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English only

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

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda*

**Meetings and conferences: divisional and interdivisional
meetings and programmes**

International Workshop on Exonyms, GeoNames 2001

Berchtesgaden, Germany, 1-2 October 2001

Submitted by Germany**

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** Submitted by the Dutch and German-speaking Division.
Prepared by Peter Jordan, Vice-Chair, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde,
Jörn Sievers, Chairman, Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN) and Bernd E.
Beinstein, Secretary, StAGN.

Programme**MONDAY, 1 October 2001, 1330 -1730 hours**

- **Opening**
- **Introduction into the workshop**
 - Jörn SIEVERS: Advantages of endonyms as incorporated in UN resolutions
 - Henri DORION: Necessity versus practical difficulties implementing UN resolutions on the reduction of exonyms
 - Peter JORDAN: Role and meaning of exonyms according to categories of geographical objects
- **Practice of exonym use in different language communities**
 - Peeter PÄLL: Evolution and classification of Estonian exonyms
 - Martin GURTNER, Rudolf MÖSCHING: The rules for exonyms on the Swiss topo maps
 - Bettina WOBK: German exonyms in publications of travel operators
 - Roman STANI-FERTL: Structure of common forms of the use of exonyms under the aspect of the medium of publication
- **Discussion**

TUESDAY, 2 October 2001, 0830 - 1730 hours

- **Practice of exonym use in different language communities (continued)**
 - Leo DILLON: Recent discussions in the U.S: Board on Geographic Names concerning the use and application of exonyms and endonyms
 - Henri DORION: From exonyms to endonyms: how to go forward along this difficult path; reference to the France-Quebec exonym project
 - Milan Orožen ADAMIČ: Problems with standardization of the 1:1,000,000 map of Slovenia, an example of a country map at the junction of many nations and languages
- **Consequences of the findings for the work of UNGEGN and further procedure**
 - Peter JORDAN: Proposal of guidelines for the use of exonyms
 - Proposals for definitions and resolutions
 - Distribution of tasks

Participants:

1	Adamič , Milan Orožen	Geographical Institute, Ljubljana	SI
2	Back , Otto	AKO Wien	AT
3	Beinstein , Bernd E.	BKG Frankfurt am Main	DE
4	Cheetham , Catherine	Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, London	GB
5	Crom , Wolfgang	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz	DE
6	Dillon , Leo	U.S. Department of State, Washington	US
7	Dorion , Henri	Laval Université, Commission de toponymie du Québec	CA
8	Gurtner , Martin	Bundesamt für Landestopographie Bern	CH
9	Hausner , Isolde	Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften	AT
10	Jordan , Peter	Österreichisches Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut, Wien	AT
11	Mardak , Nikolaus	Deutsche Assoziation der Ukrainisten	DE
12	Mösching , Rudolf	Bundesamt für Landestopographie Bern	CH
13	Päll , Peeter	Institute of Estonian Language	EE
14	Paulig , Helge	Ministerium für Kultus, Dresden	DE

15	Planques , Pierre	IGN Paris	FR
16	Pobanz , Wolfram	Freie Universität Berlin	CH
17	Rießler , Michael	Humboldt-Universität Berlin – Geographisches Institut	DE
18	Sievers , Jörn	BKG Frankfurt am Main	DE
19	Stabe , Knut Hans	BKG Frankfurt am Main	DE
20	Stani-Fertl , Roman	AKO Wien	AT
21	Wobek , Bettina	Universität Wien	AT
22	Zaccheddu , Pier-G.	BKG Frankfurt am Main	DE

MINUTES of the Workshop

Opening:

SIEVERS welcomed the participants expressing his sincere thanks to some of them for not having spared themselves the long journey to the place of this meeting. He then opened the workshop, which had been prepared by JORDAN and himself on behalf of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD). The DGSG chairman, ORMELING, was unfortunately forced to call off his visit for reasons of health.

We expressed special thanks to the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Kartographie” (German Cartographic Society) for its generous support in providing the infrastructure required to organize and arrange for the workshop during the 50th German Cartographers’ Day.

Introduction:

SIEVERS gave a brief historical survey of the work and activities of UNGEGN and United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names (prepared by KERFOOT and him) while highlighting the success and results achieved so far in this field of work (several resolutions adopted as the formal outcome of four conferences as well as the definitions laid down in the Glossary on Toponymic Terminology) and continued citing a number of examples of application. He then emphasized once again the general objectives of these UN institutions concerning the topics "endonym/exonym": reduction of the use of exonyms for the benefit of a better international communication. By a second introductory contribution DORION stressed the importance to transfer the UN resolutions to the respective national standardizing bodies. He pointed out that the UN resolutions are still relatively unknown to the general public, thus entailing confusion and misunderstandings at the end of the users. Further, DORION emphasized the importance made by the UN efforts towards a reduction in the use of exonyms whilst he also mentioned that a world entirely free from exonyms would no doubt remain a utopian concept. However, he then modified this general demand for a reduction of exonyms by explaining that the main goal was to reduce the use of exonyms, not the exonyms themselves. All participants unanimously agreed with this conclusive remark. SIEVERS referred to this particular aspect several times in the course of the debate by pointing out that the new data base technology will nowadays provide the ideal prerequisites for this specific task: on one hand exonyms can be collected and made available for the purpose of research activities in this field; on the other hand any use of exonyms not desired, or just tolerated or even recommended, can very easily be supplied to various sectors of application by means of appropriate classification criteria (classifiers), which would surely stimulate or contribute to a more conscious use of exonyms.

