



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

# INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**UNGEGN**

**INFORMATION**

**BULLETIN**

(FORMERLY NEWSLETTER)

The *Information Bulletin of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (formerly UNGEGN Newsletter) is issued approximately twice a year by the Secretariat of the Group. The Secretariat is established within the Statistics Division (UNSD), Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Secretariat of the United Nations. It publishes contributions/reports from the Experts of the Group, its Linguistic/Geographical Divisions and its Working Groups. Contributions for the Information Bulletin can only be considered when they are made available in digital form. They

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***The Bulletin is issued without formal editing.***

## Preface

### Message from the Chairperson

#### Dear Colleagues

I trust that everyone returned home with good memories and experiences from the successful Ninth UN Conference in New York. I hope, too, that each of you took back some new ideas and information that is, or will be, helpful in your continuing work on geographical names standardization.

#### **Ninth Conference and 24<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN – follow up**

- Since we met in August, the reports of the Conference and of UNGEGN have been finalized, edited by the UN, published and also made available on the UNGEGN website ([unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo)). Moreover, the Conference report has been accepted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). I express our thanks to the UNGEGN Secretariat for prompt action in processing these materials on our behalf.
- During the past couple of months, I have been working with the Secretariat on updates for the UNGEGN website. As this is a continuing process, we welcome your information on corrections or additions that should be made – in particular to keep links to your websites up to date.
- Now available as pdf files on the UNGEGN website are: (a) the updated list of all documents submitted to the UN Conferences and to UNGEGN Sessions and (b) the compendium of resolutions (in English and French at this time) of all nine Conferences. If it would be useful for you to have an Excel version of the list of documents or a Word file of the resolutions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

#### *Looking ahead*

- In the coming year I believe that a number of UNGEGN Working Groups and Divisions will be organizing meetings. To make these as effective as possible, I do encourage you to consult about the selection of dates to avoid overlap with other similar meetings, and to make the information available for the Secretariat to post on the UNGEGN website.
- You will see in this *Bulletin* that since the Ninth Conference, the Task Team for Africa has already been active by participating at the Africa GIS Conference in Burkina Faso, and is organizing a special UNGEGN session for the 31<sup>st</sup> International Geographical Congress in Tunis (August 2008). The Dutch- and German-speaking Division is planning an open symposium on geographical names and cultural heritage in Vienna in May and a meeting of the Working Group on Pronunciation will be associated with this. The Working Group on Exonyms and the Romano-Hellenic Division plan to meet in Romania in September. A joint planning meeting will be held by the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation and the Working Group on Publicity and Funding in April. These items, and more, you can read about in this *Bulletin*.
- The months ahead will see (through UNGEGN or its Working Groups) further initiatives in a number of directions, for instance, the development of the UNGEGN Geographical Names Database, furthering links with the Economic Commission for Africa, publishing the six language addendum to the *Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical*

names, organizing toponymic training, the creation of a press kit for the use of all experts, and planning for the 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN in early 2009.

### ***News of UNGEGN experts***

- At the Ninth Conference in August we were very concerned about the sickness of Mr. Luís Abrahamo, and it was with great sadness that we learned Mr. Abrahamo passed away on October 3, shortly after he had been able to return home from New York to Mozambique. In this *Bulletin* you will find some further commentary about the valuable contributions of Mr. Abrahamo to the work of UNGEGN and geographical names.
- On a happier note, we extend congratulations to Mr. Joern Sievers (Germany) and Mr. Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands), who have recently

“retired” at age 65. Both are strong proponents of UNGEGN activities and will continue to be involved in geographical names standardization in the future – Mr. Sievers through representation of StAGN and Mr. Ormeling through his role as Vice-Chair of UNGEGN.

I look forward to exchanging news and views with UNGEGN experts in the months ahead. If you have suggestions pertaining to the next UNGEGN Session, we would be pleased to receive them as soon as possible, to assist in planning for 2009.

**Helen Kerfoot**  
*UNGEGN Chair*  
*Ottawa, Canada*  
*hkerfoot@nrcan.gc.ca*

## **Meetings scheduled for 2008 and 2009**

### **2008**

February 20-22	ESRI Federal Users Conference Involvement of WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers <i>Contact:</i> Randall Flynn (flynnre@worldnet.att.net)	Washington, DC
April 15-19	Association of American Geographers Involvement of WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers <i>Contact:</i> Randall Flynn (flynnre@worldnet.att.net)	Boston
April 21-23	Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation Working Group on Publicity and Funding <i>Contacts:</i> Ki-Suk Lee (leekisuk@snu.ac.kr) David Munro (David.Munro@strath.ac.uk)	San Francisco
May 19-21 May 22-23	Symposium GeoNames08 (DGSD) Working Group on Pronunciation <i>Contacts:</i> Peter Jordan (peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at) Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig (dmacgiollaeaspaig@pobail.ie)	Vienna

Late May	ISO TC211 26 <sup>th</sup> plenary session Involvement of WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers <i>Contact:</i> Randall Flynn (flynnre@worldnet.att.net)	Copenhagen
August 12-15	31 <sup>st</sup> Congress of the International Geographical Union Special UNGEGN session relating to Africa <i>Contact:</i> Brahim Atoui (atoui.khalil@caramail.com) <i>Website:</i> www.igc-tunis2008.com	Tunis
August 18-22	23 <sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Onomastic Sciences Papers on toponymy welcomed <i>Website:</i> icos2008.yorku.ca	Toronto
September 8	Romano-Hellenic Division	Timișoara, Romania
September 9-10	Working Group on Exonyms	
September 11-12	ICA Commission on national and regional atlases <i>Contacts:</i> Salvatore Arca (scuolagtc@virgilio.it) Peter Jordan (peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at) - with Serban Dragomirescu (serbangheorghe@k.ro) - and Remus Cretan (cretan_remus@yahoo.com)	

## 2009

May 5-12 (tentative)	25 <sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Session	Nairobi
June 27-July 1 (tentative)	9 <sup>th</sup> UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas	New York
November (tentative)	19 <sup>th</sup> UN Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok

## Message from the Secretariat

Dear UNGEGN Experts,

From the feedback we received during and after the Ninth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (21-30 August 2007) the Conference was considered successful. We would like to thank all of you once again for your participation and hard work that made this possible.

