

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

**Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda:
Activities relating to the Working Group
on Exonyms**

Geographical Names as an Editorial Problem

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Geographical Names as an Editorial Problem¹

Systematic Research on Exonyms with Guidelines for Their Use for Editorial Work

Multi-named geographical features cause some difficulties for editors. Editors have to decide which name in which situation for which publication they should use. Especially difficulties arise with the decision whether to use the local form of a name (**endonym**) or a form in a language other than the local one (**exonym**).

The discussion about the **definition** of the terms endonym and exonym has lasted for decades. A new approach introduces two levels for the definitions – a meta level and a technical level. Additionally, **pre mises** are formulated the definitions must meet. The main premises are:

- The terms endonym and exonym must be complementary.
- There is no toponym outside these two terms.
- The existence of a toponym associated to one term does not mandatory require a counterpart.

By setting the four elements *language, area, form*, and *time*, the terms endonym and exonym will be defined. A clear assignment of all geographical names is possible, and the premises are kept.

Marginal areas where the line between endonym and exonym is unsteady are described:

- transcription and transliteration,
- diacritics and special characters,
- toponyms for object beyond state's sovereignty,
- toponyms in multilingual areas,
- toponyms crossing borders of language areas,
- linguistic adjustments.

Furthermore, one can find description of the toponymic **terminology** and definitions for the different fields in toponymy with some amendments.

For editorial work the thesis is differentiating four **types of use** for exonyms:

- exonym recommended,
- exonym possible,
- exonym unnecessary,

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- exonym inappropriate.

The recommended type of use for a specific exonym in a specific situation can be found by a systematic schema of questions. This schema of questions guides the editor to the recommended type of use. The **criteria of use** for exonyms are described and illustrated comprehensively.