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Item 5
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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS
Report of the Norden Division

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Report of the Norden Division to the twenty-second session of UNGEGN
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Agenda item 5

Since the eighth conference on the standardization of geographical names in 2002 the countries within the Norden Division have continued their work concerning place-names standardization. The following report mainly reflects the progress made since that conference.

1 Measures taken and proposed to implement United Nations resolutions on the standardization of geographical names

Sweden

Resolution VIII/2 (2002) "Commemorative naming practices for geographical features” has been referred to by the Stockholm Name Drafting Committee in connection with the growing demands on the Committee to honour Astrid Lindgren, the famous writer, and Anna Lindh, the late Swedish foreign minister, by naming something after them. Also referring to this resolution, the national Place-Name Advisory Board has considered the possibility to recommend local municipalities, (where the names of streets and other urban names are decided) to show restraint when it comes to commemorative naming.

Resolution VIII/9 (2002) ”Geographical names as cultural heritage” is well in line with the Swedish legislation relating to place-names. A section called Good Place-Name Practice is since July 2000 included in the Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds, which clearly emphasises place-names as being a part of the cultural heritage of Sweden. The Act is supervised by the Swedish National Heritage Board.

2 Economic and social benefits of the national and international standardization of geographical names

Field collection of names

Finland

Since 2002 the systematic field survey of inherited place-names organized by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland has continued in 16 municipalities, and about 4,800 new records were added to the collections of names of the Research Institute. In 2003, the Research Institute arranged a competition via Internet in the schools of the Helsinki area to collect unofficial urban place-names (in slang), and the result was 14,500 records of 4,100 separate names.

Since the mapping responsibility in the northernmost Lapland was passed from the Finnish Army to the National Land Survey in the beginning of 2003 the NLS decided to extend the Topographic Database, the data source of the Basic Map 1:20 000 and the National Geographic Names Register, to cover the whole country by the end of 2007. This comprehensive project includes recollection of geographic names in a multilingual (Finnish, North Saami, Inari Saami and Skolt Saami) area of nearly 40,000 km². The NLS Lapland district office carries out the filed-work and the experts of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland checks and approves the spelling of the names.
Iceland

Place-names have been collected in Iceland since the early 20th century, in the beginning by The Archaeological Society (later the National Museum) and volunteers, not least from local youth societies. The Place Name Institute has collected place names since 1970. Furthermore, place-names are recorded to a certain extent in connection with the regular fieldwork for mapping purposes.

Norway

Collection of microtoponyms is constantly going on in a number of municipalities. New material is normally being digitalized, most often by means of Access or Excel software. Still many names remain unregistered because they are not being collected in time. Through the new cultural program (Kulturmeldinga 2002) the Ministry of Cultural Affairs has initiated a greater effort in collecting place-names and coordinating existing collections in order to establish a comprehensive Norwegian place-name database.

Sweden

Place-names have been scientifically and systematically collected in Sweden since the late 19th century, but due to lack of resources within the national place-name institutes this work nowadays lies fallow. Instead, place-names are collected by other means, e.g. through short-term ventures like a national project called Forests & History and sometimes with the aid of volunteers from local heritage societies. A recently published book by Staffan Nyström called Smånamn och andra ortnamn [Microtoponyms and other place-names] includes detailed instructions for non-professional place-name collectors. Furthermore, place-names are recorded to a certain extent in connection with the regular field-work for mapping purposes.

3 Official treatment of names

Finland

Since 2002, new or altered Finnish, Swedish, and Saami names on 254 revised sheets of the Basic Map in 1:20,000 have been checked by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. Furthermore, the Research Institute has continued to provide statements concerning geographical names in Finland and to offer guidance and information requested on both indigenous names and names in foreign countries.

In the beginning of 2004, the renewed Language Act (www.finlex.fi) came into force in Finland. The act replaced the act number 148/922. According to the act, the national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. In the beginning of 2004, the renewed Saami Language Act came into force (www.finlex.fi), and replaced the act number 516/1991. The purpose of the act is to ensure, for its part, the constitutional right of the Saami to maintain and develop language and culture of their own. The act contains provisions on the right of the Saami to use their own language before the courts of law and other public authorities to enforce and promote the linguistic rights of the Saami.

With the exception of Åland, which has a Swedish-speaking majority, all provinces are either monolingual Finnish or bilingual with a Finnish majority. However, all provinces have names in the two official languages (see Toponymic guidelines of Finland).

