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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 for Switzerland

Paper submitted by Switzerland**

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Report for Switzerland

1. National and Regional Geographical Names Authorities

On the level of the Federal Government the legal bases for the standardization of geographical names in Switzerland are the following:

- i) Bundesratsbeschluss über Orts-, Gemeinde- und Stationsnamen vom 30. Dezember 1970 (Decree of the Federal Council concerning the names of populated places, communities and stations as of 30 December 1970);
- ii) Richtlinien über die Festsetzung und Schreibweise von Stationsnamen und Namen von PTT-Dienststellen vom 1. März 1988 (Instructions for the fixing and writing of the names of stations and post offices as of 1 March 1988);
- iii) Weisungen für die Erhebung und Schreibweise der Lokalnamen bei Grundbuchvermessungen in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz vom 27. Oktober 1948 (Instruction for the collection and writing of local names for cadastral surveys in German-speaking Switzerland as of 27 October 1948);
- iv) Weisungen betreffend die Schreibweise von Gemeindenamen; Bestandteil des Amtlichen Gemeindeverzeichnisses der Schweiz (Instruction for the writing of community names; a part of the official Gazetteer of Community Names).

On the lower level 6 out of 26 Cantons have issued additional decrees on the collection and writing of local names for their territory.

In Switzerland there is quite an interest in toponymy but more on the local and cantonal than on the national level. 'There is no national names authority yet, as the Federal decree does not provide for such a body, but instead for a toponymy commission in each Canton. 20 of them have installed a small committee. In the 6 others some experts are officially charged with the standardization of names. These Cantonal Names Commissions function to everybody's satisfaction.

On the national level the following federal governmental offices have responsibilities in names standardization:

- Federal Office of Topography (names in the national topographical map series)
- Directorate of Cadastral Surveys (names in the large scale cadastral plans and in the digital cadastral data base)
- Federal Office of Statistics (gazetteer of administrative units)
- Federal Office of 'Traffic (names of the stations of the Swiss Railways and all other officially approved public transport systems, as well as post offices and post coach stations)
- Directorate for International Law in the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (names of foreign countries)

2. Data Bases of Geographical Names in Switzerland

The Federal Office of Topography continued to build up its Toponymic Data Base which will hold in storage all names contained in the National Topographic Map Series at the scales 1:25_000, 1:50_000, 1:100_000, 1:200_000, 1:500_000 and 1:1_000_000. Presently the data base consists of at least all names in the maps at 1:100_000 and smaller within the Swiss territory. The complete data base is supposed to hold some 250'000 names.

The list of data fields includes the following items:

- name, as written on the National Map;
 - altitude (of populated places with more than 100 inhabitants, mountain peaks, lakes, passes etc. only);
 - Y and X-coordinates in km (national coordinate system);
 - latitude and longitude in ... and ...;
 - numbers of the map sheets in which the name is contained;
 - statistical number of the Community to which the entity belongs
 - abbreviation of the Canton;
 - a feature code (in total 67 different feature classes)
- Additional items may be added in a later stage.

Toponymic data files can be purchased from the following organizations:

- Federal Office of Topography, CH-3084 Wabern (on Internet: <http://www.swisstopo.ch>): Toponymic Data Base (TOPNOM), extracts on request;

- Federal Office of Statistics, CH-3003 Berne (on Internet: <http://www.admin.ch/bfs/>): Amtliches Gemeindeverzeichnis der Schweiz (Official Gazetteer of the Communities in Switzerland).

3. Gazetteers and Publications

On the basis of the Toponymic Data Base (TOPNOM) a Concise Gazetteer of Switzerland will be developed including approximately 11'000 names as well as all communities.

