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Report of the Division

REPORT OF THE BALTIC DIVISION*

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The report covers activities of the division since the 25th UNGEGN Session in Nairobi (May 2009). In addition to divisional activities the report also includes information on activities in the field of national standardization in the individual countries of the Division.

The Baltic Division of UNGEGN was formed in 1992, comprising experts from four countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation. For the period between the 9th and 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (2007-2012) the Division has the following elected officials: Chair Ms. Aule Kikas (Estonia), Vice-Chair Mr. Vladimir Boginsky (Russian Federation).

1. Divisional meetings

The **13th meeting of the Baltic Division** took place on 1-2 October 2009 in Vilnius, Lithuania upon the invitation of the National Land Service of Lithuania and the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. The capital of Lithuania Vilnius was also the cultural capital of Europe 2009 while Lithuania was celebrating the Millennium of the name of Lithuania. The meeting was attended by experts from all the four member countries, as well as observers from Poland and Ukraine, all in all there were over 40 participants. Participants exchanged information on the status of legal, methodical and organisational basis of national standardisation of geographical names, on the status and development perspectives of national toponymic databases (cadastres, registers etc.), on world dictionaries of toponymy and national systems of romanization, and on the EuroGeoNames and EuroRegionalMap projects. There was an exhibition of specific cartographic production, toponymic glossaries and dictionaries that were published in Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine.

The 14th meeting of the Division was scheduled for the end of 2010 but it had to be postponed due to economic constraints. It seems likely that the next meeting could take place in Estonia in the autumn of 2011.

2. International cooperation and joint projects

Since 2009, Baltic Division members have participated in several UNGEGN working group or divisional meetings: 1) WG on Exonyms (Tainach, Austria, April 2010 – P. Päll, Estonia); 2) 5th Arab Conference on Geographical Names (Beirut, Lebanon, May 2010 – P. Päll, Estonia); 3) WG on Toponymic Terminology, minisymposium „Name research and name policies – some European examples" and the meeting of the Norden Division of UNGEGN (Uppsala, Sweden, October 2010 – Z. Cekula, Latvia); 4) WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, and the EuroGeoNames symposium in association with the meeting of the UNGEGN East Central and South-East Europe Division (Zagreb, Croatia, February 2011 – P. Päll, Estonia; U. Gitendorfs, Latvia).

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[1] Submitted by Aule Kikas, Chair of the Baltic Division, in collaboration with Peeter Päll (Estonia), Vita Strautniece (Latvia), Aistė Pangonytė (Lithuania) and Vladimir Boginsky (Russian Federation).

Latvia (Latvian Geospatial Information Agency) and Lithuania (Lithuanian National Land Service) were in the reference group of the European Commission-funded EuroGeoNames (EGN) project and their national geographical names databases were connected to the EGN infrastructure in 2009, the Estonian Land Board followed later in the same year. Thereby all the official geographical names of the Baltic countries are available to the wide public, using a single application (see *http:www.eurogeonames.com/refappl/*).

Latvian State Land Service (holder of the National Address Register) and the Lithuanian Centre of Registers participated in *eContentplus* project „European Address Infrastructure (EURADIN)" in 2008-2009. The project aims at constituting a Best Practice Network to promote the harmonization of European addresses.

ANNEX

Additional information provided by member countries

ESTONIA

National names authorities and legislation on geographical names

The Place Names Board of Estonia has held usually two meetings per year, lately it has also made decisions voted by e-mail. Much of the work is done in working groups dealing with specific questions. Since 2009, seven new populated places have been reconstituted, and for some populated places the status (generic term) has been changed.

On 17 February, 2011 a new Spatial Data Act was approved by Parliament. This also necessitates some changes in the Place Names Act. One needs also to take into account the requirements of the Address Data Register (ADS). It is envisaged that changes to the Place Names Act will be prepared during 2011.

Important for the understanding of the principles of geographical names standardization is training. During 2009, 22 training courses were organized for some 900 officials working with geographical names and addresses in local governments. Also, a training seminar was arranged for some 70 people from organizations that use names and addresses (banks, postal services, communications, electricity, telephone services, mapmakers).

The annual Place Names Days have become a traditional public event of the Board since 2003. In 2009 it was organized in Rapla and in 2010 in Valga. The event is attended by local officials and researchers of local history and folklore. Papers delivered at seminars deal with the implementation of the Place Names Act, principles on names standardization, information on the Place Names Register and with the place names of the local county.

