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REPORTS BY GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR COUNTRIES
AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE
AND
NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

Standardization of geographical names in Russian Federation between 1998 and
2002

(Submitted by Russia)**

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STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN RUSSIAN FEDERATION BETWEEN 1998 AND 2002

RESUME

Standardization of geographical names between 1998 and 2002 was carried out in Russia on the basis of the Federal Law "On naming geographical features" adopted in 1997. The Federal Government approved a number of decrees to detail some of the Law statements and to provide for their implementation.

In February of 1998 the Government of the Russian Federation determined the Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia (Roscartography) as special federal executive authority in the field of collection, standardization, use, registration, inventory and storage of geographical names. The paper enlists the tasks Roscartography is charged with to provide for the standardization of geographical names.

In March of 1999 by its Decree the Government of the Russian Federation approved new Statute of Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names. The tasks of the Commission and results of its recent activity are mentioned.

In cooperation with the Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names, Roscartography is constantly working to establish compliance of available normative and methodical base for the standardization of geographical names with the Federal Law "On naming geographical features". The Paper provides a list of normative documents and map products including those using COST-83 Romanization system prepared between 1998 and 2002 and gives brief descriptions of their contents

Current status of developing the State Catalogue of Geographical Names is described. Successful completion of the data retrieval system is mentioned. Further work on compiling the Catalogue will be carried out on production basis.

International cooperation in the standardization of geographical names between Russia and the countries composing the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia, the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts, and the country-members of CIS is described.

Standardization of geographical names between 1998 and 2002 was carried out in Russia on the basis of the Federal Law "On naming geographical features" adopted in 1997. The Federal Government approved a number of decrees to detail some of the Law statements and to provide for their implementation.

Official authorities on geographical names. In February of 1998 the Government of the Russian Federation determined the Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography of Russia (Roscartography) as special federal executive authority in the field of collection, standardization, use, registration, inventory and storage of geographical names. Roscartography shall:

- support common technical policy and management in naming geographical features;
- supply state authorities and agencies, local administrations, juridical persons, and civil community with official information on naming and renaming of geographical features;
- provide state geodetic control over the activities in naming geographical features;
- provide for compiling, security and use of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names;
- develop international cooperation in the standardization of geographical names.

In accordance with these tasks Roscartography:

- develops and maintains the State Catalogue of Geographical Names;
- provides control over correct display of geographical features and their names in map products;
- determines procedure for monitoring of geographical names, coordinates the issues pertaining to recording, standardization, use, registration, inventory, and storage of place-names.;
- considers and submits to the Federal Government proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features on the continental shelf and within exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation as well as of features discovered or determined by the Russian researchers in the World ocean or Antarctica;
- in accordance with the set procedure considers proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features submitted by the state authorities in the subjects of the Russian Federation and provides expertise of names;
- considers the contents of gazetteers and reference books on geographical names prepared by the federal Executives within their terms of reference, as well as the contents of gazetteers and reference books on geographical names prepared by the state authorities in the subjects of Russia;
- supervises adherence to normative and legal documents on naming geographical features;
- develops and approves methods and recommendations on determination of production rates for handling place-names as well as common technically substantiated rates.

According to the legally set procedure, Roscartography is conferred by the right on developing and approving guidelines, manuals, statutes and other norma-

tive, legal documents which determine unified requirements, rates, and conventions related to geographical names.

In March of 1999 by its decree the Government of the Russian Federation approved new Statute of Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names. Under the Statute the Commission is constantly operating authority that coordinates activities of various industries in the field of geographical names. It shall develop unified approach to place-names handling, their recording, registration and inventory as well as to preservation of geographical names as a part of historic and cultural inheritance of the peoples of Russia. Representatives of more than twenty departments, agencies, services and institutes joined the Commission. Activity of the Commission could be conventionally split into two portions:

- based on the gained experience in handling geographical names the Commission shall determine high priority issues, consider drafts of legal and , normative acts of the Russian Federation pertaining to geographical names and investigate execution of the already approved legal acts. It shall collaborate with authorities of different levels, the concerned Russian and foreign juridical persons and agencies on the issues of geographical names. The Commission shall prepare appropriate stuff for the Russian participants in the UN Conferences and other international organisations on place-name issues;

- Commission is responsible for investigation of proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features and provision of forceful conclusions. It shall coordinate development and support of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names, compilation and release of gazetteers, references and bulletins on geographical names.

Within its terms of reference, decisions of the Commission are mandatory for the federal Executives and authorities represented in the Commission as well as for agencies acting within the field of responsibility of the above mentioned federal Executives.