The following is a list of available gazetteers for Switzerland:

- i) Bundesamt für Statistik / Office fédéral de la statistique: Amtliches Gemeindeverzeichnis der Schweiz / Liste officielle des communes de la Suisse / Elenco ufficiale dei comuni della Svizzera. - Bern / Berne, 1986, 203 p.
- ii) The Index to Stations (in Switzerland) in the official timetable, contains all stations with their official spelling:
Schweizerische Bundesbahnen / Chemins de fer fédéraux suisses / Ferrovie federali svizzere / Viafiero federalas svizras / Swiss Federal Railways ed.: Offizielles Kursbuch / Indicateur officiel / Orario ufficiale / Urari uffizial / Official Timetable, Bern / Berne / Berna, annual editions.
- iii) Geophysical version of the National Map at 1:1-000-000 with names index
- iv) National Maps at 1:200,000 in 2 sheets with names index for Swiss territory.
22 Cantons have detailed collections of names for their territories. There is intensive research work in toponymy going on, based on these files. The following local gazetteers and publications can be mentioned in this respect:
 - Weibel, Viktor: Namenkunde des Landes Schwyz. Studia Linguistica Alemanica, Frauenfeld, 1973.
 - Hammer, Thomas Arnold: Die Orts- und Flurnamen des St. Galler Rheintales. Studia Linguistica Alemanica, Frauenfeld, 1973.
 - von Planta, Kobert und Schorta, Andrea: Rätisches Namenbuch, Band I, 2.Aufl., Bern, 1979.
 - Ortsnamenbuch des Kantons Bern (A-K), Bern, 1976 und 1987.
 - Hug, Albert und Weibel Viktor: Urner Namenbuch, Band 1-4, Altdorf, 1988/91
 - Zehnder, Beat: Gemeindenamen des Kantons Aargau, Aarau, 1991.

- Dittli, Beat: Orts- und Flurnamen im Kanton Zug. Typologie, Chronologie, Siedlungsgeschichte. Altdorf und Zug, 1992.
- Waser, Erika: Luzerner Namenbuch 1,1 und 1,2: Hitzkirch, 1996.
- Walch, Gertrud: Orts- und Flurnamen des Kantons Glarus. Bausteine zu einem Glarner Namenbuch. Diss. Zurich. Schafthausen, 1996.

Work for more gazetteers is going on in several Cantons: Basle-Country, Berne, Glarus, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Schwyz, Thurgau, St. Gallen, Solothurn and Ticino.

4. Rheto-roman – the **fourth** Official Language **in** Switzerland

On March 10, 1996 the Swiss people accepted a new law, which aims at the preservation of the Rheto-roman language, which is spoken by some 40'000 inhabitants. The law states that Rheto-roman is a recognized official language for communication with members of the Rheto-roman speaking language community. There is, however, no direct influence of this new law on geographical names, because Rheto-roman names are official already since many decades. They were standardized based mainly on the gazetteer (Ratisches Namenbuch) edited by R. von Planta and A. Schorta.

5. Information **on** Name Changes

In our report to the 17th UNGEGN-Session there was a mistake concerning a name change of a district in the Grisons. Instead of «Kreis Müstair» and «Bezirk Müstair» it should read «Kreis Val Müstair» respectively «Bezirk Val Müstair». In the meantime another change in that region has been announced: the former «Kreis Lugnez» is officially called by the Rheto-roman/German double name «Kreis Lumnezia/Lugnez».

The community of «Vellerat» has been transferred from the Canton of Berne to the Canton Jura. The total number of communities in Switzerland has decreased from 2973 end of 1995 to 2924 in 1997. This reduction is mainly due to a major administrative restructuring in the Canton Thurgau.

6. International Cooperation

Internationally Switzerland has been active in the StAGN (Ständiger Ausschuss für Geographische Namen). Having no national names committee with official status in Switzerland, recruitment for participation in meetings and other activities happens on an ad-hoc basis and is supported only by the institution the respective participant belongs to. According to a mutual agreement, the editor of this report functions as a coordinator in national and international affairs concerning geographical names, with two alternatives in the Federal Office of Topography (Bundesamt für Landestopographie), Ing. géom. Jean-Claude Stotzer and Dipl. Ing. Martin Gurtner. Correspondence may therefore be addressed as follows:

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