

**Twenty-third Session
Vienna, 28 March – 4 April 2006**

**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda:
Reports of the division**

Turkey National Report

TURKEY

NATIONAL REPORT

1. Organizational Activities

Since the Twenty-Second session of UNGEGN held in New York in 2004, the legal status of the authorities for national geographic names has been changed through an Official Regulation of the Ministry of Interior. Some preliminary studies have been planned and realized during the said period.

1.1 Historical Background

Attempts to standardize geographical names in Turkey started in late 1930s, when the Ministry of Interior set up a special committee for the standardization of names of populated places. Establishment and naming of administrative units -provinces, districts, sub-districts and villages- are based on the Law on Provinces (Law no.5442) dated 1949. Naming or renaming an administrative unit or a natural geographic feature is accomplished by different, hierarchical local and governmental procedures depending on the type of administrative unit. The procedure comprises the decisions of the General Provincial Council, the Administrative Provincial Committee, the Governor and finally the triple decree of the Minister of Interior, the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic. The establishment and naming of a province or a sub-province is executed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The General Directorate of Provincial Management is authorized to register and standardize names of villages, upon the approval of the Minister of Interior.

A “Permanent Committee on Geographical Names” was set up in 1952 by the Ministry of Interior and was authorized to standardize names of administrative units, inhabited places and natural geographic features except roads, parks and streets in the districts of municipalities. The Committee, which consisted of experts from universities and national bodies, continued its activities until 1975, though not on a regular basis.

In 1983, a national committee called the “Committee of Experts for the Standardization of Geographical Names” was established through a government decree. Due to the difficulties faced in implementation, the government decided to terminate the activities of the Committee in 1986.

Standardized geographical names are prescribed as they take place in publications of the Ministry of Interior, and on topographic maps published by the General Command of Mapping of the Ministry of Defense and nautical charts published by the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

In practice, standardization of topographic, nautical local names is carried out by the General Command of Mapping, the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography, and local municipal boards, respectively with the authorization of the Ministry of Interior and the Committee.

1.2 Legal Status of the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey

(BEGeoN-T)

“The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T)” which is responsible for the standardization of geographic names in Turkey, has been officially founded in July 2004, in accordance with the directive of the Ministry of Interior prepared in cooperation with other related national institutions. The Board, composed of ministerial and academic staff as well as experts, carries out its tasks in parallel with UNGEGN and is authorized to standardize geographical names of all categories, including exonyms, maritime names and undersea features as well as proposals for the names of objects in space. The Board may create working groups in order to achieve its responsibilities.

The officials on the Board represent various institutions, such as the General Directorate of Provincial Management of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Society for Turkish Language, Turkish Standards Institute, Turkish Historical Society, Universities, General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

1.3 BEGeoN-T Activities

The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey organizes two General Assembly (GA) meetings every year. Recent developments, activities of working groups, decisions about possible questions from various institutions are discussed during these meetings

Five working groups have been established in the General Assembly meeting which was held in October 2004, in line with the activities of UNGEGN and based on national needs. These working groups are on “Technical Infrastructure”, “Exonyms of Country Names and Capitals”, “Toponymy Guide”, “Glossary of Toponymic Terminology” and “Gazetteer and Geographical Names Database”. Representatives on the Board or other experts proposed by participating institutions may take part in these working groups.

The Board has been briefed on the activities of the working groups during the General Assembly meeting which was held in October 2005. The Turkish version of the UNGEGN brochure has been prepared and submitted to the approval of UNGEGN. The brochure will be published upon approval. The Board also decided to establish new working groups, namely on “Determining Deficiencies concerning the use of Populated Place Names and Standardization of anomalies about use of Geographical Names”, “Medium Scale Gazetteer”, “World Gazetteer”, and “Geographical Names in the Surroundings of Turkey”.

The “Concise Gazetteer of the World at scale 1:30 M”, the revised version of the “Gazetteer at scale 1:250.000”, “Concise Gazetteer of neighbouring regions of Turkey” will be assigned to the new working groups of the Board. The latter study will be conducted in parallel to the examination of actual and old Turkish maps with a view to gathering Turkish exonyms.

Since its establishment, The Board is working for the publication of following documents: “Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features”, “Turkish exonyms of countries and capitals” based on the list of ISO 3166, “Toponymy Guidelines for Authors, Map Publishers and Other Editors”, “Glossary of Toponymic Terminology”,

“Gazetteers and Names Databases at various scales”, “Marine, Nautical and under sea names”.

2. Technical Activities Carried out By the General Command of Mapping in parallel with BEGeoN-T

2.1 Names of countries and their capitals (Exonyms of the Turkish Language)

List of exonyms of countries and their capitals agreed according to ISO 3166 are determined and registered after a joint examination of the Society for Turkish Language, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and General Command of Mapping for nation-wide use. Although a draft version is available, the list will be published in the web site of the Board and participating institutions after the approval of the GA. The work for a legally approved and standardized Turkish equivalent of country names and their capitals is carried out as a parallel work with UNGEGN.

