UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

WORKING PAPER NO. 13/14

Twenty-eight session 28 April – 2 May 2014

Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda

Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms *

Submitted by the Working Group on Exonyms

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Summary

The report highlights the activities of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms since the 27th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, New York, 30 July and 10 August 2012. In this period the Working Group held one business meeting and a workshop. The WG met on August 6th 2012 during the 10th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in the UN Headquarters in New York and discussed the endonym/exonym divide and new definitions of the endonym and the exonym as well as the question whether a third term for international waters is needed. At the same occasion Peter JORDAN was confirmed as WG convenor by elections. The WG met again for its 14th meeting in Corfu, Greece, 23-25 May 2013. It had the character of a workshop and was hosted by the Greek UNGEGN delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Corfu. The meeting was organized in conjunction with a meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (Convenor: Staffan NYSTRÖM), which met 25th May afternoon. The meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms (WGE) was attended by 33 experts from 20 countries and saw 17 paper presentations on the endonym/exonym divide as well as on use and documentation of exonyms in various countries. This sequence of paper presentations was followed by an intensive discussion on new definitions of the endonym and the exonym circling mainly around the questions, whether language and officiality were essential criteria for this divide. It became also very obvious that it is in reality not so much the exonym as such which is in the focus of the WG's activities and discussions, but the relationship or correspondence between endonyms and exonyms. Working Group on the Endonym-Exonym *Relationship* would therefore be the more appropriate title of the WG. In the minds of UNGEGN members, it would help to legitimise many of the activities that have clearly become de rigueur for the WG as it advances its understanding of these issues and avoid the erroneous impression that the WG is in favour of the exonym at the expense of the endonym. The proceedings of the 14th Meeting have already been published as Volume 3 of the toponymic book series "Name & Place" edited by Peter JORDAN and Paul WOODMAN. The report announces also the next workshop of the WG in Hermagor, Austria, 5-7 June 2014. This workshop is to continue the discussions on the endonym/exonym divide and to arrive – impossible – at new definitions of the endonym and the exonym.

1 Organizational aspects

The Working Group on Exonyms was established in 2002 by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin. Resolution VIII/4 specifies its tasks with taking measures for "the categorization of exonym use, the publication of pronunciation guides for endonyms and the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms".

WG meetings held:

1st Meeting: **Berlin**, September 6, 2002, in the framework of the 8th UN Conference

- 2nd Meeting: **Prague** [Praha], September 24-26, 2003, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre
- 3rd Meeting: New York, 2004, in the framework of the 22nd UNGEGN Session
- 4th Meeting: Ljubljana, May 19-20, 2005, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
- 5th Meeting: **Vienna** [Wien], 2006, in the framework of the 23nd UNGEGN Session

- 6th Meeting: **Prague** [Praha], May 17-18, 2007, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre.
- 7th Meeting: New York, August 29, 2007, in the framework of the 24th UNGEGN Session
- 8th Meeting: **Timişoara**, September 9-11, 2008, hosted by the West University of Timişoara, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography and the Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn House
- 9th Meeting: Nairobi, May 11, 2009, in the framework of the 25th UNGEGN Session
- 10th Meeting: **Tainach** (Austria), April 28-30, 2010, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names and the Catholic Educational Centre "Sodalitas"
- 11th Meeting: **Vienna** [Wien], May 4, 2011, in the framework of the 26nd UNGEGN Session, but outside UN facilities, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names
- 12th Meeting: **Gdańsk**, May 16-18, 2012, hosted by the Polish Main Office of Geodesy and Cartography
- 13th Meeting: New York, August 6, 2012, in the framework of the 10th UN Conference
- 14th Meeting: **Corfu** [Kerkyra], May 23-25, 2013, hosted by the Greek UNGEGN delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Corfu

Currently the Working Group comprises 87 official members and associated experts from 36 countries (see Appendix).

