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English only

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

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical
names since the Seventh Conference**

Report of Estonia

Submitted by Estonia**

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** Prepared by the Place Names Board of Estonia.

In the period from 1998 till 2002 there have been several major steps taken regarding the official standardization of geographical names in Estonia.

The **Place Names Board of Estonia** acting under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has continued the reform of the nomenclature of populated places. On January 1st, 1998 a new official list came into force that contained 4,509 names with an increase of 1,089 names in comparison with the former list. A more modest increase of about 100 names was achieved on the next stage, one year later, and a few names were added to the list in the following years. Currently the list holds about 4,600 names.

At various meetings of the Board also other matters were discussed, e.g. the list of names of islands, standardization of the names of land property units, some individual names, etc. The Board also approved recommendations on the choice of names for new municipalities that might be formed during the planned administrative-territorial reform. All materials concerning the Place Names Board have been published at its website (<http://www.eki.ee/knn/>), the texts are mainly in Estonian but with English summaries. News on the current activities of the Board are regularly updated in both languages.

The *ad hoc* working group of the Place Names Board has worked out a new draft Place Names Act that would supersede the existing Act dating from 1997. The new draft had been necessitated by changes in the legal framework, inadequate effectiveness of some of the regulations of the present Act as well as some new considerations in launching the National Place Names Register. The main concept of the Act did not change but the whole text was thoroughly edited. At present the draft is being reviewed by the Ministry of Justice, then it will be forwarded to the Government and subsequently to Parliament.

Minority names

The Place Names Act recognizes the right of historical minorities to use place names of their own language, in some cases two parallel names are allowed. Parallel names in Estonian and Swedish have been officially approved for the municipality of Noarootsi, in the municipality of Vormsi most names of populated places are in Swedish. During the reform of the list of populated places parallel names in Estonian and Russian have also been suggested for the municipality of Kasepää but these changes have not yet been initiated by the municipality itself that would be a legal prerequisite.

In South East Estonia the dialect of Võru is acquiring the status of a literary language being called the Võro language. In 2001 the first Võro-Estonian dictionary was published. The dictionary contained a list of geographical names. The official names of populated places in several municipalities of the Võru and Põlva counties have been standardized in their local form, i.e. in the Võru variety. The Basic Map of Estonia uses for natural features and some other features only local name forms, sometimes local name forms appear in parentheses if the official name is different.

Cartographic programmes

Maps in Estonia are produced both by public funding and privately. At present four large series of maps are produced using public funding: a) Basic Map of Estonia, 1 : 10,000; b) Base Map of Estonia, 1 : 50,000; c) Defence Map of Estonia, 1 : 50,000; d) nautical charts (different scales). All production is carried out digitally.

Basic Map of Estonia (*Eesti põhikaart*, digital version 1 : 10,000, printed version 1 : 20,000). 96 sheets of the map have been printed by May 2002 covering parts of Central Estonia (from Rapla up to Türi), South East Estonia (eastern half of Võrumaa, also areas near the Latvian border) and territories on the west coast of Lake Peipsi. The digital version of the basic map (1 : 10,000) covers about 67% of the whole territory of Estonia; this work is being carried out by several cartographic enterprises.

Base Map of Estonia (*Eesti baaskaart*, 1 : 50,000) is actually a satellite photo map. 94 sheets of the total of 112 have been printed by May 2002. The only uncovered parts remain near the eastern border of Estonia.

Nautical charts. The Estonian Maritime Administration has published altogether 42 sheets on Estonian territorial waters, on the scale 1 : 100,000, 1 : 50,000, etc. Since 1998 the production of charts is done digitally, digital maps cover at present all sea areas on the scale 1 : 100,000. The Electronic Navigational Charts will cover all sea areas on the scale 1 : 50,000 by the end 2002. To facilitate the navigation of smaller ships a sea atlas is being published: Part 1 (1999) covers the Gulf of Finland, Part 2 (2001) the sea areas of Western Estonia, Part 3 that will cover the Gulf of Riga, is due to be printed in 2002. *List of Lights Estonia* (2nd ed.) was published in 2000.

Other maps. In 1999 a new administrative map of Estonia (*Eesti haldus- ja asustusjaotus*, 1 : 300,000) was published that contained all the officially approved names of populated places and is the most up-to-date administrative map at present. The map is also available as a CD map with some additional information.

Map of Estonia (*Eesti kaart*, 1 : 50,000) is a new series of general topographic maps based on defence maps, and published by AS Eesti Kaardikeskus. 30 sheets of the series have been printed by January 2002.

The most comprehensive privately produced cartographic work is the Estonian Road Atlas (*Eesti teede atlas*) 2002/2003 (1 : 150,000) by AS Regio, an updated and expanded version of the atlas of 1997/98. The atlas includes an index of over 11,000 place names, it is also available on a CD. An online version (<http://regio.delfi.ee>) based on the cartographic database of AS Regio includes a search engine with street and other place names.

Gazetteers and databases

The **National Place Names Register** (*riigi kohanimeregister*) envisaged by the Place Names Act was officially endorsed by the Government on November 30th, 1998. It is intended as a public source of official names that is provided free of charge to all users via the Internet. At present the software needed for operating the database (based on Oracle) has been worked out, the user interface will be finalized during 2002. The register will include the official geographical names, also unofficial and variant names used on maps of Estonia. The first data included in the online database (<http://www.ekk.ee/knr>) at the moment are the names of administrative units and populated places, about 5,000 records. The place names register will be based on official name decisions but will also use data from AS Eesti Kaardikeskus and other institutions.

There are also several other databases that have information on geographical names, some of them available online.

