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REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

EASTERN EUROPE, NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION

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Report of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division

Composition of the Division

The Sixth UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names, convened in New-York, 25 August - 3 September 1992, adopted resolution No 1 on forming Africa South Division, the Baltic Division and the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division.

At the final meeting of the UN Group of Experts on standardization of geographical names, 4 September after the Conference, while discussing the programme of implementing the Sixth UN Conference resolution, Azerbaijan, Russia and the Ukraine declared their decision to join the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division as its members.

The first organizing meeting of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division was held in Kiev, 24-28 October 1994. It was attended by Armenia, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Kirghizia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and USA.

At this meeting Armenia, Byelorussia, Russia and the Ukraine confirmed their decision to work in the Division as its permanent members. The representatives of Kirghizia and Turkmenia advised that the form of their participation in the Division activity would be solved after additional consultations.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and USA expressed their intention to work in the Division as observers.

In 1995 Bulgaria and Kirghizia sent the written notification on their decision to join the Division as its members.

In 1996 Uzbekistan expressed the readiness to work in the Division as a permanent member. Georgia and Turkmenia advised that the issue of their participation in the Division was being consulted.

At the first divisional meeting, the countries which had agreed to work in the Division permanently, unanimously elected Russia as the divisional country co-ordinator for the term before the Seventh UN Conference. For this period Mr. Boginskiy (Russia) was elected the Division Chairman, and Mr. Krinitzkiy (Ukraine) Deputy Chairman. The composition of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division for July 1, 1996 is the following:

No	Divisional members	Divisional observers
1.	Azerbaijan	Estonia
2.	Armenia	Lithuania
3.	Bulgaria	Poland
4.	Byelorussia	USA
5.	Kirghizia	
6.	Russia (co-ordinator)	
7.	Ukraine	
8.	Uzbekistan	

National Standardization of Geographical Names in the Division Countries

Azerbaijan - The State Committee on Geodesy and Cartography together with the Toponymic Division of the Geographical Institute of the Azerbaijan Academy of Science restored the names of populated places as they had occurred before the revolution. Since 1992 all the maps have been published taking account of the changes in geographical names. The reference book "Administrative territorial division of the Azerbaijan Republic" is being updated. The reference book on geographical names in Azerbaijan, Russian and English is under development now.

Armenia - At present the standardization of geographical names is not carried out because the national body on geographical names is absent in the Republic.

Bulgaria - In 1993 The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the decree that conferred upon the Council for Orthography and Transcription the powers and duties of the national body on standardization of geographical names. In accordance with this decree, the Ministry of Territorial Development and Construction approved the Rules for establishment and activity of the Council and its composition. The Council is to perform its functions in close contact with the Commission on Naming and Renaming in the Administration of the Republic of Bulgaria President and the Institute of the Bulgarian Language of the Academy of Science. The Council develops the main principles of rendering foreign geographical names in the Bulgarian language as well as of rendering the Bulgarian place-names in the Roman script. The Council resolutions are mandatory for the users all over the country. The Council does not have the powers to name and rename the geographical objects in Bulgaria.

The Council updated and then adopted the principal rules for rendering of foreign geographical names and the rules for transcribing French, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish, English, Russian, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish place-names. The Rules were approved by the Ministry of Territorial Development and Construction and published as an compulsory document. Due to the close co-operation between the Council and the Committee for Standardization and Metrology, the Rules ensure the consistency with the standards adopted in Bulgaria, pertaining to the issues of

foreign names transcription. After publishing the Rules, updating of foreign geographical names lists compiled in accordance with the adopted methods, was begun.

In 1994 the list of country names was prepared and agreed to with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It complies to the international standard and the standard for two characters codes for country names, adopted in Bulgaria. The list has been passed to the national TV, radio and telegraph agency, to provide for correct pronunciation of the World country names in mass media.

Due to popularization of the Council activity, it is addressed for consultation by a wide range of users which promotes for the unified rendering of geographical names in Bulgaria.

In course of updating the place-name lists, a number of exonyms is being reduced.

A great deal of cartographic products have been released in Bulgaria recently. Application of the Romanization system to the Bulgarian place-names recommended for international use by the Third UN Conference on standardization of geographical names (Athens, 1977) is continued.

Byelorussia - The Board on Geodesy and Cartography was disbanded in the Republic. It is being rearranged at present. The national body on the standardization of geographical names is absent. The problems connected with geographical names usage on maps are resolved by Minsk cartographic factories and Byelorussian cartographic-geodetic agency.