Elected convenor is Peter JORDAN (Austria, <u>peter.Jordan@oeaw.ac.at</u>). Between 2006 and 2012 Peter JORDAN acted as convenor in charge with Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia) as co-convenor. From 2004 to 2006 Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ and Peter JORDAN were both co-convenors. Between 2002 and 2004 Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ was the convenor of the WG.

The WG maintains a website accessible under <u>http://ungegn.zrc-sazu.si</u>. It is conducted by the Institute of Geography of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences (Matjaž GERŠIČ) and contains a.o. reports of all WG meetings as well as links to all publications of the WG.

2 Activities since the last UNGEGN Session in 2012

Since the 27th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, New York, 30 July and 10 August 2012, the Working Group held one business meeting and a workshop.

13th Meeting, New York, 6 August 2012

The WG met on August 6th 2012 during the 10th Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in the UN Headquarters in New York (US). The Working Group's acting co-convenor, Peter JORDAN, chaired the meeting.

JORDAN gave an **overview on activities** of the WG since the last UNGEGN Session in Vienna (AT) in 2011, especially on the 12th Meeting of the WG, held in Gdańsk (PL) from May 16th to 18th 2012. He expressed his gratitude to the host of this meeting, the Polish Main Office of Geodesy and Cartography, and to Katarzyna PRZYSZEWSKA, the responsible organizer in place. The meeting had been organized as a joint meeting together with the UNGEGN WG on Romanization Systems (Convenor: Peeter PÄLL). JORDAN pointed out that at and after this meeting the following main topics were on the table:

- (a) Endonym/exonym divide, definitions of the endonym and the exonym: The current definitions were regarded not applicable, because they do not focus on essential criteria. The discussion on this issue was in Gdańsk characterized by a remarkable convergence between the positions of JORDAN and WOODMAN, who had earlier rather different views. They convened that neither language nor official use can be regarded as essential criteria for the endonym/exonym divide.
- (b) The question whether a third term for international waters is needed: Regarding the status of names for international waters related to the endonym/exonym divide three opinions are on the table: (i) A name of a coastal dweller community has endonym status all over a sea and names used by other communities have exonym status; (ii) A name of a coastal dweller community has endonym status only in coastal waters, but a name from outside can anyway be classified as an exonym, also in international waters, since an exonym does not necessarily need an endonym as a counterpart; (iii) A name of a coastal dweller community has endonym status only in coastal waters, but a name from outside can only be classified as an exonym, where an endonym exists. Thus for international waters a third term is needed. It was stated that this question was not as urgent as the need for new definitions of endonym and the exonym.

The report of the convenor was followed by the election of officers. JORDAN explained that MILAN OROŽEN ADAMIČ was the first convenor of the WG, the person who had made the engine run. He had convinced JORDAN in 2005 to become his co-convenor, but in 2006 OROŽEN ADAMIČ was appointed ambassador of Slovenia in Zagreb and from that moment on JORDAN actually acted as convenor of the WG and was confirmed in this function in Nairobi (2009). According to him the WG has – in spite of quite a number of activities like the organization of workshops and the publication of proceedings – not reached its goals yet (e.g., viable definitions of the endonym and exonym, guidelines for the use of exonyms etc.). So he announced that he would be willing to run for another term as convenor in order to accomplish at least parts of its mission. OROŽEN ADAMIČ apologized for not having acted as convenor for several years and announced, that he wanted to step back, also because he had been elected chair of his division. He proposed that JORDAN should become the one and only convenor of the WG. JORDAN asked if a secret vote was demanded. This being refused by the WG members present JORDAN was elected unanimously convenor of the WG on Exonyms. JORDAN announced to establish a sort of steering committee for the WG.

Future activities: JORDAN proposed to focus in the next meetings on the following agenda items: (a) Thorough discussion of new definitions; (b) Criteria for a politically sensitive use of exonyms; (c) Categorisation of exonyms. As a starting point for agenda item (a) JORDAN presented the following definitions for the terms endonym and exonym:

Endonym = the name applied by the local community for a geographical feature conceived to be part of the area, where this community lives, if there is not a smaller community in place that uses a different name.

