ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL   13 **July 2012**

Tenth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 31 July – 9 August 2012
Item 13(a) of the provisional agenda*
Writing systems and pronunciation:
Romanization;

The Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names

Submitted by Belarus **

The Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names

National system of the Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names is based on historical language form called *latinka* which was traditionally used in popular scientific and fiction periodicals of the XIX – beginning of XX centuries and was represented in works of such Belarusian outstanding authors as Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas, Franishak Bagushevich, Vincent Dunin-Marcinkevich equally with Cyrillic. The form of *latinka* was well adapted for the features of Belarusian language.

The 1st version of the Regulation on the Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names was developed and approved by the State Committee for Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Belarus in November, 2000. Since 2001 in Belarus the Regulation had been used for the purposes of cartography and other activities designed for national and international use.

In 2006 the Regulation underwent an examination by UNGEGN WG on Romanization Systems. The form of *latinka* was recognized to meet the requirements necessary for the National system of transliteration. Experts suggestions were taken into specialists consideration of Belarus. A project of the 2nd version of the Regulation on the Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names was submitted for discussions to all the concerned authorities.

In June, 2007 The State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus adopted the 2nd version of the Regulation in the form of INSTRUCTIONS for Transliteration of Geographical Names in the Republic of Belarus into Letters of the Roman Alphabet (annexes below).

The 2nd version of the Regulation was repeatedly submitted to UNGEGN WG on Romanization Systems in May, 2012 and met no objections. National system of Belarus is recognized to be reversible and understandable by the population of many countries.

Today the system of the Roman alphabet transliteration of Belarusian geographical names is applied in road and tourist maps production, represented in the normative reference book "The names of settlements of the Republic of Belarus" in six volumes, in the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of the Republic of Belarus and other publications intended for international use.

The Republic of Belarus submits this system for international approval as the system for the Romanization of Belarusian geographical names.

INSTRUCTIONS
for Transliteration of Geographical Names in the Republic of Belarus
into Letters of the Roman Alphabet
(Scope – mandatory for all)

1. The Instructions for Transliteration of Geographical Names in the Republic of Belarus into Letters of the Roman Alphabet (referred to below as the Instructions) establish rules for converting geographical names from the Belarusian system of writing to the Roman alphabet on cartographic and other documents produced in foreign languages in the Republic of Belarus for international use.

2. The specifications in the Instructions are mandatory for all ministries, national administrative bodies, institutions, enterprises and organizations, regardless of form of ownership, and for individual persons, including foreign persons, holding special permits to perform activities in the field of geographical names in the Republic of Belarus.

3. The conversion of geographical names in the Republic of Belarus into the Roman alphabet begins with their correct spelling in Belarusian, authenticated by official sources.
   If there are no official documents in the Belarusian language, names shown in cartographic and encyclopedic publications in that language should be used. Corrections can be made in accordance with studies conducted by the Toponymic Commission of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus and the National Toponymic Commission of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, standardized dictionaries of the Belarusian language, and other sources.

4. The conversion of geographical names is accomplished by transliterating the characters (symbols and letters) of the Belarusian alphabet into corresponding characters of the Roman alphabet. The appearance of the word is preserved without adjustment for precise conveyance of its sounds, which ensures reversibility from the Roman to the Belarusian spelling. The transliteration is a means of generalizing and standardizing the romanization system so that it can be used in all Roman-alphabet countries.

5. The transliteration rules in the Instructions do not extend to depiction of toponyms in Roman-alphabet countries adjacent to the Republic of Belarus (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia). Geographical names in these and other Roman-alphabet countries should be shown on maps in the national system of spelling approved for each country.

6. The transliteration of geographical names in countries adjacent to the Republic of Belarus which use the Cyrillic alphabet should meet the following requirements: for Russia – the GOST in effect in the Russian Federation for transliteration from Russian orthographic spellings; for Ukraine – the rules in effect in Ukraine for transliteration from Ukrainian orthographic spellings. The geographical names in these and other Cyrillic-alphabet countries are romanized in accordance with the newest cartographic, encyclopedic and other reference publications of the respective country in the romanization system it has approved.

7. Geographical names in the Republic of Belarus are transliterated from their current Belarusian spelling.

8. The transliteration rules are similar to the GOST standard in effect in the Russian Federation. Exceptions are cases involving peculiarities in the toponymy of Belarus and differences in the Belarusian and Russian alphabets. This pertains to the letters Г (Belarusian toponymy does not have an explosive Г, which is transliterated from Russian by the letter G), Ў and the apostrophe ('). They are transliterated from Belarusian by the following symbols:

Г – by the grapheme H (instead of G in GOST rules),

Ў – by the grapheme U (as in GOST rules for У) with added diacritic (˘), i.e., Ŭ.

Since the Г is rendered by the Roman letter H, the letter X is denoted by the digraph Ch, as permitted by other standards (instead of H in GOST rules).

Considering that the letters Е е, Ё ё, Ю ю, Я я in Cyrillic have a dual meaning (at the beginning of words and after vowels and separation symbols, they denote two sounds [й] + a vowel; after consonants they denote softening of the preceding consonant + a vowel), they are transliterated in accordance with these characteristics. In the first case by Je je, Jo jo, Ju ju, Ja ja (apostrophe and separatings soft sign are unnecessary), and in the second case by ie, io, iu, ia.