JORDAN proceeded with a comprehensive survey depicting the manifold possibilities of using endonyms and exonyms while emphasizing the necessity of defining application-related categories regarding exonyms. Basically, three major categories can be distinguished: (1) the role and meaning of exonyms according to the type and function of geographical objects (names of physical features, settlements, administrative units, countries); (2) the role and meaning of exonyms according to communicative situations (by medium type, by practical function of the medium, by intention of communication); (3) the role and meaning of exonyms according to the geographical and cultural relation between the language of the endonym and the language of the exonym.

Nine responses have been received on questionnaires sent to participants prior to this workshop asking for information on the use of exonyms in the respective participants' countries (Great Britain, U.S.A., Estonia, Canada, France, Moldavia, Slovenia 2, Austria) manifesting the subjective point of view of the persons questioned. The answers clearly showed that exonyms are most frequently used for state names, and that they are also preferred by the mass media, in everyday communication, in the case of historical and natural features, whereas those means of communication employed in the endonym's country or region of origin tend to make the least use of the pertinent exonym. Exact results of feature categories can be found as annex in the supplement Jordan.

Practice of exonym use in different language communities

PÄLL reported on the varied past concerning the use of exonyms in Estonia ever since the first legislation related to this subject was passed in 1911. Therefore, it is also in Estonia considered a necessity of prime importance to control the use of exonyms by means of precisely defined official categories of application.

GURTNER and MÖSCHING then gave an account of the relevant situation as it exists in four-language Switzerland and presented the rules to be observed in this field within Switzerland. Exonyms have to be used only for cities, villages and important topographical features, which are widely known; for smaller features also about 10 km on either side of the language border. Moreover, the handling/application of exonyms was explained in detail by the Swiss geographical names data base.

WOBEK examined in a diploma thesis a number of publications issued by travel operators from German-language countries. When checking these texts and maps provided as travelling documentation she found a complete chaos and confusion with respect to the proper use of exonyms/endonyms. In many instances wrongly spelt names or most unusual new creations occurred in the texts examined. This fact showed very clearly, that guidelines for the use of endonyms/exonyms are urgently needed.

STANI-FERTL announced the publication of a register comprising about 5 000 German-language exonyms divided into five categories: current - less current– historic – regionally limited – to be avoided. He presented a method developed by him serving to provide, e.g. editors with a simple and easy method helping to decide quickly on the correct use of endonyms or exonyms. He expected that this would lead to a more conscious application of exonyms, while at the same time a general reduction of their use can be achieved.

DILLON gave an account of the general policy of the USBGN, which recommends for standardizing foreign names the use of the local official name. However, this policy does conflict with the prevailing practice among American citizens, but also in administrative circles (“desk user”) since both prefer conventional names (exonyms). The reasons for these phenomena given by DILLON is the difficulty of recognizing in many foreign names the relevant type of feature, of treating adjectival name forms (mainly in Slavic languages), as well as the obvious lack of familiarity with applying diacritical marks. In spite of the fact that this would amount to a breach of the USBGN principles, guidelines defining the use of exonyms will no doubt be issued sooner or later.

DORION explained the exonym project, under which France and Québec have established a joint data base comprising about 4 500 French-language exonyms, the French exonym constituting the main entry. This entry contains the relevant endonym, the country, the language, the type of feature as well as the coordinates. The endonyms are also addressable as reference entries.

ADAMIČ referred to the list of Slovenian exonyms. All in all 34 000 exonyms were compiled, 1 400 of which have been retained and standardized by the Slovene Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names. All other exonyms have been classified as "not recommended".

Summarizing discussion and consequences of the findings for the ongoing work of UNGEGN

JORDAN concluded this series of contributions by putting forward a proposal for the definition of guidelines on the use of exonyms. He opposed fields structured according to categories tending to prefer a request for endonyms to other fields in which the use of exonyms presents an advantage from the aspect of communication or even seems to be inevitable in terms of use, (as e.g. in the case of naming historical details /topographic features having ceased to exist and with them their endonyms; further, names designating topographic features crossing linguistic boundaries in the case of oral and textual communication). Finally, he formulated the following two demands: (a) Avoid outlining historical borders or historical ethnic situations by exonyms (especially important in cartographic communication); (b) In written or cartographic communication: Let each exonym be preceded by the corresponding endonym. Demand (b) is basically contained in Resolution V/13).