In the new Language Act, the section 33 applies to Signs and place names and public transport:

(1) The texts of signs, traffic signs and other corresponding signposts directed to the public posted by authorities in bilingual municipalities shall be in Finnish and Swedish, unless solely foreign languages are to be used in them in accordance with international practice.
(2) Road traffic legislation contains further provisions on the language of traffic signs and other guideposts on road and streets.

(3) Provisions on the place names to be used in signs posted by the authorities may be issued by a Government Decree. A statement by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland shall be obtained before a Decree is issued.

(4) Provisions on the language to be used in signs and notices directed at passengers in public transport may be issued in a Government Decree.

Iceland

The Icelandic Place Name Act was revised in 1998. The Place-Name Committee has supervisory duties when it comes to laying down names for new settlements and the way in which they are written. It lays emphasis upon the importance of preserving the place-names as a part of the nation’s cultural heritage. Place-names shall be spelt in accordance with adopted linguistic rules, but established names shall not be changed without strong grounds. The committee shall also decide what name shall appear on the maps of the national mapping authority, Landmælingar Islands, if there is a disagreement about this. Three cases have been dealt with since 2002. The Committee also expresses its views on new municipal names.

Norway

The Norwegian Place Name Act relating to the standardization of geographical names, which has been in force since 1991 is now in the process of being revised. An Evaluation Committee has suggested a series of amendments to the Act, and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs is preparing a revised text to be regarded by the National Assembly (Stortinget). The proposed amendments aim at an easier handling of the law as well as a greater focus on the cultural heritage aspect.

A new act on personal names came into effect on January 1, 2003. The Act admits a greater variety of first names and surnames and may have some influence on geographical names in the future.

The complaint committee of place-names has until now treated about 1,000 names. In about one fourth of the cases the decisions of the committee turned out in favour of the prosecutors.

Sweden

The Swedish Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds (Kulturminneslagen) was revised in 2000. It now includes a paragraph dealing with ”good place-name practice”. The emphasis is put upon the importance of preserving the place-names as a part of the nation’s cultural heritage. Place-names shall be spelt in accordance with adopted linguistic rules, but established names shall not be changed without strong grounds. Swedish, Saami and Finnish names shall as far as possible be used on maps, signposts and other marking in multilingual areas. Names that are approved for public map production shall also be used in other contexts in their approved form.

4 Treatment of names in multilingual areas

Finland

The Swedish department of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland gives advice on the use of Swedish names in the Swedish and bilingual areas. The native Saami expert of the Research Institute in Utsjoki handles questions concerning the Saami languages (North, Inari and Skolt Saami) in Finland. The area where place-names in these three languages occur comprises 30,000 square kilometres of northernmost Finland.
Norway

According to the Norwegian Place Name act names used by the linguistic minorities (Kvenish/Finnish and Saami) are to be used in official contexts such as on maps and road signs. If a minority name is the only one of a feature in question it is to be used alone. If a feature has a name in more than one language both names or all names are to be used. However, this principle has not so far been carried out properly. Name consultants of Norwegian, Kvenish and Saami place-names give advice on the correct spelling.

Sweden

The National Land Survey (NLS) decided in 1983 that the geographical names in the North Saami area of Sweden should be treated according to special principles on the official maps. All names of natural features should be written in correspondence with the North Saami orthography, accepted by the Saami themselves in 1978. Since the Saami in 1983 had agreed upon a new Lule Saami orthography, the NLS decided in 1988 to use this orthography in the same manner. The NLS has gradually introduced these two orthographies in the official maps, also for settlement names.

In 2001 the NLS made a new decision after referring the question to the Saami Council for consideration. According to this decision also the South Saami orthography and a special Ume Saami orthography shall be used for the Saami names in the area to the south of the Lule Saami area.

In the Code of Good Place-Name Practice it is stated that Swedish, Saami and Finnish names shall, as far as possible, be used together on maps and on signposts and other signs in multilingual areas.

5 Administrative structure of national names authorities

Denmark

The Place-name Committee (Stednavneudvalget) is the national geographical names authority in Denmark. In co-operation with the National Survey and Cadastre (Kort & Matrikelstyrelsen) and the municipal authorities it recommends to the Ministry of Culture the orthographical form of names to be authorized as well as changes in the orthography of previously authorized place-names. The list of authorized place-names, containing some 25,000 names, can be downloaded via the Internet from a server accessible at the homepages of the National Survey and Cadastre and the Institute of Name Research at the University of Copenhagen.

