

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Reports of the liaison officers

**Information on the activities of the Working Group on Geographical
Names of the Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre
and Earth Remote Sensing of the Commonwealth of Independent States
(CIS)**

Submitted by the Working Group on Geographical Names of the CIS Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing and the Chairman of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UNGEGN**

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**Submitted by the Working Group on Geographical Names of the CIS Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing and the Chairman of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UNGEGN V.M. Boginsky (Russia).

Summary*

The Report provides information on successful cooperation between the Working Group on Geographical Names of the CIS Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing and the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

On November 21, 2016, the UN General Assembly considered Item 126 of the Agenda of the 71st Session and adopted the resolution tabled by the Kyrgyz Republic “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States”.

The resolution complies with the spirit of the Declaration of the CIS member-states which was made on September 16, 2016, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the CIS and which emphasized the need to develop cooperation with international organizations, first of all the UN, and thus to enhance the authority of the CIS in the world arena.

Over the course of last 20 years, many member-states of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UNGEGN (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Ukraine) were taking an active part in cooperation with the Working Group on Geographical Names of the CIS Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing.

The Working Group on Geographical Names (hereinafter the Working Group) was established in October 1996 in pursuance of the resolutions taken by the 9th Session of the CIS Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing (hereinafter the Interstate Council).

The Working Group was organized as a consultative body to develop proposals and recommendations to be further considered by the Interstate Council while taking decisions related to identification and usage of geographical names in the CIS member-states.

The Working Group is entrusted with the following tasks:

- prepare proposals and recommendations for the Interstate Council in terms of geographical names;
- compile bulletins on changes in geographical names made in the CIS member-states and prepare their publication.

The activities of the Working Group are regulated by the Provisions for the Working Group approved by the Interstate Council.

Throughout that time, the efforts of the Working Group have been coordinated by the cartographic and geodetic service of the Russian Federation.

The Working Group held regular meetings and invited specialists of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UNGEGN to attend them. In total, twelve meetings were organized (Moscow, 1996; Moscow, 1999; Minsk, 2001; Moscow, 2004; Kiev, 2005; Lviv, 2006; Sofia, 2008; Minsk, 2010; Baku, 2012; Yalta, 2013; Yerevan, 2015; Chisinau, 2016). At the meetings, the experts exchanged information and experience related to different geographical names issues (current state of legal and normative framework in the area of geographical names, usage of Romanization systems, compilation of gazetteers and dictionaries of geographical names, development of national databases of geographical names, etc.)

Discussions at the Working Group meetings resulted in providing appropriate recommendations. The way in which they had been implemented was considered at the Group's subsequent meetings. Recommendations were submitted for discussing at the sessions of the Interstate Council. Appropriate resolutions were taken for the Working Group activity to be guided.

The Working Group mainly focused on the way to provide a regular exchange of information on all changes in geographical names made in the CIS member-states. Joint efforts made in this direction resulted in compiling and publishing of the information bulletin "Changes in geographical names in CIS member-states" and three supplements to it.

In 2007, the Working Group suggested that instead of releasing standalone bulletins, the e-Bulletin of changes in geographical names in the CIS countries (hereinafter the e-Bulletin) should be created and populated on a regular basis and thus an efficient exchange of computer information on changes in geographical names should be provided.

In 2013, the upgraded format of the data to be available in the e-Bulletin of geographical names' changes was adopted. This format is used up to now. In the updated e-Bulletin, the information is provided as alphabetical lists of geographical names arranged per countries. Within the lists, the information is put in a table form and includes the following items:

- former names and generic terms in the Russian language;
- new names and generic terms in the national and Russian languages;
- current administrative affiliations of geographical objects;
- dates (DD-MM-YYYY) when names of geographical objects were legally changed.

New names of geographical objects are rendered in Russian in accordance with the rules adopted in an appropriate country to render geographical names from a national language into Russian. In case the newly rendered names differ from those traditionally used in Russia, the latter are given in parentheses.

The e-Bulletin contains information on more than 6 300 geographical names of 11 countries which have been legally changed since 1990.

Annually, all changes made in geographical names which have been revealed by the members of the Working Group in their countries, are considered at the Group's meeting and, if approved by the session of the Interstate Council, are included in the e-Bulletin. The updated Bulletin is sent to all cartographic and geodetic services of the countries which participated in its update and is posted on the website of Rosreestr (www.rosreestr.ru) in open access.