

**Twenty-sixth session
Vienna, 2-6 May 2011**

Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda

Issues of toponymic standardization

**NAMING STREETS AND ROADS WHEN ASSIGNING ADDRESSES
IN NORWEGIAN MUNICIPALITIES ***

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Summary

A new law for registration of property, *Matrikkeloven* or the Land Register Statute, took effect on January 1, 2010. and regulates the assignment and management of addresses in the 430 municipalities in Norway. The goal is to assign street or road addresses to all instances in the country (residences, offices, business locations, vacation homes, etc.), and each municipality is responsible for assigning its own addresses. The law allows for the use of an additional name as well as the name in the address. The basis for this is a desire to preserve farm names of cultural-historical value, with the aim of making them an integral part of street or road addresses. The Norwegian Mapping Authority has the responsibility for training and dissemination of information to the municipalities, in regard to both the Land Register and Place Name Statutes. The aim is to give them a thorough introduction to the current statutes and regulations for addressing, assigning names and spellings, as well as to motivate them to launch assignment of addresses in both the urban and rural areas of the municipality. During the course the cultural-historical aspects of place names and their function to create identity have been emphasized. Guidelines for choosing and approving address names are mentioned in section 6 below.

1. Legislation

A new law for registration of property, *Matrikkeloven* or the Land Register Statute, took effect on January 1, 2010. (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-20050617-101.html>). It replaced an earlier law on property division and regulates the assignment and management of addresses in the 430 municipalities in Norway. The goal is to assign street or road addresses to all instances in the country (residences, offices, business locations, vacation homes, etc.), and each municipality is responsible for assigning its own addresses. Street addresses are to be the only type of addresses used in Norway by 2015.

There are a number of provisions in the new law, and one of these is concerned with the assignment of addresses. There are also guidelines for the assignment of addresses (The Addressing Guide: Assigning and managing addresses according to the Land Register Statute www.statkart.no/nor/Matrikkel/Adresse/Adresseveileder/). A handbook on addresses and place names is also available on the Web (<http://www.statkart.no/nor/Matrikkel/Adresse/>).

2. Additional localization name

The law allows for the use of an additional name as well as the name in the address. The basis for this is a desire to preserve farm names of cultural-historical value, with the aim of making them an integral part of street or road addresses. The same applies to names of well known institutions or buildings. An addressee and his address might look like this:

Peter Berg, Fjellvegen 5, Langvik, 6998 Romsdal.

3. Authorization

Individual municipalities approve names and spellings of street and road names, but the spelling must be in accordance with the norms set down in the Place Name Statute of 1990/2005 (<http://www.lovdata.no/all/nl-19900518-011.html>) – The Norwegian Mapping Authority stipulates the spelling of most place names, except those that are the responsibility of the municipality in question (for instance addresses), and if an existing place name or a part of it is used in an address, this spelling will be the norm for the name in an address. Place name advisors, experts under the auspices of the Norwegian Language Council, give advice on correct spelling.

4. Training and information

The Norwegian Mapping Authority has the responsibility for training and dissemination of information to the municipalities, in regard to both the Land Register and Place Name Statutes. To facilitate these responsibilities, the Mapping Authority cooperates with GeoForum. Divisions of this institution have held regional courses throughout Norway in 2010 and 2011, but the course outline and program were developed by the Mapping Authority with the assistance of the Place Name Advisory Committee. These courses are primarily intended for employees working in the addressing offices of the municipality or responsible for place names. The aim is to give them a thorough introduction to the

current statutes and regulations for addressing, assigning names and spellings, as well as to motivate them to launch assignment of addresses in both the urban and rural areas of the municipality. During the course the cultural-historical aspects of place names and their function to create identity have been emphasized. When choosing a name, addressing offices are advised to draw on existing place names, and when possible, to use them as they are or as the first element in a newly formed name.

5. The procedure for assigning address names

The procedure for assigning a street address starts when the municipality decides which streets and roadways or easements are to have a name. Following this there is an open discussion regarding the choice of name, and the municipality sends one or more name suggestions to the Place Name Advisory Committee for evaluation. The Advisory Committee sends their comments back to the municipality, which then approves a name and its spelling. The spelling must be in accordance with the Place Name Statute. In the case that an existing name, or part of it, is used as the name of a street, the spelling approved by the Mapping Authority should be used as the basis for the address name. The approved name will then be sent to the Central Registry for Place Names at the Mapping Authority. The spelling in the Central Registry for Place Names will then be used as the basis for any public use of the name.

6. Guidelines for choosing and approving address names (street and road names)

Principles for choosing a name:

- The name must fit into a comprehensive system of addressing
- The name should build on and be a continuation of local name traditions
- The name should be suited to the place
- The name should not be obscene or comical
- Names should not duplicate or closely approximate existing names
- The name should be easy to write, read, and pronounce
- Names of living persons should be avoided, and the name of a deceased person should not be used until 5-10 years after the death of the person. Names of people who lived recently should be written as they were spelled by the bearer. It is in general advisable to restrict the use of personal names.
- Classification names (names of animal and plant species, minerals, constellations, etc. in a subdivision or neighborhood) may be used when desirable, but such naming easily becomes a cliché and should be restricted.

7. Additional rules for individual municipalities

Several municipalities have additional rules for naming streets, roads, and other public areas and buildings. In Oslo a committee has worked out a new and detailed set of rules for such names and the town council is now in the process of finalizing it.