

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

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

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 Eighth Conference**

Report of Estonia

Submitted by Estonia**

* E/CONF.98/1.

** Prepared by the Place Names Board of Estonia.

Summary

The report outlines main activities regarding the official standardization of geographical names in Estonia in the period from 2002 to 2007. A new Place Names Act entered into force in July, 2004. The functions of the Place Names Board have thereby been widened.

Three large series of maps are produced in Estonia using public funding: 1) Basic Map of Estonia (1 : 10,000, printed version 1 : 20,000); 2) Defence Map of Estonia (1 : 50,000); 3) nautical charts. All production is carried out digitally.

The National Place Names Register is being developed, having in mind also its integration with other place names databases in Estonia. In 2006 a gazetteer of lakes was published.

A large world atlas in Estonian was published in 2005.

Two meetings of the UNGEGN Baltic Division have been held in Estonia in 2003 and 2006

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

In the period from 2002 till 2007 there have been several major steps taken regarding the official standardization of geographical names in Estonia.

A new version of the **Place Names Act** entered into force on July 1, 2004. The main emphasis in the Place Names Act has remained the same. The Act specifies requirements on place names to be used officially. More consideration in the new Act is given to legal procedures, and the needs of the National Place Names Register which is to acquire a central role in collecting all geographical names data.

The **Place Names Board** (*kohanimenõukogu*) is the main names authority in Estonia, being a consultative body responsible to the Minister of Regional Affairs. With the new Act, the Place Names Board has acquired the statutory right to approve by a resolution official geographical names. This will be done in cases where no other names authorities have initiated procedures to establish a geographical name. Members of the Place Names Board were newly nominated in July 2004.

At various meetings of the Board principles of standardizing street names, cadastral names and lake names have been discussed and recommendations adopted. After thorough discussions by *ad hoc* working group the Board approved on November 15, 2005 an official listing of 1166 lake names that are to be used in the list of publicly accessible water bodies. This was the first case of approving official names by the Place Names Board. The next item on the agenda will be island names.

Following a successful start in 2003 the Board has continued annual public events (place names days) for wider audience that deal with issues of place names standardization. These are meant primarily for local officials but are open to all interested persons. As the events take place in different locations, there are also papers dealing with local toponymy and cultural history. In October 2004 the event was held in Haapsalu, with special emphasis on historical place names. In October 2005 the day was held in Rakvere, papers concerned, *inter alia*, minority names. In

October 2006 the place names day took place in Viljandi.

All the documents concerning the activities of the Place Names Board have been published on its website (<http://www.eki.ee/kmm/>), mainly in Estonian but also with English and Russian summaries. News on the current activities of the Board are regularly updated in all three languages.

Minority names

The Place Names Act supports the use of minority place names, in some cases two parallel names are officially established. For example, there are parallel Estonian and Swedish names in the municipality of Noarootsi. More needs to be done in order to raise awareness on minority rights in toponyms in the areas of autochthonous Russian population along the coast of Lake Peipsi. Bilingual names are also to be found in the new list of lake names.

In South East Estonia the names of populated places in several municipalities of the counties of Võrumaa and Põlvamaa have been standardized in their local form, i.e. in the Võru variety. This has been done with the aid of the Võru Institute. The Basic Map of Estonia (printed version) uses almost exclusively local name forms for natural features. Differences with the formerly used name variants are mainly phonetic.

Cartographic programmes

Field survey of place names is being carried out in two directions. At the Institute of Estonian Language there are collections of place names which are expanded mainly with the help of students and local enthusiasts. Field work is also being done by the Võru Institute, the data are entered into a database. Cartographic enterprises, when preparing new basic map sheets, conduct their own field collections, consulting both the local governments and the collections held at the Institute of Estonian Language.

Basic Map of Estonia (*Eesti põhikaart*, 1 : 10,000) is a digital topographic database providing information on settlements, hydrography, relief, toponyms and land use. Digital production includes orthophotos, vector maps and raster maps. By the end of 2003 almost all of the territory of Estonia had been covered by digital mapping. In printed version (1 : 20,000) there are currently 378 map sheets available (of these, 107 were printed in 2004, 28 sheets in 2005, and 14 sheets in 2006). These have been published by the National Land Board, some sheets also by the Estonian General Staff of Defence Forces and the Board of Border Guard. The overall number of printed map sheets will be ca. 500.

Defence maps. By the end of 2005 all of Estonia's territory has been covered by mapping at 1 : 50,000 produced according to NATO standards. The maps are generalized from a digital version (1 : 10,000) of the Basic Map. The maps are available both digitally and on paper.

Air navigation charts. The Estonian Civil Aviation Administration has produced in 2004 an air navigation chart of Estonia (1 : 500,000).

Nautical charts. The Estonian Maritime Administration (EMA) has produced 64 sheets on Estonian territorial waters (scale 1:100,000, 1:50,000, etc.). Since 1998 the production of charts is done digitally. Digital charts cover all coastal areas (scale 1:100,000). To facilitate navigation for smaller ships 4 folios have been produced. Chart compilation is based on digital hydrographic database. To date 76 electronic navigational charts have been compiled.

