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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 Slovenia**

Submitted by Slovenia\*\*

### **Summary**

Since the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the Slovenian Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names has continued its work on the standardization of geographical names within and outside the territory of Slovenia.

The Commission met on 22 occasions: 5 meetings and 17 corresponding meetings were held. Information and activities relating to the Commission are posted on its web page<sup>1</sup>.

The main task of the Commission was to prepare decisions on the correctness and suitability of new and changed names of streets and settlements, in accordance with the law designating areas and naming and marking settlements, streets and buildings. The accepted opinion of the Commission must be followed by municipalities, which are tasked with officially announcing new or changed names. Decisions were made by the Commission for 20 street names in 2017, 13 street names in 2018 and 2 street names, to date, in 2019.

Slovenia has two national minorities, Hungarian and Italian. According to the Constitution of Slovenia, Hungarian and Italian are recognized as official languages in ethnically mixed territories. Within Slovenia, the standardization of Hungarian and Italian names applies only to settlements. Other, non-standardized names result in significant errors on maps and in databases. Since 2014, efforts have been under way to standardize all Hungarian and Italian geographical names at the scale of 1:25,000. Lists of Hungarian and Italian names were prepared by the respective national communities, with the participation of the Surveying and Mapping Authority of Slovenia and the Slovenian Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names. The list of Italian names is almost finished; only a few names remain incomplete. However, much work is needed to complete the Hungarian list,

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\*GEGN.2/2019/1.

\*\* Prepared by the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Republic of Slovenia

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.gu.gov.si/en/delovnapodrocja\\_gu/projekti\\_gu/slovene\\_governmental\\_commission\\_for\\_the\\_standardisation\\_of\\_geographical\\_names/#c17314](http://www.gu.gov.si/en/delovnapodrocja_gu/projekti_gu/slovene_governmental_commission_for_the_standardisation_of_geographical_names/#c17314)

since there are uncertainties about more than half of the names on the list. The initiative to complete both lists lies with the national communities.

Geographical names (standardized and non-standardized) are kept in the register of geographical names, which is maintained by the Surveying and Mapping Authority. The Authority participates actively in the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

Slovenia participates actively in the Working Group on Exonyms of the Group of Experts and is very active in the field of exonyms, especially at the Anton Melik Geographical Institute. Researchers at the Institute regularly publish articles on exonyms in domestic and foreign publications.

Country names are among the few foreign geographical names that are standardized in Slovenian (198 independent States and 51 non-self-governing territories). Standardization will continue in February 2019 with the inclusion of new country names, such as Eswatini.

## 1. NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

In the Republic of Slovenia is engaged in the standardization of geographical names the **Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names**. The CSGN is represented by several institutions: the Anton Melik Geographical Institute and Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language (both of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts), the Department of Geography and the Department of Slovene Languages and Literature (both of the Faculty of Arts), the Geodetic Institute of Slovenia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Slovenian Language Service at the Ministry of Culture and the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia.

The basic tasks of the CSGN determined by the decision of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia of 2017 are the following:

- to perform tasks pursuant to the Act Designating Areas and Naming and Marking Settlements, Streets and Buildings (Uradni list RS (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia), no. 25/2008);
- to carry out international obligations of the Republic of Slovenia related to geographical names, i.e. representing Slovenia at UN meetings and within the UNGEGN;
- to perform other tasks related to UN resolutions and the recommendations of the UNGEGN, and to the preparation of standardization documents and the standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Slovenia;
- to perform other tasks determined by acts and other regulations.

After Eleventh UNCSGN the CSGN met on 22 occasions: 5 meetings and 17 corresponding meetings.

The main task of CSGN is preparing decisions of correctness and suitability of new names and renames of streets and settlements in Slovenia. The accepted opinion of CSGN is obligatory for municipalities that finally officially announce new or changed names.

In 2017 CSGN was deciding about 20 street names, in 2018 about 13 street names and finally in 2019 about 2 street names.

Information and activities related to the Commission are posted on the in 2014 completely renewed website:

[http://www.gu.gov.si/en/delovnapodrocja\\_gu/projekti\\_gu/slovene\\_governmental\\_commission\\_f\\_or\\_the\\_standardisation\\_of\\_geographical\\_names/#c17314](http://www.gu.gov.si/en/delovnapodrocja_gu/projekti_gu/slovene_governmental_commission_f_or_the_standardisation_of_geographical_names/#c17314) . On the website are also published procedures and recommendations of the CSGN concerning the suitability of the names of settlements and streets.

## 2. MULTILINGUAL AREAS

The Republic of Slovenia has two traditional national minorities - the Italian and Hungarian National Community. Both national minorities enjoy high legal protection, which extends from the international conventions ratified by Slovenia – which are constituent parts of the Slovenian legal order - to the highest state act, the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and numerous legal and other acts.

On ethnically mixed territories it is declared the equality of the use of Italian and Hungarian language. Based on the Decree on the transcription of geographical names on national maps in ethnically mixed

areas in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette, no. [57/14](#)) in these areas, geographical names on the maps are to be written in both languages, first Slovene and then either Italian or Hungarian.

