geodesy and Cartography under the Government of Republic of Lithuania)

Ukmergės 41,
2034 Vilnius, Lithuania
fax: +370-2-725791
tel.: +370-2-725790
E-mail: vgkt@vgkt.lt
(Ms. Danutė Mardosienė, tel.: +370-2-724629;
Mr. Tomas Duksa, tel.: +370-2-725841)

Valstybinė lietuvių kalbos komisija
(State Committee of Lithuanian Language)
Žvejų 14
2600 VILNIUS
Fax: +370-2-725094
(Ms. Danguolė Mikulėnienė, Ms. Jūratė Palionytė,
+370-2-723358; +370-2-723310)