

Twentieth Session
New York, 17-28 January, 2000

Item 5 of the agenda

REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

**EASTERN EUROPE, NORTHERN
AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION**

Report of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division

Division Composition

The resolution to establish the Division of Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names was adopted at the Sixth UN Conference on Geographical Names held in New York August 25 – September 3, 1992.

At present 10 countries are the Division permanent members - Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the USA and Estonia attend the Division as observers. Current composition of the Division was confirmed at its third session held in Moscow June 22-23, 1999.

National Standardization of Geographical Names in the Division Country Members

Azerbaijan. The State Committee for Geodesy and Cartography together with the Toponymy Division in the Institute of Geography of the Academy of Science in the Republic of Azerbaijan restore the old names of populated places existing before the revolution. Since 1992 all the maps have been released with the place-names changes accounted for. The reference-book "Administrative Division of the Republic of Azerbaijan" is updated. The reference-book on geographical names is prepared in the Azerbaijan, Russian and English languages. National program for geographical names standardization is developed. The program plans on establishing the authority on geographical names standardization, building legislative and methodical basis to handle geographical names, developing digital place-names databases and national systems for processing geographical names. While progressing in all the directions mentioned, it is hoped to use international experience in the standardization of geographical names, to get technical and financial assistance from the UN Group of Experts for training national personnel and establishing the appropriate authorities to carry out standardization of geographical names.

Armenia. As the country lacks a national authority to standardize geographical names this work is not presently carried out.

Bulgaria. The Council on Orthography and Transcription was established by a specific decree of the Bulgarian Government as the national authority to standardize geographical names. The Council terms of references, procedure, and composition were adopted. The Council is to execute its functions in close contact with the Commission on Naming and Renaming in the Administration of the President of Bulgaria and the Institute of the Bulgarian Language of the Academy of Science. The Council develops basic rules to render foreign geographical names in Bulgarian and to write the Bulgarian names with the Roman script. The Council resolutions are mandatory to the users all over the country. The Council is not authorized to name or rename geographical features in Bulgaria. The Ministry of Regional Development and Amenities in person of the Main Administration for Cadastre and Geodesy is authorized to carry out the standardization of geographical names. The following was fulfilled within the recent two years:

- The list of the Bulgarian toponyms was updated with the latest changes in the names of populated places accounted for.
- The Romanization system for geographical names adopted at the Third UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names in Athens, 1977 has been further

used together with the Bulgarian standard for Romanization of the Bulgarian characters. The standard was developed by the Committee for Metrology and Standardization of Bulgaria. The difference between the two systems concerns some characters for which the standard allows using digraphs and diacritics. At present the Committee for Metrology and Standardization of Bulgaria is about to complete developing new version of the transliteration standard.

- The rules for rendering foreign place-names into Bulgarian were further developed. The rules for rendering the Hungarian, Greek and Icelandic geographical names were published early in 1999. The rules for Romanian, Turkish and Albanian names rendering are being completed. The list of geographical names for Great Britain has been prepared. Since January of 1999 the administrative division of Bulgaria into 28 regions has been changed.

Bulgaria continues participating in the Division of Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia and in the Division of Eastern Europe, Central and South Eastern Europe of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names on permanent basis.

Belarus. In 1998 the law "On administrative division and the procedure to solve the issues pertaining to administrative division of the Republic of Belarus" was adopted. The same year the Toponymic Commission of the Council of Ministers of Belarus was established. The Commission comprises representatives from 20 ministries and departments. The Commission held two meetings and considered the issues of normative and methodical support for geographical names collection and filing, naming and renaming of administrative and territorial units as well as the issues of place-names spelling in accordance with the rules of the Belorussian and Russian languages.

