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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR DIVISIONS AND  
ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF  
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE

Progress made by division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia of the UN  
Group of Experts on Geographical Names between 1998 and 2002

(Submitted by the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia)\*\*

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PROGRESS MADE BY DIVISION OF EASTERN EUROPE, NORTHERN AND  
CENTRAL ASIA OF THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS  
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BETWEEN 1998 AND 2002

**Resume**

The Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names established per the resolution of the 6<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names is composed of 10 permanent country-members: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, USA and Estonia attend the Division meetings as observers.

In the reviewed period 1998 – 2002 the Division held two meetings: in Moscow (Russia) June 22-23, 1999 and in Minsk (Belarus) October 2-3, 2001. At the meetings it was reported on the activity in the standardization of geographical names in each country.

The Report presents information on national standardization of geographical names in each of the Division country, on the progress made in the countries between 1998 and 2002. Problems and perspectives of the standardization of geographical names are considered.

## **Division Composition**

The decision to establish the Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names was taken at the sixth Conference on the standardization of geographical names held in New York, August 25 – September 3, 1992. At present the Division is composed of 10 permanent country-members: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, USA and Estonia attend the Division meetings as observers.

In the reviewed period 1998 – 2002 the Division held two meetings: in Moscow (Russia) June 22-23, 1999 and in Minsk (Belarus) October 2-3, 2001. At the meetings it was reported on the activity in the standardization of geographical names in each country. The Division of Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia worked in cooperation with the Working Group on geographical names of the CIS Inter-state Council on Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre, Remote Control of the Earth attending joint meetings and compiling the Bulletin of changes in place-names in CIS members.

## **National standardization of geographical names in the Division country-members**

**Azerbaijan.** Since the second half of 1999 the State Committee on Geodesy and Cartography of Azerbaijan (now the State Committee on Land and Cartography of Azerbaijan) has started compiling a full list of geographical names based on 1: 50000 map. The List will involve names of natural features, populated places, hydrographic features. The List contains the Russian and Azerbaijan forms of names. This is the first time when the Azerbaijan name forms are given in Roman script. The names of 2440 geographical features were agreed to the Institute of Geography and Azerbaijan State Academy of Science. The list of hydrographic names is compiled in cooperation with the Committee of Water Economy and Melioration of Azerbaijan and includes 800 names. Drastic changes took place in the agriculture of the state and therefore, a great deal of the issues related to geographical names still require further investigations and study. The list of populated places comprises 3200 names and is based on normative documents. The list shall be considerably changed with the adoption of the new State Law “On land use and administrative division” in October 2000.

Use of the Roman script was introduced in Azerbaijan since the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 2001 by the Decree of the President of the Republic. In view of this all the activities on the standardization of geographical names are carried out with the Roman script only. Reference Book on the administrative division of Azerbaijan is being now prepared in Roman graphics.

The national program for the standardization of geographical names is being developed in the country now. The program stipulates establishing the authority on place-names standardization, developing legislative and normative basis for names standardization, compiling computer place-name databases and national computer systems to handle geographical names.

**Armenia.** The Decree of the Government of Armenia adopted in December 18, 2000 determined the State Committee for Cadastre and Real Estate of the Government as

the executive authority responsible for geographical names. The authority is vested with the tasks to develop normative acts on the standardization of geographical names, to prepare recommendations for the Government of Armenia to take decisions on naming and renaming of geographical features. The special Commission of the State Committee for Cadastre and Real Estate was established to deal with all issues related to naming and renaming of geographical features.

The main source of name collection is toponymic investigations carried out by commercial companies and the Institute "Aerogeodezia" in course of field survey. Geographical names are also taken from maps at scales 1: 10 000 - 1: 1 000 000, archive materials and documents which require updating and verification.

"Aerogeodezia" is working on compiling database of place-name obtained from maps, plans, archive materials and documents. Card file comprising 10 000 geographical names is created. The card file contains names of geographical features in the Armenian language, name variants, administrative reference, sources, name status (official, historical, local, etc), generic term, geographical coordinates with 1' accuracy, and some other information on the geographical feature.

