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**United Nations Group of Experts On
Geographical Names
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Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda *

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the
standardization of geographical names**

Report of Germany

Submitted by Germany**

Summary

The full report provides a summary of the activities undertaken by Germany during the intersessional period. Activities prior to 2017 were presented at the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in New York in August 2017 (see E/CONF.105/48).

Among other recommendations, a recommendation for naming public thoroughfares in Germany was approved and published. The Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy contributes to the development of a regional gazetteer for Europe, based on the survey request for a gazetteer service for Europe providing authoritative names. Together with the National Digital Library, the Federal Agency has started work on the provision of geographical names data as linked data.

The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names is the body responsible for developing recommendations on the standardization of geographical names. Since the diverse personnel of the Permanent Committee currently includes representatives of Austria, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, the Permanent Committee's standardizing work covers the German-speaking area in Europe.

* GEGN.2/2019/1

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National report of Germany for the period 2017 - 2019

This National report of Germany summarizes the activities in Germany for the period 2017 – 2019. The former activities were presented at the 11th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York in 2017. The achievements are reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions adopted by the various UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

Res. I/7 and II/19 Regional meetings

The „Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen“ (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) (StAGN) was conducting regular meetings twice a year and held its last meeting on 5-6 March 2019.

Representatives of Germany participated in all the former United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names as well as UNGEGN Sessions.

Representatives of Germany attended meetings of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division (DGSD) of UNGEGN. The last one was arranged on 10 October 2018 in Brussels, Belgium.

Res. IV/4: Publication of toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

Toponymic guidelines of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the former German Democratic Republic were separately presented for the first time at the Ninth Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in New York in 1981. Following editions were published in 1992, 1998, 2002, and in 2010. The latest sixth edition (2016) was presented at the 11th UNCISG. The latest edition can be downloaded at: <http://www.stagn.de/empfehlung-schreibweise-gn>.

StAGN has added a new chapter to its toponymic guidelines by approving a recommendation for naming public thoroughfares in Germany as resolution at its 144th session on 13 November 2018 (see Working Paper under item 7).

Res. V/12: Collection of basic information on the standardization of geographical names

The (Gazetteer-) web service developed by the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (BKG) ("Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy") in co-operation with the Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (StAGN) ("Permanent Committee on Geographical Names") has been evolved continuously.

This (Gazetteer-) web service is based on a Web Feature Service (WFS) and thus compliant with the corresponding Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) specification. All geographical names information of several (topographic) vector data products based on scale level 1:200.000 and smaller was amalgamated. Technically the geographical names information is maintained in a single database called "Geographical Names of Germany" (GN-DE). Through unique identifiers the names entries of the GN-DE are linked unambiguously to all data bases and products provided by BKG. At present the data base contains about 165 000 entries including more than 1 700 names in the languages of the national minorities of the Sorbs, Frisians and Danes. About 27 000 entries of gender of hydrographic features have been added. The administration and maintenance tasks of the GN-DE are conducted in Frankfurt am Main,

whereas the (Gazetteer-) web service is facilitated through the "National Geodata Centre" at the BKG in Leipzig (www.geodatenzentrum.de).

Res. V/15: Establishment of national geographical names authorities

The „Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen“ (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) (StAGN) was established in 1959 and held its 145th session in March 2019. StAGN is an independent scientific organization without sovereign functions. Within the German linguistic area it is the competent body responsible for elaborating on recommendations on the standardization of geographical names. To StAGN are equitably affiliated scientists and experts in practice from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and other German-speaking regions. They represent the technical fields of topography, cartography, geography and linguistics coming from institutions and administrations concerned with geographical names. The secretariat of StAGN is located at the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie, BKG).

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Res. VI/11: Glossary of Toponymic Terminology

The third edition of the German Glossary of Toponymic Terminology has been published in 2010. The latest Version 5.0 can be downloaded at:

<http://www.stagn.de/glossar-toponymische-terminologie>

Res. VIII/1: Promotion of minority group and indigenous geographical names

The languages of four national minorities residing in Germany - the Danes, the Frisians, the Sorbs, and the German Sinti and Roma – are officially recognized as minority languages. Low German has the status of a regional language preserving protection in the sense of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. An overview provides the website published by the German Federal Ministry of Interior¹. Geographical names in minority languages are in use in Frisian and Upper and Lower Sorbian/Sorabic.

The map “Federal Republic of Germany at 1:1 million scale, physiogeographic regions – their names and margins” (latest edition 2014) shows names of geographical regions in Sorbian and Frisian languages in those regions where the minority language is spoken.

The latest 6th edition of the Toponymic Guidelines of Germany (published 2016) contains a list of geographical appellatives, adjectives and other words for cartographic purposes in the

¹ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/minderheiten/minderheiten-in-deutschland/minderheiten-in-deutschland-node.html>

languages German, Frisian, Upper Sorbian and English. This list shall be helpful to foreign users to read and evaluate German cartographic publications in which apart from German also Frisian and Upper Sorbian geographical names and generic terms appear. The list shows only frequently occurring appellatives of geographical names.