This contribution was followed by a lengthy general discussion, in the course of which it was emphasized again that the UN efforts for standardization apply primarily to the products generated in the sectors geoinformation/cartography, where a restricted use of exonyms is in any case of primary importance. However, there are other fields of application in everyday life, in which the use of exonyms cannot be dispensed with. For this reason participants expressed their unanimous agreement that the respective names committees at the national level should publish guidelines on the use of exonyms along with the lists of exonyms already asked for. It is recommended that the 8th Conference 2002 should adopt a resolution on this item with the following contents:

CATEGORIZATION OF EXONYMS AND GUIDELINES FOR THEIR USE

The Conference recommends that national names authorities adopt guidelines and principles concerning the use of exonyms in various types of national publications.

Considering resolutions II/28, etc. the Conference reiterates that the use of exonyms should be reduced as much as possible.

The first step should be to establish a database of all the existing exonyms; then the exonyms should be classified according to their acceptability and frequency of usage; this database should, as a minimum, contain the following elements for each name:

exonym, endonym, language of the endonym, romanization system used (if appropriate), feature type, location, note of acceptability, frequency of usage.

Only those exonyms recommended for national use should be published together with guidelines about their usage.

WOBEK'S contribution clearly evidenced the considerable uncertainty that still exists in the tourism sector with regard to the proper use of endonyms/exonyms. Only one resolution (1972, II/38) was adopted in 1972 by the UN Conference dealing with this subject. Participants considered it necessary to submit another resolution to the 8th Conference, which should comprise the following aspect:

USE OF ENDONYMS AND EXONYMS IN THE TOURISTIC SECTOR

Geographical names standardized in accordance with the principles of national standardization means that endonyms are to be accompanied only by those exonyms, which are widely used touristically. In order to standardize the respective exonyms, reference should be made to authoritative name gazetteers and national names boards.

At past sessions of UNGEGN as well as during former UNCISG - conferences the topic „Pronunciation“ was always given minor importance. However, the correct use of foreign language endonyms also requires in most cases knowledge of proper pronunciation. Therefore, all participants gave their common support to propose a resolution on this topic reading as follows:

AIDS TO PRONUNCIATION

The Conference,

Recalling Resolution I/4 (E);

Further recalling Resolution I/10;

Further recalling Resolution IV/4;

Noting that the most recent developments of technology allow for the rendering of the spelling of endonyms, with their diacritics, in gazetteers and toponymic databases;

Noting further, however, that the difficulty of correctly pronouncing many endonyms still exists;

Recommends that compilers of gazetteers and toponymic databases pay special attention to providing aids for pronunciation by giving general rules and/or by preparing lists of endonyms together with indications of their pronunciation, following the IPA system if it is necessary for clarification.

It was then discussed that the definition of the term "exonym" in the Glossary of Toponymic Terminology should be reconsidered. Instead of proposing a new definition of exonym, it was thought that a short text of explanation should be proposed to be added to the definition. (It was thought further, that some other definitions in the Glossary could also require a few words of explanation).

ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION TO THE TERM "EXONYM"

The term "area" means a country or any administrative unit established within a country for linguistic management purposes. It also includes areas where toponyms of a given language enjoy a specific status.

DEFINITION OF THE TERM "CROSS-BOUNDARY ENDONYM" or "BOUNDARY-CROSSING"

A name of a given geographical feature shared by two or more countries or administrative areas established for linguistic management purposes. Examples: Alpe, Alpen, Alpes, Alpi...

A cross-boundary endonym identifying a given geographical feature refers to the whole of that feature.

It was considered necessary to check all adopted resolutions referring to the matter "use of exonyms or endonyms" against actual validity and contradictory content. DORION agreed to examine the relevant resolutions and agreed to deliver his opinion as a written contribution to the workshop participants for further consideration, likely as a paper to be submitted to the 8th Conference. The resolutions to be considered are amongst others:

1972: II/28 - II/29 - II/31 - II/35 - II/38	1977: III/7 - III/18 - III/19	1982: IV/20	1987: V/13
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Beyond that, it was suggested to complete the questionnaire campaign mentioned above by a more detailed inquiry on the resolutions related to the use of exonyms/endonyms as implemented by the UNGEGN Member Countries. ADAMIČ agreed to make available the experience he had gained with an investigation that was carried out in Slovenia. He will send the respective report to SIEVERS/JORDAN in due course. It was proposed to prepare subsequently a questionnaire which should be distributed by the UNGEGN Secretariat to all national names committees.

In conclusion, the question was discussed whether an UNGE GN Working Group on Exonyms should be established. It was proposed to first deliberate over this suggestion with the UNGEGN Chair.

Closing of the Workshop

JORDAN and SIEVERS expressed their sincere thanks for the papers presented and to all attendees for their active participation in the various discussions. DORION extended his thanks on behalf of the participants to the organizing committee for their excellent work in preparing this event. He appreciated the success and good results achieved by this Workshop.