Other maps. Tallinn City Administration has in 2005 published a detailed official atlas of the capital (1 : 5,000). The most comprehensive privately produced cartographic work is the Estonian Road Atlas 2008 (1 : 150,000) by AS Regio, an annually updated 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/>) includes a search engine with about 4000 place names.

Other maps include several road maps of Estonia, county and municipality maps. Map companies have also published world atlases and maps for schools. At the end of 2005 the Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers completed a large World Atlas, containing about 60,000 toponyms. Cartographic basis and layout of the maps was produced by Jāņa Sēta Publishers in Rīga, Latvia.

There have been several courses on onomastics at the Universities of Tartu and Tallinn which deal with topics like applied toponymy and names standardization.

Gazetteers and databases

The **National Place Names Register** (<http://gmaps.maaamet.ee/knr/>) contains appr. 22,000 named features with some 24,000 names. The Register has opened a public user interface on the Map Server of the Estonian Land Board. During 2006, appr. 16,000 features of the register were linked to the same features in KNAB, the database of the Institute of Estonian Language, and more than 1000 features were linked with the Information System of Estonian Nature (EELIS) allowing for cross-database queries.

A database of standardized place names, including names from Estonia and abroad **KNAB** (appr. 101,000 features with 277,000 names at present, <http://www.eki.ee/knab/knab.htm>) is being compiled at the Institute of Estonian Language. The Institute has also the largest collection of Estonian place names, containing about 600,000 entries, collected in field work. The database of place names of the historical county of Võrumaa **AVKA** (appr. 23,000 entries) is being compiled by the Institute of Võru, the public interface is being newly planned.

While discussing integration of the three mentioned databases (and possibly others), it has in general been agreed that the National Place Names Register will be primarily concerned with documenting official place names and related data, but research into the history and origins of the names will be the priority for two other databases that are linguistically oriented. Linking these databases by unique ID codes is underway.

In 2006 the Information and Technology Centre at the Ministry of the Environment produced a **list of Estonian lakes** (*Eesti järvede nimestik. Looduslikud ja tehiskärved*). This publication contains descriptions of 2,804 lakes (including artificial ones), with names linguistically verified by a working group of the Place Names Board. There is an index of all name variants.

The Estonian Maritime Administration has produced *Sailing Directions for Estonian Waters* (in English, 2004; the Estonian edition was published in 2003). This richly illustrated reference book contains many toponyms of coastal areas. A 4th edition of the *List of Lights – Estonia* was published in 2006. *Estonian Pilot Book* (2003, 2nd edition 2007) is available in Estonian.

Other publications

FASTER, MARIKO; SAAR, EVAR (2002). *Võrumaa kotussõnimmist* (On the place names of Võrumaa). Võro. 255 pp.

KALLASMAA, MARJA (2002). *Estonian verbal names*. In: *Actas do XX congresso internacional de ciencias onomásticas. Santiago de Compostela, 20–25 setembro 1999*. A Coruña, pp. 269–276.

KALLASMAA, MARJA (2003). *Läänemurde loodus- ja viljelusnimed* (Names of natural and cultural features in the Western Estonian dialect). Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, Tallinn. 196 pp.

KALLASMAA, MARJA (2005). *Estonian Settlement Names*. In: *Onomastica Uralica 3. Settlement Names in the Uralian Languages*. Debrecen–Helsinki, pp. 17–33.

KALLASMAA, MARJA (2005). *Eesti kohanimed liigitamisest* (On the classification of Estonian place names). In: *Keel ja Kirjandus*, 2, pp. 136–140.

Nime murre. Pühendusteos Valdek Palli 75. sünnipäevaks 30. juunil 2002 (Festschrift for Valdek Pall on his 75th birthday). Compiled by Marja Kallasmaa. Eesti Keele Instituudi toimetised 11. Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, Tallinn 2002. 349 pp.

PAJUSALU, KARL; HENNOSTE, TIIT; NIIT, ELLEN; PÄLL, PEETER; VIKBERG, JÜRI (2002). *Eesti murded ja kohanimed (Estonian dialects and place names)*. Eesti Keele Sihtasutus, Tallinn. 320 pp.

PÄLL, PEETER (2005). *Võõrnimed eestikeelses tekstis* (Foreign names in Estonian texts). *Dissertationes philologiae estonicae Universitatis Tartuensis*. 15. Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, Tartu. 198 pp.

SAAR, EVAR (2002). *Wiedergeburt der authentischen Ortsnamendarstellung in Südestland* (Renaissance of authentic place names rendering in South Estonia). In: *Actas do XX congresso internacional de ciencias onomásticas. Santiago de Compostela, 20–25 setembro 1999*. A Coruña, pp. 535–541.

