

**Twenty-ninth session  
Bangkok, Thailand, 25 – 29 April 2016**

---

**Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**Report of the Divisions**

## **Report of the Romano-Hellenic Division**

Submitted by Romano-Hellenic Division \*

---

\* Prepared by Andrea Cantile (Italy).

## **Report of the Romano-Hellenic Division\***

### ***Summary***

The report informs about the re-activation of the work in the Romano-Hellenic Division, started in the occasion of the 28th Session of UNGEGN.

The main common activities organized in the last two years consist in a special meeting on “Status of national standardization of geographical names in the Romano-Hellenic area” and an International scientific symposium on “Place names as intangible cultural heritage”, held in Florence [Firenze], Italy, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

After the description of these activities the report collects the main national activities carried out in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The authors of these notes are indicated in brackets at the end of each paragraph.

### ***Main common activities***

In the occasion of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN, the Romano-Hellenic Division (RHD) re-activated its work with a meeting which was attended by the distinguished experts and representatives of Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Romania, with the special participation of the representative of International Union of Geographers.

During this meeting, the experts decided to revitalize the Division organizing a special meeting on “Status of national standardization of geographical names in the Romano-Hellenic area” and an International scientific symposium on “Place names as intangible cultural heritage”.

The Symposium was held in Italy under the auspices of the Accademia della Crusca, the Italian Geographic Military Institute (IGMI) and the Government of the Tuscany Region. The International scientific symposium took place in Florence, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and was hosted by the Italian Geographic Military Institute.

Twenty experts on geographical names attended the symposium and presented their papers in quality of linguists, historians, geographers, planners and cartographers, from Austria, Canada, Cyprus, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden. About forty representatives of various institutions took part to the symposium from UNGEGN Romano-Hellenic Division and the French-speaking Division, UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage, UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, IGU Commission / ICA Working Group on Toponymy, General Commission for Survey of Saudi Arabia, Italian Geographic Military Institute, Italian National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology and the Universities of Bergamo, Trento, Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, Rome, Accademia della Crusca, Accademia dei Lincei, Italian Society for Geographical Studies, Italian Centre for Historical-Geographical Studies and Società Savonese di Storia Patria.

Papers highlighted the efforts of the United Nations in national and international standardization of place names, the importance of the geographical names in safeguarding and preserving heritage, the relationship between historical maps and toponymy, *genius loci* and identity, etymological studies, vernacular place names, new toponyms, toponymy and landscape, the recent historical toponymic

database of Tuscany Region and the role of Geographical Names Authorities for the preservation of toponymic heritage (The proceedings of the symposium are now in press).

For the complete list of the papers presented in the symposium please see the *UNGEGN Information Bulletin* No. 48, May 2015, pp. 20-22.

Moreover, in conjunction with the symposium were held two sessions of divisional meeting. As result of which the RHD has:

- inaugurated a cooperation with the French-Speaking Division and the Norden Division;
- established new links with the experts of Andorra and Portugal;
- decided to reactivate the divisional website, and to disseminate a translation of the Wikipedia entry on the UNGEGN in Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Turkish, and to disseminate also a special entry of Wikipedia on the RHD in English, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish and Turkish.

The program of new divisional activities for the next two years will be established during the RHD meeting in occasion of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGEGN in Bangkok.

Following are brief notes of the national activities from the country member of the division. The authors of these notes are indicated in brackets at the end of each paragraph.

### ***National activities***

#### *Cyprus*

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CPCSGN) continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and the Romanization of the Greek alphabet, according to ELOT 743, of the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus. All toponyms were gathered by appropriate and authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus in 1878 and later periods.

The CPCSGN regularly maintains a website, where all relevant information is available. The address of this website is: <http://www.geonoma.gov.cy>.

The website includes information regarding the historic background of CPCSGN, legislation and regulations regarding its operation, the organizational structure, announcements, activities, documents from our participation in conferences and other events, documents regarding the transliteration of geographical names in roman alphabet, several editions, maps, etc. The website also includes a complete and fully searchable national gazetteer.

A list of names of countries and capitals was submitted during the 10<sup>th</sup> UN Conference and the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN and was also distributed to many government departments, ministries, academic institutions, schools. It is also available on CPCSGN's website for viewing and downloading. This list is also regularly distributed to any interested persons in hardcopy form.

