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English only

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their
countries and on the progress made in the
standardization of geographical names since the
Seventh Conference**

Report of Germany

Submitted by Germany**

* E/CONF.94/1.

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(Permanent Committee on Geographical Names).

Background information

The permanent committee on geographical names

"Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen" (StAGN)

- *Historical sketch*

The „Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen“ (StAGN) (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) was established in 1959. StAGN is an independent scientific organization without sovereign functions. Within the German linguistic area it is the competent body responsible for elaborating on recommendations on the standardization of geographical names. To StAGN are affiliated in particular scientists and experts in practice from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and other German-speaking regions. They represent the technical fields of topography, cartography, geography and linguistics as well as institutions and administrations concerned with geographical names.

- *StAGN Secretariat*

The Secretariat of StAGN is located at the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (formerly: Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie / IFAG).

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- *Meetings*

StAGN was conducting regular meetings twice a year and held nine meetings since the Seventh Conference. Each meeting was attended by some 30 members and guests. The agendas included usually detailed reports and discussions on the items presented in detail below.

Representatives of Germany attended working meetings of the **Dutch- and German-speaking Division** (DGSD) of UNGEGN held in New York in 1998, in Maastricht in 1999, in New York in 2000, in Frankfurt am Main in 2000, and in Berlin in 2000. Chairmanship of DGSD was conferred in 2000 from Dr. Sievers, Germany, to Prof. Ormeling, The Netherlands.

Representatives of Germany participated in the **Sixth United Nations Conference** on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York in 1998 as well as in the 20th **UNGEGN Session** held in New York in 2000.

National goals and programmes

Digital databases and gazetteers

- *Gazetteer Germany*

In 1981 the first edition of the Gazetteer Federal Republic of Germany („West Germany“) was published by the Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie. It comprises of 21.500 geographical names contained on the General Topographic Map at 1:500 000 scale. The data was available in printed and digital form. After the German reunification in 1990 this dataset was supplemented by the geographical names of the five new Länder (federal states) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen, Sachsen and the eastern part of Berlin. The database was extended by recording some 25.000 additional names as rendered on the general topographic map at 1:250 000 scale. This dataset is marked GN250 and is available in digital form only. A derivative product of the Gazetteer Germany, marked GN1000, contains about 14 000 names of autonomous communes and administrative units.

- *Concise Gazetteer Germany*

In fulfilling Resolutions II/35 and V/16 of the Second and Fifth UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, a Concise Gazetteer Germany was compiled and presented at the Twentieth UNGEGN Session in 2000. The gazetteer comprises populated places of larger than 10.000 inhabitants, other places of cultural or touristic significance, lakes, streams, mountains and regions of major importance. The concise gazetteer contains an alphabetical list of some 1600 geographical features and a second part which lists systematically the names classified by features classes (populated places, hydrographic features, mountains, geographic regions). The Concise Gazetteer Germany is available on the Internet.

- *Data base of European geographical names*

There are a number of reasons why a European geographical names data base is necessary, and why the separate national names data bases should be integrated: 1.) Mobility within Europe necessitates a standard data base from which the required names information can be obtained to fuel routing operations. 2.) For administrative purposes, in view of the unification of Europe, a central data base would be required containing name versions that have been used in some official capacity in Europe over the last decades. At least a third of the European continent has changed in terms of political domination, and also with regard to its official names during this time. 3.) Coupled to these political vicissitudes, the extensive contacts between language communities in the past have lead to the

emergence of sets of exonyms for nearly every language community in Europe. This is, without a proper concordance, a setback for proper communication.

The data base should have the functionality to search for all attributes of the names, that is to search for: - endonyms alphabetically, - name elements, such as generics, - all names belonging to a specific language, - all names belonging to a specific area, - all names belonging to a specific names category, - all exonyms belonging to a specific language, - all names belonging to a specific level of hierarchy, - and to provide historical information on the time when name versions held official status.

A majorly important principle of the concept is that the access to the data base will be independent of a reference language. All endonyms will be equally listed as main entries. This will also strictly be applied to the various endonymic name forms of border-crossing geographical features as well as to officially approved names of minority languages in a country.

The project is being carried out at the Institute of Geography of the Humboldt University in Berlin and is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). A paper will be presented on that topic at the Eighth Conference.

- *List of geographical names of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic countries*

Supported by a grant of the German Research Foundation, a concise gazetteer was compiled comprising geographical features located in the Commonwealth of Independent States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan as well as in the Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The dictionary was published in autumn 2000 by the publishing house Dudenverlag, Mannheim.

The dictionary consists of the following parts: - A detailed Introduction; - The alphabetically ordered dictionary containing some 12 000 main entries and about 20 000 cross references; including general geographic information each main entry contains: the current original script of a name (as well as old forms of that script), a transliterated romanized form, the current transcription to the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, and the former Russian name (in Cyrillic letters); - A systematic list of administrative units of third order of all countries; - The alphabets of all languages and their transliteration tables to the Roman alphabet as well as their transcription tables to German; - Hints for pronunciation; - Bibliography.

