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English only

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

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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 Finland

Submitted by Finland**

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** Prepared by Ritva Liisa Pitkänen, Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, Helsinki, and Teemu Leskinen, National Land Survey of Finland, Helsinki.

The Finnish name planning has operated on the same principles in the past five years as earlier; for background information and operation report, cf. Seventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. New York, 13–22 January 1998.

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 of Finland. E/CONF.91/L. 15. 11 November 1997.

1. Field collection of place names

The basic material of place name treatment consists of the place names collected by interviewing local inhabitants in the entire country. The collection includes ca. 3 million names. The systematic collection of the Swedish-language names has been completed. The collection work done in the Finnish areas in the past few years has been mostly renewed collection. The names collection has been supplemented with ca. 23,000 names during this period. Unofficial urban names have been collected since 2001 in the Urban Place Names project.

2. National standardisation

Official treatment of names

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland is responsible for the official treatment of Finnish and Saami-language names (the Language Planning Department), as well as that of Swedish names (the Swedish Department). The work concentrates on (1) correcting names on published maps, (2) statements and recommendations on various names, such as the names of municipalities and administrative areas, villages, public buildings and enterprises, as well as municipal road names, (3) organising onomastic training for cartographers (since 1996), municipal name planners, students and teachers, (4) acquiring and providing information on spelling, pronunciation and inflection of domestic and foreign names in Finland.

The Research Institute maintains a daily toll-free telephone line to answer name-related questions. A considerable number of the questions the telephone advice line receives have to do with the correct use of foreign place names. Questions concerning names of companies, administrative units and associations have increased, which probably means that the everyday problems with place names are shifting from the field of the traditional place names towards a more urban and administrative environment.

The general public receives information on names through the media. The name planners and researchers of the Research Institute answer questions from the public on the radio and write articles on names in newspapers and magazines.

Finnish maps are mainly produced by the National Land Survey of Finland which also maintains a Real Estate Register. After the restructuring of the organisation of the National Land Survey, cartographic names are revised in the same way as they used to be. The place names on the maps drawn by the regional survey offices of the National Land Survey have been revised at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland since 2000. The number of maps revised since 1998 is 767 in all. We also revised the Finnish and Swedish names in some of the nautical charts of the Finnish Maritime Administration. Field work has shown that in some parts of the country it might be worthwhile to pay more attention to the preservation of dialectal features in the names.

Planning of names in multilingual areas

Transferring the old Swedish place names in the planned nomenclature into Finnish has proved problematic, especially in the towns that have grown rapidly and become more and more Finnish in the past few decades. In order to make the loaning practices more uniform, the name planning officials of Finnish, Swedish and Saami of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland published guidelines for the planners of names in bilingual areas in the information bulletins of language planning in 2001 (Samuli Aikio & Sirkka Paikkala & Peter Slotte: *Ohjeita kaksikielisten alueiden nimistösuunnitteluun/ Anvisningar för namnplanering inom tvåspråkiga områden* [Guidelines for the planning of names in bilingual areas]. Kielikello 2/2001; Språkbruk 3/2001). The core objective of the guidelines is to preserve the original linguistic form of the place names in the planned names

even in the other language. The new guidelines cover not only the Finnish-Swedish but also the Finnish-Saami place names.

Law on place names

In Finland, place names are given and ratified by several authorities. In order to clarify the heterogeneous situation, the Research Institute set a working group to draft a report to the Ministry of Education, *Paikannimet – yhteinen omaisuutemme : tarvitaanko Suomessa paikannimilakia?* [Place names – our joint asset: does Finland need a law on place names?] (1997). The statements issued by the various official and cultural bodies have been positive towards the drafting of some kind of regulations to ensure the correctness and the cultural values of the official place names. Moreover, they have considered it important to create a national names register. The law on place names is related to the language law, which is being prepared.

3. Toponymic databases and Web sites

The Finnish National Land Survey's Geographic Names Register (GNR) is a toponymic database serving the needs of both national standardisation and map production. The register comprises the National Place Name Register (PNR) and the National Map Name Register (MNR). The PNR contains data on feature type, feature location, and approved spelling and language of the place names. The MNR includes the product-related information for the cartographic representation of the place names in the PNR. The nation-wide MNR products will range from 1:20,000 in scale to 1:4.5 million. At present the PNR and the MNR on the scale of 1:20,000 cover the whole country, both including more than 800,000 names, while the coverage of the MNR on the scale of 1:100,000 is about 90 percent, comprising nearly 200,000 map names. The GNR is not available in the Internet, but plans exist to establish a public web service free of charge.