In 1999 the 4<sup>th</sup> volume of the 5-volume "Dictionary of toponyms in Armenia and vicinities" was released. The publication was prepared by the scientists in the Armenian State University and comprised about 24 000 geographical names.

In 2000 "Dictionary of Armenian surnames" was published. It includes 17 000 surnames, large part of which is connected with place-names in modern and old Armenia.

The Republic does not have Romanization system for rendering geographical names. It is under development now.

**Bulgaria.** The Government Decree of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted in 1999 determined the Council on Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names as the national authority for the standardization of geographical names. Principles for establishing the Council, providing its work and composition were approved. The Council is to work in close co-operations with the Commission on Naming and Renaming in the Administration of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria and with the Institute of the Bulgarian Language of the Academy of Science.

The Council develops basic principles to render foreign names in Bulgarian and Bulgarian place-names with the Roman characters. Decisions of the Council are mandatory for all users all over the country. The Council is not vested with a right to name or rename geographical features.

The Main Administration for Cadastre and Geodesy in the Department of Regional Development and Welfare is responsible for the standardization of geographical names. In the period under review:

- List of Bulgarian toponyms was updated in view of changes in the names of populated places;
- Romanization system for geographical names adopted in 1997 at the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names in Athens has been still

Conventions, 1994, p 55) is still used. The suggestion to adopt Roman script for Kirghizia is being considered now in the Republic.

**Russian Federation.** In the Constitution of the Russian Federation the issues relating to geographical names fall within federal jurisdiction. In 1997 the Federal Law "On naming geographical features" was adopted. The Law establishes legislative basis for naming and renaming of geographical features, standardization, use, registration, inventory and storage of geographical names as constituent part of historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in the Russian Federation.

A number of decrees were adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure implementation of the Law statements. In 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 geographical names. Procedure for considering proposals on naming and renaming of geographical features by Roscartography was determined. Procedure for registration and inventory of geographical names as well as for developing and supporting the State Catalogue of geographical names was adopted.

Roscartography together with Inter-department Commission on Geographical Names revises normative and methodical basis for the standardization of geographical names and insures its compliance with the Federal Law "On naming geographical features".

Romanization system GOST-83 approved by the 5th UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names in 1987 (Montreal) has been used. The system was employed to create map products for international circulation e.g., Atlas of the World, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition that included more than 220 000 names of geographical features.

Federal Law "On naming geographical features" seeks to develop the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. Roscartography is charged with the task to compile and support the Catalogue. In 2000 computer data retrieval system on geographical names was developed. In 2001 beta-testing of the system was carried out. At the stage of beta-testing, data array including more than 8500 names of six subject of Russia was input in the Catalogue. The system was put into industrial operation. Since 2002 the air survey and geodetic facilities of Roscartography have taken part in developing and maintaining the State Catalogue. The full Catalogue based on 1:100 000 maps will comprise about 2 500 000 names of the subjects of Russia.

In the reviewed period the following papers were released:

- the 2<sup>nd</sup> updated edition of "Guidelines for standardization of geographical names in Antarctica".
- "Gazetteer of hydrographic features of Russia and other state-members of CIS". In the Gazetteer the standardized names are accompanied by generic terms and location reference as well as some other information that simplifies feature identification. It also contains variants of names taken from various sources.
- Reference book "States and territories of the World".

In 2002 final editions of “Manual for naming and renaming of geographical features of the Russian Federation”, “General guidelines for recording and standardization of geographical names”, “Guidelines for rendering Moldova geographical names in Russian”, and the Comments to the Federal Law “On naming geographical features” will be prepared. Supplement 2 to Information Bulletin “Changes in geographical names of CIS state-members” is almost completed.