- *Index of German-language Antarctic place-names*

The Digital Antarctic Names Data Base of German-language place-names, established and maintained at the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, includes the names of those Antarctic topographical and geographical features which have been first named in German since 1870. The first edition published as a hardcopy in 1988 was followed by three supplements. A second edition was published in 1993 which was up to now followed by eight further supplements. The Index containing some 700

entries is available on the Internet (http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/geoname-antarctic/geo_nam_ant_p1.html). It is integrated in an international project named Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica (CGA) under the auspices of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). The gazetteer is accessible through the Internet (www.pnra.it/scar_gaze) and downloadable as ARCIINFO export file by contacting Geoscience Australia's National Mapping Division www.auslig.gov.au/download/#Antarctic.

Orthographic reform of the German language

The reform became effective in the German-speaking countries and regions in 1998/1999. Geographical names will or can be affected by the reform as well. However, geographical names are similarly treated like personal names. That means that the spelling of a geographical name, or the change of a spelling, cannot be executed by simply applying the orthographic rule or by a decision of a names committee. In Germany in the case of names of populated places (about 250 000) the spelling of a name is in general officially stated by the respective commune. The communes are also responsible for some 3 million street names. In the case of hydrographic features (about 500 000) water economy authorities of the German states or other authorities are responsible. In the case of other regional geographic features (about 2 million) in general the land survey or cadastral offices are responsible.

In 1999 a working group was established to formulate a recommendation on the application of the reform to geographical names. The group was comprised of representatives from the Austrian and German land survey administrations, a member of the commission for the orthographic reform of the German language, and the chairman of StAGN. The group issued a recommendation that decidedly encouraged all responsible authorities to follow the rules of the reform and adapt name spellings accordingly where applicable. The text of the recommendation issued by StAGN is attached in English and German to the fourth edition of the Toponymic Guidelines Germany presented at the Eighth Conference.

Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

The first edition of Toponymic Guidelines Federal Republic of Germany was presented at the 9th Session of UNGEGN held at New York in 1981. Due to the German unification which took place in 1990, the guidelines were reviewed and a second edition was presented at the Sixth UN Conference held at New York in 1992. Work on a third edition was done due to a subsequent administrative reform which has been performed in the five new Länder (federal states) Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen and Sachsen. It was presented to the Seventh Conference in 1998.

The fourth edition takes into account the orthographic reform of the German language and its implications on the spelling of geographical names. A separate paper will be presented at the Eighth Conference.

Glossary of Toponymic Terminology

A German Glossary of Toponymic Terminology was prepared by StAGN and published by the Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie (IFAG), Frankfurt am Main, in 1995. It was based on the English version (Version 2.0) of the glossary which was issued by the UNGEGN Working Group on Terminology in 1993 and adopted by UNGEGN at its 17th Session in 1994. It contained 374 English/German entries and 226 German definitions (see also Working Paper Nr. 10 of the 18th UNGEGN Session held in Geneva in 1996).

The second edition of the "German Glossary of Toponymic Terminology" is going to be published in 2002. It contains 392 English terms and their German equivalents, 238 of which are main entries (with definitions) and 54 cross-references. It is completed by an English-German register and takes into account the improvements gained by the UNGEGN Working Group which resulted in a document tabled at the Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in 1998: "Glossary of Toponymic Terminology – Version 4" (E/CONF.91/L.13)

List of country names

A synoptical list of country names in German language is being collated and compiled by StAGN. The list contains those names being used and issued by the Foreign Offices of the Republic of Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Swiss Confederation. The list is being updated continuously and published at irregular intervals. The sixth edition, extended by a list of selected non-independent regions, was published as of February 1999 and the seventh edition in February 2001. The list is available on the Internet (<http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/Stagn/Staatennamen.htm>).

List of exonyms

A list of „Selected exonyms of the German language“ was published by StAGN in 1994 (see Working Paper No.81 of the 17th UNGEGN Session). The list contained only such exonyms that are commonly and widely used within the German-speaking regions. Exonyms showing slight modifications as compared to the endonymic spelling were not listed.

The list has been revised thoroughly and amended by indicating the notation of pronunciation (International Phonetic Alphabet) for the German exonym as well as for the endonym, the latter one following the principle "as endonymic as possible – as German as necessary". In the list the respective

column is headed "endonymic pronunciation adapted to German". The list contains some 600 entries. It is available on the Internet (http://www.ifag.de/Kartographie/Stagn/Exonyme/f_Exonyme.htm) also providing audio files for each exonym and the endonym in the pronunciation adapted to German.

Map of geographical regions in Germany

Under the convenorship of H. Liedtke the second edition of the map „Federal Republic of Germany at 1:1 million scale, Geographic regions - their names and margins“ *) was compiled by StAGN and published by the Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Frankfurt am Main in 1994. This map integrates and harmonizes the contents of two separately existing maps, published for the former GDR in 1982**) and for FRG in 1985***) . A paper on this item was submitted to the 17th Session of UNGEGN as Working Paper No.39 Add.1.

