

6. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

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Based on the situation in the Netherlands.

- Place names in cadastral plans have no legally binding aspect. It is coordinates and numbers that have priority.
- Place names were exempted from the 1947 spelling law in the Netherlands: the spelling of geographical names was to be decided later on, not by law but by decree.

Topics of discussion

1. Street names were not considered as geographical names, and were to be spelt according to the 1947 Spelling Law.
 - During the last 10 years municipalities in our Frisian minority area where Frisian names used to be translated into Dutch by the topographic survey found the use of municipal acts to define the spelling of all toponyms within their area in Frisian.
 - Names of new municipalities (because of mergers) are decided upon by the Ministry of the Interior, experts from the Academy of Sciences contribute in an advisory capacity.
2. Municipalities have all authority regarding their areas. They can determine land use, have cultural autonomy, and may thus decide on spelling of names of geographical objects in their areas (but unfortunately, they frequently favour foreign or mediaeval spelling!).
 - The policy of the Topographic Survey is to write geographical names in accordance with their spelling in legal acts (election laws, provincial laws, municipal laws, drainage board authority ordinances). This is a misuse of those laws, that never were intended to standardize the name spelling, but were passed for other purposes. But as there is no national names bureau in the Netherlands, the Topographic Survey (part of the Dutch Cadastre) has no alternative sources.

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