Regional authorities of Denmark (Greenland and the Faroe Islands):

The Greenland names authority
Nunat Aqqinik Alajangisartut
Place Names Committee
c/o Qqaasiliriffik
Postbox 980
DK-3900 Nuuk
Greenland
Kalallit Nunaat

The Faroe Islands names authority
Fröðskaparseitur Foroya
University of the Faroe Islands
J.C. Svabos Ñota 14
Postbox 272
FO-110 Tórshavn
Foroya
Finland

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland assumes the right and responsibility for providing normative recommendations for geographical names. Furthermore it acts as an authoritative organ in matters relating to the standardization of geographical names by providing guidance for administrative bodies and by checking the Finnish, Swedish and Saami names on the maps prepared by the National Land Survey of Finland. The recommendations are based on linguistics, cultural history and local tradition.

The power to decide on names is divided between various administrative bodies. The municipalities decide on the names of streets, roads, parks etc. but also on the names of the municipalities themselves. The National Land Survey of Finland decides on the names in the maps and those of cadastral villages. Furthermore the Finland Post Corporation decides on the names of post offices, and the VR-Group Ltd. (the railway company) decides on the names of railway stations etc.

Iceland

The role as national place-name authority is performed by the Place-Name Committee.

Furthermore, the local governments of Iceland (104 in all) are responsible for a large amount of place-names.

Norway

The Mapping Authority (Norw. Statens kartverk) has the role as the major national geographical names authority. This authority has the power to standardize names of natural features as well as of settlement names. However, other administrative bodies on state level, county level, and municipal level have the authority to decide on names of features of which they are administrators.

Until now the Mapping Authority has been organized in 18 county offices. Due to reduced grants the number of county offices have been reduced to 12 from January 1, 2004. This reorganization involves fewer resources for place-name activities as one person will be in charge of several counties.

The Norwegian Language Council (Norw. Norsk språkråd) administers the place-names consultants. These make out eight for Norwegian place-names (with regional responsibility), three for Saami place-names (North, South and Lule Saami), and one for Kvenish (Finnish) place-names. Their tasks are to give advice on the correct spelling of place-names in official use, and to give general advice on the usage of place-names. The greater part of the practical work of the consultants is carried out by six full or half time employed assistants.

Sweden

The supervision of the Act concerning Ancient Monuments and Finds is the responsibility of the National Heritage Board (Sw. Riksantikvarieämbetet, RAÄ) and in order to cope with that a position as a place-name expert has been established at this authority. However, the role as national place-name authority is performed by the National Land Survey (NLS, Lantmäteriverket, LMV). The third main part involved in Swedish place-name standardization is the Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research (Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet, SOFI). Furthermore, the local governments of Sweden (290 in all) are responsible for postal addresses, urban and rural, containing a large amount of place-names. There is no special onomastic competence for this work, though, which has caused some worry as regards the linguistic examination of the names in question.
6 Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors

Finland

The Toponymic guidelines of Finland have been revised and will be presented in an updated version at the 22nd session of UNGEGN.

Norway

The last version of the Toponymic guidelines of Norway is available on the Internet site of the Mapping Authority of Norway (Statens kartverk), http://www.statkart.no (search “toponymic guidelines”). A new edition will be presented at a later stage when the Place Name Act has been revised.

Sweden

The Toponymic guidelines of Sweden are being revised and planned to be presented in an updated version at the 22nd session of UNGEGN.

7 Toponymic data files

Denmark

The place-names register of the National Survey and Cadastre, established in 1976-1981, contains today approximately 120,000 place-names. The register is continually updated and is in the year 2000 digitized to serve users of geographical information systems. The place-names including geometry is revised in connection with the updating of the National Topographic Database. The updating takes place with an interval of 5 years.

Finland

The Finnish National Land Surveys Geographic Names Register (GNR) is a toponymic-cartographic database serving the needs of national map production, place name standardization and information service. The aim is that all place name and map name data needed in national mapping be stored and maintained in a single database. The data source of the GNR is the Topographic Database and its 800,000 toponyms, the spelling of which have been approved by the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. The GNR comprises two integrated parts, the National Place Name Register (PNR) and the National Map Name Register (MNR). The PNR is scale-less, contains no cartographic data, but data on place names' feature type, feature location, and approved spelling and language. The MNR includes the product-related information for the cartographic representation of the place names in the PNR for different map scales and products. The GNR was reported in detail in the 8th UNCSGN in Berlin 2002 (E/CONF.94/CRP.26).