Due to being out-of-print a third edition was issued and will be presented at the Eighth Conference. This edition contains some minor corrections at margins of some geographical regions. Furthermore it is implementing the rules of the orthographic reform of the German language which, however, has to be applied to only 5 names of a total of 714 names rendered on the map: in four cases "ß" had to be replaced by "ss", in one case three identical coinciding letters have to be kept (formerly: the valley *Rottal* – now: *Rotttal*).

Work is in progress for collating names of geographical features in coastal waters of Germany. The most appropriate scale is considered to be 1:250 000.

Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names 2002

- *The Conference*

On the invitation of the German Government the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations decided in July 1999 to hold the Eighth Conference in Germany. A larger capacity for work was drawn since on taking all necessary measures to organize and prepare the Conference in the Conference Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. The following German authorities have been cooperating with the United Nations to organize the conference: - the Foreign Office; - the Ministry of the Interior; - the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, Frankfurt am Main; - the Working Committee of the State Survey Offices of the Federal Republic of Germany; - the Ständiger

*) Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1:1 000 000, Landschaften - Namen und Abgrenzungen, 2. Ausgabe. Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Frankfurt am Main, 1994

**) Regionale geographische Namen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (regional geographical names in the GDR), approx. scale 1:800 000, Berlin 1982

***) Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1:1 000 000, Landschaften - Namen und Abgrenzungen - (vorläufige Ausgabe). Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie, Frankfurt am Main, 1985

Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN). In conjunction with the Conference the following events are being prepared: - a technical exhibition; - technical excursions; - a toponymic training course for trainees in toponymy from developing countries.

- *Training Course on Toponymy*

A Training Course in Toponymy has been organized, lasting for four weeks from 11 August to 6 September 2002. It was held in Enschede, The Netherlands, in the first week and in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in the second week. During the third and fourth weeks, course participants are attending the Eighth Conference, and the Twenty-first Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in Berlin. 24 trainees participated in the course.

The course is being organized, in co-operation with the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of the UNGEGN, by a Project Group established at the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The course is sponsored by the United Nations Department of Statistics, the Government of The Netherlands and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The aims of the course are:

- To provide Developing Countries with information on the establishment or the strengthening of "names authorities" that can deal with national geographical names in general, with names collection, names surveys, national names standardization, the preparation of a gazetteer and/or a digital toponymic data base. Such a data base could become part of a national geographic information system (GIS);
- To introduce participants to the above activities through theory and practical applications;
- To consider international aspects of the work of geographical names, such as romanization systems and the use of foreign names;
- To enable participants to attend the session of the UNGEGN and the Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names to be held in Berlin, immediately following the course.

Second International Symposium on Geographical Names "GeoNames 2000"

The Second International Symposium on Geographical Names "GeoNames 2000" was held in Frankfurt am Main from 28 to 30 March 2000 to endorse and support the United Nations in their efforts to promote standardization in toponymy as well as to prepare topics for further discussion at the Eighth Conference.

The Symposium focussed on the difficult and dualistic problem of avoiding the use of exonyms for the reason of being unequivocal in cartography as well as recommending their use if they form living and vital parts of languages, thus fostering the mother tongue. Similar considerations would be dedicated to the question of applying romanization systems for transcribing names from non-Roman scripts to the

Roman alphabet. Furthermore, the items concepts of names data bases and the status of national standardization were dealt with as well as the implications of the orthographic reform of the German language on the spelling of geographical names. The theme, pronunciation as an aid to the correct spelling of foreign names and its rendering on the Internet, were treated in conjunction with a visit to the German broadcasting station 'Hessischer Rundfunk', including a lecture on and a demonstration of the pronunciation data base of the German broadcasting association ARD.

The Symposium was supported by the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD), the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Vermessungsverwaltungen der Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AdV, the Working Committee of the State Survey Offices of the Federal Republic of Germany), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Kartographie (DGfK, the German Society for Cartography), the Austrian Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde (AKO, Board on Geographical Names), the Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch language committee), the German broadcasting station 'Hessischer Rundfunk', and the publisher of German language dictionaries 'Dudenredaktion'. More than 75 participants of 23 countries attended the Symposium.

International Workshop on "GeoNames 2001"

Under the auspices of the Dutch and German Speaking Division (DGSD) of UNGEGN the workshop GeoNames 2001 devoted to the function and meaning of exonyms was held in Berchtesgaden (Germany) on 1 and 2 October. Already the Second International Symposium on Geographical Names GeoNames 2000, held in Frankfurt am Main in March 2000, had raised this subject. Its scope was not wide enough, however, for a detailed discussion. GeoNames 2001 offered such an opportunity. It was accepted by 22 participants not only from DGSD member countries, but also from Canada, Estonia, France, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
