Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 21 - 30 August 2007
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 Eighth Conference

Report of Denmark

Submitted by Denmark**

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REPORT FROM DENMARK ON THE SITUATION THERE AND ON THE
PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
SINCE THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE

Summary
In a community such as Denmark there is a growing need for some simple and clear
guidelines for the standardization of geographical names. Efforts are being made to fill this
need and these may result in the promulgation of a law about geographical names. The task
of standardizing geographical names in Denmark has been entrusted to the Place-Name
Commission, which will be able to celebrate its one hundredth anniversary in 2010. There is
thus a long tradition for the standardization of Danish place-names. A reform of the system
of local government, which took effect on 1. January 2007, has resulted in the loss of many of
the old names of local councils and that new names have been brought into use. At the
National Survey and Cadastre the names on the new charts for Greenlandic waters are being
converted to the new Greenland spellings. In collaboration with Oqaasileriffik the gazetteer
of Greenland place-names is being improved and in the future it will be published on the
Internet.

A law about place-names
In a community such as Denmark where an increasing number of official systems are being
digitalized, the need for uniform and authorized name-forms is becoming increasingly
urgent. In Denmark the forms taken by geographical names are fixed by the Place-Name
Commission and subsequently authorized by the Minister of Culture. There is, however, a
growing need for some simple and clear guidelines for the standardization of geographical
names and in the Ministry of Culture efforts are also being made to meet this need, possibly
in the form of a law about place-names. Remarkably enough, Denmark – unlike the other
Nordic countries – has never had a law about place-names.

The Place-Name Commission
In Denmark work was begun on the standardization of place-names in 1910. The task was
entrusted to the Place-Name Commission, which is still the authority that is responsible for
the orthography of Danish place-names. In connection with the one hundredth anniversary of
the Place-Name Commission in 2010 a commemorative volume is being prepared and it is
possible that a conference will also be held then on the standardization of place-names.

The names of Danish local councils
On 1. January 2007 a reformed system of local government came into force in Denmark. As
a result of this reform 14 counties were abolished and replaced by 5 regions, while 275 local
councils were amalgamated and reduced to 98 local councils. Some of the old names of the
local councils have naturally been reused in the new regional structure but a good many new
names have also been brought into use. From a typological point of view the new council
names resemble the old ones. Most of the new names are, like the old ones, compounded
with a settlement name (Hillerød Kommune, Holstebro Kommune etc.) but there are also
some names which are compounded with a name for a natural feature (Guldborgsund
Kommune, Odsherred Kommune and Rudersdal Kommune).
The place-names of Greenland
In connection with the new and improved charts over Greenlandic waters the names on the charts are being converted to the new Greenland spelling. Since the charts contain not only place-names at sea but also on land, a revision of the present gazetteer of Greenland names is contemplated. The new and improved Greenland gazetteer is intended to be published on the Internet. The place-names are being treated in collaboration with Oqaasileriffik (The Greenland Language Council) under which belongs Nunat Aqqinik Aalajangiisartut (The Greenland Place-Name Committee).

Web addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.navneforskning.dk">www.navneforskning.dk</a></td>
<td>The Name Research Section at the University of Copenhagen, home for the Place-Name Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.kms.dk">www.kms.dk</a></td>
<td>The National Survey and Cadastre</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.oqaasileriffik.gl">www.oqaasileriffik.gl</a></td>
<td>The Greenland Language Council with the Greenland Place-Name Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.fmn.fo">www.fmn.fo</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://levende.kms.dk/su/sunavn/htm">http://levende.kms.dk/su/sunavn/htm</a></td>
<td>The Authorized Danish Place-Name Register</td>
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