2.2 Turkish Glossary of Toponymic Terminology

The fourth version of the “Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographic Names”, which contains 375 terms, has been translated into Turkish in order to ensure a correct understanding of UN documents on the standardization of geographic names and order to form the necessary basis. The terms are categorized into three groups: the first group of terms have a unique, precise Turkish definition; the terms in the second group have multiple meanings or numerous terms have a single meaning in Turkish; those in the third group have no translation in Turkish or there are words with similar connotations in terms of their definition. This work has been conducted by the General Command of Mapping and the Society for Turkish Language. This glossary will be published for national and international use after its approval.

2.3 Gazetteer and Geographical Names Database

2.3.1 Concise Gazetteer of Turkey at scale 1:1 million

There is a lack of compromise concerning geographical place names in Turkey and its surroundings on the atlases and maps published by governmental agencies or the private sector. Absence of a standard guide and database for the use of institutions and agencies working in this field hinders the usage of common and standardized geographical names. In 2005, a gazetteer was formed with a view to overcoming existing problems and meeting the requirements at small scale mapping, place definition, education etc. The gazetteer which is published by the General Command of Mapping and verified by Ankara University will be accessible for personal use in 2006.

2.3.2 Mid-scale Gazetteer of Turkey at scale 1:250 000

A gazetteer containing features rendered on Joint Operations Graphic (JOG) maps at scale 1:250.000 consisting of almost 45.000 names in NATO STANAG-

2213 standards were accomplished in 1997–1998. It comprises some 58 geographical features such as populated places, places of cultural importance, transport, lakes, streams, mountains, physiography, vegetation, and regions of major importance. The Gazetteer is being updated by using newly published JOG's, which cover more than half of the territory of Turkey. The attributes captured for each feature are as follows; name, feature type, easting, northing, longitude, latitude, JOG sheet and date of publication. The feature type is in compliance with NATO geo-name databases.

2.3.3 Enhancement of Positional Accuracy of Populated Places Data Base of Turkey (PPDB)

The residential entities (populated places) in descending hierarchical order are as follows: province, sub-province, sub-district and village. The following information could be collected for a populated place: ID number, official national name of the place, its position (title of the 1:25.000 map sheet and grid numbers), geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude), population, previous names of the place and elevation of the center of the village/town. Positional accuracy of locations (latitude and longitude) of populated places is being enhanced to ± 100 m. Positions of populated places located at grid corners of topographic maps are moved to actual positions by using overlaid raster images of topographic maps at scale 1:50 000. The database is used for topographic and mid-scale map production in General Command of Mapping. Beginning from January 2004, the monthly updated database has been made accessible to users on intranet. Moreover, several universities, research institutions, military organizations, private and public organizations have bought this data base for several purposes. PPDB is updated continuously by using both the toponymy collected during field campaigns and the reports on renaming or foundation of a populated place supplied by the Ministry of Interior.

2.3.4 Concise Gazetteer of the World at scale 1:30 M

A World Political Map at scale 1:30 M is produced by the General Command of Mapping in February 2006. This map contains information, among others, about political borders, main rivers and lakes, major regions, coastal features, major cities, water bodies such as sea and ocean. Production of the World Physical Map will be achieved in the second half of 2006. In addition to these two maps produced by the General Command of Mapping, small-scale maps and atlases published in Turkey by private companies and other institutions will be used for the production of this gazetteer. This gazetteer will meet the needs of Turkish map users, map and other editors for standardized geographic names of the World.

2.4 Toponymy Guide

The first edition of Toponymic Guidelines of Turkey has been presented at the fourth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names which was held in Geneva in 1982 (E/CONF.74/L.7). The second edition of the Toponymic Guidelines of Turkey is due to be published. A study has been conducted by the Society for Turkish Language

and General Command of Mapping on scripting rules of the Turkish language for geographical features. This study will enrich the new edition of Toponymic Guidelines of Turkey for map and other editors.

List of 'Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features' of Romano-Hellenic Division and geographical features on base topographic maps of Turkey are merged to be a part of the Guide.

3. Participation of General Command of Mapping in activities of Regional Divisions and other International Bodies

Romano-Hellenic Division has conducted a meeting in Greece in April 2005. Although Turkey was not represented in this meeting, a short report about the activities of BEGeoN_T and standardization of names was submitted to the Secretariat of the Division.

A new project - EuroGeoNames – has been designed and proposed to Eurogeographics by German-Dutch cooperation. This project addresses critical issues to the implementation of an operational European Spatial Data Infrastructure at European level. EuroGeoNames project is in line with the goals and aspirations of INSPIRE and resolutions of UNGEGN. Turkey participates in and contributes to the project as a Reference Group member. Turkey is planning to make its geographical names database deposited in the General Command of Mapping accessible free of charge for non-commercial single inquiries. Commercial use will be agreed upon an agreement to be reached between the Project Coordinator and participating institutions.