Norway

The Norwegian Mapping Authority (Statens kartverk) has continued the establishment of a comprehensible register of all names on different map series and charts. This register (SSR) also comprises names, which have been decided upon according to the law. So far about 91,500 names decisions have been entered into the register. Names from maps in different scales are constantly being registered in the SSR. The register is now including 554,400 names altogether. The register is accessible on the Internet address http://ngis2.statkart.no/norgesglasset/default.html
Sweden

The National Land Survey (NLS) has replaced the so-called Map Search with a service where the place-name database is accessible on the web site of the NLS (www.lantmateriet.se). The place-name database functions as a national place-name dictionary. By presenting the place-names of the Swedish national map in a register on its home page on the Internet the Land Survey will make it possible for authorities, organisations and the general public to have easy and reliable access to approved and standardized place-name data. Currently, the database contains about 700,000 place-names and there will be about 1,2 million when the map is completed.

The place-name collections at the Institute for Dialectology, Onomastics and Folklore Research (Språk- och folkminnesinstitutet, SOFI) now exist in a computer-based version containing almost four million records. The aim is to make it available on the Internet, but so far only parts of it can be seen on the web site (www.sofi.se) for demonstration purposes.

8 Toponymic web sites

Denmark

National Survey and Cadastre, http://www.kms.dk
Institute of Name Research, http://www.navneforskning.dk

Lists of authorized Danish place-names
http://www.navneforskning.dk
http://levende.kms.dk/su/sunavn.htm

Danish maps on the Internet
http://kmswww3.kms.dk/kortpaanettet/index.htm

Finland

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, http://www.kotus.fi

Iceland

The Place-Name Committee, http://www.ismal.hi.is/ornefnanefnd.html
The Place-Name Institute of Iceland, http://www.ornefni.is

The National Land Survey, Landmælingar Íslands, will open a place-name database on its web site. The database contains about 50.000 place-names.

Norway

The Mapping Authority (Statens kartverk), http://www.statkart.no
The Place-Name Consultants (Statens namnekonsulentar), http://www.stadnamn.org
Section for Name Research (Seksjon for namnegransking), http://www.hf.uio.no/inl/sna/namn.html
Norwegian Language Council (Norsk språkråd), http://www.sprakrad.no/stadnamn.htm
Documentation project (Dokumentasjonsprosjektet), http://www.dokpro.uio.no

Sweden

9 Terminology in the standardization of geographical names

Sweden

A Swedish version of the UNGEGN Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names is presented as a part of Hans Ringstam’s recently published *FN:s arbete med geografiska namn* [UN work on geographical names].

10 Toponymic education and practice and international co-operation

10.1 Existing education and practice

Finland

At the University of Turku, academic studies of the Finnish language include linguistic fieldwork and collecting of toponyms. In 2002-2003 the Research Institute gave onomastic lectures for students of cartography at Helsinki University of Technology.

Norway

At the University of Oslo, an academic course on the standardization and the use of geographical names and personal names is offered every spring semester. In more general terms onomastics are taught at all of the four Norwegian universities. Also several training courses on toponymy and collection of microtoponyms are held annually in cooperation with local municipalities and local organizations.

10.2 Exchange of advice and information

Norway

The place-name consultants in cooperation with the Mapping Authority have planned several local meetings with personal representing the municipalities, road divisions etc. to meet the requirements of the Place Name Act.

Sweden

Within the NLS there are in-house training programmes to meet the need from its staff, both those concerned with cartography and those occupied by real estate information and registration. The NLS and the two other central name authorities (RAÄ and SOFI) also – in various ways – support the local authorities in their work with the new addressing system. The Church of Sweden is given support as regards names of parishes, and advice is also given to the Swedish Maritime Administration (names on nautical charts) and the Swedish Road Administration (names on road signs).

The Place-Name Advisory Board has an important role as concerns the co-operation between the various authorities and organisations involved in Swedish name standardization issues.
10.3 Co-operation with national organisations

Norway

The annual joint meeting of the place name consultancies and the Mapping Authority was held in September 2003, dealing with common problems such as the coordination of decisions and building up a comprehensive database of place-names.

In connection with the above-mentioned meeting a conference on place-name databases was organised by the Norwegian Name Research Committee. It was recommended that those universities and institutions responsible for name databases, included the Mapping Authority, should put up a program aiming at the coordination of more or less widespread collections.