The Toponymic Commission has set the priority task to compile a reference-book of the populated places in the Republic of Belarus as their names are widely used. The reference book will comprise six volumes corresponding to the current administrative division of Belarus into six regions (oblast'). Each volume will include a full list of the populated place names in the Russian, Belorussian languages and in the Roman script as well. The reference book will serve the basic source for the State Database of Geographical Names of Belarus that is being planned now. The Database development is being prepared now.

"The Rules for Romanization of the Geographical Names in the Republic of Belarus" has been prepared. Together with the Jakub Kolas Institute of the Belorussian Language an experimental system for transliteration of the Belorussian names with the Roman characters has been developed. It is tested now. "The Rules for Rendering the Belorussian names in Russian" are prepared.

"The Procedure for Registering and Filing Geographical Names" has been prepared. The data to develop and maintain the State Database of Geographical Names are under preparation.

Recently maps and atlases for the school as well as various reference and specific maps have been widely issued.

In May 1999 the President of Belarus signed the decree on the development of the National Atlas. The Atlas will be a scientific and reference cartographic product that will provide notions on the territory, landscape, population, economy, history and culture of Belarus. It will be issued in Belorussian. The Council to coordinate the Atlas devel-

opment has been established. The Atlas is planned for publishing in 2002.

Georgia. The State Department of Geodesy and Cartography of Georgia is responsible for national standardization of geographical names. In April of 1998 in Georgia the state law "On geodetic and cartographic activities" was adopted. To realize the law statements the development of legislative and normative documents setting the procedure for determination and standardization of geographical names for mapping has been started.

A draft of the law "On Geographical Names" was developed and agreed with all the departments and agencies concerned. In the nearest time it is to be discussed in the Parliament of Georgia. Meanwhile, till the law "On Geographical Names" is adopted, the temporary State Commission was established to rename populated places.

In cooperation with the Department of Onomastics of the Tbilissi State University the place-names database is developed based on the topographic map at scale 1:100,000. The database will comprise geographical name, a name of administrative units, the number of map sheet a feature is located on, a status of geographical name (official, historical, etc), abbreviations used on topographic and specific maps. The first results will be obtained late in 1999.

The State Department of Geodesy and Cartography of Georgia pays much attention to releasing geographical, school, specific maps, atlases and globes in the Georgian language. In course of their development many issues pertaining to changes in geographical names are solved.

The State Department of Geodesy and Cartography of Georgia has developed the rules for rendering the Georgian place-names in English, the manual for Romanization of the Georgian geographical names. The general map of Georgia in Roman script at scale 1:500,000 is under development now.

The State Department of Statistics has developed "Temporary Classifier for Administrative Division of Georgia". The State Department of Statistics and the State Department of Geodesy and Cartography are together working on the determination of the Georgian populated places names.

Kyrgyzstan. In 1995 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic formed the Joint Commission on Geographical Names. For the latest three years the toponymic database for Kyrgyzia and the adjacent states based on the 1:100,000 map was enhanced with the data picked up from the topographic maps at scale 1:25,000. At present it comprises the data for more than 18,000 geographical features. It is being constantly updated. The Kyrgyz geographical names are restored now.

To render the Kyrgyz toponyms in Roman script the Romanization Systems and Roman-Script Spelling Conventions, 1994 developed by the Bureau on Geographical Names of the USA and the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names in 1979 are still in use. The issue of adopting the Roman script is not finally solved yet.

Russian Federation. The issues pertaining to naming of geographical features are treated in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. According to the Constitution naming of geographical features is under federal jurisdiction.

Since 1994 the Interdepartmental Committee on Geographical Names established by the Government of the Russian Federation co-ordinates efforts of different agencies to develop a common approach to naming of geographical features. In 1999 the composition of the Committee was renewed. The Chief of the Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia (Roskartografiya) Drazhnyuk A.A. was appointed its chairman. The Committee comprises representatives of more than 20 ministries, departments and agencies. Its terms of references have been detailed.