The existing national gazetteers prepared by the CPCSGN in 1982 and 1987 respectively are:

- "*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*" (about 2000 entries)
- "*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*" (about 67000 entries)

All geographical names and toponyms included in these gazetteers were derived from the official large scale cadastral map series of the Department of Lands and Surveys. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus is currently available on CPCSGN's website.

All cadastral maps of Cyprus have already been digitized and their information was categorized and stored in digital relational databases and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Based on these databases, it is possible to easily identify and locate any geographical name in Cyprus. It is also technically possible to produce a new, more precise gazetteer. This task is currently under study and development by CPCSGN and its associates.

All geographical names and toponyms were included in a distributed European database named "EuroGeonames" through EuroGeographics, and they are available on-line at: <http://ec2-50-19-212-160.compute-1.amazonaws.com/EGNol/>

The majority of the official geographical names of Cyprus, along with other relevant geospatial datasets, can also be accessed through the INSPIRE geoportal of Cyprus at: [www.geoportal.gov.cy](http://www.geoportal.gov.cy).

During the last three years, more than 2500 toponyms have been examined and processed, offering services to the central government, and local government authorities, for the standardization and transcription from the Greek Alphabet to the Roman script according to ELOT 743.

CPCSGN recently prepared a poster regarding the standardization and transliteration of geographical names. This poster was distributed to all high schools. The Committee also published a book marker which was distributed to all schools and government departments. This book marker includes brief information regarding the tasks undertaken by the Committee and also includes the transliteration rules followed.

In March 2015, the President of the Committee participated in the UNGEGN Romano-Hellenic Division Meeting and the International Scientific Symposium on Geographical names as intangible cultural heritage, which took place in Florence, Italy. A paper was submitted, along with a powerpoint presentation entitled: "Toponymic Standardization in Cyprus Geographical Names - Intangible Cultural Heritage".

In November 2015, the Committee prepared a paper entitled: "The Benefits of Geographical Names Standardization in Cyprus", which was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 49.

The CPCSGN strongly supports the efforts undertaken by the U.N. for the standardization of geographical names and aims to comply and implement the U.N. and UNGEGN Conferences resolutions for the standardization of geographical names.

Cyprus gives a great importance on the implementation of the U.N. Conference resolutions on the standardization of geographical names, as a part of its duties for safeguarding the cultural heritage. (*Andreas Hadjiraftis*)

### *France*

About the progress made in France on standardization of geographical names, please see the Report of the French-Speaking Division.

## *Greece*

During the period between the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGEGN (2014-2016), the competent Greek authorities (Hellenic Army Geographical Service and Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service) have continued their cooperation and work on the elaboration of a Geographical Gazetteer of Greece.

Furthermore, Greek experts have actively participated in the work of various Working Groups of the UNGEGN. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the participation of Greek experts in the meetings of the Working Group of Exonyms, held in Hermagor, Austria, in 2014 and in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2015. (*Alexandros Stavropoulos*)

## *Italy*

In 2014 the Joint IGU/ICA Commission/Working Group on Toponymy organized a Symposium on “Place-names changes” at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Forty-five papers were discussed in six thematic sessions. The proceedings were published in 2016. See Peter Jordan and Paul Woodman (eds.), *Place-Name Changes. Proceedings of the Symposium in Rome, 17–18 November 2014*, Verlag Dr. Kovac, Hamburg 2016 (ISBN 978-3-8300-8423-5).

In the same year, Italy has joined the EuroGeoNames project, contributing with its toponymic database (DBTopo25v), containing all toponyms of the Italian Topographical Map 1:25000 scale. At the same time, the Italian Geographic Military Institute started a systematic control and update of mentioned database. In the same period it was also organized a training course for technicians in charge of the treatment of the Italian official place names.

