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Report of the divisions

REPORTS OF UNEGN DIVISIONS

**REPORT OF EASTERN EUROPE, NORTHERN AND
CENTRAL ASIA DIVISION*)**

*) The Report is prepared by Chairman of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, V. M. Boginsky (Russia) with use of the information provided by Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kirghizia, Russia, Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine.

RESUME

The Report comprises information on present composition of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and a brief overview of national standardization of geographical names in each Division's country.

The report includes:

- status of the legislative and normative basis for the standardization of geographical names and their usage in the countries of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names;

- development of national catalogues, registers and databases of geographical names in the countries of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names;

- issued or developed gazetteers or references of geographical names;

- national Romanization systems used in the countries of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names;

- compiled lists of exonyms;

- meetings of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names and participation in the international arrangements devoted to geographical names issues.

Composition of Division

A resolution to form the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names was adopted at the Sixth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held on 25 August – 3 September 1992 in New York. Currently, the Division is composed of 10 permanent country-members: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kirghizia, Russia, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Estonia participate in the activities of the Division as observers.

National standardization of geographical names in the countries of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Azerbaijan

In March 2009, the State Law ‘On geographical names of the Azerbaijan Republic’ was adopted. The Law authorized the State Committee on Land and Cartography to carry national standardization and registration of geographical names, to compile gazetteers and references of geographical names and to develop and maintain the National Catalogue of Geographical Names. The State Committee is working in cooperation with the other state authorities in the Republic.

By the Decree of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic, since August 1, 2001 all paperwork in the country, including standardization of geographical names has been carried in the Roman script.

In May 2008, the Council of Ministers adopted ‘Regulations for registration of geographical names, requirements to compilation of gazetteers and references of geographical names and development and maintenance of the State Catalogue of geographical names’.

In Azerbaijan, standardization of geographical names is being held in accordance with the national programme that provides for development of computer databases of geographical names; use of lists of full and short names of the world states and territories in the UN languages to develop databases of foreign countries names; development of computer systems to process data related to geographical names; study of the world advanced technologies in geographical names maintenance.

Working maps of the Republic at 1:100,000 scale are created in the Azerbaijan language. These maps are regularly maintained and all changes are reflected on them including those concerning geographical names.

By now, the State Committee on Land and Cartography fulfilled about 80% of work related to accumulation and standardization of geographical names for the topographical maps of scale 1:50,000 which were previously issued in Russian. Accumulation of geographical names is accompanied by digitization of the maps during which Azerbaijan standardized names are recorded together with geo coordinates of location of their first characters on the map.

Development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Azerbaijan has been started. A full list of geographical names on the base of 1: 25,000 map series is compiled. As all these maps were previously issued in Russian, now geographical names are verified on the spot.

Names of geographical objects connected with economic activity of people are accumulated in different organizations. For example, names of railway stations, ports, airports and other transportation objects have been accumulated in the Ministry of Transportation; names of objects connected with mining – in geological agencies; names of populated places – in the Parliament of the country, etc. It is planned to bring together and standardize all these toponyms.

The reference book “Administrative and territorial division” that includes standardized names of populated places of Azerbaijan is issued in cooperation with the Parliament of the Republic.

The reference book of the names of the world countries and territories both in the Azerbaijani and English languages is prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of External Affairs.

Armenia

The Committee on Real Estate and Cadastre of the Armenian Government is a national body responsible for the standardization of geographical names in the country.

A legal basis for naming and renaming of geographical objects in the Republic of Armenia as well as for the standardization, storage and usage of geographical names is determined by the State Law “On geographical names” passed by the Parliament of the country in November 1999. In 2008, some amendments were introduced in the Law.

In 2010 some amendments were made in the “Procedure of collection and registration of geographical names and maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names in the Republic of Armenia” adopted by the Government in 2001.

Naming and renaming of geographical objects is regulated by the ‘Instruction in naming and renaming of geographical names in the Republic of Armenia’.

Special Commission on naming and renaming of geographical objects established by the Government of Armenia is working on permanent basis. In 2009, composition of the Commission *Ծոցր* was partially renewed. The Commission examines suggestions related to naming and renaming of geographical objects and their spelling. Approval of geographical names is the terms of reference of the Armenian Government. Lists of approved geographical names are published in the official government bulletin and available at the site <http://www.arlis.am> / .

In 2010, ‘Regulations for rendering of geographical names of the Republic of Armenia in the Russian and English languages’ was completed. Its supplements contain names of the large objects available on 1:300,000 map rendered in Russian and English.

