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Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

**Slovene field and house names in Carinthia [Kärnten]
Intangible cultural heritage of the Austrian Commission for
UNESCO**

Submitted by Austria*

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Summary

In 2010, Slovene field and house names in Carinthia [Kärnten] were included into the Austrian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The traditional Slovene field and house names are part of the living cultural heritage and are deeply rooted in the minds of the Slovene as well as the German-speaking Carinthian population. These names form an essential part of the Carinthian Slovenes' linguistic and cultural identity. The preservation of local Slovene microtoponyms is a matter of major concern for many individuals, communities, associations, institutions and researchers in Carinthia. They try to not only document the traditional Slovene field and house names, but to also consolidate them in daily use. For this purpose, maps and hiking maps featuring the names of the locations in their dialect form and in standard Slovenian have been created in the past years. The documented toponyms and the maps are also available on the internet portal www.flurnamen.at, www.ledinskaimena.si.

Introduction

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was established during the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2003 and constitutes one of the organization's seven conventions with regard to culture. The main objectives of this Convention are: to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage, to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned, to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof, and to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

Since the Austrian ratification of the Convention in 2009, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO has been in charge of implementing the Convention and drawing up a National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Austria.
(<http://immaterielleskulturerbe.unesco.at>)

In 2010, Slovene field and house names in Carinthia [Kärnten] were included into the Austrian National Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Applications for the inscription to the Austrian Inventory can be submitted by communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals passing on intangible cultural heritage. The application for the inscription of Slovene field and house names in Carinthia was submitted by representatives of Slovene cultural associations and the interest group of farmers in Zell/Sele – initiatives that create maps documenting local field and house names.

Slovene field and house names are an important basis for understanding the economic, socio-historical and linguistic development of the Carinthian region, which is home to the autochthonous ethnic minority of the Carinthian Slovenes. The preservation of Slovene denominations for farms and houses, fields, mountains, lakes, landscapes, valleys, paths, trails, gorges, rocks, etc. is a matter of major concern for many individuals, communities, associations, institutions and researchers in Carinthia. They make every endeavor to not only document the traditional Slovene field and house names, but to also consolidate them in daily use. For this purpose, maps and hiking maps featuring the names of the locations in their dialect form and in standard Slovenian have been created in the past years.

The Slovenes in Austria are an ethnic minority living in Southern Carinthia and Southern Styria. In the 20th century, the percentage of the Slovene-speaking population in Carinthia declined from 25% in 1911 to less than 3% in 2001. The Carinthian Slovene dialect is spoken throughout the bilingual area in Southern Carinthia (as well as in the Val Canale in Italy and in the Koroška region in Slovenia). This main dialect can be further divided into three larger dialect groups (the Gailtal, Rosental and Jauntal dialects) and many local varieties, the specific features of which are also expressed in the denominations for places. The traditional Slovene field and house names are part of the living cultural heritage and are deeply rooted in the minds of the Slovene as well as the German-speaking Carinthian population. These names form an essential part of the Carinthian Slovenes' linguistic and cultural identity.

Maps featuring Slovene field and house names in Carinthia

Within the framework of the European Union project „Narava – sustainable, regional and cross-border production and marketing of agricultural products from Zell/Sele [Narava – trajna regionalna in čezmejna proizvodnja in trženje kmečkih proizvodov iz Sel/Nachhaltige, regionale und grenzüberschreitende Produktion und Vermarktung bäuerlicher Produkte aus Zell/Sele], a map recording traditional Slovene names for houses and fields within the municipal territory was published in 2008 (www.kosuta.at, www.kosuta.at/landkarte). The project was carried out by the local farmers' association [Interesna skupnost selskih kmetov/Interessensgemeinschaft der Zeller Bauern] in cooperation with the Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute [Slovenski narodopisni inštitut Urban Jarnik/Slovenisches Volkskundemuseum Urban Jarnik], which is based in Klagenfurt. Not only were the houses of the municipal territory recorded cartographically, but the initiative also put up signposts showing the way to the houses and farms. The feedback was very positive; in particular, the Red Cross praised the exact signposts that now help them find their way to remote houses much easier in cases of emergency.



