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Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda

MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TRAINING COURSES IN TOPONYMY

<u>An Introductory Toponymy Course on the Web*</u>

Prepared by Marc Richard, Geographer, Commission de toponymie du Québec, Canada

AN INTRODUCTORY TOPONYMY COURSE ON THE WEB

The Commission de toponymie du Québec (Canada) will offer an introductory toponymy course, in French, on its Web site (see <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca>, *Outils* section). These Web pages are an adaptation of a first-term course called "Introduction à la toponymie" given by Henri Dorion, geographer, toponymist, and member of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, at the Department of Geography at l'Université Laval de Québec <http://www.ulaval.ca/sg/CO/C1/GGR/GGR-18345.html>. [Course description is given in French only].

At the time of writing, it was anticipated that the course would be available in time for the 22nd Session of UNGEGN.

This course, which uses a large variety of multimedia resources, attempts to give a general training at the university level on place names, in addition to training francophones responsible for managing place names at the local, regional, and national levels. It has three general objectives:
- to present an introduction to basic toponymic knowledge
- to demonstrate the double function of geographical names (location and direction, on the one side, and cultural evidence on the other)
- to make students aware of the problems of toponymic management at different levels (municipal, local, and even international)

Also, the course has the following specific objectives:
- to present proper toponymic terminology
- to provide an introduction to documentary sources concerning toponymy
- to teach how to prepare and undertake toponymic field work
- to illustrate the relationship between toponymy and other disciplines (geography, history, political science, linguistics, …)

The following subjects are under development:
- What is toponymy?
- definition of a toponymic field
- birth and life of a place name
- toponymic sources
- the principle of univocity and the multiplicity of forms
- management of place names
- the Commission de toponymie du Québec
- a picture of Quebec toponymy
- field work methodology
- geographic terminology and toponymy
- a picture of world toponymy

- international standardization of toponymy

The course uses a large variety of web resources to transmit knowledge; html pages, pdf format documents, hyperlinks, sound recordings and digital photographs. The student consults the notes, documents, bank of examples (about 150 examples illustrating 35 different elements), the vocabulary (which draws largely from the *Glossary of toponymic terminology* by Professor Naftali Kadmon and from the *Lexique des termes utiles à l'étude des noms de lieux* by geographers and toponymists Henri Dorion and Jean Poirier); as well, he or she uses links of interest, listens to audio extracts, and carries out the training evaluations. There is a possibility of incorporating a discussion group into this educational tool to reinforce the group dynamic and break the isolation that one might feel in taking a course on the Internet. For now, the course "Introduction to Toponymy" is not linked to an institution of higher education and it does not count towards obtaining university credits.

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Commission de toponymie du Québec (Canada)
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