



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL  
NAMES

# Information Bulletin

NUMBER 36

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**UNEGGN website:**  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo>

# UNGEEN Information Bulletin

The *Information Bulletin of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names* (formerly UNGEEN 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

*25<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN, 5-12 May 2009*

Only a few weeks remain before the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGEGN in Nairobi ... and the deadline for submission of documents is **March 18!** We look forward to welcoming all of you to the UN facilities in Nairobi (UNON) and encourage you to look at the background material that the UNGEGN Secretariat has included on the UNGEGN website (see: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default\\_geoinfo.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default_geoinfo.htm)).

Pointers for papers and presentations are included on the website and also in the last *Bulletin* (#35), addressing questions of abstracts, division reports, etc. Documents submitted for the session will be posted on the UNGEGN website ahead of time.

We are pleased to thank the African Organization for Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS) for helping us to organize a **3-day training course** before the Session (contact Brahim Atoui at [brahim.atoui@hotmail.fr](mailto:brahim.atoui@hotmail.fr)) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) for coordinating an **exhibition** on African issues relating to geographical names at UNON. For UNGEGN Working Groups and African divisions/countries wishing to exhibit posters or other materials in Nairobi, please contact Paul Belanger ([Paul.Belanger@un.org](mailto:Paul.Belanger@un.org)) or Girum Asrat ([gasrat@uneca.org](mailto:gasrat@uneca.org)).

As in other recent Conferences and UNGEGN Sessions, we will be including special presentations within the Session, as well as holding workshops and meetings informally outside the hours of the Session.

*Brief overview 2007-2009*

Since the Ninth Conference in August 2007, we have been pleased to see that the aims of UNGEGN have been continued in many areas: at least nine Divisions and seven Working Groups have held successful meetings; training courses have been held in Africa, Europe and South America; UNGEGN experts have organized special conferences and special publications; and experts have met in conjunction with other organizations, such as the International Geographical Congress (Tunis) and the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences (Toronto). I also thank all of you who have contributed to special projects, for instance providing data and expertise towards the development of the UNGEGN World Geographical Names database and web interface, being designed and implemented at the UNGEGN Secretariat.

*Coming soon!*

- In Nairobi we look forward to launching two important databases:
  - the UNGEGN World Geographical Names – multilingual, multi-scriptural, online database of names of countries, capitals and major cities, and

- an UNCSGN resolutions database (developed through the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation) to allow the search of English-language texts of the 195 resolutions passed at the Conferences.
- The new publication *Geographical names as a part of the cultural heritage* (based on papers presented at the 2008 meeting organized by the Dutch- and German-speaking Division) is now being finalized in Austria (see later pages in this Bulletin).

Please spread the word about the forthcoming

Nairobi UNGEGN Session and encourage the participation of others in your Divisions. If you have questions about documents, the session, etc. please contact the UNGEGN Secretariat ([geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)).

I thank you for your continued interest and efforts to promote geographical names and their standardization, and look forward to seeing you in May.

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## News from Headquarters

### Message from the Secretariat

#### Information for Participants on the Twenty-fifth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, Nairobi, 5 to 12 May, 2009

##### 1. Note verbale

The note verbale, the provisional agenda (GEGN/25/1), and information about documentation for the Conference (GEGN/25/2) were sent to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations in October 2008. A copy can be provided upon request. The provisional agenda and the information on documentation are on the UNGEGN website ([unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo)) and have also been emailed to UNGEGN experts.

##### 2. Documents for the Conference

Since the facilities for reproduction of documents at the session site will be limited, experts are asked to forward to the United Nations Secretariat to ([zewoldi@un.org](mailto:zewoldi@un.org), [wangl@un.org](mailto:wangl@un.org) and [geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org)), at their earliest convenience but not later than 18 March 2009, digital documents prepared in support of items on the provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session. Each document should include a short summary and the ap-

appropriate item on the provisional agenda must be indicated.

Those documents received before the deadline will be processed by the United Nations and put on the UNGEGN website. The UNGEGN Secretariat will work with late papers, but cannot promise the same consideration.

### 3. Other useful information

Useful information on the UN office in Nairobi, Kenya and a guide on Nairobi (hotels, security, transport, etc...) is available on the

UNGEGN website <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/default.htm>.

I hope this information will help you to plan ahead your attendance in the meeting. Finally, I would like to thank those who contributed to this *Bulletin*.

Looking forward to meeting you all in Nairobi!

**Yacob Zewoldi**

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## Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences

- Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, New York, 10-14 August 2009 ([geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org))
- Eighteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and Pacific, Bangkok, 26-30 October 2009 ([geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org))
- 24<sup>th</sup> International Cartographic Conference, Santiago, Chile, 15-21 November 2009 (<http://www.icc2009.cl/>)
- 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Onomastic Sciences, Barcelona, Spain, August 2011 (ICOS website: <http://www.icosweb.net/>)
- 32<sup>nd</sup> International Geographical Congress, Köln, Germany, 26-30 August 2012 (see IGU website for other regional conferences: <http://www.igu-net.org/>)

## The UNGEGN Geographical Names Database

The Geographical Names Database, a geo-referenced database to store the names of countries and major cities in different languages, has been developed by UNGEGN in collaboration with UNSD. The Expert Group is continuously collecting new information on city names and ensures that only accurate and reliable data is being processed.

After focusing on including the country names in the official language(s) of the country and the six official United Nations languages, sourced from UNGEGN and the United Nations, the work is now concentrating on making available city names in different languages. The work on capital cities is about to be completed.

UNGEKN, through the Convenors of the Working Groups on Country Names and on Romanization Systems, has verified and provided endonyms for capitals for the United Nations member states. The United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database has also been a key data source for capital city names.

