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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

General directions for the spelling of geographical names
of the German Democratic Republic*

Paper presented by the German Democratic Republic

* E/CONF.74/1. Prepared by the Administration for Surveying and
Cartography, Ministry of the Interior, Berlin.

I. The "General Directions for the Spelling of Geographical Names of the German Democratic Republic" (hereinafter referred to as "General Directions"), which are used in the German Democratic Republic, have proved their worth as an important cartographical document. A third revised edition of the General Directions was published by the Administration for Surveying and Cartography of the Ministry of the Interior in 1979. The application of the provisions of the General Directions ensures a standardized and correct rendering of the geographical names in all cartographical products in which the national territory of the German Democratic Republic is shown.

In case of doubt, the General Directions can be used to check the spelling of geographical names, or they may be used to determine the correct spelling of geographical names which have not been listed in cartographical products or lists of geographical names.

The General Directions also provide foreign publishers with the basis for a standardized and correct rendering of geographical names of geographical features located on the national territory of the German Democratic Republic.

II. The contents of the General Directions has been subdivided as follows:

1. General remarks
2. General documents for the rendering of names on maps
 - 2.1 Chief documents
 - 2.2 Additional documents
3. General rules for the spelling of geographical names
 - 3.1 General remarks
 - 3.2 The spelling of names consisting of compound words
 - 3.2.1 Writing in one word
 - 3.2.2 Hyphenation
 - 3.2.3 Writing of names as two or more words
 - 3.2.4 Use of route stroke, comma and diagonal stroke
 - 3.2.5 Use of brackets and inverted commas
 - 3.3 Use of shortened names
 - 3.4 The spelling of dialectal names

4. Principles governing the use of additions to place-names
 - 4.1 Additions being part of the name
 - 4.2 Additions underlining the function of a place
 - 4.3 Additions for distinguishing places with identical names
5. Sorbian names
 - 5.1 Rendering of geographical names in areas inhabited by the Sorbian national minority
 - 5.2 The Sorbian alphabet (Upper Sorbian)
6. Rules governing the use of abbreviations
 - 6.1 General principles
 - 6.2 Abbreviations in place-names
 - 6.3 Forms of abbreviations
 - 6.4 Abbreviations for internal use
7. Alphabetical list of the most common abbreviations
8. Alphabetical list of the geographical names of the German Democratic Republic

The General Directions had been explained in detail on the occasion of the ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held at New York from 17 to 27 February 1981. 1/

III. We are interested in receiving, for the purpose of information, similar provisions issued by other countries for their national territories, because we have come to realize that the drawing-up of more detailed General Directions has become necessary for practical cartographical reasons in the German Democratic Republic and because they represent an effective instrument for national standardization of the spelling of geographical names. It would be possible for the German Democratic Republic to improve further its system of the spelling of geographical names of places located in other countries and to take better into account the national interests of other countries. Such an approach would constitute the basis for a gradual reduction in the number of exonyms to be used, and it would be possible to improve and align along the other countries' interests further editions

1/ See Working Paper No. 60, "Report on the ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names", (ESA/RT/C/GN/7).

of the General Directions so far published in the German Democratic Republic for the spelling of geographical names of individual countries (see item 3 of the report on the progress in the standardization of geographical names made in the German Democratic Republic since the third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1977).
