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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

National report of Bulgaria concerning its work on standardization
of geographical names for the period from 1982-1987

Paper submitted by Bulgaria

* E/CONF.79/1.

At the sixth meeting of the tenth regional group (East-Central and South-East Europe) held at Warsaw in 1982, the member States of the Group adopted a decision to entrust Bulgaria with responsibility for its chairmanship. Bulgaria has assumed this responsibility after the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names was held at Geneva in 1982. All materials of the Conference relating to the standardization of geographical names within the countries of the tenth regional group were circulated among them with a view to considering them at the seventh meeting of the Group held at Sofia in 1983 and the preparation for the Group's participation in the eleventh session of the Group of Experts held at Geneva in 1984. Bulgaria attended the eleventh session of the Group of Experts and submitted to it summarized materials on behalf of the tenth regional group (working papers Nos. 2, 3 and 4). Bulgaria has since continued to co-ordinate the work on the standardization of geographical names within the tenth regional group and at the twelfth session of the Group of Experts introduced the summarized report of its Group concerning its work for the period up to the session as well as its views on documents No. 24 of the eleventh session of the Group of Experts and E/CONF.74/L.112/1982.

From 1982 to 1987 Bulgaria convened two meetings of the tenth regional group at Sofia (in 1983 and 1987). In the view of the member States of the tenth regional group, reflected in the minutes of the meetings, the organization of work was excellent, commendable work was done at the meetings and throughout the period under review all countries of the Group worked diligently in accordance with the resolutions of the Conference and carried out the tasks set in the field of standardization of geographical names.

In conformity with the recommendations of the eighth meeting of the tenth regional group, each country in its national report will dwell on the lists of geographical names published before the Fifth United Nations Conference. In compliance with this recommendation and summing up its publishing activity, Bulgaria will report to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to the effect that it has published 48 lists of Bulgarian-transcribed geographical names of the following countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Andora, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Byelorussian SSR, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia; the provinces and territories of Australia, Canada and China, and the republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Lists of geographical names of Argentina, Canada, Iceland and Japan will be published in 1987.

Work in this field is proceeding in a normal manner, and no fewer than four lists of geographical names of the world's countries will be printed each year.

The first edition of Bulgaria's gazetteer was issued in 1972. The second edition has already been drafted on the basis of a map with scale 1:300,000. It is now being up-dated since the process of urbanization has greatly affected the change in category of several population centres. The changed geographical names of other population centres was the result of their growth. Bulgaria's gazetteer contains the names of administrative units, population centres, orthographical entities (mountains, peaks etc.), hydrogeographical entities (rivers, lakes etc.) and the names of historical sites, protected areas and reservations. Bulgarian geographical names written in Latin are also given in the gazetteer. The up-dating of the gazetteer, which is to be published next year, should be completed by the end of 1987.

As was mentioned in other reports of Bulgaria, in 1964 a specially authorized organ was established whose principal objective is the standardization of geographical names of countries and of the world. It is called the Council for Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names at the Chief Bureau for Geodesy and Cartography which is part of the Committee for Territorial and Settlement Management. The Council consists of 30 expert cartographers, linguists, geographers, historians as well as representatives from the leading mass media (radio, television, etc.) and publishing houses in Bulgaria. The Council functions according to an approved year plan which is in conformity with the requirements of cartographic editions and other publishing houses. All questions pertaining to the standardization of geographical names are addressed at the meetings of the Council whose decisions are binding for all national agencies.

The normative documents for the work of the Council are the Guide governing its activities, the up-dated version of which appeared in the National Gazette in 1983, and the General Directive on Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names (second and revised edition of 1983). Being prepared as a new normative document is the Toponymic Handbook of Bulgaria, which in its first drafting was modeled not only on already adopted normative documents but also on the Toponymic Handbook of Austria. To some extent, the drafting of the Handbook has been facilitated by the absence of minority languages in Bulgaria and the presence of firmly fixed norms of the official language. Thus the existence of dialects and their distribution can only be the subject of reference books and dialectal atlases.

The work on reducing the number of exonyms is proceeding together with work on drawing up a list of the names of States in the world. All names in that list have been co-ordinated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In any case, wherever tradition does not play that important a role, exonyms have been replaced by official national names. For example, instead of the until recently used names of Venetzuella, Gvatemala, Paragvay and Urugvay, now Venezuela, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay figure in the list which is binding for all Bulgarian agencies. Instead of the name Ivory Coast, Côte d'Ivoire is now listed, and in place of the Green Cape Islands, we now have Cape Verde. Tradition, however, has been upheld in the names of several capitals or cities such as Rim (Roma), Parizh (Paris), Lisabon (Lisboa), Florentzia (Firenze) etc. The need for tradition to be maintained is that these proper nouns already have their derivatives (adjectives and common nouns) which have a lasting place in the official language and cannot now be altered. Perhaps, with the passage of time these traditional forms will gradually give way under the influence of national forms.

The list of names of States in the world will be by the year end supplemented by the names of large orthographical and hydrogeographical entities in the world with a view to expanding its informational load and will see the light next year.

Next year's plan for the standardization of geographical names also envisages drawing up a list of Bulgarian exonyms on the basis of all previously existing lists of geographical names.

During the period 1982-1987 the officials of the Council for Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names assisted many publishing houses in editing reference books and other books containing geographical names, published in newspapers and magazines materials relating to the standardization and advocated the unification of geographical names in all Bulgarian publications. The officials of the Council have permanently monitored the implementation of its recommendations and decisions. In cases of non-implementation, appropriate measures have been mapped out to redress the consequences of improper use of certain names.

In conclusion, it can be noted that a solid basis has been established in Bulgaria for the standardization of geographical names which will facilitate further progress in this area. One should also take note of the close co-operation of Bulgaria with the countries of the tenth regional group which is having a particularly beneficial effect on speeding up work on the standardization of geographical names in those countries. The concerted solution of many problems allows for an accelerated progress and most rational results. Such co-operation can be promoted on a larger scale not only for the purposes of standardization of geographical names but for the sake of achieving mutual understanding and the peaceful and fruitful settlement of many problems.
