Economic and Social Council

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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 Eight Conference**

Report of Lithuania

Submitted by Lithuania**

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Report of Lithuania
Paper submitted by Lithuania

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

1. Background

1.1. Data, field collection and standardization tradition

The process of collecting geographical names has been completed before the Second World War. The standardization of the geographical names in Lithuania was carried out in the period of the independent republic of Lithuania (1918–1940), and the principles of the standardization have not changed. During fieldwork additional data were collected, and the spelling and accent of some place names were checked (the last expedition took place in 1986). During Soviet times some place names were dropped due to the processes of collectivization and land reclamation, and other reasons. After the re-establishment of the country's independence in 1990, some names, especially the names of settlements, are in use again. It is connected with the fact that land, woods and lakes, which had been nationalized by the Soviet authorities are claimed by their legal owners or their heirs. The owners express the wish to reestablish the old geographical names too. In cases like these the pre-war period data (a card file containing about 700,000 entries collected during fieldwork), which has been stored at the Institute of the Lithuanian Language are used.

1.2. Framework and national authorities

The official use of geographical names in the Republic of Lithuania is regulated by two main laws:

- The Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania (1995)
- The Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania (2001)

The place names in official usage should be written in the official language of the Republic of Lithuania and in correct standardized forms.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language functions as the geographical names' authority. A consultative sub-commission for Proper Names has been set up to deal with the geographical names.

The National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania functions as the national mapping authority.

The names of the districts of the Republic of Lithuania, their centers and municipalities are determined, amended and eliminated by the Seimas. The names of populated places (*oiconims*) initiated by local governments and accepted by the State Commission of the Language have to be approved by the government. The changes are entered in the Address Register managed by the state-run Center of Registers.

2. Changes during the period of 2002-2007

At the end of 2003, amendments were made to the provision of the Law on the Territorial Administrative Units of the Republic of Lithuania and their Boundaries stipulating that streets, buildings and other constructions under the jurisdiction of local governments should be given names by the resolutions of the local government councils with the approval of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language (Article 9). It has been established that names to such places should be given in accordance with certain criteria set by the government of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2004, the government approved the criteria for giving names to streets, buildings and other constructions (Valstybes Žinios / Official Gazette, No 88-3225), while the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language approved the Recommendations for the Forming and Spelling of Street Names. On average, the Commission receives about 100 requests every year for its opinion on new street names.

In 2004, the government of the Republic of Lithuania decreed by Resolution No 101 of 2 February 2004 that "the names of rivers and lakes should be changed only with the approval of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language."

In 2006, at the request of the Language Commission and the proposal of the Ministry of the Environment a linguistic examination of the hydronims included in the Classification of Lakes and the Classification of Rivers and Ponds was made. These two classifications will make up the State Cadastre of the Lithuanian Rivers, Lakes and Ponds. The aim of the linguistic examination was to establish precise and correct hydronyms. The Ministry of the Environment has been notified of the names of bodies of water that should be corrected taking linguists' recommendations into consideration. (Additionally, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language is developing an electronic database of Lithuanian hydronyms. This project is also supported by the Language Commission.)

In 2006, the Language Commission made amendments to the List of Geographical Names of Lithuania (adopted in 1997): about 60 changes (in orthography, name form or accent) were confirmed and about 30 new names were entered. For example, in 2005, the newly established highest point on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania was given the name of Aukštojas Hill (293.84 meters).

Preparations were made to implement Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 14 March 2007 establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE). To achieve the aim, the project on Lithuania's infrastructure of geographical information (LGII) is being carried out. It will allow the harmonization of the main state registers, which contain geographical information: addresses, rivers, lakes, ponds, woods, protected areas and so on. It is planned to create a frame of the infrastructure of geographical information until 2008, which will enable to make use of all the data administered by various state institutions. (The concept of the development infrastructure of geographical information has been worked out by the National Land Service.)