The Central Scientific Research Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Survey and Cartography (CNIIGAIK) is responsible for scientific and methodical support of the Committee activity. The Institute develops drafts of legislative and normative documents on geographical names, prepares prospective programmes to create new and update the available manuals, dictionaries and other normative and methodical documents, and considers suggestions on naming and renaming of geographical features submitted to the Committee.

Since its establishment, the Committee held nine meetings and made a number of specific solutions on a wide range of vital issues.

Late in 1997 the Federal law "On naming of geographical features" was adopted. The law determines the legislative basis for naming and renaming of geographical features, and for standardisation, use, handling and storage of geographical names as a constituent part of Russia's historical and cultural heritage.

To implement statements of the law the Government of the Russian Federation adopts normative and legislative documents specifying the procedure to consider suggestions on place naming and renaming, to develop and adopt normative documents, to handle geographical names, as well as the procedure to supervise storage and correct usage of geographical names in Russia, and to maintain the National Catalogue of Geographical Names. Drafts of the documents are developed by Roskartografiya together with the Interdepartmental Committee on Geographical Names. The Committee updates normative and methodical base to standardize geographical names and provides its compliance with the Federal law "On naming of geographical features".

In 1996-1999 "Manual for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Antarctica", "Dictionary of Hydrographic Features Names in the Russian Federation and the CIS Countries", "Dictionary of Geographical Names of Foreign Countries in Europe", "Dictionary of Geographical Names of the Russian Federation", and reference-book "The World States and Territories" were developed. The standardized names there are accompanied with generics, locations and some other info to easy identify a feature. They are to be published in 1999-2000.

Romanization system for the Russian names (GOST-83) approved by the V UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names in 1987 (Montreal) is constantly used. On the instructions of Roskartografiya CNIIGAIK investigated the experience gained from the system application. This resulted in the updated edition of "The Rules for Transliteration of Geographical Names of the Russian Federation by the Roman Script". "The Rules" do not change transliteration conventions, though they extend application of the system to only the names of the Russian Federation, continental shelf, the zone of exclusive economic interests of Russia, as well as the geographical features discovered and investigated by the Russian explorers in the World Ocean and Antarctica. However, "The Rules" provide that the given conventions could be also used to render into the Roman script the Russian spelled place-names of

Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, till these states develop Romanization systems for their national languages, and these systems are adopted by the UN Conference for international use. A number of cartographic products including the third edition of the World Atlas has been published and developed. The development of the National Atlas of Russia has been started.

Presently there are several catalogues of geographical names in Russia maintained by different agencies to cope with specific tasks. The CNIIGAiK Catalogue is the most generic one. The data file is maintained for all the countries of the World. Mapping and many other agencies are provided with the required info pertaining to the names for geographical features in the Russian Federation and foreign countries from the Catalogue. It comprises data on the names for nearly 2 million geographical features. The data file is being constantly updated and extended, in the first turn with the account of map making needs.

The CNIIGAiK Catalogue serves the basis to compile dictionaries of geographical names and other reference books. In addition, at the users enquiries spelling of certain place-names is detailed. The Catalogue is a card file. In addition to a name it contains a generic, feature location, state and administrative unit, for foreign names their national forms are provided (and variants). Russian rendering of a name is given. The Catalogue involves name changes and some extra data to determine a feature. The Federal law "On naming of geographical names" has set the task to develop the State Catalogue. The task is to be implemented by several stages. The State Catalogue of Geographical Names for the Russian Federation will be first compiled and further enhanced or complimented with some subcatalogues comprising the names of Russia's continental self and its exclusive economic zone together with the features discovered or investigated by the Russian explorers in the World Ocean and Antarctica. In accordance with the resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation Roskartografiya is entrusted with the responsibility to develop the State Catalogue. Roskartografiya is assigned as an executive body to deal with all the issues pertaining to geographical names. The full catalogue based on 1:100,000 and larger maps is supposed to comprise up to 2.5 million names of geographical features in Russia. The need to register names of smaller features from the maps at larger scale may arise at regional and departmental level.