**Tajikistan.** The Republic does not have the national authority on geographical names and, therefore, does not carry out any programs for the standardization of geographical names. Issues connected with displaying geographical names on maps are considered by the Administration for Geodesy and Cartography of the Tajikistan Government.

**Uzbekistan.** National service of geographical names is being organized in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Toponymic Laboratory in the National Center of Geoinformatics and Cadastre mostly carries out collection, registration and standardization of geographical names. The Laboratory has a card file of geographical names for Uzbekistan based on 1: 500 000 map and other sources. Main task of the Laboratory is to compile national fund of geographical names of the Republic and to carry out scientific investigations and industrial activity relating to the national standardization of names for geographical features in Uzbekistan and foreign place-names. The Laboratory has recently standardized the names of Uzbekistan taken from the map at scale 1:1 000 000, recorded geographical names in the Uzbek language and in the Romanized forms and developed a set of orthographic rules for the Uzbek toponyms.

In 1998-1999 inventory of the geographical names of Uzbekistan and vicinities was taken. The geographical names were picked from the map at scale 1: 500 000. Lists of place-names were compiled both in Cyrillic and Romanized forms accompanied by administrative reference and geographical coordinates. For many names brief historical and etymological information is provided.

The guidelines for Uzbek rendering of geographical names of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan under development now.

Collection, inventory, and classification of geographical names for mapping and geodetic tasks is carried out by the Central Air Survey and Geodetic Facility of the Main Administration for Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre (Uzgeodezcadastre). Display of official information on populated place names and features of national economy is supervised by the State Inspection of Geodetic Control, that of nature and historical features – by the Toponymic Laboratory in the National Center of Geoinformatics and Cadastre.

The task of developing in Uzbekistan the computer system for the State Catalogue of Geographical Names to meet different users needs in toponymic information is being studied now. After adopting the State Law of Uzbekistan on the Uzbek alphabet based on the Roman script in 1993 and making some amendments in it in 1995, books, dictionaries, and geographical maps are issued with the new alphabet.

**Ukraine.** Coordination of the activity connected with recording, standardization, registration and use of geographical names on national and international level is pro-

vided by the Main Administration for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre of the Ukraine (Ukrgeodezcartography) and the National Council of Geographical Names established in 1993 by the Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Ukraine. The Council is composed of the representatives of the concerned departments and agencies and of local administrations.

On the initiative of the Main Administration for Geodesy and Cartography, National Council of Geographical Names and with all concerned agencies participating, the State Law "On geographical names" was developed. The law determines general legislative foundation for the activity in the field of naming and renaming of geographical features, standardization, use, registration and storage of geographical names. The Law draft accounts for changes in the state language, adoption of legislative acts on local government and other realities.

In December of 1998 the Ukrainian State Law "On mapping and geodetic activity" was adopted. To ensure implementation of the Law, the Main Administration for Geodesy and Cartography develops normative documents, including those devoted to geographical names.

The Main Administration developed a number of temporary normative documents specifying the procedure for recording and standardization of geographical names in mapping. The procedure for collection, approval and processing of geographical names is regulated by "Temporary regulations for collection and recording of geographical names on topographic maps and plans". 16 guidelines for cartographers devoted to the Ukrainian rendering of names of English-speaking, German-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries were published. National Romanization system was developed.

Special programs and methods were developed for compilation of the State Register of geographical names of the Ukraine. The database of geographical names is to include all the names taken from 1:100 000 map.

The reference book "Administrative division of the Ukraine " is being constantly updated with the material issued by the Supreme Council of the Ukraine. Country names are used in accordance with the reference book "Names of the countries and territories of the World". The names of countries are given in the Ukrainian language and in the official language(s) of the appropriate country. The latest version of the Reference Book was released in 1998 and accounted for the resolutions of the 7<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on the standardization of geographical names related to country names.

The National Council of Geographical Names, the Main Administration for Geodesy and Cartography together with the State Committee of Standards develop the State Standard 'Codes for the names of countries' based on ISO standard and some material on the standardization of geographical names.