The creation of onomastic databases in digital form was started in 1991 at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. The Web Site of the Research Institute includes advice and material on name planning for the general public, e.g. a list of countries, capitals and nationalities in Finnish (<http://www.kotus.fi/huolto/kielitoimisto/nimisto>).

4. Exonyms

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland has compiled a database of Finnish exonyms. In 1997, the database consisted of ca. 9,000 exonyms. After that, the work has not really progressed.

5. European Heritage Days in Finland 1999

The theme of the European heritage Days in Finland in 1999 was "*Place names – The Memory of Places*". The European Heritage Days in Finland were organised by The Ministry of Environment, The Finnish Association for Local Culture and Heritage, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, The National Board of Education, The National Board of Antiquities. In addition to these, there was an expert body specialised in the theme in of the year. In 1999, this body was The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. For a closer account of the European Heritage Days, cf. *Place names in Finland as Cultural Heritage* by Sirkka Paikkala (Onoma 2000).

The official organisers assumed the main responsibility for the organisation of the events and the production of the publications. The theme also attracted broader interest in concrete actions. On the local level, the events were organised by municipalities and associations for local history and culture.

After the theme year, we have taken various measures to acquire data of planned names and their planning and to advance the status of name issues; e.g., the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and six universities have launched a joint project on Urban place names.

6. Courses and conferences

Since 1996, the Research Institute has arranged onomastic training courses for officials in the regional offices of the National Land Survey. The courses have also been offered to the students of land survey at the University of Technology, the students of Finnish at the University of Helsinki and schoolteachers.

The representatives of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland visited the Department of Toponymy of the Latvian Land Survey office in 1998 and learnt about their place names register and other operations. The employees of the Latvian department made a return visit to the Finnish Research Institute and the National Land Survey in 2000 and saw how the research into place names was conducted here.

The Nordic division of UNGEGN (Norden Division) held a meeting at the National Land Survey in Helsinki in December 2000. The agenda included the new place names register of the Land Survey of Finland, the registers of other Nordic countries, as well as the international place name catalogues on the Internet.

There was a Nordic congress of onomastics in Hämeenlinna on 13–17 June 1998, with the theme *Namn i en föränderlig värld* [Names in a changing world]. There were 7 participants from Denmark, 33 from Finland, 1 from the Faroe islands, 2 from Iceland, 1 from the Netherlands, 8 from Norway, 2 from Scotland and 18 from Sweden, 72 in all. There were 36 presentations, of which 6 dealt with questions related to names and name planning. The presentations, two of which were in English and the rest in some Nordic language, were published in the book *Namn i en föränderlig värld* (Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 2001).

In 2000, the 9th International Finno-Ugric Congress was held in Tartu, Estonia. Some contributions related to name planning and guidance.

Since 1998, the Research Institute has arranged two annual two-day events for discussion and training for the onomastic researchers and name planners, as well as for students in onomastics at different universities. While the autumn seminars have focused on presenting research, which is being planned or under way, the spring seminars have consisted of workshops with changing themes, e.g. the planning of place names and urban place names. The events have attracted 30–40 participants.

7. Onomastic research and training

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland has organised two research projects on name planning in co-operation with the universities. In the late 1990s, the Research Institute conducted a research into the changes in place names in nine villages from the collections of the names archive of the 1960s and 1970s to the present. This question is relevant also from the point of view of name planning, since the collections of the archive constitute the basic material of the place name planning. For summaries of the results of the project, cf. Ainala 2000. The Research Institute launched a joint, three-year Urban place names project with six Finnish universities at the beginning of 2001. The project charts both the official planned names and the unofficial names used by the inhabitants. There are nearly 30 research projects involved in the Urban place names project.

In 2001, the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland and the University of Helsinki established a joint five-year professorship of Finnish in the field of onomastics. Thanks to the professorship, the teaching of onomastics at the university level is secured for the coming years. All students of the University of Helsinki take a one-semester course in onomastics. The students of both Finnish and Swedish can opt for onomastics as their special field.

8. Publications

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland publishes bulletins in Finnish (*Kielikello*) and in Swedish (*Språkbruk*). These publications also discuss name planning and give recommendations.

Literature on onomastic planning and research published in Finland in 1998–2001:

Books

Ainiala, Terhi (2000). *Paikannimistön muuttuminen*. Summary: Change in place names. – Virittäjä. Kotikielen Seuran aikakauslehti 3/2000. Helsinki. p. 355–372.

