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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON PROGRESS IN THE STANDARDIZATION
OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FOURTH CONFERENCE

Report by Norway**

Paper submitted by Norway

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Agenda items

5. National Standardization

a) Field collection of Names

In Norway the collection of geographical names (place names) has both practical and scientific purposes. The State Office of Cartography, (Statens kartverk, before 1.1.1986 its name was Noregs geografiske oppmåling/Geographical Survey of Norway), collects names for use in the production of maps, while various scientific institutions focus their efforts on making the register of Norwegian place names as comprehensive as possible. This material is used to verify the spelling of place names on maps and in other official publications and in research in the fields of social history, history of language and dialectology.

Although place names have been systematically registered in Norway for more than a century, the material so far collected represents less than half the total material in existence. Of the estimated 5 million place names in Norway (including names of fields and other minor features) perhaps 1.5 million are in use on official maps. In recent years there has been an increase in the amount of registration being done and the National Committee on Name Research, (Samarbeidsnemnda for namnegransking), has presented a plan for the systematic registration of all place names in the country, which will be organized by the counties and the municipal authorities. The registration form used, records the dialect form of the name, the preposition used with the name, the use of the name, details of the feature and the map reference, which is usually plotted on a 1:5000 scale map. This series covers roughly 2/3 of the surface of the country. For the rest of the surface, mostly mountainous areas, a 1:50 000 scale map is used. Tape recordings of the local pronunciation of the name are also made. Most of the field work is done by volunteers who are paid a symbolic fee and who work under the supervision of a qualified leader. (Details of courses are given below). Large scale registration of names is in progress in 3 out of the 19 counties in the country. In addition qualified research

personnel collect place names for special projects.

b) Office treatment of names

The material that is sent in to the central and regional institutions is, within the means available, checked and filed in alphabetical registers, (a national register, a municipal register and a main element register). Written sources are also excerpted. The majority of the name material is recorded on filing cards, but recently it has become more usual to use computer registration. The material is used e.g. by the name advisers in the process of establishing the correct standardized form of the name.

The main institution in the registration of place names is the Department of Name Research, (Institutt for namnegransking), at the University of Oslo. The Universities of Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø each have their own departments for place name research. In addition, some registration of place names is done by a few regional colleges and museums. There are currently plans to build up a Norwegian computerized data base of place names where academic institutions, public bodies and others can obtain information via computer networks.

A government statement of policy on cultural matters in the 1980s recommends greater public participation in the registering of place names so that as much as possible of this cultural heritage can be preserved for posterity.

c) Treatment of names in multilingual areas

Norway has not only Norwegian, but also Lappish and Finnish place names. These should be written according to the current spelling rules for Lappish, (Northern Lappish and Southern Lappish) and Finnish. In 1978 a Scandinavian standard was established for Southern Lappish, and in 1979 for Northern Lappish. This year a new standard for Lule-Lappish has been established. In the past Norwegian names were often used instead of Lappish or Finnish names, but current policy is to give equal status to the different languages. The University of Tromsø has for the past few years been running a research project on place names in multilingual areas.

d) Administrative structure of national place name authorities

The current regulations for the standardization of place names (geographical names) were passed by government resolution 31 May 1957. This requires place names to be standardized

on the basis of the local dialect, bearing in mind general orthographical rules.

Norway has had place name advisers with a linguistic background since the end of the last century. Today there are two advisers for Norwegian, one each for Bokmål and Nynorsk, (the two official Norwegian languages), two for Lappish, (one each for Northern and

Southern Lappish), and two additional advisers whose function is to deal with appeal cases. The Norwegian Language Council, which has a general mandate to make decisions concerning questions of language, makes public recommendations in a number of place name matters, e.g. in the naming of streets and oil-fields.

The normal procedure for establishing the spelling of a place name is that the public body which is to use the name makes a ruling based on the recommendations of the place name advisers. The State Office of Cartography is responsible for the vast majority of names which need to be standardized. Local councils rule on the spelling of the names of roads and institutions which fall within their jurisdiction. A public body can change the spelling of a name at any time as long as this conforms with current regulations. The Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs has the supreme authority and makes decisions in disputed cases. Parliament (Stortinget) or the Government decide on the names of administrative units.

