Catalan names: from prohibited to modern

Meeting of Authorities on Toponymy from around the world
Before the return of democracy in 1978, the use of Catalan forms of names for people and places was forbidden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before 1978</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Francisco (SP)</td>
<td>Francesc (CAT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lérida (SP)</td>
<td>Lleida (CAT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now it has an official legal status.

It is the ninth most widely spoken language in the EU.

It is used dynamically.
What type of geographical name authority does your country have?

Why?
Spain: a decentralized country

Autonomous Communities and languages

Catalan names: from prohibited to modern
A bottom-up organization

Regions with languages other than Spanish

Catalan, Basque, Galician...

Have the power to decide over place names and regional authorities

National Specialist Committee for Geographical Names
Coordinates, promotes, disseminates criteria

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What is the source of legality that enables the authority to standardize geographical names?
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.
Does the authority have the power to standardize every kind of geographical name?
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
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?
The Toponymy Committee is made up of the following bodies:

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

Language authority:
- Institute for Catalan Studies

Local consortium for Catalan language and associations of municipalities

Representatives of the Aranese language

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Official Toponymy Nomenclator of Catalonia | Work cycle

1. Institut Cartogràfic de Catalunya
   Provides toponymy database

2. Institute for Catalan Studies
   Reviews Catalan toponyms
   Consell Generau d’Aran
   Reviews Aranese toponyms

3. A field study is carried out to verify the data, with the participation of the local authorities

4. Municipalities
   Approve town names
   Aranese representatives
   Approve their names

5. Government
   Approval

Catalan names: from prohibited to modern
- 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.
What are the most common problems the authority has encountered regarding the work cycle?
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
Thank you very much for listening to us.