Development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names of the Republic of Armenia on the base of 1: 25,000 map is completed in the main. The development was started in 2002. Since 2008 the Catalogue has been systematically populated with the names taken from the maps of larger scales (1: 10,000 and 1: 5,000). For January I, 2011, the Catalogue comprises more than 40,000 geographical names.

In 2008, ‘Gazetteer of the Armenian geographical names’ was completed. The Gazetteer is published in 11 volumes – each for one marz (region) plus the city of Yerevan. It is planned to issue the Gazetteer in English.

Compilation of the gazetteer of geographical names of the world was started in 2008. The gazetteer will include approximately 200,000 names. It shall be completed in 2011.

Gazetteers and references of geographical names are issued in Armenia. Among them, there could be mentioned the reference ‘Political and administrative division of the Armenian Republic’, gazetteer ‘Populated places of Armenia’ and ‘Concise dictionary of geographical objects in the Republic of Armenia’. In 2010, compilation of the ‘Concise reference of the states and territories of the world’ started. The reference shall be issued in 2011.

A list of exonyms is being developed in the Republic. In 2008, a large list of exonyms in the Armenian language was compiled. It includes more than 3,000 names. The reference-book of exonyms - Armenian names of states and capitals - was completed.

Standardized geographical names and related data are used to create maps and atlases. Recently, more than 15 titles of school, tourist and road maps were issued. Development of the two-volume ‘National Atlas of Armenia’ in the Armenian language and the ‘Historical and Geographical Atlas of Yerevan’ was finished.

Belarus

In 2010, the Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On naming of geographical objects’ was adopted. The Law regulates naming and renaming of geographical objects, standardization of geographical names, their registration and saving as a component of the historical and cultural heritage of the people of Belarus.

In compliance with the Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On geodetic and cartographic works’ passed in 2008, the standardization of geographical names is attributed to the cartographic works of state significance, their customer being the State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus.

Standardization of geographical names is coordinated by the Toponymic Commission of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus. Decisions taken by the Toponymic Commission are mandatory to all the state and local authorities as well as agencies, companies and organizations.

Instructions in rendering of geographical names and generic terms of the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were developed. They are based on current practice of Byelorussian rendering of place-names of these countries.

The task to develop the State Catalogue of the Geographical Names of Belarus is successfully pursued. The Catalogue includes an automated retrieval system and computer database that is being constantly populated and updated on the base of official sources of information on geographical names. More than 40,000 geographical names were already input into the database. Names of geographical objects are available in the database in the Byelorussian and Russian languages as well as in the Roman script. Now, capabilities to provide more customers with standardized geographical names stored in the Catalogue are being developed. The State Catalogue makes for a unified and stable use of geographical names in all spheres of social life.

The 'Instructions in rendering of geographical names of the Republic of Belarus in the Roman script' is used to create maps and atlases intended for international circulation. Use of this Romanization system revealed a need to make some changes and amendments in the Instruction. The updated Instruction was approved by the Decree of the State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus. A number of maps, atlases and city plans based on the adopted Romanization system were issued. The reference-book 'Names of populated places in the Republic of Belarus' is ready for publication.

References of the names of populated places in six regions of Belarus were published. The names are available in the Byelorussian and Russian languages as well as in the Roman script.

In 2008, the dictionary that contains about 3,000 entities on etymology of the names of Belarus populated places was published. The book includes plenty of names of rivers, lakes, creeks, marshes, fields, grasslands and forestlands as well as personal names, family names, and nicknames. The dictionary is rich in various linguistic, historic, geographic, mythological and folklore data as well as folk legends and tales. It also enlists historical and current names, dates when geographical names were first recorded in ancient written sources.

In Belarus, atlases, maps and city plans are issued in the Russian, Byelorussian and English languages as well as in the Roman script. During recent years, more than 60 cartographic products were published, including reference and tourist maps of the world, Belarus, its regions as well as city maps and atlases. The 'Road Atlas of the Republic of Belarus' at scale 1:200,000 was created. Every year, maps and atlases for schools and colleges are also released. Publication of three-volume 'Great Historic Atlas' became a significant achievement of the cartography of Belarus.

Bulgaria

In accordance with the Bulgarian State Law 'On geodesy and cartography', the Agency of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre is an authorized body responsible for standardization, rendering of geographical names and their provision to users.

