

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

**Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda:
Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic
Data Files and Gazetteers**

Survey/Inventory on European Geographical Names (SI-EGN)

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Survey/Inventory on European Geographical Names (SI-EGN)

The Survey/Inventory on European Geographical Names data (SI-EGN) was conducted in 2005 by EuroGeographics¹ together with the German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), the University of Utrecht (UU), the Austrian Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen (BEV), the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia (SMA) and ESRI Geoinformatik Germany.

The survey has comprehensively investigated and audited the availability, quality, accessibility and provenance issues surrounding multilingual national official geographical names data. This survey, the first comprehensive one ever undertaken, has provided the proof of evidence that the planned EuroGeoNames (EGN) infrastructure and services is both required and also possible to achieve. It was carried out under the umbrella of EuroGeographics, the association of national mapping and cadastral agencies (NMCAs) in Europe, for all EU25, EFTA and candidate countries. The survey was supported by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) as well as by the Association for Geographic Information in South-East Europe (AGISEE).

In January 2005, a detailed questionnaire was issued by EuroGeographics Head Office (EGHO) to all EuroGeographics members and directly to experts identified by the UNGEGN network as national experts on geographical names. Twenty-eight countries contributed responses to the survey by providing the project coordinator with a completed detailed questionnaire (see figure).

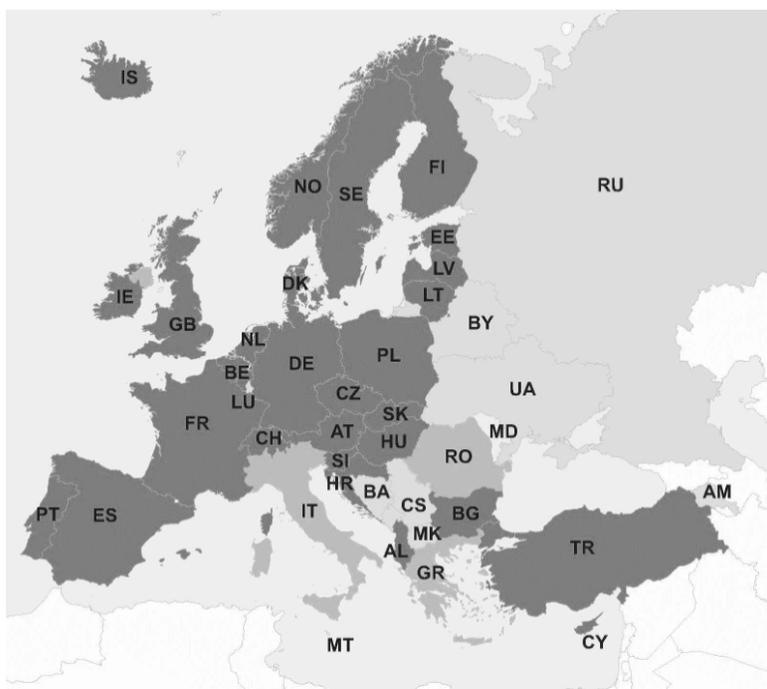


Figure – Response status of the survey/inventory, July 2005: dark grey -Detailed questionnaire replies; grey - Contact persons nominated only; light grey - No reply

¹ Association of the European National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies (NMCA), www.eurogeographics.com

A salient conclusion from the analysis of the survey responses is that the methods, standards and protocols for the establishment and maintenance of geographical names data in European countries is very heterogeneous. It also confirms and underpins the fact that interests in and applications of geographical names is very wide, and that this appeal often goes beyond those domains regarded as ‘traditional’ for this type of data, i.e. they are much more than just ‘names on map’. Another important issue revealed by the survey was that the responsibilities for specific named feature categories are often multi-agency and multi-purpose in function and that even within a single country there can be limited inter-organisational cooperation and co-ordination.

The SI-EGN final report is available (as pdf file) through the website: www.eurogeonames.com