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Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms

Representation of Geo-Political Disputes in Geo-Names supported Information Systems*

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Representation of Geo-Political Disputes in Geo-names supported Information Systems

Summary

Naming geographical features within national boundaries is a sign of sovereignty. Use of exonyms is either based on cultural or historical reasons or cross-border geographical features. In some cases, an exonym for politically sensitive feature becomes an international problem between countries separately or within international organizations. Using an exonym having political meaning may not evoke a similar image and even may create a misunderstanding in other's mind.

Starting from United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1972, several resolutions are published on reducing of use of exonym.

The need for complete, consistent and correct geo-information coverage (thematic and spatial) forces project designers to handle dispute cases without giving any priority to any of the geo-political representations but depict the real world as much as possible regarding concerns of each party.