The Council on Standardization of Geographical Names of the Ministry of Regional Development and Accomplishment was organized in the country. Its activity is based on the regulations approved by the Ministry of Regional Development and Accomplishment. The Council is entitled to develop rules and procedures for standardization, spelling and registration of geographical names of Bulgaria, rendering of foreign geographical names in the Bulgarian language, and of the Bulgarian geographical names in the Roman script.

For the purpose to provide for a consistent use of geographical names, protect national needs as well as needs of juridical and natural persons, the Working Group of experts was organized to develop the Law on names of national geographic objects.

Long term use of the earlier adopted Romanization system revealed a need in its modification. Since 2009, Romanization of Bulgarian geographical names is regulated by the Law on transliteration. This transliteration system is used to both render geographical and personal names.

Within the bounds of the joint European project - EuroGeographics-EuroGeoNames - a digital map is developed in Bulgaria, that includes: actualized geographical names, their Romanized rendering, former names of populated places, history of an area, geographical info, etc.

Administrative map of Bulgaria at scale 1: 500,000 is under production now. As a supplement, the map provides information on the Bulgarian geographical names and their transliterations.

Development of the national catalogue of geographical names still remains an issue of the day. In 2012, it is planned to determine the structure and content of the catalogue of geographical names and ways of its compiling in a standalone document. The document shall provide a foundation for development of the national catalogue of geographical names.

Kirghizia

Issues related to geographical names are regulated by the State Law 'On geographical names in the Kirghiz Republic' adopted in September 1997 and some decrees taken to achieve the Law. The latest decree was adopted in December 2010. In the country, the journal 'Normative documents of the Kirghiz Republic' is issued. The journal publishes all the laws and decrees passed by the Government (including those related to naming and renaming of geographical objects).

The Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names of the Kirghiz Government works on permanent basis. It is formed of experts from the National Academy of Sciences and various organizations. The Inter-department Commission considers issues pertaining to administrative division of the Republic, suggestions on naming and renaming of geographical objects. Final decisions of the Commission are made official as laws approved by the President of the Kirghiz Republic.

The work of the Inter-department Commission is technically supported by the State Service of Cartography and Geodesy.

Scientific foundations for standardization of geographical names are worked out by the National Academy of Sciences.

National Commission on the State Language was organized under the President of the Kirghiz Republic. In 2009, under the aegis of the Center of Encyclopedia and State Language, 'Kirghiz orthographic dictionary' was published. It includes more than 80,000 words.

In December 2010, the Government of the Kirghiz Republic passed a decree to detail the 'Regulations for rendering of geographical names of the Kirghiz Republic in the Roman script' that was adopted in 2008.

National Romanization system for geographical names is based on BGN/PCGN 1979 for Kirghiz Cyrillic.

The database that includes about 18,000 names of geographical objects is developed and regularly updated. Each geographical feature is accompanied with its name in national and Russian language, generic term, geo coordinates, sheet of topographic map of 1:100,000 scale where a given object is placed, average altitude of an object above the sea level in meters.

In pursuance of the decree passed by the Government of the Kirghiz Republic, the database 'Populated places of the Kirghiz Republic' was converted into GIS format. The system is maintained and updated to provide the authorities and organizations of Kirghizia with data on populated places.

Experts from the Regional Center of Slavonic Studies formed in the Kirghiz-Slavic University are engaged in developing unified rules for Russian rendering of Kirghiz names. They are also compiling lists of exonyms in use.

Maps in Kirghizia are issued in the state Kirghiz language and in the official Russian language. Some maps are published in English. Working 1:100,000 map of the Kirghiz Republic is maintained to reflect all officially approved changes in geographical nomenclature.

Russia

Legislative foundations for naming and renaming of geographical objects as well as for standardization, usage, registration, and storage of geographical names were set by the Federal Law 'On names of geographical objects' passed in December 1997 and also by some Government Decrees adopted to provide for the Law's implementation.

In 2008, the Federal law was adopted 'On moving amendments to the Federal Law 'On names of geographical objects'. The amendments introduced in the original Law were to detail its basic notions and purview as well as to bring some of its assets into line with the legislation of the Russian Federation in force.

Earlier adopted legislative documents (instructions, guidelines, etc) are valid in so far they do not contradict the Federal Law 'On names of geographical objects'.

Development and improving of the legislative and normative basis is still in progress.

In 2008, by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, the functions to develop the state policy and normative and legislative regulations for geographical names were delegated to the Ministry of Economic Development. In March of 2009, the Federal Agency of Geodesy and Cartography engaged in rendering of state services in the field of geographical names was abolished. The Federal Service of State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography in the Ministry of Economic Development became its successor.

