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**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 9 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**National standardization: treatment of names
in multilingual areas**

Toponymic Committee of Burgenland

Submitted by Austria**

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Summary

Burgenland is one of Austria's nine federal states (*Länder*). Three of the six officially recognized national ethnic minorities of Austria live in Burgenland: Croats, Hungarians and Roma. None of them claims an exclusive region or territory. In fact, municipalities with a considerable Croat or Hungarian population are scattered all over Burgenland. Burgenland has 278,600 inhabitants (2001 census). The census of 1991 (exact data from the 2001 census will be available in September 2002) listed 19,460 Croats and 6,763 Hungarians. No exact data are available for the Roma. Minority representatives estimate the Croat population at 30,000 to 40,000 persons and the Roma population at about 10,000 persons.

The Federal Law on the Legal Status of National Minority Groups in Austria (*Volksgruppengesetz*) states that dual naming shall appear on topographical signs in areas with a considerable minority population (i.e. one quarter). In Burgenland many villages comply with this law, but bilingual signs have been a subject of political debate for years. In the case of Burgenland, the government regulation concerning such signs was not enacted until June 2000. The regulation singles out a number of municipalities and incorporated villages where topographical terminology and signs must be bilingual.