The pilot Romanization system for the Byelorussian place-names has been developed in co-operation with the Institute of the Byelorussian language named after Yakub Kolas. Now it is being tested and improved.

Kirghizia - In 1995 the Government of the Kirghizian Republic established the Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names with a Vice Prime Minister in the head.

In the latest three years, the database on toponyms of Kirghizia and adjacent countries based on 1:100,000 topographic map and resided at the State Agency of Geodesy and Cartography, was enhanced by the data collected from topographic maps at scale 1:25,000. At present it contains the data about more than 18,000 geographical features. The database is being updated.

The Kirghizian toponyms are being restored.

To render the Kirghizian names in the Roman script, the Romanization Systems and Roman-Script Spelling Conventions, developed by the US Board on Geographical Names and the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names in 1979, are employed. The adoption of the Roman script is planned.

Russia - The activity in standardization of geographical names in Russia between 1994-1996 was targeted at implementing the following critical tasks:

- The improvement of administrative structure to carry out the standardization of geographical names.
- The development of legal basis to carry out the standardization of geographical names.
- The compilation of normative gazetteers and dictionaries of geographical names.
- The specification of the Romanization system application fields when releasing cartographic production for international use.
- The creation of geographical names files.

The issues of geographical feature naming were reflected in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, adopted in 1993. According to the Constitution, nomination of geographical features is referred to federal jurisdiction.

In May 1994, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted the decree "On unification of geographical names usage in the Russian Federation", by which the Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names was formed and its status and composition determined.

The Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names is permanently acting body which is to perform the co-ordination among the industry branches in order to provide the unified approach to naming of geographical features and to store geographical names as a part of cultural and historical heritage of Russia.

The Commission headed by the Chief of the Federal Agency of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia (Roskartographia) includes the representatives of more than twenty interested departments, agencies and organizations.

In pursuance of Roskartographia resolution, the Central Scientific Research Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Surveying and Cartography (CNIIGAIK) is to methodically and technically support the Commission. The Institute is to develop the drafts of legal documents concerning geographical names, to prepare the programme of future developing and updating the guidelines, gazetteers and other normative and methodical documents, to expertize suggestions on naming and renaming of geographical features received by the Commission.

In accordance with the Government of the Russian Federation decision, Roskartographia developed the draft of federal law "On nomination of geographical features".

The draft law was agreed to with more than 20 interested ministries, departments and agencies and approved by the Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names. The draft of the mentioned federal law was submitted to the State Duma (the supreme legislative body) by the Government of Russia as a legislative initiative, and was primarily accepted by the Duma 22 May 1996.

To implement this law, the Government of the Russian Federation will adopt legal documents determining the procedure of considering suggestions concerning naming and renaming of geographical features, accepting normative documents, creating geographical names, providing the unified usage of place-names in Russia and maintaining the State toponymic data file. These legal documents are under development now.

The issues of geographical names standardization were reflected in the federal law "On Geodesy and Cartography" accepted by the State Duma 22 November 1995. In accordance with this law, account and standardization of geographical names as well as provision of their unified usage are referred to federal geodetic and cartographic activity and funded from the federal budget. The federal executive body on geodesy and cartography is defined as the customer of this work on behalf of the State.

In recent ten years, more than 100 normative and methodical documents on collection and treatment of geographical names, naming and renaming of geographical features, Russian rendering of foreign place-names were developed and became effective.

Guidelines, handbooks and gazetteers embrace nearly 200 countries and territories and 140 languages of the World. In 1995 "The List of current normative and methodical documents on standardization of geographical names" was released. The Interdepartmental Commission approved the promising programme of updating normative documents step by step.

Between 1994 and 1996 the following developments were completed:

'Guidelines for standardization of the geographical names in Antarctica' (the 2nd updated edition), "Gazetteer of hydrographic features of Russia and CIS countries", "Gazetteer of the Russian Federation" and handbook "The World states and territories".

In the gazetteers the standardized name is accompanied by feature type, location and some other information that makes the feature identification easier. The gazetteers also include variants of place-names taken from the sources.

The above mentioned guidelines and gazetteers were considered by the Interdepartmental Commission and recommended for publishing. They are being released now.

In 1995 verified and enhanced handbook "The World states and territories" was prepared. It contains the names of 234 states and territories of the World (short and full official forms) with their capitals in Russian.