Between 2008 and 2010 the following kinds of the national standardization of geographical names were in progress in Russia:

1. Proposals on naming and renaming of geographical objects of the Russian Federation, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of Russia as well as of features discovered or determined by the Russian explorers in the World Ocean and Antarctica were examined in terms of their linguistic, geographical and historical propriety. Over thirteen years passed since the time when the Federal Law 'On names of geographical objects' came in force, the name proposal expertise resulted in 120 federal normative acts passed to assign new names to 716 objects and to rename 370 objects.

2. Geographical names available in draft laws (registers) and reference-books of administrative division of a number of the Russian Federation subjects were examined prior to their adoption.

3. The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is developed and maintained in pursuance of the Federal Law 'On names of geographical objects' and the Government Decree 'On adoption of the Regulations for registration and inventory of geographical names, publication of gazetteers and references of geographical names and development and maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names'. For January 1, 2011, more than 400,000 geographical names (more than 12 million data items) were input into the database.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is a constituent part of the state information resource and is included in the Federal cartographic and geodetic fund. Automated information system of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names is registered and included into the register of Federal information systems.

4. Inquiries of the federal and local authorities, agencies, organizations, and general public were considered and responded by providing them with information on geographical names and recommendations for their use. Between 2009 and 2011, information on more than 240,000 names of geographical objects on the territory of Russia was provided using the database of the State Catalogue.

5. An electronic version of the annually updated Bulletin of officially changed geographical names in Russia was prepared to meet the information needs of the state authorities, organizations, agencies and wide public. The Bulletin is accessible at the site http://www.rosreestr.ru/kartografy/state_catalogue/data/. Registers of geographical names of 14 subjects of the Russian Federation are prepared for posting on the site. As this work is completed for other subjects of Russia, the information will be uploaded on the site. With intent to implement the state policy and provide a wider access to the state information resources, now some technological and managerial issues are being solved to post geographical names and accompanying information on the portal of the Federal Service of State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography and meet needs in standardized geographical names on-line.

6. Standardized geographical names of the Russian Federation and other countries were provided for the needs of cartographic industry. These data were used to issue more than 300 titles of maps and atlases of various subject matters, more than 80 titles being created for the first time. The most significant title is the 'National Atlas of Russia'. This is a profound encyclopedic scientific and reference work that contains information on the state structure, nature, resources, population, economics, environment status, history and culture of Russia. The 'Atlas' is issued in four volumes: Overall description of the territory, Nature and Ecology, Population and Economics, History and Culture. In view of the target of the 'National Atlas' and a wide range of its users, it is released in both hard copy and electronic form.

In the cartographic products, the state policy in the field of geographical names carried out in the Russian Federation, is being implemented.

In the maps and atlases issued in Russia for international circulation, the Romanization system for the Cyrillic alphabet approved by the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal, 1987) GOST-83 is applied.

Tadzhikistan

Works in the field of geographical names are regulated by the Law of the Republic of Tadzhikistan 'On names of geographical objects' passed in 2006.

Issues related to naming and renaming of geographical objects are the term of reference of the Government of the Republic of Tadzhikistan, while practical work connected with use of geographical names is carried by the authorized state body. This state body is the Agency on Land Surveying, Geodesy and Cartography of the Government of the Republic of Tadzhikistan.

The Agency records all changes in the names of regions, cities, districts and other populated places published in the decrees of the Government of the Republic of Tadzhikistan. It also examines proposals to name or rename mountains (peaks) on the territory of the Republic submitted by juridical and natural persons.

In recent 3-4 years, more than 30 titles of maps were issued, including administrative, tourist, city maps as well as maps and atlases for school and colleges.

Uzbekistan

The State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre is the national authority responsible for standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Naming of geographical objects is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On procedure of settling questions related to administrative and territorial division, naming and renaming of geographical objects in the Republic of Uzbekistan'. Some issues related to naming of geographical objects are regulated by the State Laws 'On the state language in the Republic of Uzbekistan' and 'On geodesy and cartography'.

In pursuance of the Decree passed by the Council of Ministers of Uzbekistan 'On coordination of naming of administrative units, populated places and other geographical objects' the Republican Toponymic Commission was organized. Its terms of reference are to coordinate naming and renaming of geographical features and to preserve historic toponyms.

