

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

---

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

**Report of Eastern Europe, Northern  
and Central Asia Division**

---

**Prepared by Boginsky V.M. (Russian Federation) on the basis of the papers submitted by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division.**

## **Composition of the Division**

A resolution to establish the Division of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia in the UN Group of Experts was adopted at the UN Sixth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York, August 25 – September 3. Currently the Division comprises 10 permanent country-members: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Estonia are working in the Division as observers.

## **National Standardization of Geographical Names in the Division's Member-Countries**

### **Azerbaijan**

Standardization of geographical names in the country is carried out by several state agencies (National Academy of Science, Hydrometeorology Committee, Parliament agencies, State Committee of Land Resources and Cartography and other state bodies).

After adoption of the Roman script in Azerbaijan in 1992, a systematic standardization of geographical names is being carried in the country. Thematic maps, atlases, topographic maps at different scales have been published in the Roman script since then. According to the Decree signed by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic and dated by August 1, 2001 all proceedings in the state authorities, standardization of geographical names among them, are to be carried in the Roman script.

Development of legislative and normative basis for the standardization of geographical names has become an urgent issue. Some steps were taken in this direction, namely a number of standard-legislative acts were developed and the State Law “On names of geographical objects” was submitted to the State Parliament to be adopted.

Lately the following progress in the standardization of geographical name has been achieved:

- compilation and consultations on the gazetteer of geographical names of the objects taken from the maps at scale 1:50,000 are nearly completed;
- together with the State Parliament, a book that includes lists of names of the populated places in the Azerbaijan Republic is compiled and under publication now;
- with a view to publish topographic maps in the Azerbaijan language, the State Committee of the Land Resources and Cartography developed symbols for topographic maps of different scales, which include about 15 fonts to reflect specifics of geographical objects names.
- together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the reference-book containing names of the World's states and territories is prepared;
- development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names has been deployed.

### **Armenia**

On the 23rd of November, 1999 the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia adopted the Law “On geographical names”. The law secured a legal base for renaming, registration, storage and use of geographical names.

In the Republic, official solutions on naming of geographical objects are taken by the Government. As a consultative body in 2000 the ad hoc Commission for Geographical Names was established. The Commission is working under the aegis of the Committee of State Cadastre of Real Estate under the Government of Armenia. The Commission considers proposals for registering, changing and spelling of place-names. Lists of geographical names adopted by the Government are published in the official bulletin.

The following has been fulfilled in the field of national standardization of geographical names:

- Approximately 20,000 geographical names were input in the database of geographical names. This number will be increased since restoring of names and naming of geographical features are in progress now. Additionally, it was decided to complement the data taken from the basic map at scale 1:25,000 with more names taken from the 1:10,000 map.

- geographical names of 11 regions (marzes) of the Republic are being registered;
- development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names is started.

In order to computerize registration of geographical names, the ArmGeoNames program was developed in the Committee of State Cadastre of Real Estate under the Government of Armenia. The program’s main task is to opportunely output registered data to juridical and natural persons, develop and maintain the State Catalogue, compile gazetteers and reference-books. The information system shall assist in development and maintenance of the database of geographical names that will comprise maps, plans, images and other documents related to geographical objects.

The following publications have been prepared recently:

- list of conventional names (exonyms) of states and capitals;
- reference-book devoted to administrative division of Armenia;
- gazetteer of populated places of Armenia.

Release of two more reference-books is planned for 2006-2007: “Concise dictionary of historic and architecture monuments of the Republic of Armenia” and “Gazetteer of geographical features of the Republic of Armenia”.

Standardized geographical names and accompanying information is used to issue maps and atlases. More than 15 titles of school maps, several tourist and road maps were published. The two-volume National Atlas of Armenia is nearly completed by now.

### **Belarus**

In accordance with the Republican Law “On geodetic and cartographic work” adopted in 1999, the standardization and registration of geographical names in use are considered among geodetic and cartographic work of state significance.

