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# Catalan names: from prohibited to modern

Meeting of Authorities on Toponymy  
from around de world

**XXIV** ICOS International  
Congress of Onomastic  
Sciences



**Generalitat  
de Catalunya**

-keno  
-cino  
-cinona  
-celona

# Recent history

Before the return of democracy in 1978, the use of Catalan forms of names for people and places was forbidden.

**Before 1978**

**Now**

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Francisco (SP)

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Francesc (CAT)

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Lérida (SP)

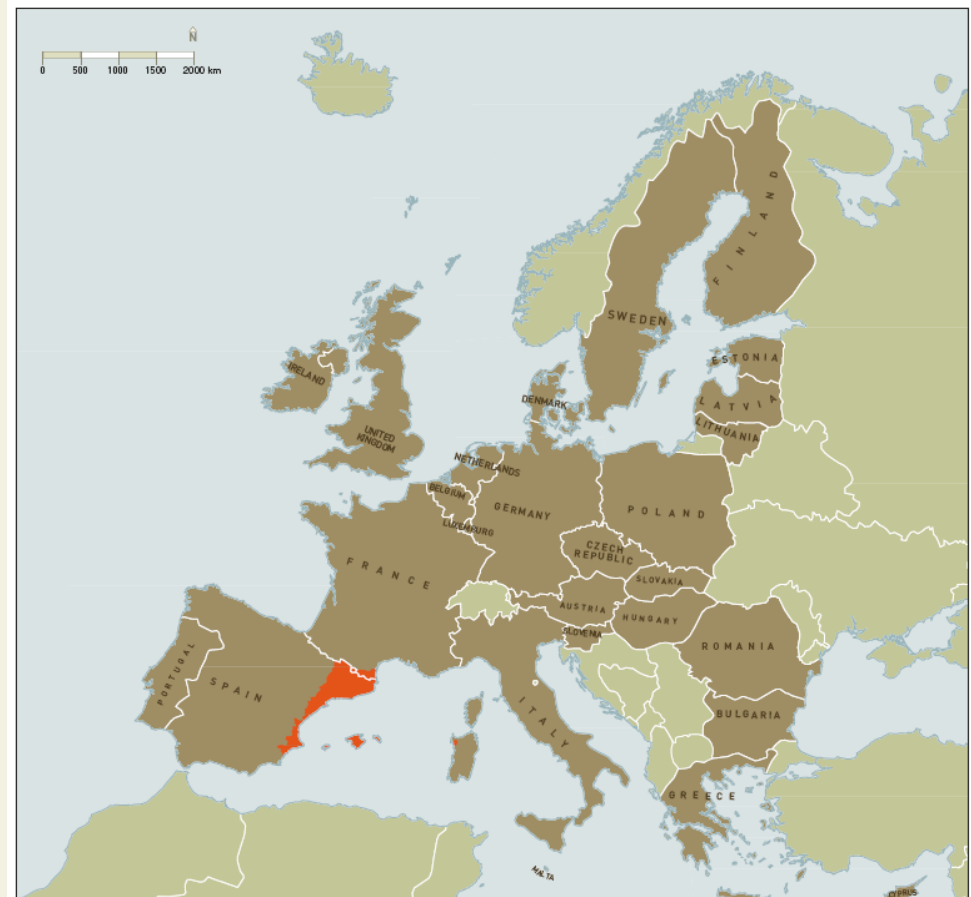
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Lleida (CAT)

# The case of the Catalan language: unique in Europe

- Now it has an official legal status.
- It is the ninth most widely spoken language in the EU.
- It is used dynamically.

Europe and the Catalan-speaking regions



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**What type of geographical name authority does your country have?**