CNIIGAiK has designed the first stage of the automated catalogue. Specifications to soft and hardware have been developed. Data registration forms to be inserted into the State Catalogue, a list of typical inquiries to be implemented have been developed for the Catalogue of geographical names. The procedure for registering place-names, issuing dictionaries and references of geographical names, developing and maintaining the State Catalogue is prepared to be adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation. This year CNIIGAiK has started designing the State Catalogue.

Russia is a member of the Division of Eastern Europe, North and Middle Asia and the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts on geographical names. Russia's delegation attended the mentioned divisions meetings and the 18th (1996) and 19th (1998) sessions of the Group of Experts and the VII UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names. Russia is the coordinator in the Working Group on Geographical Names established by the Inter-State Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and the Earth Remote Sensing of the CIS state-members. Russia arranged working meetings of the Division of Eastern Europe, North and Middle Asia and the Working Group of CIS members on geographical names in Moscow between 1996 and 1999.

Russia participated in development and discussion of international conventions for place-names rendering as well as in the standardization of Antarctica's names and in many years efforts to compile the International Gazetteer of Geographical Names for the region. The final version of the Gazetteer was considered at the meeting held by the Working Group at the XXV SCAR session.

Tajikistan. As the Republic does not have a national authority on geographical names, their standardization is not carried at present. The issues of displaying geographical names on maps are handled by the Administration for Geodesy and Cartography of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan. The Republic of Uzbekistan forms its national service for geographical names. Since 1991 collection and standardization of geographical names has been treated as a separate field apart from mapping activity. Registering and standardization of geographical names are mainly carried out by the Laboratory of Toponymy in the National Center for Geoinformatics and Cadastre. It has a card file of Uzbekistan's geographical names taken from 1:500,000 map and other sources. The main task of the Laboratory is to develop national bank of geographical names of the Republic and to carry out scientific and practical work to set the names of the features within the territory of Uzbekistan and abroad in the state language.

Recently the Laboratory of Toponymy has standardized geographical names of Uzbekistan taken from the map at scale 1:1000,000 both in the Uzbek language and with the Roman script, developed the orthography rules for the Uzbek topomyns.

In 1998-1999 toponyms of Uzbekistan and adjacent territories obtained from 1:500,000 map were registered. The lists of the names both in Cyrillic and Roman characters were compiled with administrative reference and coordinates of the features indicated. Many toponyms in the lists are accompanied with the info on their history and etymology.

The manuals to render the names of Kyrgyzia, Tajikistan and Turkmenia in Uzbek language are developed.

Collection, registering and systematization of geographical names for mapping needs is carried out by the Central Aerogeodetic Company of the Main Administration for Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre (Uzgeokadastr).

Publication and displaying of populated places names is checked by the State Inspection of Geodetic Control and the same for physical and historical features is checked by the Laboratory of Toponymy in the National Center for Geoinformatics and Cadastre.

Recently Uzbekistan has been investigating foreign experience and estimating the possibility to develop the automated State Catalogue of geographical names to provide the users with the required data.

In 1993 the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the law "On Introduction of the Uzbek Alphabet Based on the Roman Script". In May 1995 some changes were made in the law. The new alphabet is already used. Primary school is totally using the Roman script. Books, dictionaries and maps are published with the new alphabet. Uzgeokadastr registers and standardizes geographical names with the Roman characters.

Ukraine. Coordination of standardization, registration and use of geographical names both at national and international levels is carried out by the Main Administration for

Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of Ukraine (Ukrgeokartografiya) together with the National Council on Geographical Names established in 1993 by the resolution of the Ukrainian Cabinet. The Council comprises representatives of the appropriate ministries and departments of the Republic and of local administration. In view of some changes in the Ukrainian legislation and the development of the law "On geographical names" in the nearest time the composition of the National Council will be reconsidered and its status changed and detailed.