The 10th National Conference on Name Research was held in May 2003. The topic of the conference was Gustav Indrebø (1889–1942) as name scholar. He was the leading place-name consultant in the 1920’s and 1930’s. The proceedings of the conference have been published in Gustav Indrebø og norsk namnegrænsing (Gustav Indrebø and Norwegian Name Research), Seksjon for namnegrænsing. Universitetet i Oslo. 2003 (with summaries in English).

10.4 Co-operation with international organizations

Finland

The combined Saami Language Board, that handles problems of the usage of Saami languages and gives recommendations concerning them, had two meetings in Karasjok (Norway), in November 2002 and October 2003. The board consists of 12 members, 3 of whom are from Finland representing the Saami languages spoken in Finland.

In September 2003, the delegation of the Ministry of Education of P. R. China – the Observation Group on the Standardization of Orthography and Orthoepy of Geographical Names – visited the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and the National Land Survey of Finland. The delegation consisted of eight experts on linguistics and toponymy from the China Ministry of Education (State Language Commission) and China Institute of Toponymy. The main topic during the visit was to discuss the experiences dealing with the Place Name Register of the National Land Survey of Finland and collecting and standardizing of the geographical names in multilingual areas.

Iceland

The Nordic co-operative committee for onomastic research [Nordiska samarbetskommittén för namnforskning, NORNA] was established in 1971. It is an association of Nordic scholars specialising in name research, including place-name standardization. NORNA has moved its seat to Garðabær, Iceland, with Svavar Sigmundsson as its present president.

Norway

The Norwegian Hydrographic Service participates regularly in meetings in IHO Hydrographic Committee on Antartic. At a meeting in September 2003 the status for use and collection of undersea feature names was discussed.

Sweden

The papers read at the symposia and congresses of NORNA are published in Uppsala, Sweden in the series NORNA-rapporter.
The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) has moved its seat to Uppsala, Sweden. The present president of ICOS is Mats Wahlberg, Uppsala.

11 Country names

Finland

The new, revised version *Maiden nimet suomeksi ruotsiksi, saameksi, englanniksi, ranskaksi ja saksaksi* [Country names in Finnish, Swedish, Saami, English, French, and German] was published as a booklet. Since 2000, the www-pages of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland contain an updated publication of country names, capitals and citizenships in Finnish (*Maiden nimet, pääkaupungit ja kansalaisuudet*).

Norway

A list of country names and other major geographical names in different languages is being worked on.

12 UNGEGN-meetings

In 2001 a meeting of the Norden Division was held in Copenhagen, arranged by the National Survey and Cadastre, the Place-name Committee and the Institute of Name Research at the University of Copenhagen.

In a meeting of the Norden Division in August 2002 in Berlin there were participants from Denmark (1), Norway (3), Finland (2) and Sweden (2). In this meeting the chairmanship of the division was passed from Sweden to Finland (chair Sirkka Paikkala, vice chair Teemu Leskinen) for the period of 2002-2007.

In October 2003, the Norden Division held a meeting in Helsinki. There were participants from Denmark (2), Finland (4), Iceland (2), Norway (3) and Sweden (4).

13 Publications

**Key publications:**


**All publications:**

**Denmark**


Gammeltoft, Peder: *Det nordiske og nordatlantiske databasesamarbejde.* [The Nordic and North Atlantic data base co-operation]
Finland

The information bulletins *Kielikello* in Finnish and *Språkbruk* Swedish are published four times a year by Reasearch Institute for the Languages of Finland. Both bulletins contain information and articles on the standardization of geographical names.


*Maiden nimet: suomeksi, ruotsiksi, saameksi, englanniksi, ranskaksi ja saksaksi* [Country names in Finnish, Swedish, Saami, English, French, and German.] Saara Welin (ed.). (Kielenkäytön oppaita 4.) (Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja 126.) Helsinki: Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus. 182 pp.


Iceland


Norway

The information bulletin Nytt om namn(News about Names) is being published twice a year, and the journal Namn og Nemne(Names and Words) once a year, both containing information and articles on the standardization of geographical names.


Hallaråker, Peter: Stadnamnprosjektet, Stadnamnarkivet og Stadnamnbasen i Møre og Romsdal. [The place-name project, the Place-name archives and the Place-name database in Møre og Romsdal.] In: Seksjon for namnegranskning. Årsmelding 2001, pp. 35–44.


Helleland, Botolv: Place names (Geographical Names) on and off the Coast of Norway: Names of Oil Fields Compared to Traditional Place-names. In: Journal of Geography Education (Department of Geography Education. Seoul National University). Vol. 44 (2000, 12), pp. 62–70.


**Sweden**