Signpost featuring traditional house names in Zell/Sele



Traditional toponyms in both Carinthian languages (German/Slovene) at a bus stop in Zell/Sele

In 2008, the local cultural association „Gorjanci“ in Köttmannsdorf/Kotmara vas published another map documenting the dialectal denominations of locations in their municipality. The project was based on the collecting activities of the local Josef PACK who had been collecting the original forms of traditional names for 30 years and had located them on a map. The map and another, more extensive and interactive map, including audio samples of Slovene field and house names, are available on their website www.gorjanci.at.



Maps from Köttmannsdorf/Kotmara vas and Zell/Sele

These two maps formed the basis for the inscription of Slovene field and house names into the UNESCO Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In addition to a presentation of the current practice and usage of the cultural heritage and a description of its transformation throughout the history of at least three generations, applicants also have to specify measures for securing the cultural heritage to be passed on to future generations. By creating useful maps, they want to raise awareness for the traditional names and consolidate them in daily use.

The inscription of Slovene field and house names to the UNESCO Austrian National Inventory in 2010 aroused great interest in the Carinthian and Austrian media. Due to the discussion about bilingual place name signs, Slovene denominations of places in Carinthia had been a largely political topic until then. But when these names were included into the UNESCO Austrian Inventory and this event was broadly covered by the media, the preservation of the traditional Slovene names and denominations became an important cultural issue.

The so-called „Ortstafelstreit“ (‘dispute about place name signs’) escalated in 1972, when the Austrian National Council adopted a Federal Act including provisions on the setting up of bilingual topographical denominations in Carinthian areas with a certain percentage of Slovene or mixed-language population (against the will of two parties – the ÖVP and the FPÖ). This federal act was meant to support the setting up of bilingual place name signs that had been warranted in Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955. Originally, 205 places and localities were supposed to receive bilingual place name signs. During the so-called „Ortstafelsturm“, bilingual place name signs were dismantled or destroyed, in some cases in the presence of the police.

The question of bilingual place name signs in Carinthia was eventually solved with a political compromise in 2011. According to that, bilingual place name signs must be set up in places with a percentage of at least 17.5% Slovene-speaking inhabitants. Due to this „solution“, it was decided upon a total amount of 164 bilingual place names. The new Ethnic Groups Act was adopted on a constitutional level in July 2011.

Based upon the Ethnic Groups Act from 1976, the names of 91 Carinthian localities and parts of localities became officially bilingual. However, the official Slovene place names were not included in the official topographical maps of Austria in the beginning. Only when members of the Parliament started a political process with parliamentary questions in 1988, the official position changed. According to a directive from the Office of the Federal Chancellor, the official Slovene names were included in the Austrian index of places (published by the former Austrian Statistical Central Office, now Statistik Austria) first. Then the official Slovene names were included in the official topographical maps issued by the Austrian Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying [Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen].

The inclusion of Slovene field and house names in Carinthia in the UNESCO Inventory of Intangible Heritage for Austria in 2010 took place before the dispute about bilingual place signs was solved. The positive media coverage about the Slovene denominations of places in Carinthia being part of the UNESCO cultural heritage had the effect that these names were revalued as an intangible cultural asset among the general public as well. People started to develop an increasingly positive attitude toward this special regional culture in Carinthia – particularly on the level of municipalities.

With the inscription to the Austrian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), the Austrian Commission for UNESCO expresses its support for institutions or individuals promoting the intangible cultural heritage according to UNESCO. With the inscription, the institution or individual gains the right to use the Austrian Commission for UNESCO's logo for their printed materials (brochures, folders) and electronic media in combination with an objective information about the Austrian Inventory.

With the prior agreement of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, the logo can be used for the maps with Slovene field and house names as well.



The first two maps featuring the UNESCO logo were published in 2011 in the municipalities St. Margareten im Rosental/Šmarjeta v Rožu and Schiefpling am Wörthersee/Škofiče.

The map with Slovene field and house names for the municipality of St. Margareten im Rosental/Šmarjeta v Rožu was created at the suggestion of the local Slovene cultural association St. Margareten-Abtei/Kulturno društvo Šmarjeta-Apače in cooperation with the Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute [Slovenski narodopisni inštitut Urban Jarnik] in Klagenfurt. A large part of field and house names that had been passed down orally in the local Slovene dialect was documented in writing for the first time. For many of the names an autochthonous German denomination does not even exist. Since this is a tourist map, the field and house names were denoted in Slovene standard language and the names of places, mountains, landscapes and waters are documented bilingually (German/Slovene). As the publication of the map was supported by the municipality, their logo was included as well.