In 2015, as indicated before, the International scientific symposium on “Place names as intangible cultural heritage” and the RHD meeting on “Status of national standardization of geographical names in the Romano-Hellenic area” were held in Florence. In this occasion it was newly highlighted the importance of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in Paris on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2003 by the XXXII session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and were presented various interesting case studies. During this symposium participants expressed their disappointment with the repeal of Law 8<sup>th</sup> June 1949 n. 605 with which it was established the Standing Committee responsible for directing the work of reviewing the place names of the Charter of Italy (repealed by Decree 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008, n. 112, converted with amendments by Law 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008, n. 133). About that, the participants exhorted Italy to reactivate its National Geographical Names Authority, as recommended by the relative UN resolutions, and they hoped that each Region of Italy will create their Regional Geographical Names Authorities, in cooperation with the National Geographical Names Authority. Following the repeal of the law n. 609/1949, the Italian Geographic Military Institute activated a new permanent Commission for Italian official toponyms, only for the cartographic needs of the IGMI. Notices of these two events were published in the *UNGEKN Information Bulletin* No. 47, September 2014, p. 6 and No. 48, May 2015, pp. 20-22. The proceedings are in press at the IGMI.

During the same year, the Italian Geographic Military Institute continued the preparation of the two new toponymic databases, created with the geographical names of the topographical maps of Italy at scale 1:50000 and 1:250000 (respectively named: DBTopo50K and DBTopo250K).

A new draft divisional website was launched in the official website of the Italian Geographic Military Institute.

IGMI has completed the update of the Italian city names with more than 100,000 inhabitants and it has recorded also their correct pronunciation in separate files as contribution to the UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database. (*Andrea Cantile*)

### *Portugal*

Related to the Geographical Names topic, the Portuguese entities and the respective spatial data sets, which metadata have so far been registered in Portuguese National Spatial Infrastructure (Sistema Nacional de Informação Geográfica - SNIG) and published, are:

- Centro de Informação GeoEspacial do Exército - Geographical names of cartographic series (1501A, 1501G, 500K, M586, M782, M783, M888, M889, P821) – For each series, the information is available to public, structured in 2D files and is directly related to the name of the represented geographic entities, in the lower left corner of the geographic names box, indicates the location of the geographical entity. In case of the geodetic vertexes is the bottom center point of the box.
- Correios de Portugal, S.A. (CTT) – Geoindex – Geographical names of arteries and Cities of Portugal in alphanumeric format.
- Direção Regional do Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente da Região Autónoma da Madeira (DROT Ambiente RAM) – Geographical names of places in Madeira Autonomous Region. This information was obtained from cartography at 25000 and 50000 scales. It consists of 1771 points to Geographical names of places such as County Headquarters, Parish Headquarters, towns, other villages, local names, place names of roads, streets and place names of hydrography.
- Direção-Geral do Território (DGT) – Geographical names of cartographic series (scales 10K, 50K, 100K, 500K) - Geographical names in vector format for Portugal mainland, structured in 2D related to the names of the represented objects. For 1: 10,000 scale Cartography, the information is structured and characterized according to the established technical standards, its annexes and DGT objects catalog, for this scale. The 1:50 000 scale Cartography Geographical names include names like Capital District, seat of the county, parish council, other towns and couples, local names, mountains, local saws designations, rivers, etc, and for 1:500 000 Country Capital City District Office, the county seat City, Other cities, Headquarters of Municipality and other Settlements.
- Direção-Geral do Território (DGT) – Geographical names of EuroRegional Map Portugal (1:250 000 scale). The main geographical names for Portugal mainland and the autonomous regions - Azores and Madeira Islands are: villages, local names and built up areas.
- Direção-Geral do Território (DGT) – Geographical names of streets for Emergency Situation Information Network - RISE (Rede de Informação de Situações de Emergência) - geographical names database of roads around 60 cities and towns. In every street, the name is represented by the coordinate of its centroid. This database also includes a large number of points of interest.
- Direção-Geral do Território (DGT) – Geographical Names database at national level for Emergency Situation – RISE (Rede de Informação de Situações de Emergência) - only for mainland Portugal).
- Instituto Hidrográfico (IH) – Geographical Names of Undersea Relief (for Portugal mainland, Azores and Madeira Islands).

- Instituto Nacional de Estadística, I.P. (INE) – Lugares 1991, Lugares 2001 e Lugares 2011. Population centers with ten or more accommodations for housing people and with its own name, independently of belonging to one or more parishes (for the years 1991, 2001 and 2011). (*Paulo Patrício*)

## *Spain*

Spain is implementing its national gazetteer, named Nomenclátor Geográfico Nacional (NGN) and based on to the provisions of Royal Decree 1545/2007. The NGN will be constituted by the harmonization of basic national gazetteer and other gazetteers of the Autonomous Communities (AA.CC.) of Spain. The first one, done by Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN) and called Nomenclátor Geográfico Básico de España (NGBE) includes all the names taken from the map at scale 1: 25000, in Castilian and in other Spanish official languages (the first release is already available, the second is nearing completion). The gazetteers of the AA.CC. are composed of names drawn from a larger scale maps and contain place names in the respective official languages. In parallel with the gradual publication of these gazetteers, at the state level and at the regional level, it will go conforming the NGN, which will be the reference of the standard toponymy of Spain.