The Toponymy Commission under the Council of Ministers of Belarus coordinates works carried in the field of geographical names. Decisions of the Commission are mandatory

for all the state authorities, local executive and governing institutions as well as for other agencies and organizations.

During recent years, the following normative acts on the geographical names standardization were developed and adopted:

- Instruction for Russian rendering of geographical names in the Republic of Belarus;
- Instruction for development and maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of the Republic of Belarus;
- Instructions for collection and registration of geographical features names in the Republic of Belarus.

It was decided to develop the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of the Republic of Belarus that would be a computer database to be constantly updated with the data provided by official sources of information on geographical names. It is planned to populate the State Catalogue with the names of geographical objects in the Belorussian and Russian languages as well as in Romanized forms. The State Catalogue data shall provide a uniform and correct use of geographical names in all the fields of public work. In 2006 the first stage of the development of the software for the State Catalogue is to be completed.

Since 2001 the Instruction for rendering of geographical names of the Republic of Belarus with the Roman characters has been used to create cartographic products intended for international use. The Romanization system was used to publish the atlas named “A View of Belarus”, map “Belarus” mini-map “Minsk”. The tourist map of the city of Minsk, road map “Republic of Belarus” and tourist map at scale 1:2,000,000 titled “Republic of Belarus” are prepared for publishing.

The gazetteers of populated places in Minsk, Grodno and Gomel regions were issued. The names there are given in both Belorussian and Russian languages and in the Romanized forms as well. Compilation of the gazetteers for Mogilev and Vitebsk regions is being completed.

It is planned to compile the reference “World’s states and territories” in Belorussian, Russian and English languages, and also to develop toponymic guidelines for mapeditors and other users.

### **Georgia**

Legal foundations for naming of geographical objects are defined by the Law “On naming of geographical objects in Georgia” adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 2000.

The issues pertaining to geographical names is a responsibility of the Department of Geodesy and Cartography as well as of the Government Commission for Standardization, Use, Registration and Storage of Geographical Names. The Commission was established by the President’s Decrees of 2001 and 2003.

For the purpose to develop the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Georgia, the Department of Geodesy and Cartography prepared a database of geographical names available on the topographic map at scale 1: 100,000. The names were verified and standardized in the Onomastics Department of the Tbilissi State University and the Linguistics Institute of the Georgian Academy of Science. A digital version of names lists

was submitted to the Government Commission for consideration. At present the Commission is being re-organized.

In Georgia, the national Romanization system is applied. In 2003 the Instruction for rendering of the Georgian geographical names with the Roman characters was adopted. In accordance with the Instruction, a geographical map of Georgia at scale 1: 500,000 was prepared.

### **Kyrgyzstan**

The issues connected with naming of geographical objects were reflected in the Law “On geographical names in the Kirghiz Republic” adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 1997.

The Inter-department Commission for Geographical Names has been established and is working at present. Technical-organizational support of Commission’s work is provided by the State Geodesy and Cartography Service.

The Government of the Kirghiz Republic adopted some decrees to realize the Law “On geographical names”. The decrees regulate a use of geographical names as well as rendering of the Kirghiz names with the Roman script via transliteration. Information on naming and renaming of geographical objects is published in the journal “Normative documents of the Kirghiz Republic”.

In the State Geodesy and Cartography Service, a computer database of geographical names has been developed and is functioning now. The database comprises information about 18,500 geographical objects and is being constantly upgraded.

### **Russian Federation**

In Russia, the issues related to the standardization of geographical names are regulated by the Federal Law “On naming of geographical objects” that was adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 1997. The Law laid a legal foundation for the activity in this direction.

Organizational management in the standardization of geographical names has been recently rearranged in the following way.

The Russian Federal Geodesy and Cartography Service that acted as a special plenipotentiary federal agency of the executive power responsible for the standardization of geographical names was abolished on 9<sup>th</sup> of March, 2005. The Transportation Ministry of the Russian Federation was entrusted with development of the national policy and normative and legal regulation of geographical objects naming, while the Federal Geodesy and Cartography Agency in the Ministry of Transportation became responsible for rendering service in the field of geographical names.