As you know, it's likely that the twenty-fifth session of UNGEGN will take place in Nairobi, Kenya as recommended by the Ninth United Nations Conference on Standardization of Geographical Names. The tentative date for the session is 5-12 May 2009; I would like you to pencil it in your calendar.

Besides the 25th session of UNGEGN, the Secretariat will be organizing the following two regional cartographic conferences in 2009:

- (i) The 9th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in New York, 27 June - 1 July 2009.
- (ii) The 19<sup>th</sup> United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok (tentative), November 2009.

We hope this information will help you to plan ahead your attendance in these meetings.

The UNGEGN Secretariat has been active in support of the work of UNGEGN. Among the activities carried out by the Secretariat are:

- the 2007 Addendum of the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* was translated into the 6 UN official languages and is available on the UNGEGN Website.
- the development of the UNGEGN database on country and city names is progressing satisfactorily. Your assistance in providing your country's city/town data is requested. An Excel file with the correct names of all cities/towns with a population greater than 100,000 in your language(s)/script, as well as in their Romanized forms would help the work of the Secretariat.
- some restructuring of the UNGEGN website is underway.
- many of the reports and technical documents of the nine Conferences and the 25 UNGEGN sessions held since 1967 are now available in pdf format on the UNGEGN website. I would like to thank the Map Library of the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, and in particular Ms. Brenda Brookes, for providing most of the scanned files. This work is continuing with the aim to make the website a comprehensive source of documentation.

Finally, we would like to thank those who contributed to this *Bulletin*.

I wish you all a happy 2008!!

**Yacob Zewoldi**  
UNGEGN Secretariat  
United Nations Statistics Division

## International Cartographic Association (ICA): Honorary fellowship for Helen Kerfoot

### Message from Ferjan Ormeling



Despite attempts to lure her to the 23rd International Cartographic Conference in Moscow, Helen Kerfoot was unable to join that conference, due to the fact that it ended August 9, 2007, just 10 days prior to the start of the UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names which would take a lot of preparation. Had she been in Moscow, she would have been awarded the ICA honorary fellowship there. Now I was commissioned by the ICA Executive Committee to go to New York instead where I was able to address her and hand over the deed and matching medal. This was possible thanks to Messrs. Yacob Zewoldi and Stefan Schweinfest of the UN Statistics Division who found a perfect time

slot to allow for this ICA intrusion, and kept this hidden from Helen.

The ICA honorary fellowship is awarded every two years by the ICA Executive Committee following a decision made by the ICA Awards Committee, for services to cartography and geographic information science. The composition of the current Awards Committee is:

-Alexander Berlyant, Academician and Head of Department of Cartography and Geoinformatics of Moscow State University, Russian Federation

- Tositomo Kanakubo, former ICA Vice-President, and chairman, Japan Map Centre in Tokyo, Japan

- Liao Ke, Academician and Chief Editor Chinese National Atlas Programme, China

- Bengt Rystedt, ICA Past President, Sweden

- Michael Wood, ICA Former President, United Kingdom.

The citation drawn up by the ICA Awards Committee is given below.

*Ferjan Ormeling*

*On behalf of the International Cartographic Association*

## **Helen Kerfoot**

Helen Kerfoot was already presented with a diploma for outstanding services to ICA as member of the Local Organising Committee that organised the 1999 International Cartographic Conference in Ottawa. She has played an even more important role for cartographers worldwide however as chairperson of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) standing advisory commission of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

After a BSc in Geology, Geography and Anthropology in Britain she took up a job as geography teacher in Canada, but from 1971 she was a researcher and field party leader in the Canadian Arctic, for Indian and Northern Affairs, where she must have become interested in toponymy. In 1975 she joined the Toponymy section and the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names secretariat, at the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources in Ottawa, where she was appointed researcher for Northwest Territories toponymic data. From 1992-1998 she was head, Geographical Names Section of Natural Resources Canada, since when she has been an Emeritus scientist. She is a past president of the Canadian Society of the Study of Names, which she

presided over from 1997-2003. She was delegated by the Canadian Government to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in 1987, was elected as vice-chair in 1991 and elected as chairperson of UNGEGN in 2002.

Since then she has succeeded in turning UNGEGN into a more professional body and in bringing its work in line with current Spatial Data Infrastructure-initiatives. She is one of the few experts with hands-on experience in practically all fields of toponymic standardization. Her drive to attend all the meetings of UNGEGN working groups, her participation in toponymy courses world wide, in scientific seminars and technical meetings as well as her endeavours to make all UNGEGN 'jurisprudence' on geographical names accessible through its website have benefited the whole spatial information community, as geographical names standardisation is a most important aspect in the exchange and linking of geospatial data.

For her services and contribution to cartography and geographic information Helen Kerfoot is awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the International Cartographic Association.

## **Contact e-mails of the UNGEGN Bureau and Working Groups Officers**

### **UNGEGN Bureau**

#### **Chairperson**

Helen Kerfoot (Canada): [hkerfoot@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:hkerfoot@nrcan.gc.ca)

#### **Vice-Chairpersons:**

Brahim Atoui (Algeria): [atoui.khalil@caramail.com](mailto:atoui.khalil@caramail.com)

Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands): [f.ormeling@geo.uu.nl](mailto:f.ormeling@geo.uu.nl)

## **Rapporteurs:**

William Watt (Australia): [watt.william@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:watt.william@saugov.sa.gov.au)  
Leo Dillon (United States of America): [dillonli@state.gov](mailto:dillonli@state.gov)

## **Working Groups**

### **Working Group on Country Names**

Convenor: Leo Dillon (USA): [dillonli@state.gov](mailto:dillonli@state.gov)