The NGBE and some gazetteers of the autonomous regions are published according to European standards of interoperability and compatibility of spatial data (INSPIRE), providing information in an integrated and interoperable way through a download service of geographical objects under Regulation services Network and the Technical Guidelines for the implementation of download services Inspire Directive and in accordance with version 2.0 of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) following the data model described in the D2.8.I.3 INSPIRE Data Specification on geographical Names - Guidelines.

The Geoportal of Spatial Data Infrastructure of Spain (IDEE) allows searching of geographical objects (river, mountain, city, etc.) by name or by their attributes, allowing the location on the display Geoportal IDEE and offers also other research in the gazetteers belonging to the IDEE ([www.idee.es](http://www.idee.es)). The publication of NGBE is also performed free of charge through the Download Center CNIG (<http://centrodedescargas.cnig.es/CentroDescargas>) as part of the National Reference Equipment.

Law 10/2015 for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage has recognized the traditional place names as part of the cultural heritage of the country. This recognition has been possible thanks to the support of the Special Committee on Geographical Names (CENG).

At the international level and within UNGEGN Spain attended the meeting of the Romano-Hellenic Division, and has participated in the international symposium “Place names as intangible cultural heritage”, held in Florence in 2015. Also, the CENG held in 2015 its Fourth Day “Place names in today's world: between cultural heritage and geo-referenced data”, continuing to disseminate standardization of geographical names.

Since the X Conference, Spain has continued to generate initiatives to promote training and publication of standardized and interoperable gazetteer by all competent bodies and the establishment of the NGN, from harmonization and appropriate integration, the NGBE and the gazetteers of the AA.CC. complying with the INSPIRE directive, which allows interoperability of data provided by the competent authorities in toponymy, through interoperable network services and based on the same common model.

All these actions are performed with the aim of promoting the development of the United Nations recommendations and the rules of the European institutions.

*(Marta Lillo Montilla and Angélica Castaño Suárez and Marcos Pavo López)*

### *Romania*

The constant presence of Romania at the United Nations Conferences on the standardization of geographical names confirms the will of the country to consequently put into practice the resolutions adopted by the previous conferences, to contribute to a better international cooperation.

Romania reaffirms the principle supported since the first United Nations Conference held in Geneva in 1967, stating that a standardization at the international level can only be successful if based on each country's efforts to solve its internal problems concerning the geographical names in accordance with the United Nations recommendations.

The Romanian Geographical Names Technical Commission (RGNTC) was established on the basis of the Governmental Decision no. 579/15.07.2015 comprising of representatives of ten central authorities. The presidency is running by the Military Topographic Directorate from Ministry of National Defense, which represents, also, the point of contact in relation with United Nations. The assignments include proposals for regulations at national level in the field of geographical names, coordination at national level of the geographical names standardization activities, analysis of the geographical names' change proposals, as well as the Romania's representation at conferences and working groups in the field of geographical names. RGNTC sends the proposals regarding the geographical names' adoption or changes, lists of exonyms and endonyms as well as the geographical names of the national immaterial and cultural patrimony to the National Spatial Information Infrastructure Council for approvals.

In order to implement the European Union INSPIRE directive, the significant public authorities owning datasets for geographical names were identified. Also, a technical group of experts was established to harmonize the datasets at national level and to realize a reference dataset including data from all contributors.

Regarding the geographical names dissemination to the public, the Ministry of Defense implemented the Romanian INSPIRE geoportal – the MOD component with visualization services for geographical names. Also, the National Cadastral Agency implemented on the national INSPIRE geoportal the visualization services for the produced geographical names dataset.

Romania is in favor of continuing the large exchange of ideas, information and documentation in this dynamic field. Thus we appreciate the *UNGEGN Newsletter* able to reveal the interest of larger parts of the public opinion. *(Iulian-Dan Olteanu)*