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

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 12 (g) of the provisional agenda\*

**Toponymic data files: other publications**

**Map of the geographical regions of Germany at 1:1,000,000  
scale, third edition**

**Submitted by Germany\*\***

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\*\* Submitted by Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN) (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names). Prepared by Herbert Liedtke, Bochum, and Jörn Sievers, Chairman, StAGN.

A map of geographical regions ("landscapes") of the German Democratic Republic also rendering the boundaries of these regions, was published in 1982. The geographical regions of the Federal Republic of Germany were published as a first edition in 1985. After the German unification, under the convenorship of H. Liedtke, these two maps were amalgamated to the second edition of the latter publication and presented at the Seventeenth Session of UNGEGN in 1994. The third edition presented here takes into consideration changes of names due to the orthographic reform of the German language effective in Germany since 1999. This map is supplemented by 23 additional names to a total number of 714 names. Also boundaries of some geographical regions have slightly been corrected.

Boundaries of geographical regions ("landscapes") are, in general, not determined by an act of administration. In a common sense they are realized by the people as larger areas, the boundaries of which may have a very exact definition (e.g. an island, a riverside or the edge of a forest), sometimes only a diffuse or a not precisely fixed one. So, several boundaries are uncertain or doubtful; they are rendered on the map by an interrogation mark. And due to the fact that there are several reasons for the origin of geographical regions, it frequently happens that landscapes are overlapping.

A lot of names can be traced back to early medieval sources. These names often depend on characteristic natural attributes of the region, e. g. *Erzgebirge* (ore mountains.). Other names originate from personal names like *Hiddensee*, an island named after a Danish human *Hithin*. Some are derived from animals like *Spessart* (derived from "Specht" and "Hardt": English woodpecker forest). Historic administrative units (German medieval term "*Gau*") are sources for naming like *Bliessgau* or *Ambergau*. Names of this category were widespread in former times; only a few number of names remained, indicating that names of landscapes may disappear in the awareness of the people by times. So, not surprisingly, also new names and geographic regions are created by the society. *Waldhessen* (indicating the richness of forests ("Wald") in the respective part of the German federal state *Hessen* the name is dedicated to), as an example, is rendered for the first time on this third edition map. Another category of names is related to medieval or mostly modern times territories, which became landscape names after they were handed over to or annexed by another sovereign, an example of which is *Oldenburger Münsterland*. Names of this category are called historical landscape names. A further category of geographical regions depends on economic particularities of a certain region, e. g. on the cultivation of hops in the *Hallertau*. Landscapes originating from economic reasons, sometimes have administratively decreed boundaries as in the case of the well known *Ruhrgebiet* (Ruhr District) as a region with a high concentration of industrial combines and enterprises. Otherwise it is necessary to look for a reasonable but sometimes unsure boundary as in the *Kannenbäckerland* which since the Middle Ages had steadily changing boundaries according to the exploitation of clay for the production of pottery.

Only a few number of landscapes of natural origin are names of mountains; mountains are only situated in the middle and southern parts of Germany, as *Schwarzwald* (Black Forest) or *Schwäbische Alb* (Swabian Jura). The northern part of Germany, during the last million of years formed by three glaciations, is only raising up to 200 m above sea level. On the other hand, there are several flat morainic plateaus which are clearly surrounded by naturally soaked or dry flat valley floors and which often have names of their own like *Barnim* or *Friesacker Ländchen*. Also the countless bogs have their own names; but only the larger ones are rendered on the map.

To fix boundaries of landscapes of natural origin is relatively easy, and you need only maps in a larger scale, sometimes only topographic maps, in other cases geologic, soil maps or vegetation maps to make decision about the boundary.

Names of geographical regions are official names since the beginning of the official topographic survey during the middle of the 19th century. The spelling of their names follows the rules of the German orthography: All names on the map presented here are standardized names.