### **Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers**

Convenor: Randall Flynn (USA): [flynnre@worldnet.att.net](mailto:flynnre@worldnet.att.net)  
Deputy Convenor: Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany): [pier.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de](mailto:pier.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de)

### **Working Group on Toponymic Terminology**

Convenor: Staffan Nyström, (Sweden): [staffan.nystrom@raa.se](mailto:staffan.nystrom@raa.se)

### **Working Group on Publicity and Funding**

Convenor: David Munro (United Kingdom): [david.munro@strath.ac.uk](mailto:david.munro@strath.ac.uk)

### **Working Group on Romanization Systems**

Convenor: Peeter Päll (Estonia): [peeter@eki.ee](mailto:peeter@eki.ee)

### **Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy**

Convenor: Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands): [f.ormeling@geo.uu.nl](mailto:f.ormeling@geo.uu.nl)

### **Working Group on Evaluation and implementation**

Convenor: Ki-Suk Lee (Republic of Korea): [leekisuk@snu.ac.kr](mailto:leekisuk@snu.ac.kr)

### **Working Group on Exonyms**

Co-Convenors:

Peter Jordan (Austria): [peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at)  
Milan Orožen Adamič (Slovenia): [Milan@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:Milan@zrc-sazu.si)

### **Working Group on Pronunciation**

Convenor: Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig (Ireland): [dmacgiollaeaspaig@pobail.ie](mailto:dmacgiollaeaspaig@pobail.ie)

### **Working Group on the Promotion of Recording and Use of Indigenous, Minority and Regional Language Group Geographical Names**

Convenor: Bill Watt (Australia): [watt.william@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:watt.william@saugov.sa.gov.au)

### **Task Force for Africa**

Head: Brahim Atoui (Algeria): [atoui.khalil@caramail.com](mailto:atoui.khalil@caramail.com)

### **Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors**

Coordinator: Isolde Hausner (Austria): [isolde.hausner@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:isolde.hausner@oeaw.ac.at)

## In Memoriam: LUÍS ABRAHAMO (1950 – 2007)



Mr. Luís Abrahamo (Mozambique) was well known and respected by all those who have participated in toponymic training courses in southern Africa. His death on 3 October 2007 came as a shock to all his UNGEGN friends and colleagues, and his presence at future UNGEGN activities will most certainly be missed.

Mr. Abrahamo was born in Inhambane Province, Mozambique, in 1950 and started working for the National Directorate of Geography and Cadastre (DINAGECA) of Mozambique in 1974. After promotion in technical positions in Agrarian Planning, Mr. Abrahamo was selected to attend a cartography course in Portugal in 1988 and was then appointed head of the cartography section of DINAGECA in 1989. In recent years, during the reforms in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Abrahamo integrated the staff of the National Centre of Cartography

(CENACARTA) and in 2005 was promoted to the position of Head of Territorial Division and Toponymy in the Ministry of State Administration (MAE).

In the 1990s, Mr. Abrahamo participated in toponymy training courses organized by UNGEGN's Africa South Division in Pretoria. His interest, knowledge and enthusiasm about this work would be a valuable grounding for his future endeavours. In 1998, Mr. Abrahamo represented Mozambique at the Seventh UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Since then he has been a valuable representative for his country at subsequent Conferences and UNGEGN Sessions and at the recent Ninth Conference he was elected as Vice-President of the Conference.

Following the Eighth UN Conference, Mr. Abrahamo was elected as Chair of the Africa South Division (following his role as Vice-Chair). In this capacity, and with the important international network that he had developed, in 2004, Mr. Abrahamo undertook the organization of the first international toponymy training course to be held at DINAGECA in Maputo. This was a very successful course that in addition to fundamentals needed for toponymic administration, included fieldwork and database development, led by a team of instructors from various countries. In 2006, Mr. Abrahamo organized and led a second very successful UNGEGN multi-division training course under the auspices of MAE at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo. On this occasion, Portuguese interpretation was made available for representatives from Angola, Brazil and Mozambique. During this time the usefulness of a Portuguese-speaking Division of UNGEGN was discussed, and Mr. Abrahamo became one of the leading proponents. At the Ninth Conference, submissions from Mozam-

bique and Brazil led to the successful acceptance of this new Division by UNGEGN.

During the years Mr. Abrahamo was involved with geographical names standardization, he contributed with care and concern to the development of geographical names programmes in southern Africa. In addition, he participated in the academic aspects of geographical names, most recently as Vice-President of the Names Society of Southern Africa (NSA). He had represented Mozambique both at conferences of the International Cartographic Association

(ICA) and the UN Committee on Development Information, under the Economic Commission for Africa (CODI-ECA).

We pass on to family, colleagues and friends of Mr. Luís Abrahamo in Mozambique, the appreciation of UNGEGN experts for the work he accomplished and the dedication, sincerity and thoughtfulness with which he conducted this work.

From: *Helen Kerfoot, Zinia Mabote and Ferjan Ormeling*

## From the Divisions

### Dutch- and German-speaking Division

#### Symposium GeoNames08 - Geographical names as part of the cultural heritage

Vienna, 19-21 May 2008

At the 9th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 21-30 August 2007, geographical names as a part of the cultural heritage evolved as one of the major topics. Referring to Resolution VIII/9 ("Geographical names as cultural heritage") many papers were addressing it. In addition, Ms. Hélène-Marie Gosselin, UNESCO Representative to the United Nations and Director of the UNESCO New York Office, presented in her speech the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage adopted in 2003 and entered into force on 20 April 2006 pointing at geographical names as an important element of linguistic heritage and traditions. Since geographical names are only implicitly covered by this Convention, it was found advantageous for various protection measures as well as for national and international standardization of geographical names in general to have geographical names also explicitly mentioned.

Since UN conferences due to their comprehensive tasks and strict schedule leave little space for more profound scientific discussions on a specific topic, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) – continuing its tradition of GeoNames symposia – would like to invite you to a symposium offering the opportunity to discuss this very topic during two days (19 and 20 May 2008). A one-day excursion (21 May) around Lake Neusiedl southeast of Vienna under the title "Multicultural variety around a lake" will provide some insight into the prac-

tice of multicultural situations in Austria and Hungary.