During the latest three years the Commission considered and took decisions on a wide range of issues. Namely, it approved:

- program of updating and releasing valid normative acts and methodical guidelines on the standardization of geographical names prepared by Roscartography;
- preliminary concept of developing the Russian State Catalogue of Geographical Names ;
- suggestions on use of valid Romanization system for geographical names ;
- drafts of new gazetteers;
- responses to more than 450 proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features for the territory of Russia;
- participation of the Russian representatives in international arrangements of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names and Scientific Committee of Antarctic Research relating to geographical names.

Normative documents on geographical names. In cooperation with the Interdepartment Commission on Geographical Names, Roscartography is constantly

working to establish compliance of available normative and methodical base for the standardization of geographical names with the Federal Law “On naming geographical features”. In its special direction Roscartography stated that its facilities should be guided by earlier developed instructions, conventions, regulations and other normative acts on geographical names if they did not contradict to the Federal Law “On naming geographical features” till they were updated and released as normative acts.

In the past decades more than 100 normative and methodical documents on collection, recording, standardization, naming and renaming of geographical features have been developed and approved in this country. The guidelines, manuals and gazetteers involve the stuff for about 200 states and territories and 140 languages of the world. Since then, much has been changed in a political arrangement of the world, new realities and new approaches to the standardization of geographical names have been developed. Normative acts related to geographical names of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States are apt to revision in the first turn.

Since adoption of the Federal Law “On naming geographical features” the following normative documents have been prepared:

1. Normative act that sets the procedure for consideration of proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features in the Federal Service of Geodesy and Cartography (approved by the Decree of the Government of Russia in 1999.)

2. List of documents and information that should be provided for the expertise of proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features (approved by Roscartography in 1999.)

3. Statute of registration and inventory of geographical names, release of gazetteers and references on geographical names, development and support of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names (approved by the Decree of the Government of Russia.)

4. Draft of “Manual for naming and renaming of geographical features of the Russian Federation” (in 2002 it will be improved and prepared for publication.)

5. Draft of “General guidelines for recording and standardization of geographical names” (in 2002 the draft will be completed, considered at the meeting of the Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names, approved and prepared for publication.)

6. “Gazetteer of hydrographic features of Russia and other state-members of CIS”. It is compiled for the first time and comprises more than 12 500 names of most prominent rivers, lakes, seas, bays, straits, reservoirs, channels in standardized Russian forms and Roman transliteration intended for international use. Each name is accompanied by generic term and location reference. The Gazetteer contains about 4000 variants of names occurring on map and other sources including obsolete ones. The Gazetteer was released in 1999.

7. Reference book “States and territories of the World”. It contains names of states, trust territories, territories with special status, names of state capitals and territory centers, recommended name forms to be put on maps, political reference of

the territories and the way it should be depicted on maps. The reference was published in 1999. Now it is being updated.

8. Guidelines for rendering Moldavian geographical names in Russian. The Guidelines account for Moldova having adopted the Roman script. In 2002 the Guidelines are being completed and prepared for release.

9. Guidelines for rendering Belarus geographical names in Russian. In 2002 the Guidelines are being completed and prepared for release.

10. Draft of the updated "Manual for collection and recording of geographical names of the Russian Federation on topographic maps and plans" (2000.) The draft has been adopted by Roscartography and will be considered by the Interdepartmental Commission on Geographical Names.

11. Second updated edition of "Guidelines for standardization of geographical names in Antarctica" (released in 1999.).

12. First version of "Comments to the Federal Law "On naming geographical features" (in 2002 the comments will be considered in the Interdepartment Commission on Geographical names").

13. Draft of the Federal Law "On making changes and adds to the Federal Law "On naming geographical features".

In 2001 Roscartography developed long-term program for basic directions of the activity in the field of geographical names. The program sets higher priorities in further realization of the Federal Law "On naming geographical features". The draft program will be submitted to the Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names.

Release of map products with transliteration system. Between 1998 and 2002 the activity in this area was very high. Romanization system GOST-83 was employed to render Russian place-names with Roman script on maps and atlases intended for international circulation. GOST-83 system was used in the Atlas of the World comprising more than 220 000 names of geographical features. The Atlas was published in 1999. Now the fourth edition of the Atlas is under preparation.

The geographical and thematic volumes of the National Atlas of Russia are being compiled now. Political Atlas of the World is almost completed. The Geographical Atlas of Russia, Geographical Atlas for Lecturers, new Geographical and Administrative Map of the Russian Federation at scale 1:4 000 000 are presently being designed. New school atlases on history, geography, natural history are under development. The following series are continued – "Maps of the Russian Cities", "Geographical Atlases of Russia", "Road Atlases of Russia", "Countries of the World" and many others. Place-names take a large portion of their contents. The standardization of geographical names complies with the statements of the Federal Law "On naming geographical features" and with other normative acts.