In 2011, another map with Slovene field and house names was published at the suggestion of the local Slovene cultural association SPD Edinost Škofiče/Schiefpling in the municipality of Schiefpling am Wörthersee/Škofiče. This is another example of a map in which many of the names that had been passed down orally in the local Slovene dialect were documented in writing for the first time in order to preserve their authentic form. The publication of this map was supported by the municipality as well.



Maps from St. Margareten im Rosental/Šmarjeta v Rožu and Schiefpling am Wörthersee/Škofiče.

The inclusion of Slovene field and house names in the national Inventory was followed by numerous activities: a series of lectures on the denominations of localities in Carinthia held by Prof. Heinz-Dieter POHL was organized in several municipalities in the bilingual region in 2010 and 2011; in 2011 work meetings with Farida SHAHEED, representative of the UN, and with the Slovene Commission for the Standardisation of geographical names in Slovenia [Komisija za standardizacijo zemljepisnih imen Vlade Republike Slovenije] took place; in 2012, Martina PIKO-RUSTIA became a member of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names [Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde, AKO]. Since then, project staff has been invited to conferences and has contributed articles for publications; media attention is still considerable.

Between 2011 and 2015, the cross-border European Union project „Cultural portal of field and house names“ [Kulturni portal ledinskih in hišnih imen/Kulturportal der Flur- und Hausnamen, FLU-LED] was carried out within the framework of the program Austria-Slovenia (OP SI-AT 2007–2013). Its main aim was to document field and house names in Carinthia and the Slovenian region of Upper Carniola [Gorenjska] and to make them available to the interested local and international public by means of a joint database and a joint multilingual cross-border web portal including an interactive web mapping application (www.flurnamen.at, www.ledinskaimena.si) as well as on analogous maps. The project was managed by the Carinthian Slovenes' central cultural organizations. The Slovene Cultural Association [Slovenska prosvetna zveza/Slowenischer Kulturverband] acted as the lead partner, the Christian Cultural Association [Krščanska kulturna zveza/Christlicher Kulturverband] as one of the project partners and the Development Agency for Upper Gorenjska [Razvojna agencija Zgornje Gorenjske, RAGOR] as well as the museum Gornjesavski muzej Jesenice in Jesenice were the project partners in Slovenia. In cooperation with external institutions (the Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute in Klagenfurt, the Institute for Slovenian language at the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana) and the Slovene cultural associations in Carinthia and based upon a special methodology that had been developed jointly, old dialectal field and house names were documented for selected municipalities in Carinthia. In Slovenia, the project area covered the municipalities Jesenice,

Kranjska Gora and Tržič in the Upper Carniola region. The collection of data was carried out by trained staff.

One of the goals of the project FLU-LED was to develop a common methodology for the collection of data and the documentation of Slovene field and house names throughout the entire project region. The methodology was published in a special manual (*Metode zbiranja hišnih in ledinskih imen – ‘Methods for the collection of house and field names’*), which is supposed to encourage other institutions and persons who work in the same field to use as uniform collection methods as possible.

The internet portal of field and house names and the attached database (see: www.flurnamen.at, www.ledinskaimena.si) offer the possibility to publish collected field and house names and additional information and multimedia files on the internet. They are accessible to the interested public and can be downloaded and used for private, cultural, touristic or scientific purposes. The main principle of the portal is interactivity, which means that registered users can also upload new house and field names with additional information and multimedia files.

One of the visible results of the project in Carinthia are four printed maps of municipalities featuring field and house names. Each of them forms an important contribution to the linguistic and cultural identity of the respective municipalities. In close cooperation with the local cultural associations, maps of the municipalities Finkenstein/Bekštanj (featuring standardized Slovene house and field names), Sankt Jakob im Rosental/Šentjakob v Rožu (featuring dialectal field names), Feistritz im Rosental/Bistrica v Rožu (featuring dialectal house and field names) and Sankt Margareten im Rosental/Šmarjeta v Rožu (featuring dialectal house and field names) were created. The published maps form a major contribution to the preservation of the local microtoponymy. Furthermore, these cultural assets can easily be disseminated among the interested public thanks to the internet portal. All of the above-mentioned municipalities supported the compilation of the maps and this is why all of the maps feature the logo of their municipality. The Slovene partners have created maps with field names for three of the municipalities (Jesenice, Kranjska Gora, Tržič) included in the project. These maps also feature traditional names in the local dialects.