Subthemes of the symposium:

- Political and organizational measures at the international level to be taken to safeguard geographical names as part of the cultural heritage
- Measures in the framework of national standardization to be taken to safeguard geographical names as part of the cultural heritage
- Geographical names as keys to cultural and settlement history
- Geographical names as expressions of cultural relations
- Geographical names in minority and indigenous languages
- Exonyms as part of the cultural heritage
- Documentation, data files and projects recording names in danger or getting out of use

The symposium is open for all UNGEGN experts (irrespective of divisions and working groups), but also for other persons interested.

English will be the conference language.

Should you wish to present a paper, please give notice to [peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at) by 31 January 2008 at the latest indicating author and paper title (see form sheet enclosed). An abstract in the length of ca. 200 words would then be due by 30 April 2008. A full paper in an elaborated version for print would be required by 30 June 2008, should you be interested to have it included into the proceedings.

Participants, who do not want to present a paper, are also kindly requested to announce their participation by 31 January 2008 (see form sheet enclosed).

A special registration for the excursion is necessary to organize bus and catering properly and also requested by 31 January 2008 (see form sheet enclosed).

You are, of course, free to make your own travel arrangements (e.g. by using the website <http://wien.tiscover.at/>) But having been informed about your participation by 31 January 2008 we will be able to offer you discount rates for some hotels near to the venue and to reserve a room for you. The organizers are, however, not able to cover any travel and accommodation expenses.

A 2nd circular will follow in February 2008.

### **Peter Jordan**

*Chair, UNGEGN Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) - peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at  
Chair, Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO)*

on behalf of the organizers:

*UNGEGN Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD)  
Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO)  
Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Urban and Regional Research  
Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Lexicography of Austrian Dialects and Names*

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### **Symposium GeoNames08**

**Vienna, 19-21 May 2008**

**Geographical names as part of the cultural heritage**

### **Registration form**

*Please, return to peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at or send by fax to +43 (1) 51581/3533 by 31 January 2008.*

Name .....

Affiliation.....

Country.....

E-mail.....

I will participate in the symposium GeoNames08 “Geographical Names as part of the cultural heritage” in Vienna

- 19 and 20 May 2008 (symposium days with paper presentations)
- 21 May 2008 (excursion)
- I wish to present a paper

titled.....

Please, reserve a room at a discount rate and close to the venue

- single bed room
  - double bed room
-

## 65 years - Ferjan Ormeling , UNGEGN vice-chair, celebrates a significant anniversary



This is the anniversary of a most remarkable person. Born in Utrecht, The Netherlands, but grown up and partly educated in the former Dutch East Indies, today Indonesia; son of a prominent cartographer and toponymist; professor of cartography at the University of Utrecht; working in research fields ranging from atlas cartography over toponomy, data quality, cartographic education, cartographic visualization, cartographic infrastructure, maps in the media to history of cartography; essential contributor to the Atlas of the Netherlands; leading member of the International Cartographic Association (chair, Commission on Education and Training 1987-1999, Secretary General and Treasurer 1999-2007).

Thus, what we see and note of him at UNGEGN sessions and UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names is just one aspect of his personality and a section of his tremendous scope of activities. But it is nevertheless a most essential one. It departed from his PhD. thesis on the rendering of minority toponyms on maps in Western Europe

(University of Utrecht), published in 1983. This profound study on a politically sensitive topic determined also his early years as a UNGEGN member. He advocated the official use of minority toponyms at a time, when the UNGEGN rule “one name for one object” was still considered mandatory without exception and when promoting the acceptance of minority toponyms as a part of national standardization prompted reactions like “to put [by striving for this goal] the whole building of national standardization at risk” (12th UNGEGN Session 1986). It may be a great satisfaction to him to see that in the meantime his views have widely been accepted, that many countries conduct programmes to standardize and document minority toponyms and that at the 9th UN Conference (2007) special emphasis was put on the issue that geographical names are a part of the cultural heritage and are therefore to be documented and kept in use.

But his activities within UNGEGN did not remain confined to this issue. Another important field is his engagement in toponymic training. As the convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy he did not only administer this field, but involved himself also actively in most of the training courses (42 since 1987) as an organizer and lecturer. In his function as chairman of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) he organized the most fruitful DGSD symposium GeoNames 2005 in Leeuwarden, the centre of the bilingual Dutch province of Friesland, devoted to the topic of minority/indigenous names and multilingual areas.

Apart from UNGEGN activities in the narrower sense he published on toponymic issues like on foreign geographical names in Dutch (1996) or contributes to the “EuroGeoNames” project. His election into the office of

UNGEGN vice-chair for the term 2007-2012 makes us sure to meet him and to profit from his knowledge and skills at least for several years to come.

## **Jörn Sievers – a long-term UNGEGN member celebrates his 65th birthday and retires**



*Heide and Jörn Sievers*

Well-known to all experts and an outstanding member of UNGEGN – this is Jörn Sievers at the peak of his professional life. It was devoted to names research in Antarctica as well as to the standardization of geographical names, the latter at the level of Germany and the German-speaking countries as well as within the various bodies of the United Nations. There, he knew to impress by his diplomatic skills as well as by pursuing goals very consequently and efficiently. German research into the Antarctica received out of his hands the “Register of German Geographical Names in Antarctica”. Since 1987 he functions as member, since 1994 as chair of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, the geographical names board for Germany with a coordinative function for all German-speaking countries. Since 1989 he represents Germany in UNGEGN sessions and in UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names, between 1994 and 1999 also as chairman of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division

**Peter Jordan**  
*on behalf of DGSD*

(DGSD). It was mainly due to his efforts that the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the 22<sup>nd</sup> UNGEGN Session in 2002 were awarded to Berlin and it was he, who chaired the organizing committee of this conference – an event that remained in best memory with all of us, not the least due to its most attractive social programme and its exceptional exhibition. At this same event Jörn Sievers was elected UNGEGN vice-chair, a function he maintained until summer 2007. In recent years he invested much energy into the EU-funded project “EuroGeoNames” aiming at the development of a European names infrastructure.

