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REPORTS BY GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR COUNTRIES  
AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE

National Report of Bulgaria

(Submitted by Bulgaria)\* \*

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\*\*Prepared by the Directorate of Geodesy and Cartography, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

## Summary

The Republic of Bulgaria has not established a National Body on toponymy yet. However, a number of institutions with serious experience in the field of toponymy contribute for the collection and office treatment of geographical names, namely: The onomastics division of the Bulgarian Language Institute in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; The Geographic Institute of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Military Topographic Service and Geodesy and Cartography Directorate at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

Another database is established at the National Statistics Institute named “Unified Classifier of the Administrative-Territorial and Territorial Units”, i.e. it comprises information for the names of settlements in Bulgaria.”

Having into consideration the above described situation as well as the practical need and recommendations forwarded by the Conferences of the United Nations Group of Experts of Geographical Names, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is assigned with responsibility to lay the legal grounds for this activity within the framework of the Geodesy and Cartography Act which is under preparation.

**The national body** in the field of standardization of foreign geographical names is the **Council for Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names (The Council)**, under the management of the “Geodesy and Cartography” Directorate at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. About 50 gazetteers of foreign geographical names of the countries of the world have been issued. However, they are only on paper carrier and need updating and establishment of a digital version.

In this regard the Council approves the Basic Principles for transcription and orthography of foreign geographical names, which are consequently promulgated in the Official Journal of the Country under Regulation no. 6, and the relevant Gazetteers shall be updated, elaborated and issued in compliance with those principals.

The Republic of Bulgaria will continue its efforts in the field of standardization in two main directions:

- Introduction of a systematic approach concerning the national standardization of geographical names and establishment of national geographical names information system;
- Further development of standardization of foreign geographical names.

The implementation of our intentions will be carried out through inter-institutional cooperation within the country and collaboration with foreign institutions and organizations. The conduction of our activities will go in consistence with the Resolutions adopted by the UN Conferences of Standardization of Geographical Names as well as with the cooperation within the Divisions of the UNGEGN.

# NATIONAL REPORT OF BULGARIA

## I . NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

### 1.1 Current situation

The Republic of Bulgaria has not established a National Body on Toponymy yet. However, a number of institutions with serious experience in the field of toponymy contribute for the collection and office treatment of geographical names. The onomastics division of the Bulgarian Language Institute in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences currently elaborates a *Geographical Dictionary*.

The Geographic Institute of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences also deals with standardization of geographical names.

These institutions apply contemporary scientific methodology and the relevant terminology in the field of geographical names standardization.

Cartography services, namely Military Topographic Service and Geodesy and Cartography Directorate at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works have established toponymy databases, but unfortunately only a small part of them are in digital format and still not updated.

Another database is established at the National Statistics Institute named "Unified Classifier of the Administrative-Territorial and Territorial Units", i.e. it comprises information for the names of settlements in Bulgaria."

Military Topographic Service establishes and maintains Topographic map for the whole territory of the country in scale 1:25 000 and smaller scales.

Geodesy and Cartography Directorate establishes and maintains large scale Topographic map in scale 1:5,000.

### 1.2 Toponymic Guidelines

In 1988 a concise guidelines containing the basic principles for orthography and transcription of geographical names has been issued. However the information containing in it needs further and profound development as given in the guidelines issued by the UNGEGN.

### 1.3. Foreseen Legal Actions

Having into consideration the above described situation as well as the practical need and recommendations forwarded by the Conferences of the United Nations Group of Experts of Geographical Names, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is assigned with responsibility to lay the legal grounds for this activity within the framework of the Geodesy and Cartography Act which is under preparation.

Foreseen is the **legal institutionalization of the Expert Group on Toponymy** that will deal with both methodological and practical aspects of national standardization of geographical names and will work in cooperation with the **Cornrnission of Narning and Renaming of Settlements** within the Administration of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## **11. STANDARDIZATION OF FOREIGN GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

**The national body** in the field of standardization of foreign geographical names is the **Council for Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Narnes (The Council)**, under the management of the “Geodesy and Cartography” Directorate at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. The Council has been established by Regulation № 83 (27<sup>th</sup> April, 1993 ) of the Council of Ministers and in compliance with the Resolution № 4 “National Standardization”, Recommendation № 4 (a) concerning “ National organs for geographical names” of the Geneva Conference of the UN.

About 50 gazetteers of the foreign geographical names of countries of the world have been issued. However, they are only on paper carrier and need updating and conversion into a digital version.

In this regard the Council approves the Basic Principles for transcription and orthography of foreign geographical names, which are consequently promulgated in the Official Journal of the Country under Regulation no. 6, and the relevant Gazetteers shall be updated, elaborated and issued in compliance with those principals.

- *International cooperation*

Bulgaria is a member of the East Central and South East Europe Division of UNGEGN and of East Europe, North and central Asia Division of UNGEGN. In 1999 a representative of Bulgaria took part in the 15-th Session of East Central and South East Europe Division held in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

### **111. ROMANIZATION SYSTEM**

Bulgaria uses Cyrillic alphabetic script. In 1977 by resolution III/10 The United Nations recommended system was approved, based on the system produced by the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names. The system is used in Bulgaria and increasingly in international cartographic products.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The process of renaming of geographic features is quite intensive in Bulgaria which corresponds with the broad social–economic and political changes during the last 12 years.

In the processes of cultural, economic and social cohesion between countries, geographical names carry both practical information and national identity and culture. Their correct use by both the population of the nation and by foreigners contributes to the effectiveness of direct communication between people as well as institutional–level contacts.

The Republic of Bulgaria will continue its efforts in the field of standardization in two main directions:

- Introduction of a systematic approach concerning the national standardization of geographical names and establishment of national geographical names information system;
- Further development of standardization of foreign geographical names.

The implementation of our intentions will be carried out through inter-institutional cooperation within the country and collaboration with foreign institutions and organizations. The conduction of our activities will go in consistence with the Resolutions adopted by the UN Conferences of Standardization of Geographical Names as well as with the cooperation within the Divisions of the UNGEGN.

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