Over the last months, UNGEGN collected the city names for 52 countries including

language variations, geographical information and details about the source. The database holds information for 193 countries and about 1500 cities for which 3800 names have been stored so far. In addition, Romanized names are available for about 400 cities, based on more than 30 Romanization systems.

In order to assist the user with the pronunciation of the city names in the various languages, UNGEGN attempts to acquire sound files for as many geographical names as possible. So far 19 countries have supplied this type of information.

The database and web application are under constant development to meet the requirements of a growing collection of geographical names and their dissemination. This should give the application enough flexibility in storing, retrieving and displaying the geographical information online.

It is planned to make this valuable data collection available to the public in due course. Experts as well as the general public can then access and review the country and city names in different languages from all over the world. For further information please contact [geoinfo\\_unsd@un.org](mailto:geoinfo_unsd@un.org).

**Capital and other major cities**

Wien <small>Lat: 48.24   Long: 16.43</small>		
<b>Endonym</b>		
Language	City name	Source
German	Wien	UNGEKN
<b>United Nations Languages</b>		
Language	City name	Source
Arabic	فيينا	UN terms
Chinese	維也納	UN terms
English	Vienna	UN terms
French	Vienne	UN terms
Russian	Вена	UN terms
Spanish	Viena	UN terms

## **A Statistician's Encounter with Geographical Names**

Sometime in 1988, I attended a Toponymy training programme at the University of Pretoria because I thought censuses and placenames are so intricately intertwined subjects and indeed I held as I still do, a view that these are essential entities to life. I was irked by the absence and low regard for placenames in the successive censuses of South Africa. These only counted in relation to white suburbia and non-existent in the non-white areas, a clear legacy that blacks did not count in South Africa. When I moved into Statistics South Africa, then Central Statistical Service, I sent a number of staff to this United Nations training programme so that their taste buds could develop appreciation for this area of work and its fundamental place in society and statistics.

In 1995, I tasked Miriam Babita to wrestle with the challenging task of placenames because of the central role they play in development.

This is not because of themselves as names but primarily because of their role in dissemination and development. History was made, the place-name layer was created and Census 96 dissemination was successfully implemented.

At this moment however, the organization is confronted by the difficult path of managing geography and one of the key challenges is that of place names, their capture and adequacy. The deliberations on this front are just as stimulating.

The battle for placenames in South Africa is not only one about political transition and transformation but is also about statistical development.

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## From the Divisions

### East Central and South-East Europe Division

#### Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division on the work of its nineteenth session

**Zagreb, 19-21 November 2008**

The 19th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) was organized by the State Geodetic Administration (SGA) and Croatian Geodetic Institute (CGI). It was convened by the ECSEED Chairman. The Session was held from 19 to 21 November 2008 in Zagreb, Croatia.

The Session was attended by 37 participants from 10 ECSEE Division countries including 4 representatives from Montenegro, and a guest from Austria (Dutch- and German-speaking Division).



The Session was welcomed by Prof. Dr. Sc. Željko Bačić, Director of the State Geodetic Administration, Dr. Sc. Željko Hećimović, from the Croatian Geodetic Institute (CGI) and Ms. Marina Rožić, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

Introductory presentation(s), at the beginning of every agenda item, was a starting point for the reports, discussions and presentations. Twenty-eight documents were submitted to the Session:

- ECSEED: East Central and South-East Europe Division overview,
- ECSEE Division Chairman, Željko Hećimović (CRO): Report of ECSEE Division Chairman,
- M. Chaleva, V. Fakalieva (BGR): Standardization of the Geographical Names in the Republic of Bulgaria,
- Ž. Hećimović, Z. Štefan, I. Landek, D. Brozović-Rončević, J. Buljat (CRO): Report on the Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names in the Republic of Croatia in the period from 2007 to 2008,
- Ž. Hećimović, S. Lemaić (CRO): Croatian Geographical Names Database,
- Ž. Jakir, Ž. Hećimović (CRO): Presentation of Geographical Names using Google Earth,



- Ž. Hećimović, Z. Štefan, I. Posavec (CRO): United Nations International Year of Languages and the Baška Slab,
- Ž. Hećimović, Ž. Jakir (CRO): Proposal of the Project on the Presentation of the ECSEE Division Geographical Names,
- A. Dutkó, B. Pokoly, G. Mikešy and M. Išpanović (HUN): Report on the Activity of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names 2007-2008,
- M. Zych (POL): Names of Countries, their Capitals and Inhabitants,
- M. Zych (POL): National Gazetteer of Poland: "Geographical Names of Poland" Vol.1 "Hydronyms",
- M. Zych, K. Przystewska (POL): Report of Poland 2007-2008,
- M. Kováčová (SVK): Report on the Activities in the Field of Standardization of Geographical Names in the Slovak Republic in the Period from the 18th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, Praha 2007 to 2008,
- M. Brnot, D. Kladnik (SNV): Report of Slovenia,
- M. Ozturk (TUR): National Report of Turkey,
- N. Pinchuk, N. Kizilova and N. Syvak (UKR): Report of Ukraine on Standardization of Geographical Names in Ukraine in the Period of 2007-2008,
- H. Bergmann (ATS): Toponymic Guidelines for Map and other Editors as Promoted by the UNGEGN,
- H. Bergmann (ATS): The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kartographische Ortsnamenkunde (AKO)* as the Austrian Model of a National Names Board,
- Ž. Hećimović (CRO): Website of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of the Experts on Geographical Names,
- Ž. Hećimović (CRO): Presentation of the ECSEE Division at the 25th Session of UNGEGN,
- P. Vasileiou (CYP): Report of Cyprus,
- P. Vasileiou (CYP): Procedure of Collecting and Recording the Toponyms and the Area Names of Kypros (Cyprus),
- M. Orožen-Adamič (SNV): Treatment of Geographical Names in Multilingual Areas,
- M. Brnot (SNV): EuroGeoNames,
- ECSEE Division Chairman, Željko Hećimović (CRO): Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the Work of its Nineteenth Session,
- D. Brozović-Rončević (CRO): Place Names as Intangible Cultural Heritage,
- D. Brozović-Rončević (CRO): Toponymic Education,

- P. Vasileiou (CYP): Safeguarding of Geographical Names as Part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Session documents and materials are published on the Division website <http://ungegn.cgi.hr> and CD-ROM.