In accordance with the plan of lawmaking taken by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2009, the National Center of Geodesy and Cartography prepared a draft of the State Law 'On naming of geographical objects'. In September 2010, the draft law was given its first reading in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. At present, the draft law is being amended and prepared for its second reading

Earlier developed instructions in Uzbek rendering of geographical names are now being updated. A programme of updating of toponymic instructions and guidelines was adopted for the period of 2010-2014.

In 2009, the State Catalogue of Geographical Names was further developed. The Catalogue comprises four parts and includes names of populated places, landscape objects, hydrographic objects and roads. The database includes a retrieval system for quick data search. In 2010, the Database was populated with the names of Djizak oblast'. In 2009, on the base of the topographic 1:100,000 map, lists of geographical features of Djizak, Andijan, Namangan and Fergana oblast's were compiled in both hard and electronic form.

On the base of topographic map at scale 1:200,000, a draft of the state catalogue of geographical features of Uzbekistan was compiled.

In 2009, on the base of topographical map of 1:100,000 scale, the references 'Names of geographical features in Djizak oblast' and 'Names of geographical features in Fergana plain' were prepared.

In 2010, on the base of topographical map of 1:100,000 scale, the reference 'Names of geographical features in Surkhandar'inskaya oblast' was prepared and work on the 'Gazetteer of Samarkand oblast' started.

In 2011, it is planned to begin compilation of a list of exonyms - names of countries, their capitals and major cities in Uzbek language.

In accordance with the State Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'On introduction of the Uzbek alphabet based of the Roman script', since 2001 a systematic transition to the Roman script started in all spheres, including rendering of geographical names as well as creation and publication of cartographic products.

Ukraine

Legislative foundations for naming and renaming of geographical objects as well as for the standardization, use, registration and storage of geographical names were laid down by the State Law 'On geographical names' passed in 2005.

The State Service of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre together with the Inter-department Research and Methodic Council on Geographical Names coordinate and carry activities in the national standardization of geographical names.

The State Service of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre develops drafts of normative documents pertaining to geographical names, prepares and approves regulations for the standardization, use, registration and storage of geographical names, provides for development and maintenance of the State Register of Geographical Names, considers proposals on naming and renaming of geographical objects submitted by the state authorities, participates in the international cooperation in the standardization of geographical names.

The Inter-department Research and Methodic Council on Geographical Names develops and determines basic approaches to the standardization of geographical names, examines drafts of normative and legislative documents related to geographical names, prepares recommendations on naming and renaming of geographical features.

Procedure of examination of proposals on naming and renaming of geographical objects was adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Ukraine in 2009. It determines how to make an examination of naming and renaming of geographical objects on the territory of the Ukraine, continental shelf, exclusive (marine) economic zone, features discovered or determined by the Ukrainian explorers in the World Ocean and Antarctica.

Instructions in Ukrainian rendering of geographical names and generic terms of other countries are used to create cartographic products. These instructions include name rendering rules, lists of most frequent generic terms, lists of exonyms, brief information on the Ukrainian language. In total, 28 instructions of the kind were approved. It is planned to continue development of similar instructions in future.

In compliance with the recommendations of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, a draft of the 'Toponymic Guidelines for cartographers and map editors' was developed and adopted. The 'Guidelines' set basic principles and rules of spelling of the Ukrainian geographical names on maps, in gazetteers, references and other data sources in accordance with the rules of the orthography of the Ukrainian language.

Development of the State Register of Geographical Names continued. In 2009, by its decree the Council of Ministers of the Ukraine adopted the 'Statute of the State Register of Geographical Names' which determines the basic principles of development and maintenance of the database of the Register as well of recording, standardization, inventory and registration of geographical names. On the base of the 'Statute', the main principles of populating and maintaining of the State Register of geographical Names, its structure and content were worked out, and registration forms for geographical names were prepared.

Constantly updated references and gazetteers of geographical names, normative and reference publications are aimed at providing standardized forms of toponyms of the Ukraine.

In 2010, the reference books 'Names of states and territories of the world' and 'Countries of Europe. Names of their administrative units and capitals' were issued. To provide for uniform rendering of foreign geographical names in the Ukrainian language, the electronic gazetteer of the world's geographical names is compiled. The Gazetteer includes 82,000 geographical names in Ukrainian or in national languages (or Romanization system), generic terms and locations of geographical features.

The Ukrainian proper names (personal and geographical names) in official documents and in cartographic products, on nameboards, direction signs, etc are rendered in the Roman script in accordance with the unified transliteration rules set in the 'Table for rendering of proper names of Ukraine with Roman script' passed by the Decree of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers 'On regulating of transliteration of the Ukrainian alphabet with the Roman script' in 2010.