Exonym = the name applied by a community for a geographical feature outside the area, where this community lives and differing in its written form from the respective endonym.

JORDAN pointed out that neither language nor official use (as highlighted as criteria by the current definitions) were decisive criteria, while the relation between local community and

geographical feature was in fact the essential criterion. He illustrated this by the examples of the river *Mureş* [RO], which is named by the local German community *Mieresch*, while the usual German exonym is *Marosch*, and of the Polish city Łódź, which under German occupation in World War II was officially named *Litzmannstadt*, although even at that time no local German community existed. These examples proved that the endonym/exonym divide may exist also within a language (example 1) and an official name must not necessarily be an endonym in the sense of a name "from within" (example 2). This statement was followed by a vivid discussion, in which a.o. PÄLL, ZACCHEDDU, STAVROPOULOS, MANDOLA, ALNIŢEI, ZYCH and PAIKKALA took part.

14th Meeting (workshop), Corfu, Greece, 23-25 May 2013

The WG met in the Saint Michael & Saint George Palace, Corfu City, hosted by the Greek UNGEGN delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Corfu. The meeting was organized in conjunction with a meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (Convenor: Staffan NYSTRÖM), which met 25th May afternoon. The meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms (WGE) was attended by 33 experts from 20 countries.

The convenor opened the meeting and thanked the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by the Greek UNGEGN experts Emmanuel GOUNARIS and Alexandros STAVROPOULOS, as well as the city of Corfu, represented by its vice-mayor, for hosting the meeting in such a convenient atmosphere. He stressed that the thematic focus of this meeting is on the definitions of the endonym and the exonym and hinted at the proceedings of the 12th Meeting in Gdańsk (2012), edited by Paul WOODMAN and published under the title "The Great Toponymic Divide" by the Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography.

After Peter JORDAN, Staffan NYSTRÖM welcomed the audience on behalf of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology and the vice-mayor on behalf of the city. The latter gave also a short survey over the history of the city and the island.

This opening was followed by a sequence of three sessions with in total 17 papers, 30 minutes presentation time each, including discussion. These papers are listed below.

Session 1: The Great Divide – comprehensive approaches (Chair: Peter JORDAN, Austria)

WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): The scope of activities of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, and the definitions of *endonym* and *exonym*

JORDAN, Peter (Austria): Arguments for new definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* NYSTRÖM, Staffan (Sweden): Endonym and exonym: basically linguistic concepts after all? MATTHEWS, Philip (New Zealand): Endonyms and exonyms: New definitions CHOO, Sungjae (Republic of Korea): The matter of "reading" in the exonym discussions HELLELAND, Botolv (Norway): Why *Hellas* in Norway and *Grekland* in Sweden? BUŠS, Ojārs (Latvia): Two kinds of exonyms – two kinds of classification problems

Session 2: The Great Divide – specific aspects (Chair: Paul WOODMAN, United Kingdom)
PÄLL, Peeter (Estonia): Exonyms: special case of countries with non-Roman scripts
ZAGÓRSKI, Bogusław R. (Poland): Some problems of exonym use in Arabic
BELL, Herman (United Kingdom): Toponymic teleology: the Great Divide from a Nubian perspective

TANABE, Hiroshi; WATANABE, Kohei (Japan): A reflection on names of large seas

ZYCH, Maciej (Poland): Country names in Polish as an example of using exonyms and endonyms

Session 3: Exonyms – documentation and use (Chair: Sungjae CHOO, Republic of Korea)