Special interest was aroused by the topic on geographical names as cultural heritage and geographical names databases. Geographical names as cultural heritages are a significant part of historical and cultural development. They embody national and cultural identity, and are essential for the identity of nations, groups and individuals.

In 2006, Montenegro declared its independence. It was accepted as a United Nations Member State by the General Assembly on 28 June 2006. During the 19th ECSEE Division Session, Montenegro was activated in the Division as a new Division country.

To make the ECSEED easily recognizable, the main data on the ECSEE Division is collected in one document. The document *East Central and South-East Europe Division overview* was prepared by the Division Chairman and edited by the Division experts. The ECSEE Division overview document should be continuously updated and corrected according to the changes in the data delivered by Division countries. The latest edition can be found on the Division website.

The new ECSEED website was also introduced. The previous website was hosted by Slovenian colleagues. In cooperation with Slovenian colleagues, the new Division web

site was introduced to the UNGEGN Bureau. The new website was published by the ECSEE Division Chairman. The Internet address of the new ECSEED website is <http://ungegn.cgi.hr>. It presents the Division, and should be linked with relevant national geographical names websites. The website serves as a central information point of the Division for the benefit of all ECSEED countries.

In order to systematize ECSEE Division documentation, the Division Chairman introduced unified identification of the ECSEE Division documents (*Document Symbol*), unified ECSEE Division list of documents and a unified first page of the ECSEE Division documents.

The Session recognized the importance of geographical names in national and regional spatial infrastructures and the necessity of continuing the important work on standardization of geographical names. The positive achievements and the progress can be articulated in the standardization of the geographical names by participating countries.

New positive impulses in development of Division and standardization of geographical names were also given.

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# Africa West Division

## Rapport final de l'atelier de sensibilisation sur la gestion des noms de lieux: Tenu à Ouagadougou du 4 au 8 août 2008

### 1. Introduction

Les toponymes sont une source très importante de connaissances du passé et de conservation de la mémoire des peuples. Ils constituent non seulement, une base très précieuse d'informations qu'il faut préserver mais également une marque spatiale de la culture des peuples occupant ou ayant occupé un espace donné ; ils sont ainsi porteurs d'informations où sont attachés des vestiges du passé et - des marques du présent.

Dans l'optique de promouvoir la normalisation des toponymes, un atelier sur la gestion des noms de lieux a été organisé à Ouagadougou les 4, 5, 6, 7 et 8 août 2008 par l'Institut Géographique du Burkina (IGB) en collaboration avec l'Organisation Africaine de Cartographie et de Télédétection (OACT) et le Groupe d'Experts des Nations Unies pour les Noms Géographiques (GENUNG) et son Task team Afrique.

### 2. Objectifs

Plusieurs objectifs étaient poursuivis par cet atelier de sensibilisation. Il s'agissait entre autres de :

- ❖ Montrer la complexité de la gestion des noms de lieux;
- ❖ Montrer la nécessité de la normalisation des noms géographiques;
- ❖ Sensibiliser les différents utilisateurs sur le rôle important des commissions de toponymie dans l'évolution pertinente des noms de lieu.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, deux activités majeures ont été entreprises. Il s'agit des présentations de travaux de recherche par des experts dans le domaine de la toponymie et une sortie sur le terrain afin de mieux cerner la situation qui prévaut au Burkina Faso.

### 3. Organisation de l'atelier

Le Lundi 04 Août a vu l'ouverture des travaux par le Secrétaire Général du Ministère des Infrastructures et du Désenclavement (MID) représentant le Ministre empêché par le tenu d'un conseil de ministres extraordinaire. Son discours d'ouverture a été précédé par celui de la Présidente du GENUNG, Madame Helen Kerfoot.

Cet atelier, premier du genre en Afrique de l'Ouest a été animé par *Henri Dorion, Helen Kerfoot, Atoui Brahim, Ferjan Ormeling, Elisabeth Calvarin, Mamadou L. SANOGO et Adamou Belko. Les travaux se sont déroulés sous la présidence de M. Claude Obin TAPSOBA, Directeur Général de l'Institut Géographique du Burkina (IGB) et Président de la Division francophone du GENUNG.*



Les communications ont concernées les thèmes ci-après :

- ❖ Problématique de la gestion toponymique en Afrique
- ❖ Normalisation toponymique
- ❖ Fonction des noms géographiques
- ❖ Processus de dénomination des lieux
- ❖ Importances des agences nationales de toponymie
- ❖ Terminologie en toponymie
- ❖ L'odonymie en milieu urbain
- ❖ Politiques, critères et règles de transcription en toponymie

Une journée a été consacrée à l'exercice pratique de collecte de noms de lieux sur le terrain. La sortie nous a conduit dans deux communes rurales Koubri et Saaba et deux villages Gigmenga et Tanlarghin situées aux environs de Ouagadougou.