As the retirement of an energetic and renowned person like Jörn Sievers rarely means a disappearance into the dark we can certainly count on further essential contributions to our community. He will anyway continue to chair the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names up to the next elections and remain an active member also beyond this date. But there are also good prospects to see him and to learn from him at various future UNGEGN meetings (at least of the Working Groups on Exonyms and on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers as well as of the DGSD, where he is member), if it really should happen that he is not delegated anymore to UNGEGN sessions and UN conferences. The distinguished expert from Germany has still the floor!

**Peter Jordan**  
*on behalf of DGSD*

# East Central and South-East Europe Division

*Extracts from a Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division, November 2007. For copies of the full report, experts should contact the Division Chair, Mr. Željko Hećimović ([zeljko.hecimovic@cgi.hr](mailto:zeljko.hecimovic@cgi.hr))*

The East Central and South-East Europe Division of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) was established at the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Geneva 1967 as one of 14 Divisions. They were formally recognized (Recommendation II/4) at the Second Conference in London 1972 (*see Reference 1*).

The East Central and South-East Europe Division currently has 15 countries identifying their participation: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine (*refer to Figure 1*). In progress is the introduction of Montenegro as a new Division country.

**Figure 1: East Central and South-East Europe Division of UNGEGN**



Some of the Division countries are members of more than one UNGEGN Division. Examples

of countries belonging to two or more divisions are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Division's countries active in more than one UNGEGN Division**

Country	Member of UNGEGN Divisions
Bulgaria	1. East Central and South-East Europe Division 2. Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division
Cyprus	1. East Central and South-East Europe Division 2. Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) 3. East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic) 4. Romano-Hellenic Division
Greece	1. East Central and South-East Europe Division 2. Romano-Hellenic Division
Turkey	1. East Central and South-East Europe Division 2. Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) 3. Romano-Hellenic Division
Ukraine	1. East Central and South-East Europe Division 2. Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division

Table 2 (below) gives an overview of national authorities responsible for geographical names and of Toponymic Guidelines of Division countries. This reflects the level of activities in each country and should be updated on an ongoing basis.

In the near future Turkey plans to organize a Toponymy Course in Ankara. It will be organized by the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey and the Turkish national mapping agency. That will be the first time that course will be organized in a country of the Division.

A strong influence on the Division countries has been the EuroGeographics project EuroGeoNames (EGN). As part of EU INSPIRE initiative it is going to define new standards in the use of geographical names as part of spatial data infrastructure.

The influence of the globalization process on the Division countries can be articulated by development of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Google Earth is one of the ICT tools that open new possibilities in global distribution, sharing and presentation of geographical names. It is challenging standardization of geographical names.

## References

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3. Links to Toponymic Guidelines Web Sites, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/guidelineslink.htm>
4. Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland <http://www.gugik.gov.pl/komisja/english/wydawnictwa.php>
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6. UNGEGN (2006): *Contact Information for National Geographical Names Authorities*, January 2006. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>. See under “National Names Authorities”.

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**Table 2: National authority for geographical names and Toponymic Guidelines of Division countries (Reference 2 to 6)**

Country	National authority for geographical names	Year of establishment	Contact, if no National Authority	Toponymic Guidelines (edition year)	Internet Site
ALBANIA			Military Geographical Institute, Geographic Studies Center		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGO-VINA					
BULGARIA	Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names	1951			
CROATIA	(in progress)		Croatian Geodetic Institute	2007 (not official)	
CYPRUS	Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names	1977		2000 (draft version)	
CZECH REPUBLIC	Commission on Geographical Names	2001		2002, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1987 – Czechoslovakia	<a href="http://www.vugtk.cz/">http://www.vugtk.cz/</a>
GREECE				2000, 1998, 1981	
HUNGARY	Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names	1989 1963		2002, 1994, 1981	<a href="http://www.fomi.hu">http://www.fomi.hu</a> <a href="http://www.ksh.hu">http://www.ksh.hu</a> <a href="http://fish.fomi.hu">http://fish.fomi.hu</a>
MONTENE-GRO					
POLAND	Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland Commission on Geographical Names	1951	Office of Geodesy and Cartography	2002 2000 1996	<a href="http://www.gugik.gov.pl/komisja/tgp.htm">http://www.gugik.gov.pl/komisja/tgp.htm</a>
SERBIA	(in progress)		Republički Geodetski Zavod Srbije		
SLOVAKIA	Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of the Slovak Republic	1971		2000, 1996 1987 – Czechoslovakia	<a href="http://www.geodesy.gov.sk/sgn/typonym/Eng/typoframe.htm">http://www.geodesy.gov.sk/sgn/typonym/Eng/typoframe.htm</a>
SLOVENIA	Slovene Governmental Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names	1986		1995	<a href="http://www.sigov.si/kszi/ang/top_guide.pdf">http://www.sigov.si/kszi/ang/top_guide.pdf</a>
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	Commission nationale pour la normalisation des noms géographiques	2000			
TURKEY	the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey	2004		1982	
UKRAINE	National Council on Geographical Names State Service of Geodesy & Cadastre	2004 1994			

## From the Working Groups

### Report of the Working Group on Country Names

The Working Group on Country Names presented an updated version of its principal document, "List of Country Names" (E/CONF.98/89), to the Ninth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in New York in August 2007. This document, which lists the names of all countries in the world in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country, is for the first time completely Unicode-compliant. At this conference other papers were submitted under the Country Names agenda item from Turkey, Indonesia, France, Spain, Czech Republic, and Lebanon.

The Working Group held a meeting at the Ninth Conference, which focused on the future content and format of the document. At this meeting a representative from the UN Terminology and Reference Section joined the Work-

ing Group, in accordance with the recommendation of UNGEGN Resolution VIII/12. This Section maintains the UN Multilingual Terminology Database (UNTERM – available on the Internet at <http://unterm.un.org>), the official source of country names in the six UN official languages.