- MANDOLA, Malgorzata (France, Poland): Reflections about *endonym* and *exonym* as proper place names
- KLADNIK, Drago; GERŠIČ, Matjaž (Slovenia): A gazetteer of Slovenian exonyms
- CREȚAN, Remus (Romania): South-Danubian place names reflected in Theodor Capidan's seminal works
- CEKULA, Zane (Latvia): Use of place names on maps in the border area with Russia: The territory of former Abrene
- PAIKKALA, Sirkka (Finland): Finnish exonyms: a pragmatic approach to defining *exonym* and *endonym*

In a general discussion on new definitions of endonym and exonym lasting three and a half hours and moderated by the convenor, the convenor proposed at first a sequence of main questions to be addressed, which was approved by the audience:

- (1) Do we agree to Phil MATTHEWS' unconventional approach?
- (2) Do we agree that we have to define umbrella terms, even if they are not operational for standardization purposes?
- (3) Do we agree that language is not an essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide and that it needs therefore not to be part of the definitions?
- (4) Do we agree that officiality is not an essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide and that it needs therefore not to be part of the definitions?
- (5) Do we agree that the divide should be confined to differences in writing?
- (6) Do we agree that there is no third term necessary besides endonym and exonym even not for oceans and large seas?

Ad 1) Phil MATTHEWS had in a very comprehensive and sophistically elaborated paper defined a name "as an endorym when the members of a linguistic community use the name in a written, spoken or signed mode that conforms to their language's norms at a certain point in time". This means that the status of endonym and exonym is independent of a feature's location. It is just conformity with the user's language that counts. According to this definition Milan is an English endonym for the Italian city Milano, États-Unis d'Amérique a French endonym for the United States of America. MATTHEWS argues that in this way the number of exonyms will be reduced to a minimum (more or less to uncorrect spellings) and the mission of the UN to reduce the use of exonyms will be accomplished. To the counterargument that such a reduction is only apparently achieved by the new interpretation of a still existing fact, he responds that none of the assumptions and interpretations is more "real" than the other and that our current view on the endonym/exonym divide is an inappropriate burdening of this divide by a meaning that it actually does not have. In the further discussion it is stated that although MATTHEWS's approach was consistant and logical, it was a purely linguistic approach and very much in contrast to what was discussed in this context within and outside UNGEGN so far. Following this approach would mean to reformulate several UN resolutions not only referring to exonyms, but also to other toponymic fields (Helen KERFOOT and others). It is then decided not to follow this path further at the moment, but to keep MATTHEWS's proposal on the agenda for further consideration.

Ad 2) As already in his paper, the convenor stresses the necessity to define endonym and exonym as umbrella terms, even if they are not operational for standardization purposes. All

the terms in the UNGEGN Glossary have to be referred to their umbrella term. If, e.g., the term standardized endonym is defined in the Glossary, the reader has also to find a definition of the endonym in principal, in its widest possible and most inclusive sense. And to define this umbrella term was the primary and basic task. Subterms derived from the umbrella term can be defined subsequently, after the umbrella term has been defined. This opinion meets no major objection.

Ad 3) Whether language is an essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide and has therefore to be part of the definitions, is vigorously discussed. Paul WOODMAN as well as the convenor had argued in their papers that an endonym (like a name for a house) can very well not correspond to the local language, what proves that language is not necessarily a criterion for the endonym/exonym divide. WOODMAN in contrast to the convenor, however, wishes to preserve the language criterion in the definitions in order to make them less contrastive compared to the current definitions and to make it easier for linguists to accept them. While Peeter PÄLL shares WOODMANs view, Staffan NYSTRÖM argues that language is already included in the term name (which is anyway part of the definitions) and that the fact that a name is a part of the language needs not always to be repeated. Dadfar MAANAVI supports the opinion not to mention language as a criterion by hinting at the fact that many names used by a certain community originate from another language not anymore spoken in the place. It becomes obvious that opinions in favour of and opposing language as a criterion are very much divided. The divide, however, crosses the lines of linguists and geographers/cartographers and coincides by no means with the scientific disciplines represented.