Les informations ainsi récoltées sur le terrain sont des :

- Données linguistiques
- Données historiques
- Données topographiques (limites villages et communes)
- Et des données culturelles (sites touristiques)

Le dernier jour fut marqué par :

- L'analyse des données recueillies lors de la sortie sur le terrain
- Le remplissage du cahier de terrain
- Et un exposé sur la BDNyme de l'IGN France : la technique pour créer une base de données.

Cet atelier a aussi été une opportunité pour la tenue d'une réunion de la division de l'Afrique de l'Ouest dont les participants ont été large-

ment informés des activités du GENUNG. Les participants ont convenu de l'élaboration d'un fichier de localités des pays membres et se sont donnés rendez vous au congrès de Nairobi.

#### 4. Enseignements et perspectives

Les objectifs assignés à cet atelier ont été atteints. Il a permis aux différents participants de domaines d'activité diverses de partager des expériences en termes de gestion toponymique. Aussi, au vu des recommandations issues de l'atelier, les acteurs toponymiques (administrateurs, politiciens, techniciens ou spécialistes) prendront certainement conscience de la nécessité de sauvegarder, de valoriser et de gérer les noms géographiques pour une communication internationale efficace.

La division Afrique de l'ouest remercie la Division statistique des Nations Unies, l'Organisation Africaine de cartographie et de Télédétection, le Service de coopération et d'actions culturelles de l'ambassade de France au Burkina ainsi que l'Institut Géographique du Burkina dont les contributions financières respectives ont permis l'organisation de cet atelier.

Participation à l'atelier, 30 participants : Burkina Faso (21); Congo (1); Côte d'Ivoire (3); France (1); Gambie (1); Mali (1); Niger (2).

#### **Claude Obin TAPSOBA**

Directeur Général

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# Norden Division

## Division meeting, Copenhagen, 8 - 9 October 2008

The latest Norden Division Meeting was held in Copenhagen 8 -9 October at the National Survey and Cadastre. To celebrate the occasion of the division meeting, the Name Research Section at Copenhagen University organized a half-day symposium 7 October with the title: *Making minority languages visible*. Here, speakers from Scotland, Sápmi and Denmark explored results, prospects and possibilities of linguistic minorities' rights to own place-name signage.

The symposium served as an informative appetizer for the Norden Division meeting the following two days. The agenda was relatively extensive, covering several division-related subjects, such as: Place-name legislation, Implementation of resolutions, Linguistic minorities and place-name usage as well as news from Working Groups with Norden Division member participation, i.e.: the *Working Group of Implementation and Evaluation/Publication and Funding* and the *Working Group on Toponymic Terminology*.

A problematic issue of place-name standardization is the quality and reliability of the name-data sources used by international companies in their electronic media/web-applications. A status of this issue was made and discussed. Recent developments in the *EuroGeoNames* and *INSPIRE* projects were also presented, as were the Greenlandic *NunaGIS* and the Danish *DigDag* projects – both projects based on GIS-platforms.

Finally, the content of the division report of the coming 25th UNGEGN Session, Nairobi 5.-12, May, was discussed, as were the possibilities for financial support to encourage African countries to participate in the session.

## Norden Division homepage

One of the agenda points of the division meeting was the question of a Norden Division homepage. It was agreed that Denmark and the Norden Division chairmanship proceed with the idea and attempt to establish a homepage as soon as possible.

The construction of a homepage was given top priority and within two months after the meeting the new Norden Division homepage could be announced: <http://nordendivision.nfi.ku.dk/>. The home page is organized according to UNGEGN Resolution I/4 from 1967 on National Standardization. The aim of the homepage is to present concise information about UNGEGN issues within Norden Division area.

## Next Norden Division meeting

The 2009 Norden Division meeting will be held in connection with the 25. UNGEGN Session, 5-12 May 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya.

## Peder Gammeltoft

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## Dutch- and German-speaking Division

### Report on the EuroGeoNames (EGN) Closing Workshop of the Consortium & Reference Group jointly with the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the UNGEGN, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Brussels, Belgium

On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009 about 60 participants of 30 organisations met together in Brussels at the closing ceremony of the EU-funded project period of the EuroGeoNames project. The event was organized to join the meeting of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the UNGEGN on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 with the EGN Closing Workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

The participants were members of the EGN Consortium, the EGN Reference Group (coming from the European National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies – NMCA), the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN as well as of further private and public organisations.



Project co-ordination

Within the EU-funded period (September 2006 until February 2009) the EGN Consortium has implemented a web (gazetteer) service infrastructure for providing official geographical names data in Europe together with the European NMCAs. The official geographical names data kept decentrally in the EU countries is



German Representatives of the DGSD

linked to and searchable via so-called, 'Web Feature Services – WFS'. The data maintenance and updating process remain the responsibility of the countries, which have collected and maintained them.

The main objective of the EGN Closing Workshop was to present the results of the EU-funded project period and to explain potential data providers and users the functionality of the EGN infrastructure. For potential data providers it was further demonstrated how they have to proceed for being connected to the EGN infrastructure.

Some countries like Slovenia, Latvia, The Netherlands, Austria, Lithuania, Norway and Germany have already completed their EGN implementation. Additional countries like Belgium, Hungary, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Czech Republic, Spain, Greece and France will finish their implementation either before the end of the funded period or before the end of 2009 at the latest. In spring 2009 the EGN pro-

ject coordination will be transferred to EuroGeographics – the association of the European NMCAs. The aim within the following “implementation phase 2009 - 2012” is then the connection of at least “EU27”, i.e. EU Member States. Synergies to the INSPIRE initiative – aiming at setting up a European Spatial Data Infrastructure – have been intensively demonstrated within the EGN Closing Workshop. The participants obtained a good overview on the current developments within the implementation of the INSPIRE directive. EGN is providing an INSPIRE compliant gazetteer service for Europe. The workshop has shown additionally that generally the EGN infrastructure – from the technological point of view – pro-

vides the whole service architecture for a real service needed for Europe within the context of INSPIRE.