As a principle the latest edition of the maps published by the State Office of Cartography can be regarded as giving the official version of the place names concerned. When the maps are revised the place names are re-examined and any necessary changes are made to bring them in line with the current regulations. During the process of revision new names are added and thus receive official status.

Proposals for new regulations for the standardization of place names were presented in 1983. Among the important suggestions made was that the University of Oslo and the three regional universities (Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) should share the responsibility for the name advisory service. It was also suggested that a central register of all officially recognized place names should be established. One of the significant questions was whether decisions on the writing of place names (standardization) should be the responsibility of the state or the local councils. The Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs is expected to propose a new law for debate in Parliament within the near future.

e) Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

The decree from 1957 (see note (d) above) applies to standardization and decisions regarding the spelling of place names. The State Office of Cartography has internal guidelines for the editing of names on official maps, which state that traditional names should be used as far as it is practicable to do so. The main series of maps has a short list of the most important name elements in Norwegian and Lappish with the English translations.

At the instigation of the United Nations Economic and Social Council a set of guidelines for the establishing of place names on maps was published entitled "Toponymic guidelines for cartography - Norway (E/Conf. 74/L.16. June 1982)".

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Among other public bodies which follow their own guidelines for the use of names is the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate with regard to the names of oilfields. The Norwegian Polar Research Institute, under the authorization of the Ministry of Industry, administrates the naming of features in the Norwegian polar regions. The Geological Survey of Norway has published a handbook for establishing the names of geological formations (1986). The The Ministry of the Environment has published a handbook for local councils (1987) in which it is recommended that the names of roads and streets are based on traditional, local names. A comprehensive list of English names and terms from public and private activity appeared in 1984.

9. Exonyms

a) Categories and degree of use of exonyms

In Norway exonyms are largely used of countries, capital cities, the most important rivers and mountains etc. The names of the newer nations and entities tend to be written according to the conventions of the country concerned, but using the Latin alphabet. The use of diacritical marks presents special problems.

b) Principles for reducing exonyms

During recent years Norway has pursued a conscious policy of reducing the number of exonyms, while at the same time retaining those which have gone into general use. This work is the responsibility of the Norwegian Language Council. The Language Council is currently working on a large scale list of foreign geographical names in which the spelling is to conform to the spelling used in the country in question to the extent that this can be expressed by the Latin alphabet. Diacritical marks are also to be used where appropriate.

c) Provisional list of exonyms

In 1970 a list of Scandinavian transliterations of Russian names was published. The third edition of a list of Scandinavian names of states and nationalities appeared in 1987.

11. Writing systems and guides to pronunciation

d) Research and experiments in assistining in name pronunciation

(See notes 11 a-b-c below)

Norwegian place names should be written in accordance with the current regulations governing the spelling of place names, but at the same time characteristics of the local dialect should be represented. A speaker pronounces a name more or less according to his dialect, but in some cases a standardized pronunciation is required, e.g. in the news bulletins and the weather forecast. Norwegian has two pitch accents and this causes some problems in the pronunciation of names. The special conditions prevailing with regard to the Norwegian language have made it difficult to

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reach agreement on norms of pronunciation for geographical names. However, name researchers in Norway are dealing with the problem of how to standardize the pronunciation of place names.

The Toponymic Guidelines mentioned above, (see note 5 (e)) contains a list which gives the principles of standard pronunciation of Norwegian names and appellatives on Norwegian maps. The list includes an overview of Lappish appellatives in accordance with the official spelling. A number of important names are listed with the correct pronunciation in the Norwegian Pronouncing Dictionary, (Norsk uttaleordbok 1969).

The Norwegian Place Name Dictionary, (Norsk stadnamleksikon), third edition 1986, gives the local dialect pronunciation of 5-6000 of the most common geographical names in Norway. In addition the dictionary suggests a standardized pronunciation of a number of names.

Large scale registers of names and gazetteers do not normally contain information on pronunciation. The computerized register which is in the process of being compiled by the State Office of Cartography will not, if present plans are implemented, contain information on pronunciation. It is, however, intended that there should be a section giving general information about the pronunciation of Norwegian, e.g. g and k before a velar vowel, close and open o, etc.