Toponymic data files and gazetteers

The National Place Names Register is maintained since July 2008 by the Estonian Land Board which has integrated the register with its other spatial data, especially the Address Data

Register. The register has the status of national supporting register. Current amount of data in the register is as follows: traffic features (streets and squares, etc.) – 14,826; land roads – 7250; minor address units (areas) – 820; lakes – 4042. There is a steady increase of traffic features and land roads, while the number of minor address units is decreasing because the addresses are more likely given using street names than areas. Also, among the lake names there were several duplicate records which have now been merged. Further efforts are undertaken to ensure data quality.

There is a development plan for the Place Names Register which also foresees harmonization with INSPIRE requirements, creating interfaces for different other national registers, mass migration of data from national mapping sources, cadastre register, etc. Several experts will also be needed to ensure data quality.

The National Place Names Register is available at *http://gmaps.maaamet.ee/knr/* in Estonian and English.

Other activities

In 2008 the Estonian National Museum initiated a project to mark with signposts the boundaries of parishes which is a traditional territorial unit used in dialectal research, in folklore and ethnographic studies. Parishes also form the cornerstone of local identity, as most people would recognize which parish they belong to. In March 2009, the Place Names Board officially endorsed the names of 108 parishes of Estonia, and most of the signs on Estonian roads were erected during 2010. Following that, in April 2010 the Place Names Board approved names of village groups (*nulk*) in Setumaa, a traditional ethnographic area which is not divided into parishes. Traditional city quarters have also been marked in Tallinn, the capital.

Although commemorative naming is still very rare in Estonia, there has been one exception: in March 2009 the Tallinn Airport was given the name of Lennart Meri (1929-2006), the former president of Estonia.

There was also some activity related to the protection of minority names. Among the 7 new populated places there is one (*Telise/Tällnäs*) which has parallel names in Estonian and Swedish (the populated place itself is completely new, named after a peninsula). In June 2010, a seminar was organized in Kolkja, the traditional area of Russian population, to explain the principles of safeguarding minority, particularly Russian names.

Since 2009 there is a project of compiling a one-volume dictionary of Estonian places names, explaining their etymology as well as providing some practical information on names (pronunciation, use of locative cases, etc.). It is envisaged to last five years, until 2013. The project is undertaken by the Institute of the Estonian Language in collaboration with the Võru Institute, as well as several individual onomasticians, historians, geographers, etc.

LATVIA

National names authorities

There are no changes during the reporting period – the current situation is the same as characterized in the Report of Latvia submitted to the 9th UNCSGN (see document E/CONF.98/134/Add.1).

Legislative acts

The Geospatial Information Law was enforced in January 13, 2010. (See at: *http://www.vestnesis.lv/?menu=doc&id=202999*). The purpose of the Law is to specify the institutional system in the field of geospatial information, i.e. to define the basic rules for the preparation, use, exchange and maintenance of geospatial information (including geodetic and cartographic reference data) in order to create an infrastructure for geospatial information in the Republic of Latvia. *Inter alia,* the Law determines the purpose and status of Geographical Names Database.

Since the Law on Geographical Names had not been adopted, the draft Regulations on Geographical Names Information (pursuant to Section 18 of the Geospatial Information Law) were prepared instead by the Centre of State Language and published for consultation between ministries in December 2010.

New regulations regarding the basic principles of the address system, the procedures for granting addresses and the maintenance of the National Address Register (Regulations on the Address System) were adopted by the Government in November 2010.

Toponymic data files and gazetteers

The Geographical Names Database of Latvia maintained by the Laboratory of Toponymy, Latvian Geospatial Information Agency (LGIA) contains 128,300 names of 103,300 objects (data on 3rd January, 2011). The concise public version of the Geographical Names Database (5th edition) is available now at *http://vietvardi.lgia.gov.lv* (only in Latvian still, brief description in English at: *http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3& txt_id=24*). It contains 58,000 names of 41,000 geographical objects.

National Address Register maintains data on addresses containing names of 76 cities and towns, 109 counties, 499 civil parishes, 7,505 villages, 16,555 streets, 227,713 buildings and houses (data on 1st January, 2011). National Address Register is available on the web at: *https://www.kadastrs.lv/#.*

Dictionary of village names of Latvia *"Latvijas ciemi"* (Villages of Latvia), comprising 14,012 names of 8,879 villages, is available now on the web, (in Latvian with English Summary) at *http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=0&cPath=3&txt_id=96* (brief explanations in English at *http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt_id=96*).

The volume *"Pracirika - Puožu"* of comprehensive linguistic dictionary of Latvian place names *"Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca"* was published in 2010 by the Latvian Language Institute, University of Latvia.

Toponymic education

Courses on toponymy have been delivered in some universities. Besides that, specialists of LGIA have carried out a number of lectures and presentations on toponymic topics for different groups of interests.