Ainiala, Terhi (2000). *Ortnamn i förändring*. Summary: The changing of place-names. – Namn och Bygd. Tidskrift för nordisk ortnamnsforskning. Uppsala: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien. p. 25–40. – Ainiala's articles are summaries of the results of the research project.

Huldén, Lars (2001). *Finlandssvenska bebyggelsenamn : Namn på landskap, kommuner, byar i Finland av svenskt ursprung eller med särskild svensk form* [Finland-Swedish names of settlement: names of landscape, municipalities, villages with Swedish origins or especially Swedish forms in Finland]. Helsinki: Swedish Literary Society of Finland. 537 p. – The book analyses the etymological origins of the core Finland-Swedish names of settlement.

Louhivaara, Maija (1999). *Tampereen kadunnimet* [Street names in Tampere]. Tampere: Tampereen kaupunki. 304 p. – The book discusses the historical development and the backgrounds of the planned names in the city of Tampere.

Mallat, Kaija & Terhi Ainiala & Eero Kiviniemi, ed. (2001). *Nimien maailmasta* [Out of the world of names]. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Finnish. 235 p. – The book includes articles on place and personal names.

Namn i en föränderlig värld : Rapport från den tolfte nordiska namnforskarkongressen, Tavastehus 13–17 juni 1998. Red. Gunilla Harling-Kranck. Studier i nordisk filologi 78. Utgivna av Ann-Marie Ivars. Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, Helsingfors 2001, 358 p. – The book includes six articles on names and name planning, e.g. Sirkka Paikkala's article on the Finnish place name legislation.

Ortnamnen – minnen i miljön : dagarna för Europas byggnadsarv 11.–12.9.1999. [Place names – The Memory of Places: the European Heritage Days 11–12 September 1999.]. Helsinki: Ministry of the Environment. 36 p. – Articles written by Sirkka Paikkala, Ritva Liisa Pitkänen, Kaija Santaholma, Peter Slotte, Reino Tapaninen, Jouko Vahtola, Marja Viljamaa-Laakso.

Paikannimet – paikan muisti : Euroopan rakennusperintöpäivät 11.–12.9.1999. [Place names – The Memory of Places: the European Heritage Days 11–12 September 1999.]. Helsinki : Suomen Kotiseutuliitto. 36 p. – Articles written by Sirkka Paikkala, Ritva Liisa Pitkänen, Kaija Santaholma, Peter Slotte, Reino Tapaninen, Jouko Vahtola, Marja Viljamaa-Laakso.

Paikkala, Sirkka 2000: *Place names in Finland as Cultural Heritage*. – Onoma Vol. 35. Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. Leuven. S. 145–164. – The article includes a report of the organisation of the European Heritage Days 1999.

Paikkala, Sirkka & Ritva Liisa Pitkänen & Peter Slotte (1997). *Paikannimet – yhteinen omaisuutemme : tarvitaanko Suomessa paikannimilakia?* [Place names – our joint asset: Does Finland need a law on place names?]. Helsinki: Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. 76 p. – The book includes a report by the committee on the need for a law on place names.

Paikkala, Sirkka, ed. (1999). *Kaavanimien hätäkaste : nimistösuunnittelu kunnissa 1999*. [Emergency baptism of place names: name planning in municipalities in 1999] Helsinki: Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. 103 p. – The book includes a report on the place name planning in Finnish municipalities, together with an article on the place names on guide maps.

Paikkala, Sirkka & Ritva Liisa Pitkänen & Peter Slotte (ed.) 1999. *Yhteinen nimiympäristömme : nimistösuunnittelun opas* [Our joint names environment: a guide to name planning]. Helsinki: Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Research Institute for the Languages of Finland. 225 p. – The book includes 29 articles on name planning, legislation and the publications on names of the built environment of the bibliography.

Maps and atlases

Tiekartasto Suomi - Finland [Road Atlas of Finland] 1 : 200 000 - 1: 400 000. (2000). 288 pp. Helsinki: Karttakeskus Oy. - Legends in Finnish, Swedish, English and German; with a place name index.

9. Addresses

Kotimaisten kielten tutkimuskeskus
(The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland)
Sörnäisten rantatie 25
FIN-00500 HELSINKI
(<http://www.kotus.fi>)

Maanmittauslaitos
(National Land Survey of Finland)
PL 84
FIN-00521 HELSINKI
(<http://www.nls.fi>)