EXONYMS

Recommendations on the spelling of foreign geographical names are given by the Estonian Language Committee at the Mother Tongue Society jointly with various institutions (Geography Institute at the University of Tartu, Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers, BNS News Agency). The overall policy has not changed during the last 15-20 years: the use of exonyms is limited and in principle any endonym used in an Estonian text should not be considered a "mistake". The new

large World Atlas by Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers (2005) follows closely recommendations by the Estonian Language Committee. In 2005 a monograph was published on the principles of standardizing foreign names.

Estonian Standard EVS-EN ISO 3166-1 for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions is being updated, based on the EN ISO 3166-1:2006 edition.

Romanization systems

On March 18th, 2005 the Government issued a decree on the romanization of Russian names, in compliance with the Personal Names Act. There are two official tables in the decree: the traditional Estonian transcription table and the international romanization system, as approved by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1987). The name of a person is normally registered using the traditional table, but the person is entitled to apply the international romanization system for his/her name.

The decree of the Minister of Education and Science (December 6th, 2005) applies the same traditional Estonian transcription for rendering any Russian geographical names in Estonia. In official name decisions and listings this may be accompanied by the UN romanization system for Russian, if different from a traditional one.

For national needs, the Minister of Education and Science approved in the same decree instructions for rendering Estonian names in Russian texts.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Representatives of Estonia have actively participated in the Baltic Division of UNGEGN, attending the 5th meeting of the Division in Berlin (September 2002), the 7th meeting in New York (April 2004), the 8th meeting in Vilnius (October 2004) and the 9th meeting in Jūrmala, Latvia (October 2005). Two divisional meetings have been organized in Estonia: the 6th meeting took place on the island of Kihnu (May 2003) and the 10th meeting was organized jointly with a meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems in Tallinn (October 2006). Experts are also involved in some of the working groups of UNGEGN.

ADDRESSES

AS Eesti Kaardikeskus
(*Estonian Map Centre*)
Mustamäe tee 33
10616 TALLINN
<http://www.ekk.ee>
Fax:+372-6542108

(Mr. Lui Hubel, tel +372-6528407)
Eesti Keele Instituut
(*Institute of Estonian Language*)
Roosikrantsi 6
10119 TALLINN

Fax: +372-6411443
e-mail: eki@eki.ee
http://www.eki.ee
(Mr. Peeter Päll, tel +372-6446153)

Eesti Veeteede Amet
(*Estonian Maritime Administration*)
Valge 4
11413 TALLINN
Fax: +372-6205506
e-mail: eva@vta.ee
http://www.vta.ee
(Ms. Malle Hunt, tel +372-6205645)

Kohanimenõukogu
(*Place Names Board*)
Pikk 61
15065 TALLINN
Fax: +372-6125087
http://www.eki.ee/knn/
(Ms. Aule Kikas, secretary, tel
+372-6125147)

Maa-amet (*National Land Board*)

Mustamäe tee 51
10621 TALLINN
Fax: +372-6650604
e-mail: maaamet@maaamet.ee
http://www.maaamet.ee/
(Mr. Olev Veskimäe, tel +372-6650675)

AS Regio
Riia 24
51010 TARTU
Fax: +372-7387301
http://www.regio.ee
(Mr. Jüri Jagomägi, tel +372-7387330)

Võru Instituut / Võro Instituut'
(*Institute of Võru*)
Tartu 48
65609 VÕRU
Fax: +372-78-21315
e-mail: wi@wi.ee
(Mr. Evar Saar, tel +372-7821960)

ANNEX

Changes in the administrative division of Estonia (2002-2007)

Main changes occurring in the period from 2002 till 2007 included amalgamations of municipalities:

Old name(s)*	New name*	Date of decision**
Anija vald + Kehra linn	Anija vald	July 11 th , 2002
Avanduse vald + Väike-Maarja vald	Väike-Maarja vald	June 16 th 2005
Jõhvi linn + Jõhvi vald	Jõhvi vald	June 16 th 2005
Kabala vald + Oisu vald + Türi linn + Türi vald	Türi vald	June 30 th , 2005
Kilingi-Nõmme linn + Saarde vald + Tali	Saarde vald	June 16 th 2005

vald		
Kohila alev + Kohila vald	Kohila vald	July 11 th , 2002
Kuusalu vald + Loksala vald	Kuusalu vald	June 30 th , 2005
Lehtse vald + Saksi vald (excl. 3 villages) + Tapa linn	Tapa vald	June 16 th 2005
Loodna vald + Märjamaa alev + Märjamaa vald	Märjamaa vald	July 11 th , 2002
Olustvere vald + Suure-Jaani vald + Suure-Jaani linn + Vastemõisa vald	Suure-Jaani vald	June 16 th 2005
Rapla linn + Rapla vald	Rapla vald	July 11 th , 2002
Räpina linn + Räpina vald	Räpina vald	July 11 th , 2002
Tamsalu linn + Tamsalu vald	Tamsalu vald	June 16 th 2005

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

** the decisions on amalgamations came into force after municipal elections that took place in October 2002 and 2005.

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*).