Development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. Recently Roscartography has successfully managed compiling the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. The State Catalogue will be constantly updated database of geographical names and accompanying information in volume of the contents of the state topographic map at scale 1:100 000 and smaller. The Catalogue will respond to the needs of the federal authorities, state authorities in the subjects of Russia, local administrations, institutes, mass media, and civil community in official information on geographical names. The standardized geographical names registered in the Catalogue shall be mandatory for use in all legal acts, official correspondence, publications, periodicals.

In 2000 development of computer data retrieval system on geographical names was accomplished. In 2001 beta-testing of the system was carried out. At the stage of pilot operation, data array including more than 235 000 parameters for 8 500 names in six subject of Russia was input in the Catalogue. It was decided for air survey and geodetic facilities of Roscartography to take part in developing and maintaining the State Catalogue since 2002. The functionality of the system and its tasks are being enriched.

Scientific publications. The years between 1998 and 2002 in Russia are marked with further development of scientific toponymic researches. Some of them resulted in scientific papers and articles. Here are the references to two of them:

1. Dictionary of folk geographical terms. By E. M. Murzaev. The second updated edition. 2 volumes. Moscow, Kartgeocentr-Geodezizdat, 1999. The Dictionary contains more than 4 500 entries and traces conversion of common nouns into geographical names and terms.
2. Geographical names. Adjectives derived from them. Nouns denoting inhabitants of some places derived from their names. By E.A. Levashov. Reference dictionary. St. Petersburg, 2000. The dictionary comprises about 7 500 place-names of Russia and foreign countries as well as adjectives and derivatives denoting their inhabitants.

International cooperation on geographical name issues. Cooperation in the standardization of geographical names was developed in three main directions:

- participation in the arrangements held by the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names;
- data and experience exchange between CIS state-members;
- participation in SCAR working group meetings.

After revision of names and membership of regional divisions in the Group of Experts by the 6th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Russia joined the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia and Baltic Division.

During the period under review, the Russian representatives took part in the third (Moscow, 1999) and fourth (Minsk, 2000) meetings of the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia as well as in the third meeting of the Baltic Division (Vilnius, 2001.)

Since 1994 the Russian expert (V.M.Boginsky) has served as the Chairman of the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia. As the division Chairman he participated in the 19th (New York, 1998) and 20th (New York, 2000) sessions of the UN group of Experts. The delegation of Russia attended the 7th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (New York, 1998.)

The Russian experts were engaged in the two international projects developed on the initiative of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Name. For these projects:

- the Russian version of the multilingual Glossary of technical terminology employed in the standardization of geographical names (approved by the 20th session of the UN Group of Experts in January, 2000, New York) was prepared and submitted to the UN Secretariat;
- final report on the draft of the World country names list in the six official UN languages was prepared and submitted to the Working Group on country names of the Group of Experts.

Russia is the coordinator of the Working Group on geographical names established by the CIS Inter-state Council on Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Remote Control of the Earth. The Working Group is a consultative body that works out suggestions and recommendations on the standardization and use of place-names in CIS countries. The Working Group is vested with the task to consider issues pertaining to geographical names which interest the Inter-State Council, to prepare appropriate suggestions and recommendations, to compile information bulletins reflecting name changes occurring in CIS countries.

In the reviewed period the Working Group held two meetings – in Moscow (1999) and Minsk (2002). The cooperation resulted in compilation of the Bulletin of changes in the place-names in CIS countries. The Bulletin involves information on changes in about 500 names in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraina.

In the Bulletin the information on changes in geographical names is structured per the following scheme:

1. Location of a feature (republic, region, district).
2. Former name of a feature (if changed) in the Russian spelling accompanied by a generic term.
3. New name of a feature in the Russian rendering provided by the CIS state-member accompanied by a generic term.
4. Date of name change.
5. Standardized Russian form of a name spelt according to the valid rules of the orthography for Russian geographical names and Russian rendering of foreign names.
6. Use of the changed names on topographic and other maps to provide consistency between an old and new name.

In 1999 Supplement No1 to the Bulletin of changes in the place-names in CIS countries was released. In 2002 Supplement No2 will be completed.

At the session of the CIS Inter-State Council held late in October of 2001 considerable progress achieved by the Working Group on geographical names in close cooperation with the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia was emphasized. It was decided to fully integrate the activity of the two bodies. ·