The Fifth UN Conference on standardization of geographical names approved the Romanization system for the Russian language suggested by the USSR for international use. This system was conventionally called GOST-83.

During more than ten years period of employing this Romanization system certain experience was gained. In 1995 the spheres of its further application were investigated. Further employment of this

conversion system for the place-names of Russia and the Russian names in Antarctica and the World Ocean was acknowledged reasonable.

In many republics of the former USSR the problem of national Romanization systems is not solved. Hence, the Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names has accepted the suggestion of CNIIGAIK that GOST-83 Romanization system should be further used to render the place-names of the following countries spelled in Russian: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Byelorussia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Tadjikistan, Turkmenia, the Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

When in future these countries develop their national Romanization systems which will be adopted by the UN, their place-names will be converted into the Roman script immediately from their national languages.

In 1996 CNIIGAIK developed the draft of "The Rules for transliteration of the geographical names in the Russian Federation with the Roman letters" based on GOST-83.

The Romanization system GOST-83 was employed when creating the third edition of the World Atlas and some other maps intended for international use. It was as well used in the already mentioned "Guidelines for standardization of the geographical names in Antarctica" and some gazetteers.

At present there are several toponymic data files in Russia maintained by different agencies for their specific tasks. CNIIGAIK data file is the most universal both in its contents and purpose. The file comprises data on all the World countries.

CNIIGAIK data file provides the required information on the place-names in Russia and foreign countries to cartographic and many other agencies. The file embraces information on approximately 2,000,000 geographical features. It is constantly updated and enhanced, primarily in view of cartographic needs. Gazetteers for particular territories and other reference books are derived from CNIIGAIK toponymic data file. In addition, spelling of geographical names is specified at users requests.

The file is resided on cards. It contains the data on feature type, category, location, state and administrative identity. For foreign place-names their national forms (together with their variants) are indicated. The standard Russian transcription is also provided. The file contains data on all changes in a particular name and additional information concerning the feature.

The current toponymic data files are to be transferred into a single State data file on geographical names of Russia. The Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names is appointed the coordinator of the data file development and maintenance including its electronic version. The Commission considered and in the main approved the preliminary concept of developing the State toponymic data file submitted by CNIIGAIK. The Commission recommended to further investigate the issues of the file purpose, structure, the procedure and the scope of its development. The conclusions will be considered at the nearest meeting of the Commission.

The full data file based on 1:100,000 topographic map will include about 2,500,000 geographical names in Russia. The data file is supposed to be developed in three steps.

In 1996 CNIIGAİK began the work aimed to specify the data file goals and tasks, to determinate users requirements, basic scale of topographic map, optimal contents of data, encoding system and standard record format, to analyze data source, and to create record cards for data collection.

Ukraine - 23 September 1993 the Council of Ministers accepted the decree on establishment of the National Rada (Council) on Geographical Names. It embraces the representatives of the interested Republican ministries and agencies as well as of local administrations. The National Rada is headed by the Chief of the Main Administration on Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre (Ukrgeodezkartographia). Its working body is the Department of Cartography and Standardization in Ukrgeodezkartographia. The issues pertaining to standardization of the geographical names in the Ukraine and foreign countries are the terms of reference of the National Rada.

The development of data bank on geographical names is under preparation now. At the first stage of data collection for the Ukraine, topographic map at scale 1:100,000 is likely to be used.

The programme of developing national data bank on place-names in the Ukraine includes creation of legal and normative basis for standardization of geographical names. So the Ukraine Council of Ministers decided to develop the draft law of the Ukraine "On geographical names" and legal documents on naming and renaming of geographical features..

In 1995 the handbook "Africa" was prepared for publishing. This was the first reference book on geographical names in the continents.

In 1996 the following books are to be prepared for publishing: "The Adjectives derived from the Ukrainian geographical names", "The Vanished and renamed populated places in the Ukraine during recent 50 years", "Australia and Oceania", "Orographic features in the Ukraine", gazetteers of Poland, Byelorussia, Slovakia, Rumania and Moldavia.

The handbook "Administrative territorial division of the Ukraine" is permanently maintained by Ukrgeodezkartographia departments, basing on the documents of the Supreme Rada of the Ukraine.

In the recent years renaming of geographical features, in particular populated places and urban features has decreased in the Ukraine. A great deal of the unresolved problems referred to standardization of names and their correct spelling in the Ukrainian language still remains.