Geographical names in mapping projects, exonyms

LGIA has continued the topographic mapping projects. The most significant of them regarding the geographical names:

1) the 2nd edition of the Topographic Map of Latvia, scale 1:50 000 (106 sheets are been prepared and published until February 2011);

2) the 3rd edition of the Topographic Map of Latvia, scale 1:10 000 is being prepared in digital format only (700 sheets covering 25% of the territory of Latvia have been prepared until February 2011).

The collaboration between cartographers and geographical names experts in the framework of all the state mapping programs (both civil and military) has been constant and successful during the reporting period.

The test version of the web map viewer was published by Latvian Geospatial Information in February 2010. It offers searching of geographical names on different maps in various scales (1 : 1 000 000 - 1:10 000). The map viewer is available on: *http://kartes.lgia.gov.lv* (brief description in English at *http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=4&txt_id=88*).

Mapping company "Jāņa sēta Map Publishers" has published atlases and maps with importance for geographical names in Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian during the reporting period. Two most significant cartographic products regarding the geographical names and exonyms in Latvian, compiled and published by the company are:

1) *Pasaules uzziņu atlants* (World reference atlas – 352 pages; 57,000 geographical names; the first atlas in the world which contains not only traditional information about countries and dependencies, but also includes data on all worlds' autonomies; the basic part of the atlas consists of regional political maps with highlighted administrative subdivisions);

2) Map of Latvia for Garmin navigation equipment (10,000 settlements, 162,000 farmsteads, more than 215,000 address points and 6,200 names of rivers and lakes).

Rules for rendering Armenian proper names including a list of geographical names were prepared and published by the Latvian Language Institute, University of Latvia in 2009.

LITHUANIA

National names authorities, legislative acts

There are no essential changes in the legislative basis.

At the end of 2009, Ministry of the Interior delegated to municipal administrations the task of giving names to streets and other units of address (in order to prepare for the population

census in 2011), so the Commission of the Lithuanian Language has received about 150 requests for its opinion on about 1,000 new street names. The Language Commission gave also some advice on three oikonyms in the Panevėžys district.

Toponymic data files and gazetteers

"Onomastics of the Grand Lakes of Trakai: Cultural Depths of Trakai Landscape" (under the patronage of the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO) was prepared by the Management of Trakai Historical National Park (published in 2010). The list consists from 313 names of various features: lakes, islands, shoals, shores, capes, etc. Considering the multicultural Trakai environment (Trakai is the medieval capital of Lithuania), in the list alongside the reconstructed Lithuanian place names forms (the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language assisted in preparing this part) there are also the forms from the sources recorded in other languages – Polish, Russian, and Belorussian, even some Tatar and Karaite names. Toponyms of this historically special area reveal an exceedingly expressive and colourful image of Trakai culture.

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language has started the *Dictionary of Lithuanian Place-names* – published one volume (A–B) in 2008. This is the first attempt ever made to systematically present all the names of places, existing in the living language, and to explain their origins. The dictionary also comprises part of the names of the ethnic Lithuanian areas that now are found beyond the border of the Republic of Lithuania. The dictionary will probably run into 10 volumes. Lithuanian place names constitute one of major parts of Indo-European onomastics.

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language also has started the *Geoinformational Database of Lithuanian Toponyms* LVvGDB (*http://lvvgdb.lki.lt*). This is the first database in Lithuania which jointly provides information about linguistic units – toponyms – and geographical units – geographical features. It is the first database that includes extinct onyms as well.

LVvGDB is created for: 1) scientific research and applied scientific purposes; 2) satisfying the practical needs of inhabitants and economic subjects; 3) preserving toponyms as a cultural heritage.

This database gives an opportunity to supply toponyms of Lithuanian settlements on the internet. The database would provide an opportunity for linguists and geographers worldwide to reach all this information (authentic forms of toponyms, accentual paradigma, etymology, object description, etc.). At this time database consists of toponyms of six municipalities.

Information about contemporary toponyms and geographic objects is taken from existing geographic databases: 1) Vectoric database of a Cosmic view map M 1: 50000; 2) Georeference M 1:10,000 database of Lithuania territory; 3) Digital bitmap orthophotographic map of the Republic of Lithuania M 1: 10,000; 4) Graphic data (approximate borders of inhabited terrains included) of the Lithuanian addresses registry; 5) Database of Cultural Heritage Protection Department.

Information on objects of extinct or unknown status is taken from: *Sheets of proper names of Lithuanian land* (1935–1937); *Catalogue of the Commission for Surnames and Toponyms; files of oikonyms* (1935–1937); *Oikonym list of Vilnius region* (1940–1945).

Names of Countries and Foreign Place Names

On the basis of changes to the standard ISO 3166-1 Part 1 (Country codes) and the information in UNTERM, the State Language Commission amends the List of the Names of Countries (their Lithuanian equivalents; last revision by the Sub-commission in 2010).