All workshop presentations as well as further information about the project are available at the EuroGeoNames website at <http://www.eurogeonames.com>.

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## Proceedings of GeoNames 2008 published

### Geographical Names as a Part of the Cultural Heritage

edited by Peter Jordan, Hubert Bergmann, Catherine Cheetham and Isolde Hausner

*196 pages with 79 figures and 11 tables*

Nine months after the GeoNames 2008 Symposium in May 2008 (for the report see UNGEGN Bulletin No. 35, pp. 11) the proceedings of this symposium have been published as volume 18 of the book series “Wiener Schriften zur Geographie und Kartographie”. The book is available at a price of € 25.- or USD 32.27 plus postage and can be ordered via [regina.schneider@univie.ac.at](mailto:regina.schneider@univie.ac.at) or [peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at).

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## Portuguese-speaking Division

### Portuguese-speaking Division holds its second meeting in Brazil

The first seminar on geographical names of the Portuguese Language Community of Countries (known as CPLP) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in December, together with the second meeting of the Portuguese-speaking Division of UNGEGN. The seminar was part of the Third Statistical Conference of CPLP, promoted yearly in one of its member states. In

the opening ceremony of the seminar, the president of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (known as IBGE), Eduardo Pereira Nunes, welcomed the participants from the state members and expressed thankfulness for the participation of other invited experts, especially Helen Kerfoot, chairperson of UNGEGN, professor Evanildo Bechara, mem-



ber of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL), and Maria Vicentina Dick, professor at the University of São Paulo. The chair of the Portuguese-speaking Division, José Elias Mucambo, from Moçambique, and the vice-chair, Moema Augusto, from Brazil, also participated and invited the government officials from the other countries to join the group of experts and to get prepared for the next session of UNGEGN, in Nairobi.

The CPLP has eight member states, located in four continents, namely Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guiné-Bissau, Moçambique, Portugal, São Tomé e Príncipe and Timor Leste. Seven of the state members participated in the Portuguese-speaking Division second meeting and discussed the progress made since the first meeting, held in September 2008, in New York, during the most recent United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. As it was planned then, Brazilian experts designed a website for the division, which was presented for approval during the meeting. Other plans for the division were discussed then, including the sharing of information concerning each country's legislation about geographical names, the listing of the Portuguese exonyms in use in each country, the translation of UNGEGN's materials and publications on the standardization of geographical names.

The country representatives at the seminar agreed to undertake some tasks regarding geographical names collection and standardization, such as: the research of possible contributions of each member state institutional work; the exchange of information among state mem-

bers; the translation to Portuguese of UNGEGN's *glossary of terms* published by the United Nations; the reporting, by each country, of the standardized names of towns and cities with more than 100.000 inhabitants to complement UNGEGN's database. Other tasks agreed upon were the gathering of information for the website and the exchange of the list of generic terms that occur in national topographical maps.

It is expected that the communication among the members of the Portuguese-speaking Division of UNGEGN will be boosted by the launching of the website, which will also enable discussions on geographical names issues among institutions and experts. The division is also planning to emphasize the following concerns: conveying information about any geographical name changes to UNGEGN and spreading this information; publishing and updating guidelines for the use of geographical names in cartographic products, including specific information, such as the situation of geographical names in the countries' official languages, pronunciation rules, keys for pronunciation, standardization of geographical names, geographical names authorities, sources of information, abbreviations in official maps and others.

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# Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division

## Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, 24 & 25 November 2008

The Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division met in the Nikko Hotel, Jakarta on 24 November 2008, followed the next day by a meeting of the Indonesian National Team for Standardization of Topographical Names.

The Divisional meeting was attended by 24 delegates representing Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Indonesia, and 8 observers from Indonesia.

In line with the agenda, the meeting discussed, presented and concentrated on the following topics:

### 1. Regional Gazetteer and Map Project

- The meeting noted with appreciation the work done by Australia in producing the draft of a new edition of The Regional Map
- The naming recommendation affecting indigenous minority and regional language group geographical names was discussed and it was agreed to leave it to the respective countries to manage their own
- The dense display of text on the map
- Three scales of map sizes as the maps are in digital format
- To depict only cities with population more than 100,000 to avoid the clustering of data, whether it is feasible?
- The regional map should not be the authority on boundaries, and also this disclaimer should be inserted on the map
- Updating of regional map:
  - The present regional map should be completed first before embarking on new maps at different scales, and in undertaking this ef-

fort should also make sure of the global map with a scale of 1,000,000 as reference

- Standardized geographical names to be used
- Data distribution should use official website

### 2. Generic terms across the languages of the region

*(Action/Resolution 1 from 12<sup>th</sup> Divisional meeting in Brunei Darussalam 2005 was proposed by APIT)*

- This project will be continued
- Indonesia will continue leading the effort

### 3. UNGEGN Toponymic Training Course

*(Action/Resolution 4 from 12<sup>th</sup> Divisional Meeting in Brunei Darussalam 2005)*

- Indonesia stated her readiness to accommodate this and to be a toponymic training centre.
- The meeting agreed for Indonesia to submit a proposal.

### 4. Preparation for the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Session in Nairobi, 5 – 12 May 2009

- A standard template will be used for reporting actions undertaken by member countries in regards to UNCSGN resolutions and the work of UNGEGN working groups.
- The Divisional report will be prepared based on feedback from member countries.