Since the Ninth Conference, the Working Group has coordinated to make several updates to the document. It is envisioned that a constantly updated version of this document will be made available on the UNGEGN website under the section for the Working Group on Country Names.

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### Report of Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers (WG TDFG)

#### 1. WG activities during the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (9th UNSCGN)

##### *1.1. Meeting of Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers (WG TDFG) (Monday, August 27th, 2007 at 18:00 – 19:00)*

Twenty five participants from 15 different countries attended the meeting of the WG TDFG, which was chaired by Mr. Zaccheddu. According to the WG work plan, many activities recently coordinated by the WG were discussed, amongst others: the WG website update and the contributions to the "UNGEGN

Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names".

Another major item discussed was the relationship of the WG with several international standardization bodies (e.g. with the Unicode Consortium and the International Organization for Standardization – ISO). The WG emphasized that existing liaisons should be maintained and strengthened as well as new ones established if necessary (e.g. with the Open Geospatial Con-

sortium – OGC). In particular, issues of providing geographical names information within national and international spatial data infrastructures through web (gazetteer) services are becoming more and more important for the WG. With the advent of the OGC gazetteer service profile based on OGC web feature services (WFS) in 2006, the WG has recognized the importance of a link between both communities, UNGEGN and OGC.

The compiling and publishing of technical handbooks and training materials were also discussed. It was decided that the “Draft Toponymic Data Exchange Standard” (1998) would have to be revised first. Material on the design of databases should be based on already existing material of the training courses in toponymy. The WG would incorporate into the document the findings of practical programs of toponymic data exchange models, like the European EuroGeoNames project or the Brazilian template proposed for Latin America.

The outcome of the sub-group meeting on “future of gazetteers” on Friday, August 24, chaired by Mr. Ferland, was summarized. The main point to note from the sub-group meeting was that the needs and concerns presented have to be compatible with the currently existing technical solutions within spatial data infrastructures. The WG members were invited to contact Mr. Ferland directly for further discussion.

The WG did not put forth any proposed resolutions for the 9th UNGEGN, but would continue to fulfill resolutions put forth at previous conferences.

Regarding the next WG TDFG meeting, it was decided to arrange a meeting in Europe in conjunction with a EuroGeoNames workshop, very likely to be held in summer 2008.

Finally, with Mr. Flynn’s concurrence, Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu was appointed Co-convenor of the Working Group.

### *1.2 Workshop on Toponymic Data Exchange (Tuesday, August 28th, 2007 at 13:30 - 14:45 hours)*

Twenty six participants from 22 different countries attended the workshop on “toponymic data exchange”. Different meanings and understandings of “toponymic data exchange formats” were introduced and discussed: is a “data exchange format” related to the exchange “format” of data from a database to a geographic information system – GIS? Is it related to the “content” of the data, defining a certain “lowest common denominator” for a data file (e.g. name, feature type, coordinates, country, language, etc)? Is it related also to a certain structure of the data elements modeled or listed in the standard (e.g. data types, character sets)? How would the current web services’ outputs (e.g. XML) fit into this standard?

During the workshop three WG members from Norway, Spain and Finland explained their understanding of the “content” of the data for toponymic data files. Many issues were touched on, amongst others: one or more names in different languages linked to one object/feature by unique identifiers, and distinctions between “mandatory” and “optional” elements in terms of data content. The information on the “status” of a name or a language was considered to be important.

The presentations concluded that a common understanding of “data exchange formats” was needed.

It was decided that the WG TDFG would work out an amendment of the document “Draft Toponymic Data Exchange Standard” of 1998 taking into account the findings of national and

international spatial data infrastructures. This document might then be used in countries where a database is to be created and might be useful when exchanging single datasets between different countries without using web services techniques.

## 2. WG developments and plans

Ms. Mimi Urbanc (Slovenia) has undertaken the editing and maintenance of the Working Group's web site at <http://www.zrc-sazu.si/ungegn/gazetteers.htm>. The web site provides useful links to a variety of resources relating to toponymic data files and gazetteers, and also provides access to WG documents.

The Working Group is planning to submit a summary description of WG TDFG activities to the ISO Technical Committee 211 secretariat for inclusion as a liaison report in the agenda for the upcoming TC 211 26th plenary session in Copenhagen in late May 2008; WG attendance at the 26th plenary is likely.

The Working Group and other venues: In addition to the ISO TC 211 plenary and the proposed WG meeting in conjunction with EuroGeoNames, WG members will be participating in other organized conferences during 2008 that will touch on topics relating to toponymic data

*Prepared by Pier Giorgio Zucchetti (Co-Convenor), together with Adela Alcázar, Caroline Burgess, Lou Yost, Teemu Leskinen, Johnny Andersen*

files and gazetteer services. For example, panel discussions relating to gazetteers services are being organized with WG participation for both the upcoming ESRI Federal Users Conference, Washington, DC; USA (20 – 22 February 2008) and the annual conference of the Association of American Geographers, Boston, Massachusetts, USA (15 – 19 April 2008). WG participation is also likely at the 31st International Geographical Congress in Tunis, Tunisia (12 – 15 August 2008), and subsequently at the 23rd International Congress on Onomastic Sciences in Toronto, Canada (17 – 22 August 2008).

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## Report of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

During the 9th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York the Working Group on Publicity and Funding held a joint meeting with the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation on the morning of 24th August 2007. This meeting was attended by nine experts.

The meeting welcomed the changes that had been made to the UNGEGN website

(<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo>) and in particular was pleased to note the press article on the United Nations DESA News website entitled The Geographical Name Game (<http://www.un.org/esa/desa/desaNews/v11n08/feature.html>). This feature article included an interview with UNGEGN Chair Ms Helen Kerfoot who highlighted how having a national names authorities avoids overlapping work among government departments which do not

have a clear authority to say how a name should be spelled. It was agreed that the work of the UNGEGN would be enhanced by having the two UNGEGN manuals, details of training courses and other activities posted on the website and it was also agreed that encouragement should continue to be given to the establishment of geographical names websites. With this in mind, it is proposed that a paper on setting up websites be presented at a future Session of the UNGEGN.

