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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR
REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Greek National Report**

Paper presented by Greece

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Since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Athens, 1977, Greece has participated in the two sessions of the Group of Experts, held in New York, in 1979 and 1981. Reports on the work done in Greece in the field of names standardization were submitted during those meetings.

Reviewing the five-year period, the following points may be made:

1. (a) Field collection of names continued both by the Geographic Service of Greece, as well as by the Academy of Athens and the universities. In addition, the Council of Geographic Names, in the Ministry of the Interior, continued the review and approval of toponyms, taking into consideration the recommendations of both the Geographic Service as well as recommendations of the municipal and township councils.

(b) Concerning hydronyms, the Hydrographic Service of Greece continued the collection of maritime and undersea feature names, subsequently placing them on 1:50,000 charts. Upon completion of the work for all waters surrounding Greece, the names will be indexed with the use of the computers of the Hydrographic Service.

2. (a) In the field of publications, D. Vayacacos published in ONOMA (Vol.25) the bibliography on Greek Geographic Names for 1977-1978, while in the forthcoming issue, the bibliography for 1979-1980-1981 will be included.

(b) The Geographic Service of Greece has prepared detailed gazetteers for the entire area of Greece. Expected publication date is set for the first semester of 1983. The same Service, having completed all mapping at scales 1:50,000 and 1:1,000,000, is now in the process of revising the 1:50,000 scale series. Meanwhile, it has completed some 80 per cent of the 1:5,000 scale series.

(c) Since the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Hydrographic Service has, on its part, similarly produced 30 new charts, 25 new publications and has reproduced 100 older editions. Toponyms and hydronyms are being reviewed with the publication of each new chart.

(d) In accordance with the report of the Ninth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the Hydrographic Service, along with other competent authorities in Greece, has placed on maps and informed the Group of Experts on standardized undersea feature names in waters surrounding Greece. The appropriate forms prepared by the Working Group on Maritime and Undersea Features have been properly filled out and forwarded to the Convenor of that Group for circulation among the participants of the Conference and the Group of Experts.

(e) Finally, the National Statistical Service of Greece has just published, in the Government Gazette, a list of all inhabited place names of Greece with the results of the 1981 population census.

3. The romanization system of the Greek alphabet, within the framework of the standardization of geographical names, has preoccupied the competent authorities of Greece - and Cyprus - for almost a decade. Following the reports made at the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and at the 8th and 9th sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the National Standardization Organization was entrusted with the task of preparing a standard romanization system for the Greek script. An ad hoc committee was set up, with the participation of representatives of the competent government departments and academics. A representative of Cyprus also participated.

The methodology adopted was to find a system which: (a) would be as close as possible to the phonetic representation of the name in its original Greek form, while due care was taken to retain as much as possible the historical physiognomy of the word or name; and (b) to offer the possibility of consistent reversibility, mainly for bibliographical purposes. The result was the adoption of the system which is introduced in document E/CONF.74/L.85.

4. As a matter of information, notice should be taken of the fact that since 1976 the neohellenic vernacular has been introduced by law in the civil service and education. By a more recent law (1982), the "monotoniko" system (one accent only) has been introduced. To this date, however, these changes have not affected the official rendering of place names on maps.

5. Concerning exonyms, Greece, despite the long historical usage of Greek place names in regions outside the confines of the present Greek state, supports all pertinent resolutions of the United Nations Conferences for the Standardization of Geographical Names and especially those which refer: (a) to the abolition, as soon as possible, of exonyms in the international usage (maps, passports, tourist pamphlets), and (b) to the respect of national place names, standardized by the competent geographical names authority in each country.