### 5. Date and venue of next meeting

- It was agreed that the next meeting of the Division would be held in Nairobi (5-12 May 2009) followed by in Bali (4 August 2009) concurrently with the 10<sup>th</sup> SEASC, and in conjunction with the International Symposium on Geographical Names (5 August 2009). Experts with a variety of expertise related to toponymy, especially from Asia – Pacific region, are expected to participate in this symposium.

Although, the meeting was not attended by all members of the Division, in general it was run well. The Chair of the Division will try to remind all members to participate at future meetings, also increasing cooperation among countries of this region.

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## From the Working Groups

### Working Group on Exonyms

#### UN/ICA Week of Geographical Names in Timișoara, 9-13 September 2008

A joint meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms and the ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases (CNRA) took place in Timișoara (Romania) from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2008. It was hosted by the West University Timișoara (represented by Rector Ion Talpos), the Romanian Academy of Sciences (represented by Șerban Dragomirescu), the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography (represented by Colonel Marin Alniției) and the Adam Mueller Guttenbrunn House, the cultural center of Germans in the East of the Pannonian Basin, where the meeting actually took place. Remus Crețan, professor of geography and toponomastics at the West University, was the main local organizer, made the engine run and provided for a very convivial atmosphere.

It was the intention of the meeting to gather experts on geographical names and cartographers to discuss (1) the topic of exonyms and their application in various communicative situations as well as (2) the general structure and in particular the chapter on geographical names of a “cook book” for atlas editors.

The two meetings were accessible not only to members of the respective subgroup, but to all other participants interested. The meetings were linked by a common excursion to the city of Timișoara and its multicultural surroundings guided by Remus Crețan and his colleagues. The meetings were preceded by a UNGEGN toponymic training course for young toponymists in Romania and neighbouring countries.

Participation of 48 colleagues from 18 countries and 4 continents exceeded most expecta-

tions. The organizers were especially pleased to welcome Helen Kerfoot, UNGEGN Chair, and Ferjan Ormeling, UNGEGN Vice-Chair. It was very valuable to have UNGEGN experts also participating in the ICA commission meeting. This resulted in many inputs to the “cook book” chapter on geographical names and thus had indeed the synergy effects that were expected.

The two days of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms (9-10 September) were opened by introductions into the city of Timișoara, the cultural region of the Banat and into research on geographical names in Romania by papers of Sorina Voiculescu (“Cultural aspects of Timișoara”), Remus Crețan (“On the toponymy of the Banat”), Șerban Dragomirescu (“Exonyms in Romania – an evaluation of the last 30 years”) and Ioan Sebastian Jucu (“A short analysis of the street names of Lugoj. A comparative approach before and after 1990”).

They were followed by paper presentations on the very topic of exonyms by Paul Woodman (“The spelling of the country name Romania in British official usage: from uncertainty to standardization”), Pierre Jaillard (“Exonymes et diversité culturelle”), Bogusław R. Zagórski (“Exonyms in the Arab World – in Arabic and international cartography”), Ivana Crljenko (“Exonyms in Croatian lexicographical editions: Some remarks about their uneven and inconsistent use”), András Dutko (“List of Hungarian exonyms”) and Zsombor Bartos-Elekes (“The discussion on terminology of the terms exonym and endonym”). Most of these

papers will be published in a special issue of the Reviews of Historical Geography and Toponomastics (RHGT) edited by Remus Crețan.

The full second day was devoted to the discussion and elaboration of guidelines for the use of exonyms and had the character of a workshop. As a starter into the discussion Peter Jordan presented again his paper E-CONF-98-36-Add1 (“Criteria for the use of exonyms”). After most intensive discussions highlighting and confronting in fact all the various opinions brought forward in more recent debates in UN Conferences, UNGEGN Sessions and Working Group meetings, the outlines of future guidelines were formulated and accepted by all experts present. Peter Jordan and Phil Matthews were charged to elaborate them into a paper to be disseminated once again to the members of the Working Group before it will be submitted to the 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Session in Nairobi. In the meantime (by the end of January 2009) the paper is indeed in the hands of all WG members and it can be expected that it will be presented in Nairobi.

Fig. 1: Timișoara is a multicultural city. The old main square with the Roman-Catholic church (former cathedral) in the background



Fig. 2: The “hard core” of the WGE meeting



Fig. 3: Touristic signpost in Lugoj, a country town in eastern Banat. English looks to be a well established language there.



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

This has been a slow period of activity in relation to our working group, largely due to my commitments elsewhere – please accept my apologies.

In terms of progress, the only action that has taken place has been the addition of other entries into the World Wide Summary document. I know there are still projects being undertaken within various countries that do not yet appear in this document. I would appreciate it if those aware or involved could fill out the relevant form (can be downloaded from the UNGEGN web site) and send it to me for inclusion in the summary document.

We still have two tasks yet to be started, being:

1. A compilation showing examples of methods used by different jurisdiction in relation to this that can then serve as a refer-

ence tool for other who may wish to commence similar projects.

2. An update to the Canadian publication ‘Guidelines to the Field Collection of Native geographical Names’ to also include information from other countries, again, to provide a resource tool.

I am hoping to find a few volunteers at this coming meeting who will be prepared to join into small working groups to tackle these tasks.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Nairobi!!

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

A session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers was held in conjunction with the closing workshop of the EuroGeoNames Consortium and Reference Group at the Fédéral Public Service Finances, Brussels, Belgium, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The Working Group session was attended by 26 participants from 19 countries.