The Transportation Ministry of Russia develops drafts of documents to regulate naming of geographical objects, provides international cooperation in the standardization of geographical names.

The Geodesy and Cartography Agency investigates proposals for naming or renaming of geographical objects and provides expertise of proposed names. The Agency also develops and maintains the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. The Central Geodesy, Air Survey

and Cartography Institute is entrusted with the scientific and methodic guidance of this activity.

The Inter-department Commission for Geographical Names that was coordinating the inter-branch activity in handling geographical names over several years was abolished on 1<sup>st</sup> of February of 2005 by the Decree of the Russian Government. By the Order of the Transportation Ministry of the Russian Federation dated by February 1, 2005, the Commission for Geographical Names was established, its status and composition was determined. The Federal Geodesy and Cartography Agency is made responsible for organizational and technical support of the Commission's activity.

Changes in the system and structure of the federal authorities of executive power made it necessary to modify earlier adopted normative and legal acts relating to geographical names. Now a number of changes and amendments in the Federal Law "On naming of geographical objects" are being developed. They will detail some basic concepts used in the Law, its scope as well as some of its clauses related to collection, standardization and use of geographical names.

Currently, the "Practical guide to naming and renaming of geographical objects in the Russian Federation" and the "General guide to collection of geographical names and standardization of their spelling" are being updated.

The following progress was made in the standardization of geographical names between 2003 and 2005:

- Proposals for naming and renaming of geographical objects in the Russian Federation, open ocean and Antarctica were expertized. The expertise conclusions were considered by the Government of the Russian Federation while taking decisions to name and re-name more than 700 populated places, administrative units, bays, mountains, etc.

- The drafts of the reference-books devoted to administrative division of the Republic of Karelia, Udmurt Republic, Republic of Yakutia (Sakha), Vologodskaja, Kirovskaja, Kostromskaja, Lipetskaja, Moskovskaja and Rostovskaja regions submitted to the Transportation Ministry were investigated.

- In 2003 the reference-book "States and territories of the World" was published. It includes full and shorts versions of names of states, territories, their capitals and centers.

- Development of the computer State Catalogue of Geographical Names was further developed. Right now, the Catalogue's database comprises 140,000 geographical names of 43 administrative units of the Russian Federation.

The System of Romanization of Cyrillic script GOST-83 adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal, 1987) is being used in Russia to release maps for international use. This System was applied for the World Atlas (third edition) as well as for developing the first volume of the National Atlas of Russia. It is not planned to make any changes in the adopted Romanization System. A working guide to the use of the Romanization System for developing cartographic products is being prepared.

### **Uzbekistan**

The national standardization of geographical names is currently carried out by the State Committee of Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre.

The legal foundation for the national standardization is provided by the Law “On geodesy and cartography” adopted in 1997.

Instructions to rendering of geographical names of Kirghizia, Tadjikistan and Kazakhstan in the Uzbek language were developed. Similar instructions for the names of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan are planned. A lot of other normative documents were issued to regulate the Uzbek spelling of geographical names, generic terms and other words occurred in the toponyms of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Dictionaries of oronyms and hydronyms of all the regions in the Republic of Uzbekistan available on the maps at scale 1:200,000 were compiled.

Step by step the State Catalogue of Geographical Names is being developed. At the first stage, the data were accumulated and the database of geographical names available on the maps at scales 1:1,000,000 and 1:500,000 was developed. At the second stage, starting from 2004, the database is updated with the toponyms from the map at 1: 200,000. Database populating is implemented in series for each region of the Republic. The State Catalogue shall be completed in 2010. Each name takes up a standalone entry that also contains data required to provide state registration of standardized geographical names. To be input in the Catalogue, the data are picked up from various cartographic, reference and other sources and fixed in uniform registration forms. Output forms were developed so to obtain particular results of data processing.

### **Ukraine**

In a period between 2003 and 2005, considerable changes were made in the structure of the authorities engaged in the standardization of geographical names.

