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

Report of Greece

Paper submitted by Greece

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REPORT OF GREECE

In Greece there is no governmental agency for the centralized function of collection, registration and standardization of all types of geographical names. However, according to the type of toponym (inhabited places, geographical features, odonyms etc), standardization is accomplished by the work of a number of different authorities and coordinating bodies as described in this report.

A Working Group for the Standardization of Geographical Names, consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and governmental cartographic organizations, was established in July 1997. The primary task of this Working Group is to study the status, structure and function of a National Committee on Geographical Names and propose amendments to existing national legislation for the enhancement of the recommendations of the UN for the Standardization of Geographical Names. Another task of this Working Group is the promotion of the coordination of the various national authorities, currently involved in the standardization of geographical names, according to existing laws and practice that will continue until this legislation will be revised.

Toponyms of inhabited places.

The duty of determination of official geographical names rests with the Ministry of Interior. The decision is normally taken after a recommendation of the *Committee of Toponyms*, consisting of representatives from: the Directorate of Toponyms of the Ministry of Interior, regional and local authorities, governmental cartographic agencies and linguists from the academic community. This committee considers proposals for new names, usually submitted by local authorities, from the linguistic, aesthetic, social and historical aspect and recommends their approval or rejection.

Geographical names of regions, departments and provinces are usually determined by the Ministry of Interior, without a relevant recommendation of the committee of toponyms.

Toponyms of geographical features.

Toponyms of geographical features such as mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, gulfs, bays, capes etc., are collected and registered by the two governmental cartographic agencies namely the Hellenic Military Geographic Service (HMGS) and the Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service (HNHS). The two agencies coordinate their work for the proper depiction of these toponyms on maps and charts, the development of toponymic data files and the publication of relevant gazetteers. The final decision for the determination of the official names of these features rests with the ministry of interior after a recommendation of the above-mentioned committee of toponyms.

Odonyms and other microtoponyms.

Odonyms and other microtoponyms (squares, parks etc.) within the area of jurisdiction of municipalities are determined by decisions of the council of the elected representatives of the local municipalities.

Maritime and undersea feature names.

The standardization of maritime and undersea feature names in Greece needs a significant amount of work (coastline of more than 16.000 kms, multitude of islands, islets and sea rocks (approx. 9.500), gulfs and bays (approx. 1.300), straits and channels (161), harbors and ports (500). For the proper depiction of these names in nautical charts HNHS has developed a **maritime toponymic database**, consisting of approximately 10.000 entries (gulfs, bays, capes, islands, islets, rocks and undersea features) of Greek coasts and territorial seas.

The names of undersea features included in this database are exclusively those adopted by the GEBCO Sub-committee on Geographical Names and Nomenclature of Ocean Bottom Features and approved by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), particularly those shown on the International Bathymetric Chart of the Mediterranean and the IHO publication B06.

National Cartographic Programs.

The official maps and charts of Greece are produced by the Hellenic Military Geographic Service and the Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service.

Since the last national report of Greece during the fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal 1987) HMGS has revised 225 sheets of 1:50.000 land maps; HNHS has published 70 nautical charts at various scales as new charts (33) and new editions (29) including 8 International Charts according to the relevant cartographic program of the International Hydrographic Organization for the Mediterranean and Black Seas area.

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors.

A new edition of the *toponymic guidelines for map and other editors* has been published in 1997 by the Working Group for the Standardization of Geographical Names. This edition supersedes the previous one presented in 1981 during the 9th session of the UNGEGN (1981).

Toponymic data files and gazetteers.

In 1997 Hellenic Military Geographic Service announced a new edition of the **Gazetteer of Greece** initially published in middle eighties. This gazetteer consists of three volumes and includes approximately 90.000 geographical names shown on the 1:50.000 land maps; it is available in both Greek and Romanized versions. The corresponding toponymic data file is permanently updated to conform to the latest editions of 1:50.000 land maps.

A toponymic data file of the Administrative Division of Greece has been created by the Working Group for the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1997. Based on this data the working group has published the «Administrative Division of Greece in Regions, Departments, Provinces and Municipalities» consisting of biscriptual (Greek and Romanized) lists of geographical names of Regions, Departments, Provinces and municipalities.