3. The main sources

3.1. Main toponymic sources:

- *Lietuvos TSR administracinio teritorinio suskirstymo žinynas* (Territorial Administrative Units of the Lithuanian SSR), Vilnius, 1974, p.1; Vilnius, 1976, P. 2 (about 30,000 names of residential areas).

- *Lietuvos TSR upiu ir ežeru vardynas* (Names of the Rivers and Lakes of the Lithuanian SSR), Vilnius, 1963 (about 7,000 hydronyms).

- *Lietuvos upes* (Lithuanian rivers), Editors Brunonas Gailiušis, Jonas Jablonskis, Milda Kovalenkoviene, Kaunas, Lietuvos energetikos institutas, 2001 (about 5,400 rivers names).

- *Lietuvos mišku vardynas. I dalis*. (Lithuanian forests. I Part.). Miškininku sajunga. Kaunas, 1994, 267 pages.

- List of Lithuanian Place Names, approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language on 28 August 1997 (last revision in 2006) http://www.vlkk.lt/nutarimai/lietuvos-vietovardziai.html

- List of Ethnic Exonyms, (pdf) approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language http://www.vlkk.lt/lt/article.poo/72

- List of the Names of States and Capitals (based on ISO 3166-1) approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language http://www.vlkk.lt/nutarimai/svetimvardziai/valstybiu-ir-sostiniu.html

- Modern Lithuanian Dictionary. List of place names (about 2,500 place names), http://www.autoinfa.lt/webdic/

- *Pasaulio vietovardžiu žodynas. Europa* (Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World. Europe), Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopediju leidybos institutas, 2006.

- *Vietovardžiu žodynas* (Dictionary of Place Names). Editors Aldonas Pupkis, Maryte Razmukaite and Rita Miliunaite, Vilnius, Mokslo ir enciklopediju leidybos institutas, 2002.

3.2. Main officials maps, charts and Database:

- Base of toponyms on maps of Lithuania - first topographical surveying at scale

1:10 000 in field (1949–1954), and (an updated edition) in 1970-1990.

- Address Registre (only Administrative units, Residental names and street names).

- Geographic map of Lithuania at scale 1:50 000 on CD ROOM.

- Georeference Vector Database GDB10LT, scale of 1:10 000 on the basis of Orthophoto Maps of Lithuania, all territory (27,000 toponyms in 2,782 sheets,

LKS-94; coordinates' system.

- Digital color raster (scanned) topographic maps, scale 1:10 000, all territory, LKS-94 coordinates' system.

- Topographic maps at scale 1:10 000 (near boundary).

- Topographic maps at scale 1:50 000 - all territory, 131 sheets, LKS-94 coordinates' system.

- Digital color raster topographic maps at scale 1:50 000, all territory, LKS-94 coordinates' system.

- Aeronautical charts at scale 1:250 000, all territory, WGS - 84 coordinates' system;

- Digital color raster aeronautical charts at scale 1:250 000, all territory, WGS - 84 coordinates' system.

- Navigation Baltic Sea charts at scale 1:200 000 compiled by the Hydrographic Service of the Lithuanian Maritime administration.

- Navigation chart of the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas delta at scale 1:75 000, compiled by the Lithuanian Inland Waterways Authority.

- Website http:// www.maps.lt

4. Names of Countries

On the basis of the changes to Standard ISO 3166-1 Part 1 Country codes (the information is provided by the Department of Standardization), the State Language Commission amends the List of the Names of Countries (their Lithuanian equivalents; last revision by the Sub-commission in 2007).

5. Usage of Foreign Place Names

The Commission recommends that in academic literature, advertising, information publications and special texts the original spelling of foreign place names are retained, except for common popular place names, which are mostly adapted, while in fiction, popular and juvenile literature the spelling of foreign place names (in the Latin alphabet) should be adapted to the norms of the Lithuanian language. In 2004, the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language adjusted the rules for the adaptation of Latvian place names. In 2006 and 2007, the Commission reconsidered the rules for usage of foreign names with the Lithuanian inflexions.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language has initiated the publication of Pasaulio vietovardžiu žodynas ('Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World'). Edited and published by the Institute of Science and Encyclopedias. In 2006, 'Part I Europe' was printed. The dictionary gives original and adapted (or transliterated) forms of place names and Lithuanian exonyms with the entry words accented. The volume consists of approximately 50,000 entries of social and physical geographic names with their identification data and short references; three indexes are added (Latin, Cyrillic and Greek). In 2007, 'Part II America' is expected to come out.