By the Decree of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers dated by July, 12, 2005, the State Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Service was established within the Ministry of Environment Protection of the Ukraine. The Service was entrusted with the functions of a special plenipotentiary body of the executive power responsible for the issues related to geographical names.

The Inter-department Scientific Council for Geographical Names was created to develop basic principles of the standardization of geographical names. It is to replace the National Council for Geographical Names that had been working over twelve years. The Ukrainian Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Service is responsible for organizational and technical support of the Council’s activity.

The Law “On geographical names” was adopted by the Supreme Rada of the Ukraine on 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2005. In accordance with the Law’s clauses, the Statute of the Inter-department Scientific Council for Geographical Names and the Statute of the State Register of Geographical Names was developed and submitted to the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers. A number of other normative documents are to be developed.

Instructions to the Ukrainian rendering of English, Belorussian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Lithuanian, German, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Slovak, Serbian, French,

Croatian, Czech and Swedish geographical names were issued (in total 16 instructions). In 2005, the instructions to rendering of geographical names of Denmark, Norway and Finland in the Ukrainian language were developed.

The State Register of Geographical Names is being created. Its structure, content, software and hardware are being worked out.

In 2005 the World's Gazetteer in the Ukrainian language was completed. It includes 110,000 geographical names of Europe, Asia, Greenland, South America, Antarctica, North America, Africa, Australia and Oceania. The Gazetteer provides a standardized name in Ukrainian, national form, generic term and country reference. .

In view to provide a uniform spelling of country-names in Ukrainian, the reference-book "Names of World's countries and territories" is being constantly updated.

To render the Ukrainian geographical names with the Roman characters, the 'Normative table of Romanized rendering of the Ukrainian proper names" together with the accompanying rules are used. They were approved by the Ukrainian Commission for Legal Nomenclature in 1996. Recently the Rules were used to issue administrative and geographical maps of the Ukraine at scale 1:1,500,000, road map of the Ukraine at scale 1:1,000,000, city-maps of Kiev, Kharkov, Sevastopol, Lvov, Odessa, and tourist map of the Ukraine at scale 1:1,000,000, tourist map of the Crimea 1:300,000, as well as a series of sea and air-navigation charts of the Ukraine, and others.

The exonyms in use in the Ukraine are given in the instructions to the Ukrainian rendering of foreign geographical names and generic terms, in the reference-book "Names of World's countries and territories", Atlas of the World, and a series of gazetteers of continents. In 2003 a list of the European exonyms most frequently used in cartographic products was prepared. In course of working on the World's Gazetteer, a list of the used exonyms was reviewed. The list includes nearly 1,200 exonyms.

### **Participation of the Division's country-members in international projects devoted to geographical names**

In 2003 – 2005 international cooperation in the field of geographical names was developed in two directions: participation in the actions carried by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names and exchange of cartographic and reference information with the geodesy and cartography services of the CIS country-members.

In March of 2004 (Moscow) the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and in May of 2005 (Kiev) the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia was held. The participants of the mentioned meetings exchanged information related to different aspects of geographical names, and informed each other on the results of the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> sessions of the UN Group of Experts.

Additionally, in October of 2005, experts from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine attended the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts (Riga). At the meeting, Belarus and Ukraine announced their intention to join the Division as observers.

Along with a membership in the Division of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia, the Ukraine participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Division of the Eastern Central

Europe and South-Eastern Europe as well as in the meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms (Czech Republic, Prague, 2003).

Many of the Division's country-members take part in the Working Group on Geographical Names of the Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Remote Control of the Earth established by the states of the CIS. The main objective of the Working Group is to provide a regular exchange of information on changes in geographical names. In practice the cooperation resulted in issuing the information bulletin "Changes in the geographical names of the CIS members". A regular update of the Bulletin is being completed.

Representatives of geodesy and cartography services of some country-members of the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia attended the 12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the International Cartography Association and the 21<sup>st</sup> International Cartographic Conference (SAR, Durban, 2003.)

**Prepared by the Chairman of the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Boginsky V.M. (Russian Federation) on the basis of the papers submitted by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.**