By the initiative of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language a dictionary of the geographical names of the World (*"Pasaulio vietovardžių žodynas"*) is issued by *Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas*. Volume 2 "America" was published in 2008, Volume 3 "Africa. Antarctica. Australia. Oceania" – in 2010. The dictionary gives endonyms and exonyms, adapted or transliterated forms of place names with the entry words accented. The second volume consists of approximately 30,000 entries and the third volume approximately 40,000 entries of social and physical geographical names with their identification data and short references; three indexes are added (Latin, Cyrillic and Greek). In 2011–2012, Volumes 4–5 (Asia) are expected to come out.

The Language Commission recommends that in academic literature, advertising, information publications and special texts the original spelling of foreign place names is retained, except for common popular place names, which are mostly adapted, while in fiction, popular and youth literature the spelling of foreign place names (in the Latin alphabet) should be adapted to the norms of the Lithuanian language.

Standardization in multilingual areas

According to the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 14: *In the Republic of Lithuania official, standardized forms of place-names shall be written in the state language*), the street signs should be in the Lithuanian language. So, the relics of the Soviet times – street signs in Russian letters have disappeared, but the case of street names in Polish letters and names translated into Polish (e.g., *ul. Dębova* instead of *ul. Ąžuolų*) reached the Central Administrative Court of Lithuania.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Legal basis for the activities related to naming or renaming geographical features, standardization, use, registration, accounting and preservation of geographical names is constituted by the Federal Law on Naming Geographical Features, adopted in December 1997, and by several Government regulations.

In 2008 a Federal Law was adopted on Changes in the Law on Naming Geographical Features. The aim of the changes was to clarify certain concepts and spheres of usage in the Law, also to harmonize it with other existing legislation.

The functions of devising national policy and approving normative regulations in the sphere of names standardization, according to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation in 2008, were given to the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. In March 2009 Roskartografiya, functioning also as a national geographical names authority, was abolished and its functions were given to the Federal Service of State Registers, Cadastre and Cartography (Rosreyestr), subordinated to the Ministry of Economic Development.

In the period of 2008–2010 the following activities related to national standardization of geographical names in Russia should be mentioned.

1. Linguistic, geographical and legal expert statements were given regarding proposals to give or change names to geographical features of the Russian Federation, its continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone, also to geographical features in open seas and the Antarctic discovered or distinguished by Russian explorers. As a result, since the adoption of the Federal Law on Naming Geographical Features, there have been 120 federal acts approving names to 716 geographical features and renaming 370 features.

2. Data on geographical names in draft legal acts (registers) and reference books on the territorial administrative division of several constitutional subjects of the Russian Federation were reviewed and supplemented before their confirmation.

3. Compilation and maintenance of the State Catalogue on Geographical Names in order to fulfil functions stemming from the Federal Law on Naming Geographical Features, and also a Government regulation concerning the Catalogue. On 1 January, 2011 the Catalogue contained information on 480,000 names of geographical features (altogether more than 12 million parameters of information).

4. Inquiries and proposals by institutions and organizations, also by individual persons were replied to, supplying information on geographical names or giving recommendations on their usage. In 2009-2011 information was provided on more than 240,000 geographical features using the data supplied by the Catalogue.

5. In order to supply state authorities of the Russian Federation with the newest information, an electronic version of the Information Bulletin on official changes in the geographical names of Russia has been compiled; it will be updated annually. Information Bulletin is located at *http:/www.rosreestr.ru/kartografy/state_catalogue/data/*. Registers of 14 constitutional subjects of the Russian Federation have been prepared for the display on this site. Data on all other constitutional subjects are also envisaged to be prepared. Technological and organizational issues are being worked at to include information on geographical names at the Rosreyestr portal when providing public services.

6. Work on the transcription of geographical names of the Russian Federation and foreign countries for cartographic products has been continued. Based on this, more than 300 public maps and atlases have been produced, 80 of them being completely new. The most important of these is the National Atlas of Russia. This is a fundamental encyclopaedic scientific and reference work that contains official information on state administrative structures, nature,

resources, population, economy, status of environment, history and culture of Russia. The National Atlas of Russia comprises of four volumes: 1. General Character of the Territory, 2. Nature and Ecology, 3. Population and Economy, 4. History and Culture. Considering the aims of the National Atlas of Russia and the hetereogeneous needs of users, the atlas is published both in printed and electronic version.

In these cartographic products one can see the practical realization of national policy on the standardization of geographical names in the Russian Federation.

The system of transliterating Cyrillic alphabet into letters of Roman alphabet GOST-83, adopted at the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal 1987) continues to be used in the Russian Federation when producing maps for international use.