**Why?**

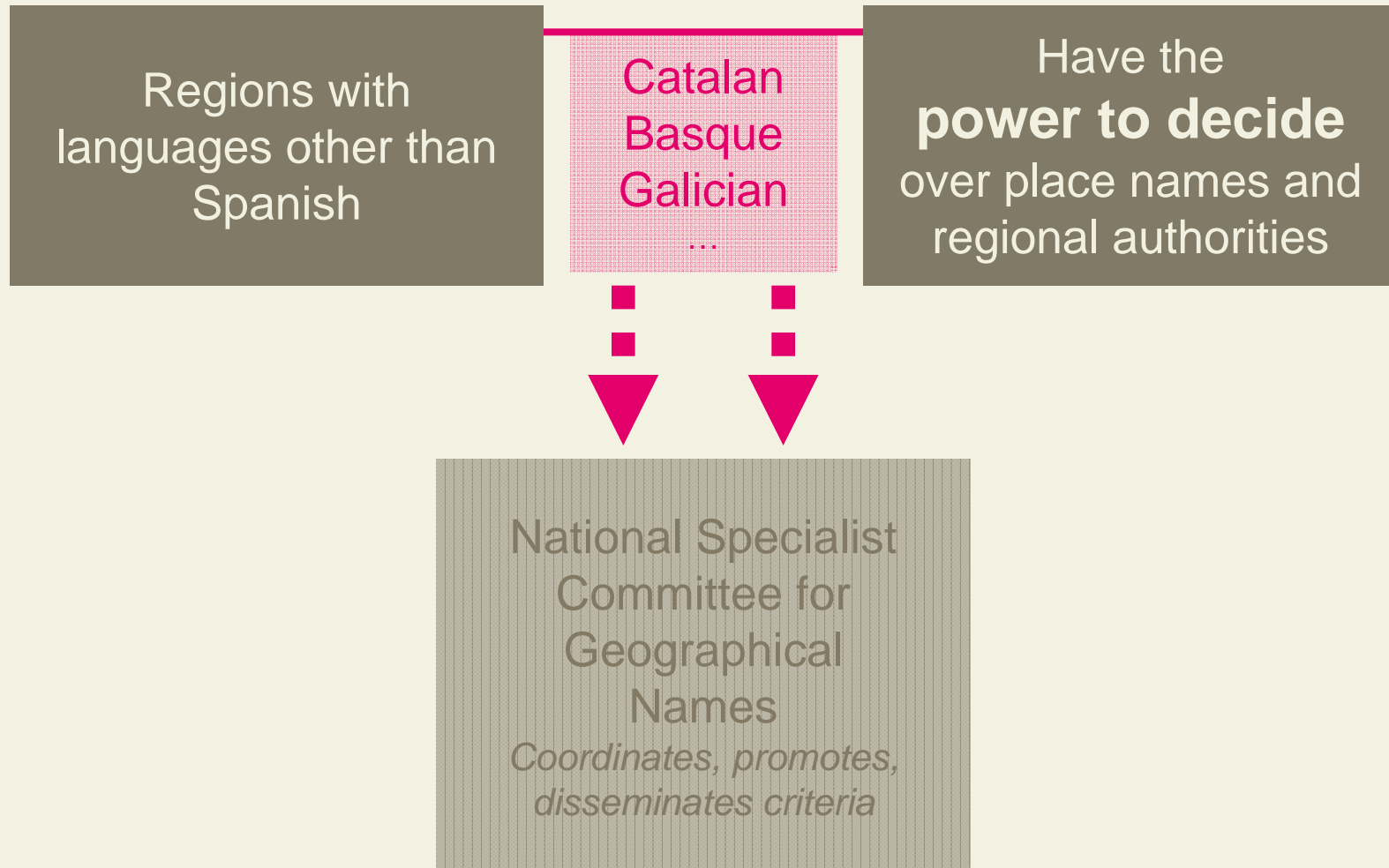
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# Spain: a decentralized country

Autonomous Communities and languages



# A bottom-up organization



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**What is the source  
of legality that  
enables the authority  
to standardize  
geographical names?**

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# Sources of legality

1. The **Spanish Constitution** establishes a decentralized state.
2. The **Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia** establishes that powers regarding toponymy belong to the autonomous regional government.
3. The **act on language policy** establishes that the only official place name forms are the Catalan and the Aranese forms.
4. The **decree on the use of toponymy** creates the Toponymy Committee.



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**Does the authority  
have the power to  
standardize every  
kind of geographical  
name?**

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# Duties of the Toponymy Committee

- Government consulting.
- Coordinating the different agents.
- Disseminating and applying criteria.
- **And making proposals to be approved by:**
  - **Municipalities: town and street names**
  - **Regional Government: all other toponyms**

## Criteria for Municipal Toponymy



*Contains the procedures for establishing and creating names of municipalities, neighbourhoods, streets, public services.*

# How to change a town's name

## Municipality

Resolution of plenary  
municipal council



## Government of Catalonia verifies

- Is the name likely to cause confusion?
- Is it linguistically correct?
- Does it follow tradition?



Approval  
or  
Rejection



### *Reports*

- Institute for Catalan Studies
- Toponymy Committee

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**What are the institutions that constitute the geographical name authority?**

**What is the work cycle? How often does the authority hold meetings? How is the work distributed?**

**In general, are the decisions taken by the authority respected and applied?**

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# Toponymy Committee

The **Toponymy Committee** is made up of the following bodies:



**Generalitat de Catalunya**

The ministries and departments of the Catalan Government with relevant powers:  
Territory,  
Cartography,  
Culture, Language,  
Statistics, Local  
Administration, etc.



**INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS CATALANS**

Language authority:  
Institute for Catalan  
Studies



FEDERACIÓ DE MUNICIPIS DE CATALUNYA



ASSOCIACIÓ CATALANA DE MUNICIPIS I COMARQUES



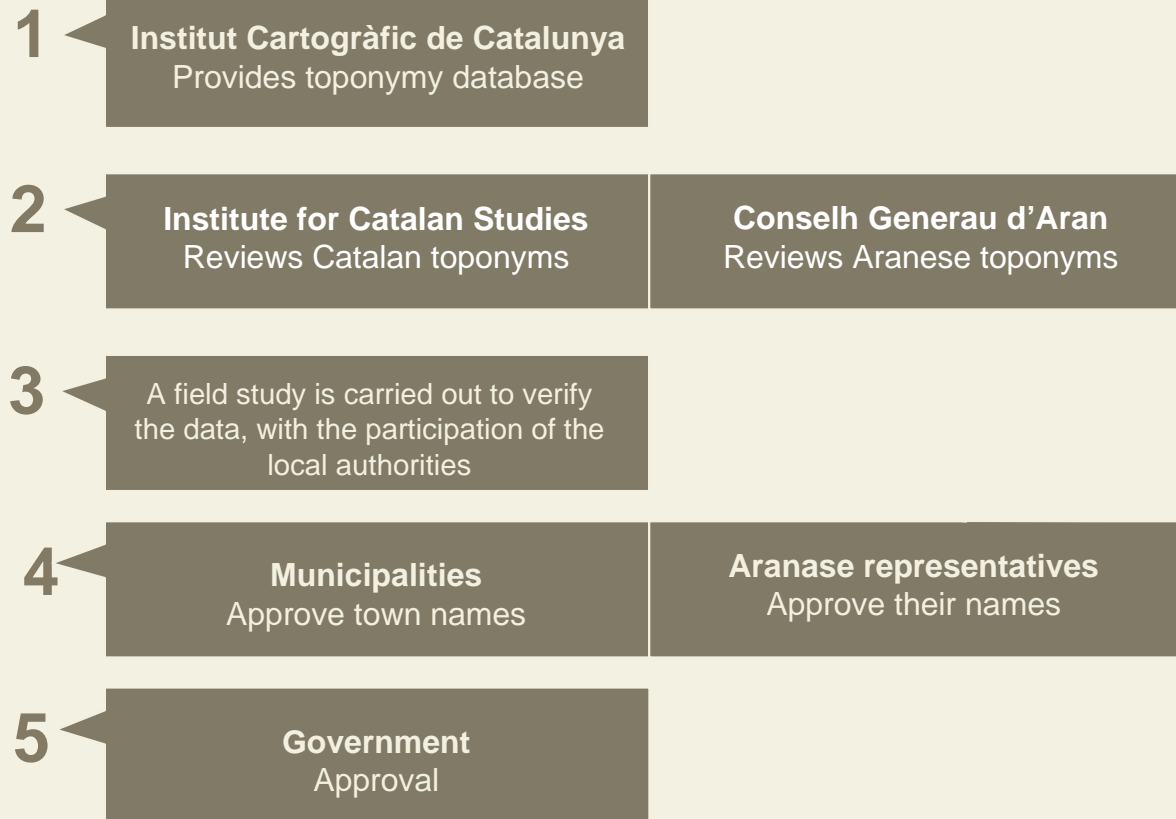
CONSORCI PER A LA NORMALITZACIÓ LINGÜÍSTICA

Local consortium for  
Catalan language  
and associations  
of municipalities

**Conselh Generau d'Aran**

Representatives of  
the Aranese language

# Official Toponymy Nomenclator of Catalonia | Work cycle



# Official Toponymy Nomenclator of Catalonia | Data

- 1137 pages of 1:50,000 maps.
- 52,688 officially recognized and georeferenced **toponyms**.
- Approved by the government on 24 March 2009.
- 4400 phonetic transcription of population centres, pronounced in the local accent of each, as per U.N. recommendations.
- Hundreds of people who volunteered their time and hard work.
- 7.7 kg in weight.



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**What are the most common problems the authority has encountered regarding the work cycle?**

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# Listening to people

- The authority must have the following characteristics:
  - Real power
  - Prestige and social recognition
  - A high technical level

**But above all, it must be able to listen**

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**Thank you very much  
for listening to us**

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-cino  
-cinona  
-celona