(AD COMMITTEE II: TECHNICAL PROGRAMMES)

6. Toponymic data files

a) Data collection procedures

In an outline on the future map system, (Norsk kartplan 2, NOU 1983: 46), proposals are presented for the compilation and maintenance of two types of computerized name register (see 5 a) above):

1) A register of all names on official maps. The updated version of this register would function as the register of officially recognized names.

2) A register of all Norwegian place names.

The State Office of Cartography will be responsible for the computerized registration of names on maps. The coordinates of the feature in question are registered by means of digital techniques. So far the work has been mainly the concern of the Land Map Division, but the Hydrographic Division and the regional County Offices of Cartography are also involved in the computerized registration of place names. It is planned that the work of the different offices should be coordinated.

Computerized registration of place names which do not appear on maps is the responsibility of the research institutions concerned /...

together with the county cartographical offices.

b) Data elements required

The following information should be included in the register of names on maps:

- 1) The official form of the name
- 2) Type of feature
- 3) Administrative location
- 4) Map number/name
- 5) Map reference for the centre of the feature
- 6) Map reference for the position of the name

The same items, with the exception of number 6, are required for the computerizing of place names for scientific purposes. The latter also registers the local pronunciation (in phonetic spelling.) inflected forms, information about tradition, name and year of birth of informant, name of the registering officer and date of registration. Other information can also be added.

c) ADP systems

The data base for the map name register, which has been planned by the Land Map Division of the State Office of Cartography, will need a capacity of 400-500 million bytes. The work of registration will be done using a Nord 100 computer, while handling the data base itself will require a Nord 500 computer. It will be possible for public bodies and private individuals to use the data base by following a special procedure either incorporating the use of the telephone or by on-line access.

Several software packages have been developed for the work of registration for scientific purposes and these are adapted for use on personal computers with disk drives or harddisks. The material which is collected by the various institutions will gradually be added to the national data base which will be available to relevant users.

d) Compatibility and structure of systems

The hardware and software which are to be used in the computer registering of place names should, in principle, be IBM-compatible. Although this has not yet been achieved, the long term plan is to bring it about so that the computer data register of place names is available on a national computer network.

e) National gazetteers

The largest register of place names was made by the US Army Map Service in 1957 and comprised about 200,000 names on the older series of main topographical maps (M711 series 1:50 000) by the State Office of Cartography, (Norwegian Geographical Survey). In 1977 the US Army Map Service made another register comprising roughly 36,000 names (M1501 series 1:250 000 map series). An updated register is now in the process of being compiled by the Land Map Division from the new edition of the M711 series and /...

this will contain roughly 0.5 million place names. So far about 150 000 names have been registered in the counties of Østfold, Akershus, Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Aust-Agder.

From 1987 all newly produced maps will have an alphabetical register of place names printed on the back.

The State Office of Cartography, Hydrographic Division, issues sea charts, but these are not computerized. The name registers in the latest edition of the coastal pilot information (Den norske los) is, however, in the process of being computerized.

About 9 000 place names are used in the Norwegian polar regions chiefly in Svalbard. Of these roughly 6,000 have been published, mostly in "Place Names of Svalbard" (1942). The remainder are registered on filing cards. The Norwegian Polar Research Institute is in the process of transferring all this material to computer data.

A law passed in 1978 requires that all properties, addresses and buildings be gradually added to the national computerized register (GAB). This register is primarily for use within the administration and has not been published. Due to insufficient consultative capacity and lack of legislation the material has not been checked with regard to linguistic form. This problem will be discussed if Parliament passes a place name law.

f) Other publications

The Postal Directorate has for a number of years published a booklet of street names in Norway. A revised and computerized version of this will be published during 1987 and will contain approximately 40,000 names.

The Norwegian Place Name Inventory (Norsk stedsfortegnelse, 1972) which is also published by the Directorate of Postal Services, is a manually compiled list of over 150,000 names of farms and centres of population in the country.

The register of Norwegian Farm Names (Norske Gaardnavne, Register 1936) contains about 66,000 names with references to volume and page. Concerning Norwegian Place Name Dictionary see 11 d) above.

