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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 Eighth Conference**

Report of Germany

Submitted by Germany**

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National report of Germany for the period 2002 - 2007

(a) Summary

The main activities for the standardization of geographical names on a national level in Germany in the period 2002 – 2007 were carried by the Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN, Permanent committee on geographical names) and the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (BKG, Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy).

According to resolution VIII-6 of the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) priority was firstly put on the development of a geographical names database of Germany (GN-DE) serving as an integral part of the Digital Landscape Models (DLM) maintained at BKG (DLM250 and DLM1000), by that abolishing various former secondary stand-alone geographical names databases. GN-DE, DLM250 and DLM1000 are becoming constituents of the national German spatial data infrastructure (GDI-DE) the components of which will be compliant to the European Spatial Data Infrastructure (ESDI) which has to be established through European legislation.

With respect to the rapidly increasing importance of European solutions evolving according to spatial information, priority was secondly put on the realization of the project EuroGeoNames, a programme for developing a European geographical names data infrastructure and services. EuroGeoNames is operated by a consortium of nine members from five countries, supported extensively by National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies from 15 European countries.

Thirdly a major contribution was provided to the activities of UNGEGN regarding the organisation and conducting of toponymic training courses.

(b) Background information

? Historical sketch

The „Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen“ (StAGN) was established in 1959. StAGN is an independent scientific organization without sovereign functions. Within the German linguistic area it is the competent body responsible for elaborating on recommendations on the standardization of geographical names. To StAGN are affiliated in particular scientists and experts in practice from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and other German-speaking regions. They represent the technical fields of topography, cartography, geography and linguistics coming from institutions and administrations concerned with geographical names.

? StAGN Secretariat

The secretariat of StAGN is located at the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (BKG).

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(c) Goals and national programmes

? Participation in meetings and conferences

- Representatives of Germany participated in the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Berlin in 2002 as well as in the 22nd UNGEGN Session held in New York in 2004 and in the 23rd UNGEGN Session held in Vienna 2006.
- Representatives of Germany attended meetings of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) of UNGEGN held in Berlin 2002, The Hague (NL) in 2004, New York in 2004, in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden (NL) and Vienna in 2006.
- StAGN was conducting regular meetings twice a year and held ten meetings since the Eighth UNCSGN. Each meeting was attended by some 25 members and guests.
- Members of StAGN participated in the International Conference on Minority Names / Indigenous Names and Multilingual Areas “Geonames 2005” in Ljouwert/Leeuwarden (NL).

- Joint meetings of parties involved in the EuroGeoNames project and members of the UNGEGN WG on Toponymic data files and gazetteers were held on the occasion of the 23rd UNGEGN Session in Vienna in April 2006 and a workshop that took place at the Instituto Geográfico Nacional in Madrid in March 2007.
- A joint meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, the UNGEGN East, Central and Southeast-East Europe Division and members of the EuroGeoNames Project was held in Prague in May 2007.
- Members of StAGN participated in meetings of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms in Prague 2003, Ljubljana 2005 and Vienna 2006.

? *National standardization - Treatment of names in multilingual areas*

In Germany four languages have been officially recognized as minority languages: Danish, Frisian, Romanes (the language of the Sinti and Roma) and Sorbian (see Working Paper 54, Twenty-third UNGEGN session, Vienna, 2006). The database "Geographical Names of Germany" (GN-DE) contains 481 approved names entries in the Sorbian language and 71 names entries in Frisian. The Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on the Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Names was provided with information from Germany for the WG's first report in March 2007.

? *Exonyms*

Within the EuroGeoNames project a variant names database for European geographical names is under construction. For the present variant names (incl. exonyms) are considered available in official languages of countries being Reference Group members to the project. The Reference Group countries are: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands and Turkey. In addition also variant names available in English shall be integrated.

? *Toponymic data files - Data elements required*

A survey/inventory on the state of the art of European geographical names data and assessment of a future European geographical names data infrastructure (SI-EGN) was carried out in 2005 (see Working Paper 50, Twenty-third UNGEGN session, Vienna, 2006). SI-EGN served as preparatory to the EuroGeoNames project (http://www.eurogeographics.org/eng/documents/051115_SI-EGN_final_report.pdf).

? *Toponymic data files - Compatibility and structure of systems*

A project for setting up a Europe-wide geographical names data infrastructure and associated services (EuroGeoNames) was started in September 2006. The services will provide access to and link the official multilingual geographical names data held at the national level. The project consortium brings together partners from the public, academic and private sectors embracing the full 'value chain' from data providers, technology partners and value added service applications (www.eurogeonames.eu) .

? *Toponymic data files - National gazetteers*

- Following resolution VIII-6 as adopted by the Eighth UNCSGN the following geographical names information held and maintained at BKG as various and partly independent (topographic) vector data products were amalgamated: Digital Landscape Models at a resolution of 1:250 000 and 1:1 000 000 scales (DLM250 and DLM1000), Administrative Units at 1:250 000 scale (VG250) and Geographical Names at 1:250 000 and 1:1 000 000 scales (GN250 and GN1000). According to a new data model developed for geographical names information, the respective data was converted to a single database called Geographical Names of Germany (GN-DE). Through unique identifiers the names entries of the GN-DE are now linked unambiguously to all databases and products mentioned above. By that GN-DE serves as the unique geographical names data source for all BKG products and consequently for the (Gazetteer-) web service (see *Working Paper presented at the Ninth UNCSGN*).

- StAGN dealt with a map project on the geographical names connected with the German coastal area shown on four map sheets at a scale of 1 : 200 000 (see: *Working Paper 51, Twenty-third UNGEGN session, Vienna, 2006*). Currently the about 1400 geographical features will be integrated in the DLM250 of BKG and the names data in the GN-DE. The integration of the names data will be carried out co-operatively with the North- and Baltic Sea Coastal Information System (Nokis) of the Federal Waterways Engineering and Research Institute, Hamburg.

? *Toponymic data files - Other publications*

A fourth edition of the map "Federal Republic of Germany at 1:1 million scale, Geographical regions – their names and margins" was jointly published by the BKG and StAGN in April 2007 (see also *Working Paper E/CONF.94/CRP.38, Eighth UNCSGN, Berlin, 2002, as for the third edition*).

? *Toponymic websites*

Since autumn 2006 the BKG is providing a standardized webservice for geographical names of Germany (GN-DE). At the moment about 84 000 names are available (<http://www.geodatenzentrum.de>, Click: Suche geographischer Namen, or:

http://www.geodatenzentrum.de/geodaten/gdz_rahmen.gdz_div?gdz_spr=deu&gdz_akt_zeile=3&gdz_anz_zeile=4) (see also a specific Working Paper presented at the Ninth UNCSGN).

? *Training courses in toponymy*

Staff members of the BKG contributed to the following training courses as lecturers. In addition a compilation of teaching material presented at the training course in toponymy held in Enschede (NL), Frankfurt am Main and Berlin in 2002, was provided for perusal to the attendees of the following courses:

2003 Khartoum (SD)

2004 Bathurst (AU, teaching material only)

2004 Maputo (MZ)

2005 Malang (ID)

2006 Vienna (AT)

2006 Maputo (MZ)

? *Country names*

An updated list of country names was published by StAGN as 9th edition as of July 2006 (<http://www.stagn.de/Staatennamen.htm>).