At this point of a deadlock Alexandros STAVROPOULOS comments not only on the language question, but extends his statement to the criterion of officiality and raises the question, why so much stress is laid on the role of endonyms as emotional ties between a human community and a feature (by WOODMAN as well as the convenor in several papers) and why all sizes and kinds of human communities had to be taken into account. He rather pleads for a more distanced and state/nation-related view, which was more practicable in the field of standardi-zation. This comprehensive statement and the heated debate following makes Paul WOODMAN proposing to abandon the planned sequence of agenda items and to take Staffan NYSTRÖM's two alternative definitions of the endonym as a basis for further discussion. He would be ready to withdraw his definitions' proposal in favour of Staffan NYSTRÖM's. This motion is approved by the audience and the convenor, who adds that he, too, would be ready to withdraw his proposed definitions in favour of Staffan NYSTRÖM's. Thus, after a short break the discussion continues on the following two definitions of the endonym proposed earlier by Staffan NYSTRÖM in his paper:

NYSTRÖM, Alternative 1: "Locally accepted name of a geographical feature used in a language that is well-established in the area where the feature is situated."

NYSTRÖM, Alternative 2: "Name of a geographical feature locally accepted and used in the area where the feature is situated."

They were replacing

WOODMAN: "Locally accepted name of a geographical feature in a language that is wellestablished in the area where the feature is situated."

JORDAN: "Name for a geographical feature used by the population autochthonous in the feature's location."

Staffan NYSTRÖM's alternatives differed just as regards inclusion or exclusion of language as a differentiating criterion, while both did not require officiality as a prerequisite for endonym status. This caused a debate on the question, whether for standardization purposes official names, names in official languages or at least standardized names were not the most and perhaps even only important. It was argued that it is often difficult to find reliable sources for other than standardized names (Alexandros STAVROPOULOS, Maciej ZYCH, Bogusław ZAGORSKI and others). In response the convenor argued that for many practical purposes like the rendering of place names on maps and in gazetteers standardized names or even only official names or names in official languages were of course the most relevant, but that they were only a part of all endoryms. The definition of the endorym in the Glossary, however, had to be all-comprehensive, to include all kinds, status versions and linguistic forms of a name. Certainly these definitions were not operational for the purposes of standardization. But purpose-orientation was not the task of defining umbrella terms. Umbrella terms had just to be defined in such a way that these definitions are true and valid under all circumstances, that there is not a single case, which they do not cover. Departing from these umbrella terms, subterms can be defined or are already defined, like it is with the term standardized endonym. A map editor or the editor of a names gazetteer will then have to declare, which subterms/subcategories of the endonym he takes into account. He/she will have to make his/her method of selection transparent to the reader, which was in the interest of scientific clarity. Maciej ZYCH hinted at the danger to arouse China's opposition, if, e.g., Tibetian place names would figure as endonyms and defended officiality as a criterion for the endonym/exonym divide. Reminded of his critical attitude opposite the current definitions and his pleading for "more practicable" definitions at the last WGE workshop in Gdańsk, he advocated a return to the definitions valid up to 2007. Generally speaking, during this part of the debate a divide between "etatistic" views and approaches granting also subnational communities the right to call their names endonyms became obvious.

Facing significantly divided opinions related to language as well as officiality as criteria for the endonym/exonym divide and taking into account that the time available was almost exhausted, other questions like whether the divide should be confined to differences in writing or whether a third term besides endonym and exonym was necessary for large unpopulated features are not discussed anymore.

Proceedings of the 14th Meeting in Corfu (see also the specific WP)

The proceedings of the 14th Meeting contain the papers presented as well as four additional articles, whose authors were prevented from attending the Meeting. The book can be ordered from publisher Dr. Kovač, Hamburg (email: <u>info@verlagdrkovac.de</u>, website: http://www.verlagdrkovac.de). It corresponds to Volume 3 of the toponymic book series "Name & Place" edited by Peter JORDAN and Paul WOODMAN and has the following full title:

Peter JORDAN, Paul WOODMAN (eds.), The Quest for Definitions. Proceedings of the 14th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Corfu, 23-25 May 2013 (= Name & Place, 3). Hamburg, Dr. Kovač.