Standardization of geographical names in Ukraine was mainly hindered by the lack of required legislative and normative base as well as of the state Romanisation standard. Therefore, on the initiative of Ukrgeokartografiya, the National Council on Geographical Names and some other ministries, departments and agencies the State law of Ukraine "On geographical names" was developed. The law provides legislative basis for naming and renaming of geographical features as well as for standardization, use, registering and storage of geographical names. The law draft accounts for changes in the state language, decrees on local self-government and other considerations. The law draft was agreed upon by the Cabinet of Ukraine and submitted to the Supreme Council of the country.

In December 1998 the Ukrainian law "On topography and mapping" was adopted. To provide for its implementation Ukrgeokartografiya develops normative documents including those concerning geographical names.

By now Ukrgeokartografiya has developed some temporary normative documents to specify the procedure for the standardization of geographical names when mapping and surveying. The procedure for collection, adoption and processing of geographical names is set by "Temporary Rules for Collection and Determination of Geographical Names for Topographic Maps and Plans". 16 manuals to render place-names of English-, German-, Spanish-speaking countries as well as of Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Moldova, France, Sweden, Lithuania, Belarus and Italy were developed for map editors. Similar rules to render names of other countries are to be further developed.

To render proper and geographical names with Roman characters the "Standard Table for Rendering of the Ukrainian Proper Names with the English Language" is employed. The Rules were adopted by the Ukrainian Commission on Legislative Terminology in 1996. The present Rules will be valid till the state Romanisation conventions being developed now are made operational.

To create the State Register of the Ukraine's geographical names, specific programs and methods for place-names bank maintenance were developed. In 1999 bank development is to be started. 1:100,000 map will be used to pick up the names of Ukraine at the first stage.

The first reference-book of place-names for a continent called "Africa" was compiled. The references "Adjectives Formed of the Ukrainian Place-Names" and "Disappeared and Renamed Populated Places of Ukraine for the Latest 50 years", "Australia and Oceania", "Orographic Features of Ukraine", dictionaries of geographical names of Poland, Belarus, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova are completed.

The departments of Ukrgeokartografiya are constantly tracking administrative division of the country for the appropriate references based on the material provided by the Supreme Council.

Names of states are used in compliance with the reference "Names of the World Countries and Territories" in Ukrainian and state language of a given country. The latest edition of the reference was modified in accordance with the appropriate resolutions of the 7th UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names.

Ukraine does not have a single list of all the exonyms used on maps and in other publications. Exonyms are provided as lists attached to the manuals for rendering of foreign geographical names in Ukrainian.

Ukrgeokartografiya, the National Council on Geographic Names together with the Ministry of Education carried out students historical and geographical expeditions "Microtoponyms of Ukraine". More than 2,000 schools participated in the expedition. More than 16,000 toponyms were investigated to be used in the National Bank of geographical names.

National Council on Geographical Names and Ukrgeokartografiya together with the State Department of Standards develops the State standard "Codes for the Names of the World Countries" based on the international ISO standard and the appropriate material on international standardization of geographical names. Ukrgeokartografiya assists in implementation of the State law "On goods circulation security" that requires official place-names.

Ukraine cooperates with the countries composing the Division of Eastern Europe, North and Middle Asia and the Division of Eastern Europe, Central and Southeastern Europe where the country permanently participates.

International Cooperation

In June 1999 the Division held its meeting in Moscow. The meeting was devoted to the results of the VII UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names and preparation for the 20th session of the UN Group of Experts. The delegations exchanged the info on the current status of national standardization. The Division Chairman and Deputy Chairman were elected. Boginsky V.M. (Russia) was elected as the Chairman and Avramenko N.G. (Belarus) as the Deputy Chairman. The Division representatives attended the meeting held by the Working Group on geographical names of CIS members that considered the results of mutual efforts to compile the Attachment 1 to the Bulletin "Geographical Names Changes in the CIS Countries" and set the tasks for further cooperation.