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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 Eighth Conference**

National Report of Turkey (2002-2007)

Submitted by Turkey**

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** Prepared by the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T), Turkey.

Summary

"The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T)" which is responsible for standardization of geographic names in Turkey, has been founded in July 2004 in accordance with the directive of Ministry of Interior prepared in cooperation with related national institutions. The directive states the terms of reference for the establishment of the Board, as well as its tasks and responsibilities. The Board is a joint inter-ministerial and academic body, responsible for coordinating and accelerating the efforts for the standardization of geographical names. It carries out its tasks in parallel with UNGEGN. The Board has been given legal competence to standardize all categories of geographical names in Turkey, including exonyms, maritime names and undersea features as well as proposals for the names of objects in space. The Board may create working groups in order to achieve its responsibilities.

The officials on the Board represent a number of institutions, such as the General Directorate of Provincial Management of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Society for Turkish Language, Turkish Standards Institute, Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkish Historical Society, Universities, General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

Standardized geographical names are prescribed as they take place in publications of the Ministry of Interior, and on topographic maps produced by the General Command of Mapping of the Ministry of Defense and nautical charts published by the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

Currently, standardization of topographic, nautical, local names is carried out by the General Command of Mapping, the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography, and local municipal boards, respectively with the authorization of the Ministry of Interior and the Board.

1. Organizational Activities

Since the Twenty-Second session of UNGEGN held in Berlin in 2002, the legal status of the authorities for national geographical names has been changed through an Official Regulation of the Ministry of Interior. Some preliminary studies have been planned and realized since then.

1.1 Historical Background

Attempts to standardize geographical names in Turkey started in the late 1930s, when the Ministry of Interior set up a special committee for the standardization of names of populated places. The establishment and naming of administrative units - provinces, districts, sub-districts and villages- are based on the Law on Provinces (Law no. 5442) dated 1949. Naming or renaming an administrative unit or a natural geographic feature is accomplished by different, hierarchical local and governmental procedures depending on the type of administrative unit. The procedure comprises the decisions of the General Provincial Council, the Administrative Provincial

Committee, the Governor and finally the triple decree by the Minister of Interior, the Prime Minister and the President. The establishment and naming of a province or a sub-province is executed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The General Directorate of Provincial Management is authorized to register and standardize names of villages, upon the approval of Minister of Interior.

A "Permanent Committee on Geographical Names" was set up in 1952 by the Ministry of Interior and was authorized to standardize names of administrative units, inhabited places and natural geographic features except roads, parks and streets in the districts of municipalities. The Committee, which consisted of experts from universities and national bodies, continued its activities until 1975, though not on a regular basis.

In 1983, a national "Committee of Experts for Standardization of Geographical Names" was established through a government decree. However, due to the difficulties faced in implementation, its activities were terminated in 1986.

Standardized geographical names are prescribed as they take place in publications of the Ministry of Interior and on topographic maps produced by the General Command of Mapping of the Ministry of Defense and nautical charts produced by the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

Currently, standardization of topographic, nautical, local names is carried out by the General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography and local municipal boards, respectively with the authorization of the Ministry of Interior and the Board.

1.2 Legal Status of the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN-T)

"The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T)" which is responsible for standardization of geographic names in Turkey, has been officially founded in July 2004 in accordance with the directive of Ministry of Interior prepared in cooperation with related national institutions. The directive states the terms of reference for the establishment of the Board, as well as its tasks and responsibilities. The Board is a joint inter-ministerial and academic body, responsible for coordinating and accelerating the efforts for the standardization of geographical names, it carries out its tasks in parallel with UNGEGN. The Board has been given legal competence to standardize all categories of geographical names in Turkey, including exonyms, maritime names and undersea features as well as proposals for the names of objects in space. The Board may create working groups in order to achieve its responsibilities.

The officials on the Board represent a number of institutions, such as the General Directorate of Provincial Management of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Society for Turkish Language, Turkish Standards Institute, Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkish Historical Society, Universities, General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of the Turkish Naval Forces.

1.3 BEGeoN-T Activities

The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey organizes two meetings every year. Recent developments, activities of working groups, decisions about possible questions from various institutions are discussed during these meetings.

Five working groups have been established in the meeting which took place in October 2004, in line with the activities of UNGEGN and national needs. These working groups are on "Technical Infrastructure", "Exonyms of Country Names and Capitals", "Toponymy Guide", "Glossary of Toponymic Terminology" and "Gazetteer and Geographical Names Database". Representatives on the Board and other experts proposed by participating institutions may take part in these working groups.

The Board has been briefed on the activities of the working groups during the meeting which was held in October 2005. The Turkish version of the UNGEGN brochure has been prepared and submitted to the approval of UNGEGN. The brochure will be published upon approval. The Board also decided to establish new working groups, namely on "Determining Deficiencies concerning the use of Populated Place Names and Standardization of anomalies about use of Geographical Names", "Medium Scale Gazetteer", "World Gazetteer", and "Geographical Names in the Surroundings of Turkey".

The "Concise Gazetteer of the World at scale 1:30 M", the revised version of the "Gazetteer at scale 1:250.000", "Concise Gazetteer of neighbouring regions of Turkey" will be assigned to the new working groups of the Board. The latter study will be conducted in parallel to the examination of actual and old Turkish maps with a view to gathering Turkish exonyms.

Since its establishment, The Board is working for the publication of following documents: "Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features", "Turkish exonyms of countries and capitals" based on the list of ISO 3166, "Toponymy Guidelines for Authors, Map Publishers and Other Editors", "Glossary of Toponymic Terminology", "Gazetteers and Names Databases at various scales", "Marine, Nautical and under sea names".

1.4 Participation in the Activities of UNGEGN Divisions and other International Bodies

BeGeoN_T participated in several Division meetings such as East Central and South-East Europe Division and Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic).

The list of "Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features" prepared by the Romano-Hellenic Division and geographical features on the basis of topographic maps of Turkey are merged to be a part of the Guide.

A new project - EuroGeoNames - has been designed and proposed to Eurogeographics by German-Dutch cooperation. This project addresses critical issues in the implementation of an operational European Spatial Data Infrastructure at the European level. EuroGeoNames project is in line with the goals and aspirations of INSPIRE and resolutions of UNGEGN. Turkey participates in and contributes to the project as a Reference Group member. Turkey is planning to make its (official) national geographical names database deposited in the General Command of Mapping accessible, free of charge for non-commercial personal inquiries. Commercial use will be agreed upon an agreement to be reached between the Project Coordinator and participating institutions.