Most registers of names which are published today are made with the aid of computers. This includes the map name register published by the cartographical department of the private publishers Cappelen. Some of the forms in this register do not conform to official standardization.

7. Terminology in the standardization of geographical names

In Norway the terms "stadnamn" (in Nynorsk) and "stedsnavn" (in Bokmål) are usually used of geographical names. In a government report on the standardization of geographical names (Stadnamn, NOU 1983:6) place names are defined as "the names of territorial lines, points or areas which have been or can be

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marked on a map". The most important terms in the field of place name research and standardization can be found in a list of Norwegian name terminology (Fagordliste for norsk namnegransking 1981).

A place name that has been agreed upon and adopted for use by a public body in accordance with current regulations is deemed to be official.

COMMITTEE III (INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES)

10. Features beyond a single sovereignty

a) Policies, procedures and cooperative arrangements

According to the present regulations the establishing of names is the responsibility of the individual department (or subordinated offices) concerned and there is, therefore, no separate body which functions as central coordinator or board for this work, but the Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs passes resolutions on matters of principle. The majority of public bodies, though not all, consult the state advisers on place names or the Norwegian Language Council about the establishing of names offshore and in the polar regions, (the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, the Norwegian Polar Research Institute). In principle the guiding policy is to use Norwegian names in these areas, but at the same time allowances are made for international use. Such considerations have been particularly noticeable in the naming of fishing banks and oilfields in the North Sea.

b) Features common to two or more nations

The form Skagerrak, instead of the traditional Norwegian Skagerak, is an example of a name which is shared by different countries. Fisker and Dogger are further examples of commonly agreed forms referring to areas in the North Sea which are now used instead of the earlier Norwegian forms Fiskerbank and Doggerbank. Such forms are few in number.

c-d) Maritime and undersea features

Oilfields tend to be given names taken from Norse Mythology, Norwegian fairy-tales and Norwegian fauna. There is a conscious effort to base name giving on national tradition. Some of the first oilfields close to the British zone, were, however, given English names, like Cod and Bream.

d) Extraterrestrial features

Not relevant.

11. Writing systems and guides to pronunciation

a) Romanization

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Norway follows international practice in the romanization of geographical names in non-Latin alphabets. Lappish is written in the Latin alphabet with the addition of a few diacritical marks.

c-d) Not relevant.

12. Toponymic education and practice, and international cooperation

a) Existing education and practice

The universities run courses in the collection of, use of and research into place names. Some masters degree students and research fellows specialize in the field of standardization. University staff run courses in the registering of place names for amateur volunteers in various parts of the country.

The State Office of Cartography trains field workers in the registration of place names on the map. The state advisers on names have given an introductory course for cartographers in the basic linguistic principles behind this work.

b) Training courses in toponomy

As the registration of place names has gradually become more organized the number of training courses has increased, though this process has to some extent been hampered by lack of funds and shortage of qualified personnel. The aim is to establish a system of training courses in every county in which the local council would be the smallest administrative unit.

In the handbook for addresses mentioned above (see point 5 c) it is recommended that local council personnel be trained in the techniques of establishing place names of e.g. streets, institutions etc.

c) Exchange of advice and information

Research institutions in Norway collaborate with their counterparts in other countries, especially in the other Scandinavian countries.

d) Exchange of personnel

There is no organized exchange programme for place name researchers, but individuals occasionally visit their counterparts in universities in other countries.

e) Technical assistance

So far there has been no call for technical or professional assistance from other countries, but the Department of Name Research at the University of Oslo is willing to give assistance as far as its resources allow.

f) Cooperation with international organizations

There is a great deal of cooperation within Scandinavia under the auspices of the Nordic Committee for Cooperation in Name Research (NORNA) in which all the Scandinavian countries are represented. A sub-committee deals with questions to do with computerized registration of names. Norway is also represented on the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS).

g) Cooperation with public information media

The practical and scientific work of registration and use of names and their linguistic implications is often published in scientific and popular journals, newspapers and through broadcasting. The press department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also conveys some research information to other countries. (END)