Palatalization of consonants marked by soft sign [ь] in Belarusian Roman alphabet has to be marked by a diacritical mark „(´)" added on top of the corresponding character: дзь – dź, зь – ź, ль – ĺ, нь – ń, сь – ś, ць – ś.

The rules for transliterating Belarusian letters into Roman letters using the diacritical mark (˘) for some of them, as in the GOST standards, are given in the table of transliteration of Belarusian alphabet into Roman alphabet as given in Appendix[1].

9. The use of upper-case and lower-case letters in the Roman alphabet should correspond to their use in names written in Belarusian:

Мінскае мора — Minskaje mora

Чырвоны Бераг — Čyrvony Bierah

Агародня-Кузьмініцкая — Aharodnia-Kuźminickaja

10. A similar approach is used for transliteration of generic geographical terms before or after a name, whether represented in full or in abbreviated form:

бал. Чысты Мох — bal. Čysty Moch

Ашмянскае ўзвыш. — Ašmianskaje ŭzvyš.

Свянцянскія грады — Sviancianskija hrady

Вял. Сяло — Vial. Sialo

Дняпроўска-Бугскі канал — Dniaproŭska-Buhski kanal

воз. Нарач — voz. Narač

Чыгірынскае вдсх. — Čyhirynskaje vdsch.

Abbreviated forms of generic terms in documents (catalogs, reference books, geographic maps) should be included either in a list of abbreviations with their translation into other languages in full form, or in the map legend with appropriate explanatory text in other languages. This pertains especially to terms rarely used on internationally used maps.

---

[1] This transliteration system eliminates both the apostrophe and the diacritics (¨) and (`) over the E e to render the letters Ё ё and Э э, respectively, the use of which is improperly permitted by other standards used in cartography.

11. Complex and compound names written together, separately or with a hyphen retain those forms in the romanized version.

12. In indexes, the transliterated geographical names are placed in the alphabetical order of the basic letters of the Belarusian National Roman alphabet: a, b, c, č, d, e, f, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, š, t, u, v, y, z, ž. In the case of ignoring diacritical marks the main function of an index – alphabetical arrangement – is undermined as different letters – с (s) and ш (š), ц (c) and ч (č), з (z) and ж (ž) – are distributed unsystematically, chaotically. Ignoring diacritical marks complicates queries and identification of transliterated names.

13. If a map is being produced which does not allow geographical names to be depicted in both the Belarusian and Roman alphabets (i.e., if the names are shown only in the Roman alphabet), it is suggested that a table of transliteration of Belarusian alphabet into Roman alphabet be placed in an empty portion of the margin (or on the reverse side). The title of the table and the notes, along with the other textual portion of the map, may be given in several languages.

14. The Government Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Belarus is responsible for checking whether the requirements of the Instructions are met.

Table
of transliteration of Belarusian alphabet into Roman alphabet

Letters of Belarusian alphabet		Corresponding letters of Roman alphabet		Examples of transliteration of Belarusian geographical names
1		2		3
А	а	A	a	Аршанскі — Aršanski
Б	б	B	b	Бешанковічы — Biešankovičy
В	в	V	v	Віцебск — Viciebsk
Г	г	H	h	Гомель — Homieĺ, Гаўя — Haŭja
Д	д	D	d	Добруш — Dobruš
Е	е	Je	je (*) ie (**)	Ельск — Jeĺsk Бабаедава — Babajedava Венцавічы — Viencavičy
Ё	ё	Jo	jo (*) io (**)	Ёды — Jody, Вераб'ёвічы — Vierabjovičy Мёры — Miory
Ж	ж	Ž	ž	Жодзішкі — Žodziški
З	з	Z	z	Зэльва — Zeĺva
І	і	I	i	Іванава — Ivanava, Іўе — Iŭje
Й	й	J	j	Лагойск — Lahojsk
К	к	K	k	Круглае — Kruhlaje
Л	л	L	l	Лошыца — Lošyca, Любань — Liubań
М	м	M	m	Магілёў — Mahilioŭ
Н	н	N	n	Нясвіж — Niasviž
О	о	O	o	Орша — Orša
П	п	P	p	Паставы — Pastavy
Р	р	R	r	Рагачоў — Rahačoŭ
С	с	S	s	Светлагорск — Svietlahorsk
Т	т	T	t	Талачын — Talačyn
У	у	U	u	Узда — Uzda
Ў	ў	Ŭ	ŭ	Шаркаўшчына — Šarkaŭščyna
Ф	ф	F	f	Фаніпаль — Fanipaĺ
Х	х	Ch	ch	Хоцімск — Chocimsk

Ц	ц	C	c	Цёмны Лес — Ciomny Lies
Ч	ч	Č	č	Чавусы — Čavusy
Ш	ш	Š	š	Шуміліна — Šumilina
Ы	ы	Y	y	Чыгірынка — Čyhirynka
Ь	ь			Чэрвень — Červień, Друць — Druć
Э	э	E	e	Чачэрск — Čačersk
Ю	ю	Ju	ju (*)	Юхнаўка — Juchnaŭka
				Гаюціна — Hajucina
			iu (**)	Цюрлі — Ciurli, Любонічы — Liuboničy
Я	я	Ja	ja (*)	Ямнае — Jamnaje, Баяры — Bajary
			ia (**)	Валяр'яны — Valiarjany, Вязынка — Viazynka

* Initially, after vowels, apostrophe, soft sign and ŭ

** After consonants