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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION: OFFICE TREATMENT OF NAMES

Main Provisions of the Law of the Russian Federation
"on Naming of Geographic Features "

Paper submitted by Russia**

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MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE LAW OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION “ON NAMING OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES”

The State Duma adopted the Federal Law “On naming of geographical features” by its Resolution from March 19, 1997, and passed it on to the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. In November 1997, the Law was considered by the conciliatory committee of the two chambers.

The Law establishes the legislative basis for geographical naming and renaming, and for the standardization, usage, handling and storage of geographical names as a constituent part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in the Russian Federation.

The Law includes 14 articles. The first article provides the main notions applied in the Law (geographical features, naming of geographical features, establishment of the unified usage of names of geographical features, standardization of geographical names),

The second article states that the legislation of the Russian Federation on naming of geographical features is based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation. It comprises the present Law and other laws and legislative acts adopted in compliance with the Law.

The third article deals with the Law application. In particular, it indicates that the Law is applied to the activity in establishing, standardization, usage, inventory, storage of the names of the Russian Federation, continental shelf and areas of economic interest to the Russian Federation, as well as of the geographical features discovered or investigated by the Russian explorers in the offshores and Antarctica, unless other is envisaged by international agreements of the Russian Federation. However, the Law is not applied to names of extraterrestrial bodies and the features residing on them, as well as to the features within towns and other populated places.

The fourth article refers the following directions of geographical names activity to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation:

- to determine the state policy in naming of geographical features;
- geographical naming and renaming;
- to establish the unified requirements, norms and rules for geographical naming;
- to develop and maintain the National Catalogue of geographical names;
- to determine the federal executive body to carry out naming of geographical features;
- to establish the procedure to fund the work relating to geographical naming;
- international co-operation of the Russian Federation in naming of geographical features.

The Government is to determine the terms of reference of the federal executive authority, that is engaged in naming of geographical features, as well as the order to adopt and make valid the legislative acts (guidelines, manuals, etc.) developed by this authority, which set up the unified requirements, norms and rules for naming of geographical features (articles 5 and 6.)

Articles 7 and 8 stipulate the guiding principles for determining the available names, naming and renaming, standardization and usage of geographical names.

Article 9 establishes the procedure to name and rename geographical features. In particular, it points out that naming or renaming of the capitals or administrative centers of the subjects of the Russian Federation is performed by federal acts.

Naming of the other features of the Russian Federation, and continental shelf, and areas of economic interest to the Russian Federation, as well as of the geographical features discovered or investigated by the Russian explorers in the offshores and Antarctica is performed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The Law entrusts the federal executive authorities, the executive authorities in the subjects of the Russian Federation, public organizations, juridical persons, citizens of the Russian Federation, with the right to submit proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features. Thereto, the procedure of submitting and considering these proposals is established. Their scientific examination, accounting for the local population opinion, and estimation of the required costs is envisaged.

According to article 10 of the Law, the available or new place-names are liable to inventory, that is the responsibility of the federal executive authorities within their terms of reference. They also compile and publish dictionaries and reference-books on geographical names, as well as release maps and atlases. To provide for the unified and stable usage of geographical names in the Russian Federation and their storage, the Law envisages the development of the National Catalogue of geographical names. The development of the Catalogue is the responsibility of the federal executive authority engaged in naming of geographical features.

Geographical names are the part of historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation, and they are protected by the state, The Law provides for administrative and other responsibility for random replacement of geographical names and use of distorted names.

The Law envisages financing the activities in establishing and standardization of geographical names, compilation and publication of dictionaries and reference-books in the state language of the Russian Federation by the funds from the federal budget allocated to the executive authorities, engaged in the mentioned activities within their terms of reference.

The similar activities in the languages of the republics within the Russian Federation or in the other languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation are funded by the subjects of the Russian Federation interested in these activities.

Renaming of geographical features by the submissions of the authorities of the subjects constituting the Russian Federation will be carried at the expense of the appropriate subjects of the Russian Federation.

In case the proposal on renaming is submitted by the federal executive authority, the renaming is carried at the expense of the funds from the federal budget allocated to the appropriate federal executive authority.

Articles 13 and 14 of the Law define the procedure to establish compliance of legislative acts to the Law and its making valid.

A brief account of the main provisions of the Law proves that its implementation will require that the Government of the Russian Federation will adopt the package of legislative acts to detail the procedure of treating the proposals on geographical naming and renaming, development and introduction of normative documents, inventory and storage of geographical names, control of their protection and correct usage in the Russian Federation, and maintenance of the National Catalogue of geographical names. The programme for immediate steps to prepare the drafts of these legislative acts has been adopted at the sixth meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on geographical names. The programme implementation has been started.

MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE LAW OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION “ON NAMING OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES”

SUMMARY

In 1997, the Federal Law “On naming of geographical features” was adopted in Russia. The Law establishes the legislative basis for geographical naming and renaming, and for the standardization, usage, handling and storage of geographical names as a constituent part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in the Russian Federation.

The report covers the structure of the Law and its main provisions. The following directions of geographical names activity are considered as the main:

- to determine the state policy in naming of geographical features;
- geographical naming and renaming;
- to establish the unified requirements, norms and rules for geographical naming;
- to develop and maintain the National Catalogue of geographical names;
- to determine the federal executive body to carry out naming of geographical features;
- to establish the procedure to fund the work relating to geographical naming;
- international co-operation of the Russian Federation in naming of geographical features.

To implement the Law, the Government of the Russian Federation will adopt the package of legislative acts to detail the procedure of treating the proposals on geographical naming and renaming, development and introduction of normative documents, inventory and storage of geographical names, control of their protection and correct usage in the Russian Federation, and maintenance of the National Catalogue of geographical names. The programme for immediate steps to prepare the drafts of these legislative acts has been adopted at the sixth meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on geographical names. The programme implementation has been started.