



Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.79/INF/38
19 August 1987

ENGLISH ONLY

Fifth United Nations Conference
on the Standardization of
Geographical Names
Montreal, 18-31 August 1987
Item 11(a) of the provisional agenda*

WRITING SYSTEMS AND GUIDES TO PRONUNCIATION
ROMANIZATION

Conversion of the Greek alphabet into Latin characters

Paper submitted by Greece and Cyprus

* E/CONF.79/1.

CONVERSION OF THE GREEK ALPHABET INTO LATIN

CHARACTERS

Paper presented by Greece and Cyprus

1. Eversince the Second U.N. Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names, the conversion of the Greek alphabet into Latin characters has been on the agenda of the U.N. conferences and UNGEGN sessions.

2. The Second Conference (1972) considered a comparative study on the conversion of the Greek alphabet, prepared by the Group of Experts. The representatives of Greece and Cyprus undertook to submit to a next session of the Group of Experts a joint proposal. During subsequent sessions of the UNGEGN, detailed discussions were held on the proposed conversion system, particularly during the 5th (1973) and the 9th (1981) sessions. Suggestions made within the Group of Experts by users, were subsequently conveyed to the appropriate standardization authorities in Greece and Cyprus (donors). Given the complexities presented by the long tradition of the conversion of the Greek alphabet--going back to the Roman times--and the use of various systems both by users and within the donor countries, it was decided to adopt a conversion system which, with the minimum use of diacritics, would be applicable to transcription and transliteration requirements. Finally, in 1982, the Greek National Standardization Organization (GNSO) adopted a conversion system which was endorsed by both the governments of Greece and Cyprus. This system was submitted to the Fourth Conference (E/CONF.74/L.85), was discussed during the 10th and 11th sessions of UNGEGN, and the Greek expert indicated

that the system will be presented for adoption at the Fifth Conference.

3. The principles on which the new conversion system of the Greek alphabet were based, may be summarised as follows:

- a. Consideration of the needs of both donors and users.
- b. Equitable service of the requirements of phonetic transcription and reversible transliteration.
- c. The application of absolute reversibility, obtainable even by electronic processes, with a minimum use of diacritics (only one).

As a result, the new system may be applied to international cartography, administrative requirements (passports, identity cards e.t.c.), library uses, and documentation of Greek names and texts of both classical and modern Greek.

4. Despite the difficulties presented by the use of a number of conversion systems within the donor countries, Greece and Cyprus are now in the position to show an extensive acceptance and use of the new system, both in cartography and in the administration.

a. In Greece the system worked out by the National Standardization Organization, as Greek standard No. 743, was sanctioned by a government act published in the Government Gazette (No. 579B, 7.10.1983). Furthermore, the Ministry by the Prime Minister issued circular No. YAP/P06.3/3480/16.4.1987 to all ministries, government departments and agencies instructing them to apply the conversion system to all appropriate cartographic and administrative cases. As a result, various government agencies issued orders for immediate application, such as, the Ministry of Interior for passports and identity cards,

the Ministry of Public Works for road and town signs, the National Tourist Organization for tourist maps and publications, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for passports and use by the European Communities' translation services. Important progress was reported in the field of cartography. Thus:

--The Hellenic Geographic Service, used the new Greek conversion standard on its new Road and Administrative Boundaries Map of Greece (scale 1:1,000,000), as well as on all new sheets of various scales (a copy of the above map of Greece and a 1:50,000 scale map of the district of Olympia are attached). Work had already started for a computerized conversion to the new system of the Gazetteer of Greek Geographic Names.

--The Hellenic Hydrographic Service is using, since 1985, the new system in all its new editions or revisions of its nautical charts (samples, at the Greek stand of the cartographic exhibition of the Conference)

---The Organization of the Municipal Transport of Athens has published the new city plan with the new system (samples on exhibit

b. In Cyprus the new system has already been used in:

--A Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus, presented to the Fourth Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names. (over 2000 entries).

--The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus, 1987, (about 65,000 entries)

--Town maps for Lefkosia and Larnaka

--Cyprus Administration and Road Map, scale 1:250,000 (English edition)

--A Visitor's Map of Cyprus, scale 1:400,000 (English edition)

CONVERSION TABLE

Greek character and combination of characters	Conversion into Latin Transcription Translitteration	Footnotes	Pronunciation according to the phonetic alphabet
A, α (AI, αι) ⁽⁵⁾ (AI, άι) (AI, αϊ) AY, αυ	a ai ái aī (av af v	a ai ái aī av af v	a e ai ai av af v y ng g ⁽³⁾ (ng ⁽⁴⁾ , ⁽⁵⁾
B, β Γ, γ ΓΓ, γγ (ΓΚ, γκ)	g ng gk	g ng gk	ng g ⁽³⁾ (ng ⁽⁴⁾ , ⁽⁵⁾
Ξ, ξ ΓΧ, γχ Δ, δ Ε, ε (ΕΙ, ει) (ΕΙ, έι) (ΕΙ, εϊ) ΕΥ, ευ	nx nch d e ei éi eī (ev ef	nx nch d e ei éi eī ev ef	nx y z e i ei ei ei ev ef
Ζ, ζ Η, η ΗΥ, ηυ	z i (iv if	z i iv if	z i iv if
Θ, θ Ι, ι Κ, κ Λ, λ Μ, μ ΜΗ, μη	th i k l m (b mp	th i k l m b mp	z i iv if i k l m b mb
Ν, ν (ΝΤ, ντ) Ξ, ξ Ο, ο (ΟΙ, οι) (ΟΙ, όι) (ΟΙ, οϊ) ΟΥ, ου Π, π Ρ, ρ Σ, σ, ς Τ, τ Υ, υ (ΥΙ, υι) Φ, φ Χ, χ Ψ, ψ Ω, ω	n nt x o oi ói oī ou p r s t y yi f ch ps o	n nt x o oi ói oī ou p r s t y yi f ch ps o	n nd ⁽³⁾ , nd ⁽⁴⁾ , ⁽⁵⁾ x o i oi oi u p r s, z ⁽⁶⁾ t i i f x ps o

1. Before the consonants β, γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ, and all vowels
2. Before the consonants θ, κ, ξ, π, σ, τ, φ, χ, ψ and at the end of the word
3. At the beginning of the word
4. In the middle of the word
5. At the end of the word
6. The combinations in parentheses are included in the table just to be clear because they are converted according to the conversion rules of each character they consist of
7. Only for information. It is not part of the standard
8. Before the consonants β, γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ.

Note: Accents are transcribed optionally by (´) . Spiritus/apostrophe/iota subscript are not transcribed.