3 Future directions

The WG will convene for a next workshop in Hermagor, Austria, 5-7 June 2014. The call for papers has already been disseminated and can also be found on the WG website (<u>http://ungegn.zrc-sazu.si</u>). The meeting will be composed of two days (Thursday, Friday) of paper presentations and discussions and one day (Saturday) with a common bus excursion. The main purpose of the meeting is to discuss the endonym/exonym divide, i.e. the concepts of the endonym and the exonym as well as possible new definitions, thoroughly, and to arrive – if possible – at new definitions. Papers are to focus on

- highlighting the divide as such, its meaning and role in toponomastics,
- highlighting individual aspects or criteria of this divide,
- arguing for the wording of new definitions or the maintenance of the current ones.

The meeting is not confined to Working Group or UNGEGN members. Everybody interested is very welcome. No participation fee is requested.

Depending on the results of this meeting, the WG will either have to continue discussing new definitions of the endonym and the exonym or be able to proceed to next agenda items such as the search for guidelines for the use of exonyms.

What became obvious in the WG's activities so far, is that exonym is a difficult term to define in isolation. Being the counterpart of an endonym, its definition requires an agreed understanding and definition of that term too. Furthermore, however one defines the terms, it is clear that the number of endonyms greatly exceeds the number of exonyms – the endonym is after all the exemplar toponym – so the WG needs, as a matter of priority, to be certain that it understands the definition of endonym before it can properly consider matters related to exonyms.

This requirement, that we should first understand the endonym, opens up the need for a whole new field of study that was perhaps not quite anticipated when the WG was founded and its terms of reference formulated:

- the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms;
- the categorisation of exonym use;
- the categorisation of exonyms (e.g. into their phonological/morphological type, or whether they are a translation of a relevant endonym);
- the application of the term exonym in languages outside Europe, especially in East Asia;
- the preparation of a relevant and workable United Nations resolution relating to exonyms.

It is clear that none of these activities relating to exonyms can be properly undertaken without a true understanding of the endonym. It may turn out that some of these forward directions may even be more appropriate to other fields of onomastics, rather than to toponymy. Other directions, such as the expansion of the WG's interest outside Europe, are essential in order to attain a global understanding of toponymy. But, whatever directions are taken, having determined that toponyms can be divided in this binary fashion – endonym and exonym – the Working Group needs to be completely comfortable that it fully understands both terms and can as a consequence confidently slot any given toponym into one category or the other.

With the benefit of a decade of work behind it, therefore, it has become clear that the Working Group should not be constrained by the terms of reference implicit in its title; namely, that it should limit its field of study to exonyms alone. It has become clear that it is imperative also, indeed as a priority, to study endonyms too. There is a further aspect regarding the WG's title, too; one of presentation. Given that a fundamental tenet of UNGEGN is to give primacy to the endonym, in particular the standardized endonym, it is odd that UNGEGN should have a WG seemingly devoted to its counterpart, the exonym – a category that we have agreed should be restricted. The title of the WG can easily be misconstrued, the inference drawn being that the WG is in favour of promoting the exonym – which is quite untrue, for in reality the WG is dedicated to establishing the definition of and appropriate toponymic niches for the exonym.

In reality, therefore, the WG's terms of reference are more to do with considering the relationship or correspondence between endonyms and exonyms. **Working Group on the Endonym-Exonym Relationship** would therefore be the more appropriate title of the WG. In the minds of UNGEGN members, it would help to:

- (a) legitimise many of the activities that have clearly become de rigueur for the Working Group as it advances its understanding of these issues;
- (b) avoid the erroneous impression that the Working Group is in favour of the exonym at the expense of the endonym.

Appendix

Members and associated experts of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms (updated: 18.02.2014)

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