Res VIII/2: Commemorative naming practices for geographical features

StAGN has approved a recommendation for naming public thoroughfares in Germany as resolution at its 144th session on 13 November 2018 (see Working Paper under item 7).

Res VIII/4: Exonyms

StAGN is currently preparing an updated list / 3rd edition of “Selected German Language Exonyms” as an online version, to be hosted by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG).

Res VIII/5: Joint meetings of the linguistic/geographical divisions and working groups of the UNGEGN

Several German members of StAGN participated in meetings of the UNGEGN Divisions and Working Groups:

- UNGEGN Scientific Symposium and Joint Divisions and Working Group Meetings, 10 - 13 October 2018, Brussels, Belgium
- Meeting der UNGEGN East-Central and Southeast European Division, 13 February 2019, Bratislava, Slovakia

Res VIII/6: Integration of geographical names into national and regional spatial data infrastructures

The German dataset provided for the INSPIRE² data provision for European purposes is a single database called "Geographical Names of Germany" (GN-DE). The GN-DE dataset is currently used for the geographical names data provision within the "German Spatial Data Infrastructure" (GDI-DE) and is therefore also the rationale for the INSPIRE compliant provision, which is already available through: <http://www.europeandataportal.eu/>

The German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) is intensively involved in an initiative of EuroGeographics, the European Association of National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities, with the aim to develop a regional gazetteer for Europe based on already existing harmonized and regularly updated European data sets. The rationale for this initiative has been a “survey on pan-European gazetteer services” in March 2017 organized by EuroGeographics and the Joint Research Center (JRC) of the European Commission. The results of the survey emphasized the request for a “gazetteer service for Europe providing authoritative names”. A separate Working Paper under agenda item 15 provides more information.

According the open data initiative of the Federal government in Germany geographical names data from BKG are available free of charge since 2013.

A new Web Map Service (WMS) of the physiogeographic regions of Germany is available since May 2017 and visible in the Geoportal.de. The main additional value of this service is the provision of the physiogeographic regions together with the dictionary of the geographical

² Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community

regions. A description is retrievable for each region with one click into the map. It is planned to add geographical names (exonyms) in languages from the bordering states as additional information to this map layer as well.

In 2017 the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN) published a revised and updated edition of four map sheets “Geographical Names in German Coastal Waters” on a scale of 1 : 200 000, in cooperation with the German Land Survey Offices of the northern German Federal States based on nautical charts provided by the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH). The edition contains approx. 1 500 names. The German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) has integrated the geographical names of the map sheets into the Digital Landscape Model at scale 1 : 250 000.

Res VIII/7: Toponymic data exchange formats and standards

The German dataset GN-DE is compliant with the INSPIRE Implementing Directive (COMMISSION REGULATION - EU - No 1089/2010 of 23 November 2010 implementing Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards interoperability of spatial data sets and services):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:323:0011:0102:EN:PDF>

A Technical Guidance document describes the INSPIRE Data Specifications for the spatial data theme Geographical Names:

http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/Data_Specifications/INSPIRE_DataSpecification_GN_v3.0.1.pdf

The National Digital Library (DNB) as well as the German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) are currently exchanging ideas about how geographical names data can be provided as Linked Data, a method of publishing structured data so that it can be interlinked and become more useful through semantic queries. Amongst others, BKG contributed to an international convention organized by the DNB by presenting information about current geospatial data provision issues.

Res VIII/12: Standardization of names of countries

The last updated list of country names in German language was published by StAGN as 13th edition as of January 2014. The list, collated by StAGN is a synopsis of country names taken from officially issued publications of the Foreign Ministries of the three countries Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The StAGN list is commented and with additional information. The edition can be downloaded at: <http://www.stagn.de/liste-staatennamen>

Res VIII/15: Support for training and publications

The Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG) promotes the use of modern databases and GIS technologies for data modelling and capture comprising Open Source Software. These components are very useful as parts of toponymic training courses. Staff members of BKG contributed to several training courses as lecturers in the past. The last one

was arranged in March 2018 in Manila (PH). Last but not least, staff members of BKG and BSH contributed to the Toponymy Training Manual ³.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the report and progress made by Germany
- (b) Express its views on the way forward concerning the Working Group's work plan and the upcoming actions for 2019-2021
- (c) Express its support on the maintenance of the Online Discussion Forum as a useful tool for the exchange of ideas on new and well-known issues
- (d) Comment and provide guidance on the work being carried out on the support of the Agenda 2030 and on building a stronger relationship between UNGEGN and UN-GGIM

³ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Training%20Manual.pdf>