The UNGEGN Chair opened the session with a number of presentations covering UNGEGN business. Significant progress was being made

in the population of the UNGEGN World Geographical Names database which was to hold names data for countries, capitals, and cities with a population of over 100,000. The database would be accessible through the UNGEGN website and would provide data in Roman, and, where appropriate, in non-Roman scripts with romanised forms. International boundaries, country names and capital city information had been supplied through the UN and UNGEGN working groups, and other city data had been sourced mostly through national names committees. The Chair demonstrated

the user interface and the output results in map and table formats, and looked in detail at the various fields that would be available. Trialling would take place in March to which Working Group members would be given access and be asked to provide feedback. It was anticipated that the database would be launched at the forthcoming 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN session in Nairobi in May and an *ad hoc* committee of UNGEGN members could be formed to oversee the database.

The UNGEGN Chair outlined the concept of the National Toponym Database project, a joint initiative of UNGEGN and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The ECA had assisted the Ethiopian Mapping Agency in creating the digital “EthioGaz” based on the Ethiopian National Gazetteer and was working on the creation of a generic digital gazetteer format which could be used by any UN member state. Interest in this project had already been expressed by Sierra Leone and Nigeria. This “UNGaz” would be a freely-available platform-neutral desktop application with a graphical interface designed to run on a low-bandwidth connection. The UNGEGN Chair outlined the simple user-interface, the various data fields, the methods of data input and future development plans. The Working Group welcomed the initiative and would attempt to gather information on similar projects being undertaken independently in order to coordinate efforts. The ECA had been publicising the “UNGaz” through National Mapping Agencies and would also give a presentation to UNGEGN. ECA would be encouraged to provide Working Group members with access to the “UNGaz” for review purposes.

A number of special presentations were being arranged for the 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN session and the UNGEGN Chair described those which had been proposed. Several workshops and meetings would take place out-of-session and an

exhibition would be organised by the ECA. The Working Group Convenors would be responsible for the scheduling and arrangement of papers submitted under their agenda item and for drawing conclusions from their session.

Mr Illert (BKG Germany) gave a presentation on the work of INSPIRE, the legal framework for a European Spatial Data Infrastructure, which was aimed at promoting interoperability between data sets and services, building on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Open Geo-Spatial Consortium (OGC) standards. The architecture was demonstrated and an overview of the various Themes and associated Thematic Working Groups given. The Geographical Names Thematic Working Group was responsible for drawing up legally-binding “Implementing Rules” as well as a non-binding Guidance Document. Mr Illert described the model and characteristics, and outlined problems encountered and perceived future steps. Further details could be found at <http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu>.

Mr Stani-Fertl (Austria) reported on the creation of the Database of Exonyms and Other Variant Names (EVN) which was being built as an add-on to the EuroGeoNames central server, connected through spatial object unique identifiers. Lists of exonyms and other variants had been provided by national names authorities and representatives of official minorities authorised by national mapping authorities for all countries of the EuroGeoNames Reference Group<sup>1</sup>. 3,300 entries in 25 languages had been added to date, with a total of more than 5,000 anticipated. Mr Stani-Fertl displayed the data model and described the online editing procedure, authorised access to which

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<sup>1</sup> comprising the 15 participating European National Mapping and Charting Agencies (NMCAs)

was available through  
<http://141.74.33.52/egn.edit-vne>.

Mr Päll (Institute of Estonian Language, Estonia) and Ms Kivisalu (Estonian Land Board) described the geographical names network within state information systems and introduced the new Place Names Register. A new online version had been launched in January 2009 after the Estonian National Topographic Database, the Address Data System and the National Place Names Register had been interconnected to provide a single access point solution to names enquiries. The interface was available in English and Estonian at <http://xgis.maaamet.ee/knravalik>

The Working Group discussed preparations for the forthcoming UNGEGN session. The Co-convenors would draft a report of Working Group activities and monitor papers submitted under this topic. A poster-format panel for an exhibit area at the session would be considered by the Working Group, possibly incorporating text encoding standards relevant to the ECA data model. Members would pass ideas and recommendations before the beginning of March 2009 to the Convenors who would arrange the compilation of the poster.

Various subjects for an out-of-session workshop were considered in some detail, including simple database applications, data

modelling, and lessons learned through the EuroGeoNames project. Members concluded that Working Group involvement should complement and support the ECA “UNGaz” project and would therefore postpone a decision on a workshop until details of the planned ECA contribution were available. The Convenors would investigate this and draft a proposal for a workshop ahead of the UNGEGN meeting.

The Working Group agreed that the altered format followed during this session would serve as a model for future meetings, with increased focus on the description of relevant work being carried out by member states.

The next meeting of the Working Group would be held during the 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN session in Nairobi. Members were encouraged to consider holding future joint meetings with other UNGEGN working groups or divisions.

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## Report of the Task Team for Africa

Before the UNGEGN meeting, the Task Team for Africa has undertaken several actions for the promotion of geographical names in Africa:

a) Organizing a toponymic workshop in Nairobi, Kenya from 1 to 3 May 2009, for the countries of East Africa. This course, organ-

ized with the support of the African Organization of Cartography and Remote Sensing, and under the auspices of the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, follows the courses already held in Tunis for the countries of North Africa in 2006 and in



Ouagadougou for the countries of West Africa in 2008.

b) Participation in the organization of a course that the Arabic Division is organizing in Kuwait later this year, with the collaboration of the Municipality of Kuwait City and the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy. The Task Team for Africa is in-

volved in organizing this training, given that more than seven African countries are members of the Arabic Division.

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## From the Countries

### Brazil puts forward a program for geographical names standardization

Brazilian government officials and experts are making considerable efforts in national geographical names standardization. During the second half of 2008, many facts pointed to excellent developments in this subject in the future years, among them the creation of the Geographical Names Committee, in the National Commission on Cartography, which works with the country's Planning Ministry. Some activities promoted aimed to increase and to build stronger bonds in order to establish the national network of geographical names, with the leadership of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). Partnerships with some institutions of the Brazilian federative units, such as the states of Paraná, Ceará and Pará, grew stronger. In Pará several geographical names are in indigenous languages.