The launch of the new promotional leaflet Geographical names as vital keys for accessing information in our globalized and digital world was welcomed as an aid to promoting names issues particularly amongst national mapping and charting agencies in countries that do not have a names authority. During 2008 the Working Group will produce a media press kit that will include good examples of situations where toponomy has been a key issue. Anyone wishing to submit ideas or material for inclusion in this press kit should e-mail the Working Group Convenor.

Following the Working Group meeting in New York, the Convenor assisted in drafting a Conference Resolution asking for continued UN

support for training courses and publications. He also drafted two press releases that were offered to the UNGEGN Secretariat for issue before and after the 9th UN Conference.

As ever, the Working Group urges experts to promote names issues and the work of the UNGEGN wherever and whenever possible, particularly at conferences such as the forthcoming 31st International Geographical Congress to be held in Tunisia, 12-15 August 2008 where it is hoped a session on toponymy will take place. Please let the Convenor know of any opportunities for publicity.

It is proposed that the next meeting of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding be held jointly with the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation in San Francisco, USA, 21-23 April 2008. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Convenor.

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## **Report of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation**

The next joint meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation / Working Group on Publicity and Funding will be held from April 21-23, 2008 in San Francisco, USA. In particular, this meeting will review the questionnaire responses from the 2007 conference and deal with further possible improvement in operations for the future UNGEGN sessions. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Convenors.

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# **Report of the Task Team for Africa**

## ***Planning for training***

A la suite du succès du stage organisé à Tunis (Tunisie) en avril dernier principalement pour les pays d'Afrique du Nord, l'Association Africaine de Cartographie et de Télédétection envisage d'organiser un autre stage au profit des pays appartenant à la région Ouest et ceci en collaboration avec le Groupe de Travail sur la Formation.

En effet lors de son Conseil d'Administration tenu à Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) qui s'est tenu le 15 et 16 novembre 2007, le point sept de son ordre du jour était consacré à la relation entre l'OACT et le GENUNG ;

« Sur ce point le Conseil a souhaité que l'Organisation s'inspire de l'Expérience de

l'UNGEGN et profite du partenariat qui la lie avec cette organisation relevant des Nations Unies, pour qu'un atelier similaire à celui qui a été organisé en Afrique du Nord sous le thème des noms géographiques se tienne en Afrique de l'Ouest (Burkina Faso). A cet effet, un document sera établi par l'OACT en collaboration avec l'IGB pour définir les critères de participation ainsi que les modalités d'organisation de cet atelier de formation » (*Extrait du Rapport du 13ème Conseil d'Administration de l'OACT.*)

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## ***Africa GIS 2007, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso du 17 au 21 septembre 2007***

La 8ème Conférence Internationale Africa GIS 2007 s'est tenue à Ouagadougou, au Burkina Faso du 17 au 21 septembre 2007, avec la participation de plus de 349 personnes provenant de plus de 29 pays de différents continents.

Au cours de cette rencontre, plusieurs thèmes ont été abordés notamment :

- Géo-information et politique nationale de l'information géographique.
- Vision multidimensionnelle de la pauvreté.
- Aménagement foncier et développement urbain.
- Technologies spatiales et géo-information au service du développement durable.

Le Groupe d'Experts des Nations Unies sur la normalisation des noms géographiques était présent pour la première fois à cette rencontre. Au cours de celle ci, nous avons présenté une communication dans laquelle nous avons mis

l'accent sur le rôle, les missions et les activités enregistrées à ce jour, par le GENUNG.

L'importance de la normalisation des toponymes dans le développement économique des états africains et la nécessité de ces pays de se doter de structures en charge de cette problématique ont été également mises en exergue.

Devant l'importance de la normalisation des noms géographiques tant du point de vue économique, culturel, social, historique etc. ce thème sera désormais inscrit dans l'ordre du jour des prochaines rencontres d'Africa GIS. Il est à noter que la prochaine réunion d'Africa-GIS, est prévue à Kampala, Ouganda, en 2009.

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## **Congrès de l'Union Géographique internationale**

Tunis du 12 au 15 août 2008

Le prochain Congrès de l'Union Géographique Internationale se tiendra à Tunis (Tunisie) du 12 au 15 août 2008 sous le thème 'Construire ensemble nos territoires'.

Les toponymes sont un élément important d'explication de l'espace ; ils interviennent en tant qu'indicateurs, référents et facteur explicatifs de l'organisation spatiale.

A ce titre, tout espace servant de support à l'activité humaine doit être pourvu d'une identité, d'une dénomination. Les espaces occupés sont ainsi repérés, balisés nommés pour pouvoir se situer dans et sur l'espace ; en outre, pour qu'il soit pris en considération, l'espace doit être localisé 'afin de mieux cerner la réflexion sur les objets qui vont l'occuper et l'animer' Dès lors l'espace objet devient par l'opération de sa dénomination, un espace projet. Ces espaces ainsi délimités, seront valorisés par la nature des 'objets' que l'on veut observer que l'on veut mettre en relief.

Par conséquent le toponyme est un élément important de l'explication de l'organisation spatial et c'est à ce titre que le GENUNG et les organisateurs du Congrès ont décidé que le thème de la toponymie fera partie du programme du Congrès.

Les travaux seront organisés comme suit :

- Regard sur l'utilisation des noms géographiques en Afrique avant, pendant et après l'ère coloniale ;

- Examen des problèmes de l'enregistrement, de la conservation, de l'officialisation et de l'utilisation des toponymes normalisés en Afrique ;
- Définir les étapes à suivre et à programmer pour contribuer à la réalisation des objectifs de standardisation des noms géographiques en Afrique, en vue de promouvoir la place des économies africaines dans un monde digital de plus en plus étendu.

