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English only

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

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by divisions of the Group of Experts on
Geographical Names on the situation in their divisions and
on the progress made in the standardization of geographical
names since the Seventh Conference**

Romano-Hellenic Division report

Submitted by Italy**

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1. Since the 7th GENUNG conference held in NY the RHD has changed its Chairman: Mme Sylvie Lejeune (France) has been substituted by Mr. Salvatore Arca (Italy), unanimously elected by the Division Experts attending the 20th UNGEGN Session (New York, January 17 / 28 / 2000).

The creation of the Francophone Division established during the Conference, has not determined meaningful changes in the programs and in the scientific and operational potentialities of the RHD: the Francophone Division Expert support to the RHD has continued both by the participation to the meetings at divisional level and by the presentation of much appreciated scientific contributions.

Actually these kind of collaborations, which should be always kept alive in the future, overpass the limits of the geographic / linguistic areas and find their natural development platform in the national languages similarities and, in some cases, in the belonging to a common geographic region.

2. During the said period the RHD has organized three meetings:

- The first one has taken place in NY on January 17th 2000 during the 20th UNGEGN Session. Experts of Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and Turkey have shared the related works.

The Experts have examined the main issues in order to obtain the results indicated by the 7^o Conference resolutions and have created the basis for the efficient common preparatory activities of the 8^o Conference.

- The second meeting has been organized in Florence, Italy, in the Military Geographic Institute facilities during July 6 / 7 2000. Experts of Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain have attended.

Have been taken into consideration the many aspects concerning the geographical names normalization, in details the following prior subjects have been discussed:

- Status and overview of the Standardization on geographical names in the RHD;
- Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and Other Editors;
- Administrative Division of RHD countries;
- Concise catalogue of the geographical names in the RHD countries;
- Exonyms;
- Multilingual glossary of geographical features;
- Translation and distribution of the UNGEGN promotional brochure.

This meeting has allowed not only to focus on the issues related to the above listed points, but has also created the real basis for the production of the divisional documents with the participation and the contributions of the Experts of the many members of the Division.

A note regarding the meeting has been published on an appropriate UNGEGN Newsletter.

- The third meeting has been in Athens, Greece, during October 10 / 13 2001, kindly hosted by the Hellenic Foreign Affairs Ministry.

It has been attended by 17 experts of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain.

The main issues already approached during the Florence meeting have been deeply examined; particular attention, besides, has been given to the problems of the single countries as for the national toponyms authorities and as for the existing norms in the multilingual areas for the treatment of geographical names.

On that occasion it has been agreed with the other delegates attending to improve the “Multilingual glossary of geographical features”, with the inclusion of the Greek, Romanian and Spanish versions. This document could be of great help for all the map and geoproduct creators, since it foresees the main geographical elements normally used and their related names in six languages.

The related report has been proposed for the publication within the UNGEGN Newsletter.

3. The achieved progresses by the RHD countries in the field of geographical names normalization have been illustrated in the respective national reports of this 8^o Conference.

The activity of the Division has been developed, as above described, by the organization of meetings intended to coordinate the activities of the member countries and to invite the national experts to work for obtaining the goals indicated during the UNGEGN Conferences.

We hope that the participation in the divisional activities will be in the future as ampler as possible and that it will be extended to those countries whose experts till now have not had the opportunity to bring their contribution of science and thought.