In 2010, maps of Lvov and Odessa were issued. Geographical names on these maps are transliterated in Roman in accordance with the 'Table for rendering of proper names of Ukraine with Roman script'.

Compilation of a unified list of exonyms continues. The list of Europe's exonyms that includes most frequent names is prepared. The e-gazetteer of the world's geographical names includes more than 1300 exonyms which widely circulate in the Ukraine.

The standardization of geographical names carried out in the Ukraine contributes to the progress made in cartography. In 2008-2010, a large number of reference, thematic and school maps and atlases were issued. The most significant of them was the 'National Atlas of the Ukraine'.

Participation of the countries of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division in international activities in the area of geographical names

Between 2008 and 2010, the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names held two Working Meetings (Eighth and Ninth).

The Eight Working Meeting of the Division took place in May 2008, in Sofia (Bulgaria). The Meeting was devoted to the resolutions of the Ninth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and tasks to provide for their fulfillment. The participants advised and discussed the main trends in the national and international standardization of geographical names; held elections of Division's Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Boginsky V. M. (Russia) was once again elected as Chairman and Avramenko N. G. (Belarus) – as Vice-Chairman. The participants discussed and adopted some recommendations concerning preparation of the report on Division's activities for the Twenty Fifth Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (Nairobi, 2009).

The Ninth Working Meeting of the Division was held in May 2010 in Belogradchik (Bulgaria). The Meeting was devoted to the following issues:

- resolutions of the Twenty Fifth Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
- status of the national and international standardization of geographical names in the member-countries between 2008-2010;
- exchange of information on the modern trends in the standardization of geographical names (legislative, normative and methodic basis of the national standardization of geographical names, computer databases of geographical names, development and use of the national Romanization systems, problems in the circulation of exonyms);
- tasks of the Division's countries in view of the coming Twenty Sixth Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (2011).

Participants of the Working Meeting approved the initiative of the Agency of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of Bulgaria which developed the site of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names. On the site (<http://www.cadastre.bg/Otdel.htm>), information on status of national standardization of geographical names in each Division's country is available. A resolution was taken to support and update the site.

Experts from the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names attended the meetings of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division as observers. In their turn, some experts from the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division participated in two meetings of the Baltic Division (Russia as a permanent member, Belarus and the Ukraine as observers).

Chairman of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division attended the Twenty Sixth Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (held in Nairobi in 2009) on behalf of the Division.

Many countries forming the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names took part in the actions held by the Working Group on Geographical Names of the CIS Member-states Council on Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing. The task pursued by the Working Group is to provide a regular exchange of information on changes in geographical names. As a result of their cooperation, the Bulletin 'Changes in geographical names in CIS State-members' was compiled and published. The 'Bulletin' includes information on changes in the names of more than 4,000 geographical objects in 11 countries after 1990. Geographical names are given in the Russian and national language of a corresponding country.

It is expected that after adoption of the 'Bulletin' at XXXI Session of the CIS Member-states Council on Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Earth Remote Sensing in May 20011, it will be posted on the sites of geodetic services of the countries which input in its compiling.

Summary

The report testifies to a significant progress made in the countries forming the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names for the recent years. Most of the countries adopted and some are on the way of doing this the state laws that laid down legislative foundations for recording, standardization, usage and storage of the national geographical names. Government decrees were issued to provide for achievement of the laws.

In the Division's countries, official bodies were formed which are authorized to take decisions on issues related to geographical names. Special commissions on geographical names are working and coordinating efforts of experts from organizations and agencies concerned.

Substantial progress was made in developing and maintaining of the national electronic catalogues, registers and databases of geographical names. Some of them already operate and provide state authorities, organizations, companies and general public with official information on geographical names. Every year, volume and content of these services is growing.

More and more attention is paid to developing of instructions and guidelines for map and other editors.

Some countries have adopted and are using national Romanization systems, while for the others this is still a pressing issue.

Lists of exonyms are compiled and issued in a few countries of the Division. Most countries have not yet started this work.

Considerable success achieved in geographical names standardization greatly contributes to development of cartography. Recently, this has resulted in an increase in titles and volumes of cartographic products released.

Countries forming the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names are interested in international cooperation and this is proved by their active participation in the UN conferences and sessions as well as in regional meetings devoted to geographical names issues. This is also confirmed by constancy of the composition of the Division where 10 permanent country-members and 4 country-observers have been working for more than 17 years.