On the reverse side of all maps there are texts providing further information about the field and house names, local history and local tourist services



Maps from the project FLU-LED

In Carinthia, the project is carried out by local Slovene cultural associations. The project is scientifically supported by the Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute. Another organization that is involved with the project is the Slovene Alpine Club in Klagenfurt [Slovensko planinsko društvo Celovec], cooperating with all major alpine clubs in Carinthia and Slovenia. The central Carinthian Slovene cultural associations provide their support in organizational and professional questions. The names are documented on the basis of archive material and maps (old and new private and official maps), publications on Slovene denominations (several extensive works on house, field and place names were published in Carinthia in the past), handwritten records from individuals, and, above all, field research in the municipalities. The data compiled this way are then recorded on the maps, which are produced by professional enterprises.

Public interest for the documentation of traditional names in the municipalities has remained equally strong in the past few years. Many municipalities have started to document their traditional denominations and several new maps are being prepared at the moment.

For many centuries, the written word throughout the settlement area of the Carinthian Slovenes was German while the Slovene language was passed on mostly in its spoken and dialectal form. The Slovene dialectal names reflect important historical and linguistic developments. Due to economic and social transformations and as a result of linguistic assimilation, there are only few people who use traditional names in their natural surrounding nowadays. The fact that these carriers of cultural assets are still alive makes the initiative even more important because these denominations can now still be passed on to the next generation. If these important steps were not taken today, it would be very complicated to reconstruct the names that have been handed down until now in the future. A natural handing down to the next generation would be prevented.

A growing number of people regards Carinthia's linguistic and cultural diversity to be an enrichment. Regardless of politics, there are also German-speaking Carinthians who are

interested in these traditional names. They have grown up with these cultural assets and have also preserved a certain relation towards the names, even if they do not speak Slovene anymore. The development and fostering of cultural diversity provide a great opportunity to overcome the conflicts of the past and to create a brighter future for Carinthia.

Selected literature

JORDAN, Peter (1988): Möglichkeiten einer stärkeren Berücksichtigung slowenischer Ortsnamen in den heutigen amtlichen topographischen Karten Österreichs [Opportunities for a better representation of Slovenian place names in modern official topographical maps of Austria] (= Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Institut für Kartographie, Berichte und Informationen, vol. 6), Wien.

JORDAN, Peter et al. (eds.) (2009): Geographical Names as a Part of the Cultural Heritage (= Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie, vol. 18). Wien: Institut für Geographie und Regionalforschung.

KLINAR, Klemen; ŠKOFIC Jožica; ŠEKLI Matej; PIKO-RUSTIA, Martina (2012): Metode zbiranja hišnih in ledinskih imen: projekt FLU-LED v okviru Operativnega programa Slovenija- Avstrija 2007-2013 [Methods of collecting house and field names: the project FLU-LED within the Operational Programme Slovenia-Austria 2007-2013]. Jesenice: Gornjesavski muzej.

POHL, Heinz-Dieter: <http://members.chello.at/heinz.pohl>

ZDOVC, Pavel (2010): Slovenska krajevna imena na avstrijskem Koroškem. Razširjena izdaja = Die slowenischen Ortsnamen in Kärnten. Erweiterte Ausgabe [Slovenian place names in Austrian Carinthia. Amended edition]. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti.

Websites

Map of Zell/Sele

www.kosuta.at

www.kosuta.at/landkarte

Map of Köttmansdorf/Kotmara vas

www.gorjanci.at

<http://www.gorjanci.at/index.php/de/landkarte-top>

Maps from the project FLU-LED

www.flurnamen.at

www.ledinskaimena.si

<http://www.flurnamen.at/de/dokumente>

Projects about field names in Austria

The field names of Vorarlberg were included in the Austrian Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011: <http://nationalagentur.unesco.at>

Field names in Tyrol:

<http://www.onomastik.at/content/flurnamendokumentation-im-bundesland-tirol>

Field names in South Tyrol:

http://www.uibk.ac.at/germanistik/fachbereiche/germanistische_linguistik/forschung_flurnamen.html

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