

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

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**Terminology in the standardization of geographical names**

**Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology:  
List of proposed new terms**

Submitted by the Convenor of the Working Group \*\*

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## ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC TERMINOLOGY

### List of proposed new terms

#### 1. New terms approved by the Working Group between 2002 and 2006

Since the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, three meetings of the Working Group on Terminology have been held, viz. in 2002, 2004 and 2006. Following the last resolution concerning the Working Group on Terminology, adopted by the Eighth Conference (VIII/3, see above) the following terms and their definitions were proposed by experts, discussed by the Working Group at its meetings and approved for inclusion in the *Glossary*. In the cases of *oronym* and *ethnonym* only the definitions were changed. The number before each term indicates the term in the *Glossary* after (or, if in parentheses, instead of) which the respective new term should be inserted.

- 019 authorized name – *see* name, official.
- 317 standard name – *see* name, standardized.
- 118 geoname – informal alternative for geographical name.
- 118 geonym – *see* name, geographical.
- 345 transboundary name – name of a geographical feature extending over two or more political entities, e.g. rivers and mountain ranges.
- 240 nominative form (of a toponym) – in languages whose grammar includes declension and cases, the name form in the first (nominative) case. *Examples:* in German, Berlin (and not Berlins, *of* Berlin, genitive case); in Hungarian, Budapest (and not e.g. Budapestre, *to* Budapest); in Russian, Москва (and not e.g. МОСКВЫ, *from* Moscow).
- (250) oronym – name of a vertically structured formation of the terrain (including the sea bed) e.g. names of mountains, mountain ranges, sea mounts, hills or highlands. *Examples:* Matterhorn, Gauriśankar, Fuji San, Sierra Madre, Mid-Atlantic Ridge.
- (028) choronym – name of a large geographical or administrative unit of land. *Examples:* Yorkshire, Ar-Rub al-Khali, Misiones, Attika.
- 080 ethnonym – name of an ethnic group, such as a tribe or a clan. *Examples:* Danes, the Hashemites, Saami, the Sorbs.
- 144 lacustrine name – *see* name, lacustrine.
- 218 name, lacustrine – name of a lake or of an inland sea. *Examples:* Dead Sea, Ozero Balkhash, Lake Malawi.
- 031 commemorative name – *see* name, commemorative
- 211 name, commemorative – name of a natural or man-made geographical feature named after a person or after an event, as a way to honor or memorialize the respective person or event. *Examples:* Isla de Pascua (Easter Island, Chile), Sydney (Australia), Blyderivier (South Africa).

## 2. The terms exonym and endonym

The Working Group on Exonyms has proposed new definitions for the terms “exonym” and “endonym”, as follows (changes from the original definitions as published in the *Glossary* are underlined):

exonym        name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is spoken, and differing in its form from the name used in an official or well established language of the area where the geographical feature is located.

endonym       name of a geographical feature in an official or well established language occurring in that area where the feature is located.

These were accepted by the Working Group on Terminology (except for the substitution of “located” by “situated”). As no examples were provided by the Working Group on Exonyms, the new definitions, following *Glossary* practice, are being proposed thus:

(081) exonym        Name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is widely spoken, and differing in its form from the respective →**endonym(s)** in the area where the geographical feature is situated.

*Examples:* Warsaw is the English exonym for Warszawa (Polish); Mailand is German for Milano; Londres is French for London; Quluniyā is Arabic for Köln. The officially romanized endonym Moskva for Москва is not an exonym, nor is the Pinyin form Beijing, while Peking is an exonym. The United Nations recommends minimizing the use of exonyms in international usage, See also →**name, traditional**.

(076) endonym        Name of a geographical feature in an official or well established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated. *Examples:* Vārānasī (not Benares); Aachen (not Aix la-Chapelle); Krung Thep (not Bangkok); Al-Uqşur (not Luxor).

## 3. New term proposed

It is suggested to add the following term, which has already been used in toponymy. Resulting from the onomastic term *onymisation*, i.e. changing a common noun into a proper name, the following is proposed:

343/b toponymisation – the act of producing a toponym (i.e. a proper noun) from a common noun. *Examples:* producing the toponym Bath (England), place of the Roman baths, bathum); Iraq from ‘Irāq (Arabic, waterside of a sea or of a large river, or a pasture).

#### 4. The term univocity

This term has been used in UNGEGN's *Manual for the national standardization of geographical names* (pp. 36 and 83) instead of the "one place – one name" principle, and appears to be a misnomer. According to *Websters New International Dictionary*, the meaning of univocal and univocity (from Latin vox, voice), is "having only one meaning". Theoretically, the term uninominy (from Latin nomen, name) could serve the purpose, but is there a real need for it? The Working Group on Terminology is asked to decide.

#### 5. New terms proposed without definitions having been supplied

The following terms were proposed for inclusion in the *Glossary*, but no definitions were received to date:

- anecdotal toponym
- recycled toponym
- corrupted toponym

The first two terms were discussed by the Working Group, but the experts present did not consider this splitting of the term *toponym* necessary. If no definition for the term *corrupted toponym* will be received, it will be deleted.

#### 6. The terms oikonym and anoikonym

A further two terms that were proposed already in 2002 without a definition being supplied were *oikonym* and *anoikonym* [οἶκος = house in Greek; hence the prefix eco-]. Some experts proposed to include these two terms, using temporary definitions based on those submitted by Dr. Milan Harvalik (Czechia), originator/editor of the "List of Key Onomastic Terms", to the International Council of Onomastic Sciences" (ICOS) in Pisa, 2005, as follows:

- 248/b oikonym – in some languages (e.g. Slavonic, German, Estonian) a synonym for *populated place*.
- 016/b anoikonym – in some languages (e.g. Slavonic, German) name of a non-inhabitable natural feature or of a man-made firmly fixed uninhabitable one. *Examples*: names of some terrain formations such as lava fields, water bodies or lines of communication.

A decision on these terms should be taken.

#### 7. The need for two new terms

- (a) A need has been identified for a term describing maritime allonyms applied to international waters or "high seas", i.e. areas not coming under the jurisdiction of any country or sovereignty. The names of

such areas do not fit either the definition of endonym (term 076) or exonym (081), because there are no “languages occurring or spoken” there. *Examples:* Mare Mediterraneo (Italian), al Baħr al Mutawassit (Arabic), Mediterranean Sea (English). Perhaps “neutral maritime name (with language)”?

(b) With the introduction of underground mapping and underground cadasters, a suitable term is required., and “underground name”, see “underground toponym” is proposed.