

9. TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES

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**The following text has been taken from the UNGEGN website:**

At the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Athens in 1977, the gathering and dissemination of toponymic information were discussed. The great variation in approaches from country to country, led Josef Breu, elected as UNGEGN Chair in 1977, to initiate the compilation of *Toponymic Guidelines*, with a sample from Austria submitted to the Eighth Session of UNGEGN in 1979 ([W.P. 5](#)).

Recommendations have been made, and updated, concerning the content of *Toponymic Guidelines*, and the subject is retained as an UNGEGN and Conference agenda item. *Guidelines* have been presented as technical documents, published in *World Cartography*, published by individual countries, or made available on websites. 40 countries have now issued *Toponymic Guidelines*, with a number of countries having developed several editions since 1979. Other countries are encouraged to make their material available for editors worldwide.

Content of Toponymic Guidelines

The content of *Toponymic Guidelines* has been developed since 1979 and includes information about official, national and minority languages, names authorities, source material for toponyms, glossaries, abbreviations used on official maps, differentiating text from toponyms on national maps, and administrative regions. At the Ninth Conference ([Conference report, paragraph 106](#)), it was acknowledged that the format should not be too restrictive; also considered important were having guidelines in more than one language and cooperating with neighbouring countries.

Recent reports of the Coordinator

- to 26th Session of UNGEGN, 2011, [W.P. 70, rev. 1](#)
- To 25th Session of UNGEGN, 2009, [W.P.29](#)
- To 24th Session of UNGEGN, 2007, [W.P. 5](#)

Status reports, recent Guidelines, etc.

The UNGEGN [Manual for the national standardization of geographical names](#), published by the UN in 2006, contains Chapter IX (Part II) "Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors, for international use (from the 1970s to the present)" by Helen Kerfoot (Canada) and Eeva Maria Närhi (Finland).

- Content list as developed over the years (page 148). See also: [W.P. 86](#), 26th Session of UNGEGN, 2011
- *Toponymic Guidelines* produced up to 2004 (pages 149-151)
- *Toponymic Guidelines* available on the web (page 151)
- UN Conference resolutions pertaining to *Toponymic Guidelines* (page 152)

A special module of this toponymy course, S14, is devoted to toponymical guidelines.

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