Seminars were carried out in these states with the main purpose of showing the relevance of the standardization of Brazilian geographical names, and the results were excellent in all cases. The highlight of these seminars was the importance of the commitment and the engagement of these states' institutions as future parts of the recently created Geographical Names Committee. It is intended that this Committee becomes Brazil's authority on geographical names. Moreover, IBGE is getting prepared to work together with INPI (Brazil's national authority on industrial property) in order to raise the number of products registered and protected in association with standardized geographical names.

In November and December of 2008, important events took place in the city of Rio de Janeiro concerning geographical names and international matters. From November 26th to 28th, IBGE promoted an introductory course on the standardization of geographical names and a workshop on geographical names and environment. Both events had the support of the Canada-Brazil partnership in the National Geospatial Infra-structure Project (PIGN).

The course and the seminar had the special participation of experts on the theme, among them Helen Kerfoot, chair of UNGEGN, and Maria Vicentina Dick, professor of Indigenous Toponymy at the University of São Paulo and one of the most experienced scholars working on the theme in Brazil. IBGE experts also participated in the course and the workshop, namely the chief of the Coordination of Cartography of IBGE and vice-chair of the Portuguese-speaking Division of UNGEGN, Moema Augusto, and Ana Bustamante, who is translating to Portuguese a great part of the UNGEGN's *glossary of terms* for the standardization of geographical names and presented the first results of that project, which will meet an important need of the Portuguese-speaking countries.

Other remarkable event took place on December 2nd: the first seminar on geographical names of the Portuguese Language Community of Countries and the second meeting of the Portuguese-speaking Division of UNGEGN. This event was attended by the chairperson of UNGEGN, Helen Kerfoot, who made important remarks, as well as the chair

of the Portuguese-speaking Division, José Elias Mucombo, from Moçambique. The event started with an invitation from the chairman for the audience to honour the memory of one of the founders of the division, the most respected engineer Luís Abrahamo, from Moçambique, deceased shortly after the Ninth Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in 2007.

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## Publications

### ***Acta Academica* – “Critical perspectives of Name Changing” Dr. Lucie A. Möller honoured**

The University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, dedicated a special edition of its journal, *Acta Academica*, to Dr Lucie A. Möller, South African expert to the UNGEGN since 1996 and member of the Dutch- and German-speaking and Africa South Divisions of UNGEGN. This publication entitled “Critical perspectives on name-changing”, is of special interest to the work of UNGEGN, with contributions by experts in the fields of African languages, toponymy and political issues. It was launched at a function on 7 November 2008 in the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery of the University.

Dr Lucie A. Möller was delegated by the Government of South Africa to the UNGEGN meeting in Geneva in 1996, to the Seventh UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in New York in 1998, the Eighth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin in 2002, and to the accompanying UNGEGN sessions, as well as to meetings of the UNGEGN Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation. Since 1992 Dr Möller organized eight and co-presented ten UN training courses on geographical names

in South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia, and compiled a Training Manual which has been used at training courses in Southern Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Dr Möller was co-founder of the Names Society of Southern Africa, served on the Executive as Secretary-Treasurer of the Society, and as Editorial Secretary of *Nomina Africana*, since its launch in Stellenbosch in 1987. She arranged and participated in thirteen NSA congresses and presented reports and papers at congresses in Canada, Germany, Korea, Namibia, Scotland, South Africa, Swaziland, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United States of America. She is the author, co-author and compiler of eight books and numerous articles, radio talks and TV appearances, and is a member of the South African Academy of Science and Art (Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns).

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### **University of the Free State media release on the journal launch**

From all the language issues covered in the English and Afrikaans printed media, the name change of place names is receiving the most attention. This is according to Prof. Johan Lubbe, research associate from the University of the Free State's (UFS) Unit for Language Management, during the recent

launch of a journal on name change on the Main Campus in Bloemfontein.

In the journal it is found, among other, that, as a result of the nature of the new democratic foundation of the ANC controlled government which puts the interests of the ma-

jority first, there is a move in the thinking and execution of name change. In this way not only names change but art, culture and heritage matters are democratically thought through and planned.

“As a directive from the South African Language Board (Pansalb), the Unit for Language Management at the UFS annually compiles the SA Language Monitor which reports on the language rights situation in South Africa as mainly reported by the print media. Issues about name change appeared throughout and this is why the unit decided to publish a journal with various perspectives on this,” said Prof. Lubbe, who is also the guest editor of the journal.

Other topics discussed in the journal include, among others, language visibility, a historical overview of the change in place names, the Khoisan influence on naming and naming amongst Xhosa speakers.

In a contribution on language visibility it is found that geographical naming policy and the national language policy does not correlate and language visibility as language mechanism is not considered. In a historical overview on the change of place names it is found that name change was never a calculated, political process and only after 2000 mention was made of a conscious, orchestrated process of name change.

In a further contribution on the name change of Johannesburg International airport, it was found that the government, by ignoring the sentiments of the minority, made itself guilty of splitting the nation in spite of pronunciations that nation building is a priority. Where African languages are concerned, it was found that the English name is increasingly being discarded in favour of the Xhosa name. This is apparently connected to the language debate in South Africa.

The journal, “Kritiese perspektiewe op naamsverandering” (“Critical perspectives on name change”) is a supplement to the “Acta Academica”, an accredited national journal that is independently publishing selected research articles in the human sciences and interdisciplinay fields. Nine co-operators from across the country made contributions to the journal.



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