This dictionary is important since in the pre-war time the use of endonims in their original form had not become the norm. Therefore foreign geographical names in popular publications are used in an adapted (Lithuanian-type) form. There are several reasons why the use of original foreign forms is still being opposed. One of them is the peculiarity of the Lithuanian letters (based on the Latin alphabet which has no letters q, w and x, but has letters with diacritic signs, e.g., c, š, u, e, e, i, u and others). Another one is the peculiarities of Lithuanian grammar (grammatical categories of proper names, such as gender, number and case are shown by inflexions). And finally, it was customary to adapt foreign names in the Soviet period (1940–1990), i.e., to transcribe in the Lithuanian letters according to an approximate pronunciation. Some consumer protection organizations think that a law should be passed according to which the original (endonimic) form would be used in brackets next to the lithuanized (adapted) variant. The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is for a compromise in this situation.

6. Exonyms

At the instruction of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Language Commission approved the lists of traditional place names of the ethnic Baltic lands, i.e. in the Kaliningrad (Karaliaucius) Region, in 1997 about 450 place names), in Poland (in 1998, about 300); in Belarus (in 1999, about 1,150); and in Latvia (in 2000, about 70).

In 2002, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language initiated the creation of the database of ethnic place names (project manager Maryte Razmukaite). The work is carried out according to the program for the preservation of the dialects and ethnic place names, approved by the government and the Language Commission. About 5,000 ethnic place names of the areas beyond the present territory of Lithuania that were or are still inhabited by Lithuanians have been accumulated in computer databases and in card indexes. Several separate card indexes have been formed of these place names: of their Lithuanian forms and non-Lithuanian (Belarus, Latvian, Polish, Russian and German) equivalents.

7. Plans for the Future

Lithuania has developed a project on a database of geographical information (LGII), with the aim of harmonizing all the databases of geographical information available at various public institutions of Lithuania. During the process of the implementation of the project, the official geographical information will be checked and made more accurate. It will be accessible on the Internet, which means more possibilities for a wider use of the Lithuanian geographical information. Carrying out this project, Lithuania is getting ready to implement the directive of the European Commission, INSPIRE. Lithuania is also participating in the project of European Geographical Names (EGN).

8. Abbreviations

LGII – Lithuanian Geographical Information Infrastructure
LKS-94 – Lithuania Coordinates System 1994
INSPIRE – Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe
WGS-84 – World Geodetic System 1984

9. Further information may be obtained from:

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10. **Summary**

The Lithuanian geographical names have been standardized, with official legal acts regulating their usage in official context and official maps. The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is in charge of the standardization of place names on the national level, while the National Land Service under the ministry of agriculture is responsible for official maps. In this respect nothing has changed.

A new thing is that the concept of the development of the geogra phical information has been created by the National Land Service, and the project on the infrastructure of the geographical information (LGII) is being carried out. According to it, the registers and cadastres and similar databases (among them geographical names) administered by various state institutions will become a harmonious whole and will be put online. It will open up new possibilities for using geographical information for the public and private sector alike.

The Dictionary of the Geographical Names of the World is published on the initiative of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. It is edited by the Institute of Science and Encyclopedias. In 2006, Part I Europe came out. The Dictionary presents original and adapted (or transliterated) forms of place names and Lithuanian exonyms; the entry words are accented. Part I Europe consists of approximately 50,000 entries of social and physical geographic names with their identification data and short references. In 2007, Part II America is expected to be published. The dictionary is important as the use of endonims did not become the norm in the pre - war years in Lithuania, and the popular publications often still use the adapted forms of foreign place names.

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