Until the state standard for conversion of the Ukraine place-names into the Roman script is accepted, cartographic factories of Ukrgeodezkartographia will employ the temporary in-house rules. When developing the draft standard, various alternative variants were discussed. At present the draft standard is being evaluated and approved.

In 1995 the handbook "Names of countries and territories of the World" was prepared for publishing. It contains the abbreviated and full names of countries and dependent territories. The names are given in the Ukrainian and national (for the Roman writing countries) languages or in the national Romanization systems (for non-Roman writing countries).

At present substantial difficulties appear when rendering geographical names of foreign countries in the Ukrainian language because of changes in the Ukrainian orthography which are discussed now. The Commission on Orthography continues its work and intends to consider the problem of the Ukrainian spelling of place-names of foreign countries.

For those engaged in creating cartographic products, the guidelines and rules for the Ukrainian rendering of place-names in English, German and Spanish-speaking countries, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Moldavia, France, Sweden, Lithuania, Byelorussia and Italy have been developed.

In 1996 the guidelines for spelling of geographical names on cartographic products published in the Ukrainian and foreign languages are to be developed. The specific trait of the Orthography Guidelines under development is that they will be the first to contain orthography rules for the names both in the Roman and Cyrillic script.

In 1995 "Temporary rules for collection and treatment of geographical names for topographic maps and diagrams" were developed. Now they are employed at cartographic factories of Ukrgeodezskartographia.

In the Ukraine the single list of all exonyms used on maps and in mass media has not been compiled yet. Exonyms are listed in each particular guidelines containing the rules for rendering of foreign geographical names in the Ukrainian language.

The problem concerning geographical names in the territories populated by national minorities will be solved on adopting the law of the Ukraine "On geographical names". The only legal document currently taken into consideration when resolving these problems now, is the law "On languages" accepted by the Ukraine in 1989. It states in particular that the Ukrainian place-names are formed and presented in Ukrainian but at the same time they could be rendered in the language of the nation that is a major one in this or that locality.

Uzbekistan - The national agency on geographical names has not been established in the Republic of Uzbekistan yet. The Main Administration of Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre (Uzgeodezkadastr) submitted a message to the Government of the Republic on the need to arrange toponymic agency.

Standardization of geographical names is carried out by Uzgeodezkadastr. Toponymic Group and Laboratory of Toponymic Research have been formed with the following tasks:

- standardization of geographical name national spelling,
- investigations in changes of geographical names,

- development of computer data bank on geographical names in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Toponymic Group prepared and released for in-house circulation the lists of populated places in Samarkand oblast', Andijan oblast' and Tashkent oblast'. The similar lists are being prepared for the rest oblast' of the Republic. The first attempts were made to process the collected toponymic data with the computer.

The task of the Laboratory of Toponymic Research formed in 1995, is to develop scientific and methodical basis for standardization of national spelling of geographical names. This task is rather urgent as for many years in the Republic maps were published in the Russian language only.

"The Main rules for treatment of geographical names on maps" and "The Manual for establishing the names of geographical features when creating topographic maps and developing national database on geographical names in the Republic of Uzbekistan" have been developed in Uzgeodezkadastr and are being approved now.

International co-operation in standardization of Geographical Names

Between 1994 and 1996 the Division representatives attended the following international meetings on standardization of geographical names issues:

24-28 October 1994, on the initiative of the Ukraine the first meeting of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division was convened in Kiev. At this meeting together with specifying the Division composition, exchange of information on national standardization of geographical names took place. In addition, the participants were informed on the basic results of the Seventeenth Session of the UN Group of Experts on geographical names. The report on the results of the first divisional meeting, prepared by its chairman, was issued in Newsletter No 3 1995.

16-20 May 1995 in Kiev the training course arranged by Ukrgeodezkartographia for CIS experts and the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division was held. The course was conducted by the US Board on Geographical Names (Randall Flynn and Gerd Quinting). The trainees came from Armenia, Kirghizia, Russia, Uzbekistan and the Ukraine.

30 October - 3 November 1995 the National scientific conference "Development of national data banks on geographical names" was convened in Kiev, attended by representatives from Russia, USA and Canada.

The Ukraine representatives participated as observers at the first meeting of the Baltic Division in Tallin (Estonia), 26-27 October 1995.

The second meeting of the Division is scheduled to be held in Moscow 16-18 July 1996. It will be devoted to the preparation for the Eighteenth Session of the UN Group of Experts on geographical names in Geneva, August 1996.