The Place Names Database **KNAB** at the Institute of Estonian Language contains appr. 60,000 features with some 160,000 names. This is a systematic computerized collection of data on geographical names from both Estonia and abroad. Its purpose is to facilitate the study and standardization of geographical names by providing data on their history and modern use. It has been planned as a linguistically-oriented database, to enable to compile and prepare different gazetteers and dictionaries. Since March 2001 the database is available on the Internet at <http://www.eki.ee/knab/knab.htm>, with explanations in Estonian and English.

The Institute has also the largest collection of Estonian place names, containing about 600,000 cards, collected in field work. Plans to digitize this collection are under discussion.

The Institute of Võru that has provided geographical names for the Basic Map in South East Estonia, is compiling a place names database of the historical county of Võrumaa **AVKA**. The database will be

available online with a map interface, draft version at <http://www.ekk.ee/avka/> is expected to contain some 10,000 geographical names of the ecclesiastical parishes of Põlva, Räpina and Vastseliina.

The National Land Board has opened an online service to provide information on **land property units**. At <http://www.maaamet.ee/teenus/kiirp2ring.php> it is possible to query names of the units and view them on different kinds of maps.

A gazetteer of populated places (*Eesti Vabariigi haldus- ja asustusüksuste klassifikaator (EHAK)*) was published in 2000 containing the names of all official populated places and their codes.

Other publications

BLOMQVIST, MARIANNE, *Svenska ortnamn i Estland med estniska motsvarigheter. Rootsikohanimed Eestis eesti vastetega. Viron ruotsalaisia paikannimiä virolaisine vastineineen. Swedish place-names in Estonia with Estonian equivalents*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska folkskolans vänner. Volym 158. Ekenäs 2000. 176 lk.

Eesti keele sõnaraamat ÕS 1999 (Dictionary of Estonian Language ÕS 1999). Tallinn 1999, pp. 971-1020. Concise orthographical dictionary with a list of geographical names.

KALLASMAA, MARJA, *Eesti kohanimed ja teised rahvad* (Estonian place names and other peoples). In: *Eesti rahvaste raamat*. Tallinn 1999, pp. 112-119.

KALLASMAA, MARJA, *Estonian farm names and the problem of Germanic personal names*. In: *Congressus nonus internationalis fenno-ugristarum*. 7.-13.8.2000 Tartu. Pars II. Summaria acroasium in sectionibus et et symposiis factarum. Linguistica. Tartu 2000, pp. 377--378.

KALLASMAA, MARJA, *Personal names in Estonian place names*. In: *Akten des 18. International Kongresses für Namenforschung*. Trier, 12.-17. April 1993. Bd. IV. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 1999, pp. 199-202

KALLASMAA, MARJA, *Saaremaa kohanimed II* (Place Names of Saaremaa 2). Eesti Keele Instituut, Tallinn 2000. 224 pp.

PÄLL, PEETER, *Maailma kohanimed* (Geographical names of the world). Tallinn 1999, 632 pp. http://www.eki.ee/knab/mkn_ind.htm

PÄLL, PEETER, *Muukeelsed kohanimed Eestis* (Non-Estonian place names in Estonia). In: *Eesti rahvaste raamat*. Tallinn 1999, pp. 340-347.

UJET, LIIVI, *Eesti haldusjaotus 20. sajandil*. Teatmik (The Administrative Division of Estonia during the 20th Century. Reference Book). Eesti Omavalitsusliitude Ühendus / Riigiarhiiv, Tallinn 2002. 312 pp.

EXONYMS

In 1999 a dictionary of foreign geographical names (*Maailma kohanimed*) was published containing about 4,200 name articles with name variants in multiple languages. The choice of name spellings was previously discussed by the Estonian Language Board with the participation of various institutions (Institute of Geography at the University of Tartu, Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers). A short version of the list was also published as annex to the new orthographical dictionary. Both listings were based on the Place Names Database KNAB (see above).

Estonian Standard EVS-EN ISO 3166-1:2000 includes codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions, the text is in Estonian and in English.

Romanization systems

On March 25th, 1998 the Government issued a decree on the romanization of Russian names. The amended Estonian transcription table was accompanied by the international romanization system, approved by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1987). The so-called

GOST 1983 system is also used on official maps. In May 1998 a modified Estonian-Russian transcription table was approved by the Minister of Education.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Representatives of Estonia have actively participated in the Baltic Division of UNGEGN, attending the 3rd meeting of the Division in Vilnius (November 2000) and the 4th meeting in Riga (April 2002). Experts are also involved in some of the working groups of UNGEGN.

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ANNEX

Changes in the administrative division of Estonia (1998-2002)

Main changes occurring in the period from 1998 till 2002 included amalgamations of municipalities; only one municipality was renamed:

Old name(s)*	New name*	Date of decision**
Abja linn + Abja vald	Abja vald	June 11 th , 1998
Antsla linn + Antsla vald	Antsla vald	June 29 th , 1999
Karksi-Nuia linn + Karksi vald	Karksi vald	June 8 th , 1999
Kaarma vald + Kuressaare vald	Kaarma vald	June 15 th , 1999
Lihula linn + Lihula vald	Lihula vald	May 13 th , 1999
Otepää linn + Pühajärve vald	Otepää vald	March 17 th , 1999
Raja vald	Kasepää vald	October 20 th , 1999
Vihula vald + Võsu vald	Vihula vald	June 8 th , 1999

* *linn* = town (urban municipality), *vald* = rural municipality.

** the decisions on amalgamations came into force after municipal elections that for most municipalities were held in October 1999.

The former towns retained their title of towns after the amalgamation but they have no longer administrative functions. The term used to describe them is "town within a municipality" (*vallasisene linn*). Further changes (amalgamations) are planned to take place in the autumn 2002, following new municipal elections.