Il est à noter que cette session consacrée à la toponymie sera organisée avec l'aimable contribution de l'Association Africaine de Cartographie et de Télédétection et du Centre de Télédétection des Etats d'Afrique du Nord et de l'office de topographie de Tunisie.

Nous invitons la communauté toponymique internationale à participer massivement à cette rencontre et à contribuer par des communications de qualité à son succès. Pour tout contact, veuillez prendre attache avec

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**Site web de l'UGI : [www.igc-tunis2008.com](http://www.igc-tunis2008.com)**

All UNGEGN experts are encouraged to participate in the special session (TSS.8 Standardization of Geographical Names in Africa)

being organized by UNGEGN at the Congress of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Tunis, August 12-15, 2008.

The session aims to:

- Discuss the use of geographical names in Africa before, during and after the colonial era;
- Analyze the difficulties faced in the recording, preservation, approval and dissemination of standardized toponyms in Africa;
- Identify the steps that should be taken and planned to contribute to the implementation of the standardization of geographical names in Africa, with a view to benefitting African economies in an increasingly globalized and digital world.

*Please contact UNGEGN Vice-Chair Brahim Atoui for more details about the session and about participation:*

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**Brahim Atoui, Vice-Président du GENUNG**  
**Helen Kerfoot, Présidente du GENUNG**

## Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

In the framework of the 9th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names the Working Group on Exonyms held its **7th Meeting** on 29th August 2007 in New York. It was well attended by 22 experts. They agreed to elaborate guidelines for the use of exonyms as the next major project of the WG. Such guidelines would have to be based both on the acceptance of the exonyms' functionality as well as on political sensibility. The next meeting of the WG will have the character of a workshop with the main task of drafting these guidelines.

Based on an earlier invitation by Mr. Crețan (Romania), which had been confirmed by the

Romanian delegation to the Conference, this next meeting of the WG will take place in Timișoara, Romania, in the 2nd week of September 2008. The two day's meeting will be accompanied by a one day excursion to minority villages in the city's surroundings. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the divisional meeting of the Romano-Hellenic Division.

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# **Report of the Working Group on Pronunciation**

## ***Meeting of the Working Group in New York 2007***

A meeting of the Working Group was held during the course of the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York in August 2007.

The meeting focused on a number of issues relating to the pronunciation of geographical names, including the provision of guides to the pronunciation of individual names in

national gazetteers. The meeting also discussed the question of providing digital audio guides to pronunciation of names in web-based national toponymic databases. It was agreed that the Working Group should undertake, as a matter of priority, an evaluation of the treatment of the pronunciation of geographical names in the Toponymic Guidelines. Ms. Isolde Hausner (Austria) agreed to undertake this task and to prepare a report for the next meeting of the Working Group.

## ***Proposed meeting in Vienna, May 2008***

In follow-up discussions in New York with the Convenor, members agreed to hold a full meeting of the Working Group in Summer 2008. The meeting has been scheduled to take place on 22 and 23 May in Vienna and will be held in conjunction with the GeoNames08 symposium which is being organised by the Dutch- and German-speaking Division of UNGEGN from 19 to 21 May 2008.

The agenda of the meeting will focus on all topics relating to the pronunciation of geographical names, and will include an evaluation of the treatment of pronunciation in Toponymic Guidelines. Other topics covered will include guidelines for the preparation of national pronunciation tables of geographical names, the representation of pronunciation in national gazetteers and databases, including the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and the use of digital audio pronunciation in web-

based toponymic applications. The meeting will also address the question of cooperation with other Working Groups, in particular, the Working Group on Romanization Systems, and the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.

A call for papers relating to any of the above topics will be issued in January 2008 and a draft program for the meeting will be circulated in February. The meeting will be open to all UNGEGN experts and not just to members of the Working Group. Those interested in participating should contact the Convenor.

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## From the Countries

### Italy

On June 19th, 2007, in the seat of the Istituto Geografico Militare in Florence a group of geographers and linguists laid the foundations of an Association for the Study of Place Names in Italy. Some Italian Institutions like the Società Geografica Italiana and the Istituto Geografico Militare already agreed to this proposal, which has the following aims:

- (i) To involve scholars of other disciplines like history, anthropology, archaeology, natural history etc who work in Italy and abroad to join the association;
- (ii) To consider the place names in all aspects and from many points of view;

- (iii) To draw maps and diagrams which show the place names in relation with the territories and people and their changes in the past;
- (iv) To build up a shared Web GIS.

Italy is an excellent example of a country which experienced many changes of rules during its long history. Consequently its place names are both pieces of evidence of different languages and cultures once prevailing in given areas and a key for identifying ancient territories and people.

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### France

#### Toponymie et diversité linguistique

La France a l'intention de mettre en valeur la langue française dans toute sa diversité en partant du constat qu'il n'est pas de plus riche héritage linguistique que les noms de lieu. Elle porte bien son attention sur l'importance de la graphie et de la syntaxe des noms, en régulant ainsi les usages parfois incohérents de ce français plein de subtilités et de contradictions, avec les ressources suivantes : le projet d'édition d'une grammaire, enrichi d'une étude sur l'étymologie des noms de lieu, la diffusion des noms des collectivités territoriales françaises sur le site [www.toponymie.gouv.fr](http://www.toponymie.gouv.fr), etc. La mise en place d'un groupe de travail sur la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel devrait permettre de préserver la richesse et la diversité des langues régionales exprimées dans les noms de lieu non administratifs.

Au plan international, la promotion du patrimoine linguistique français passe par la diffusion des exonymes sur le site [www.toponymiefrancophone.org](http://www.toponymiefrancophone.org) dans "le Tour du monde en français", et dans le projet Euro-GeoNoms. Des systèmes de romanisation des noms formés en caractères non latins, conformes aux particularités du français, élaborés en commun avec l'Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO), sont officialisés et appliqués avec souplesse. Des liens avec la section de terminologie des Nations unies ont abouti à un échange de vues avec les médias lors d'une réunion d'information sur les exonymes, tel Pékin, et la romanisation.

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