Many of Hungarian and Italian geographical names within Slovenia are not yet standardized, so they cause considerable errors on various maps and in databases, as well as communication problems. So far, standardized are only names refer to the settlements – towns and villages, that are recorded in Register of Spatial Units and Register of Geographical Names (hereinafter: RGN) of Surveying and Mapping Authority (hereinafter: SMA).

In 2014, the Italian and Hungarian National Communities were asked to prepare a lists of Italian and Hungarian geographical names for objects on ethnically mixed territories (firstly for the scale level 1:25,000) that are in the RGN actually recorded only in Slovenian language (hydronyms, oronyms, landscape areas). Both National Communities was recommended to cooperate with linguists and standardization bodies in Italy and Hungary.

In June 2015, the Italian National Community provided a list of Italian names for the municipalities of Ankaran and Koper, and in September 2015 for the municipalities of Izola and Piran. Since the lists were incomplete, they were called upon to supplement them. The Italian Community had sent the supplemented lists at the end of November 2015. In December 2015, the lists were reviewed by the SMA and a common list of all Italian geographical names was prepared. In the list also the Italian names from the archive cadastral maps at the scale 1:1,000 (period 1952-1955, some from the year 1940), 1:2,000 (period 1952-1955, some from the year 1940) and 1:2,880 (mostly from the periods 1927-1933, 1909-1910 and from 1953, but also from the years 1901 and 1938) were added. This list was in January 2016 sent to Italian Community for review and amendment. In May of the same year, the Italian community sent a final version of the list, which was sent a few days later to the Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names. On 12 January 2017, a meeting was held of representatives of the Italian ethnic minority, the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia and the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names. After the meeting there are only a few of the names that are left open. In February 2019, the Italian National Community sent a list of missing Italian geographical names. A full list of Italian geographical names will be sent shortly to all members of the commission. If there are no comments on the list, the commission will standardize the Italian geographical names at the next regular meeting.

Efforts to standardize the Hungarian geographical names in the bilingual area were much less successful. In November

2015 the SMA, upon the request of Hungarian National Community, prepared scans of archival cadastral maps (327 scans). At the end of February 2016, the Hungarian Community provided lists of Hungarian names in several non-harmonized tables. In March 2016, one list of Hungarian geographical names (the basis was data of REZI 25) was send to the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names. After in 2016, a detailed review of all the lists of Hungarian names was carried out at SMA. It has been found that more than half of the Hungarian geographical names in different lists are named differently. On 13 January 2017, the Hungarian National Community, the Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia and the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names met at the meeting. It was concluded that the Hungarian Community again review all documents and remarks of the SMA and prepare a new, single list of Hungarian geographical names. At the same time, it was advised to the Hungarian

community to include experts in Hungarian language and to connect with the Hungarian Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names. In the last two years the Hungarian Community has not yet sent a new list, nor has it come into contact with the Hungarian Commission. The initiative to complete list is on the side of the national community.

### 3. TOPONYMIC DATA FILES

Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia is actively involved in the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of the UNGEGN and also in the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

The national Register of Geographical Names is maintained by the SMA. The register contains geographical names that were captured from maps at scale 1:5,000 (approximately 140,000 names), 1:25,000 (approximately 60,000 names), 1:250,000 (approximately 8,000 names), 1:1,000,000 (approximately 1,000 names). RGN of all four scales cover the entire territory of Slovenia and also the border areas of neighbouring countries. The majority of geographical names in the register are endonyms.

The logical model of RGN is based on three entity types:

- geographical feature (topographic object),
- geographical name and,
- inscription (on the map).

Every geographical feature in the graphic database has at least one geographical name (it can have several - in a multilingual area or traditional names for geographical features).

Each geographical name in a relational database may have several inscriptions (if it appears on maps of different scales).

In 2016 the GN database was incorporated into a new topographic database that is INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) compliant. Topographic database uses an ArcGIS platform and provides maintenance of data as well as the preparation of various products for users. Geographical names in new database contain besides all mandatory and some voidable INSPIRE attributes, also attributes from RGN (more or less related to the cartographic use and standardization). Geographical names are an independent layer of topographic database, but linked with the topographic object by identifier. Due to the huge volume of work the link of geographical names with topographic objects will be performed gradually.

In 2015 first version of the INSPIRE compliant Web Service for geographical names was prepared, but it contains data from the previous geographical names database that was not feature/object oriented. That data is no longer maintained.

New Web Service that will also be INSPIRE compliant is under construction. Despite the fact that the new geographical names database was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the INSPIRE Directive, the original data must be transformed into an INSPIRE compliant form. This will be done shortly using the open source tool HALE Studio. Next, the Web Service will be set up, which is very likely to be published on the portal HALE Connect ([haleconnect.com](http://haleconnect.com)).

### 4. EXONYMS

Slovenia actively participates in the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms and also otherwise is very active in the field of exonyms, especially researchers of the Anton Melik Geographical Institute. They regularly publish articles on exonyms in domestic and foreign publications.

## 5. COUNTRY NAMES

Country names are among the rare foreign geographical names that are standardized in Slovenian. The CSGN had standardized Slovenian names of 198 independent and 51 non-self-governing territories a few years ago. In February 2019, a list was updated and changed names of two countries were standardized: Eswatini and North Macedonia.

The Slovenian official short name for Eswatini is *Esvatini* and the Slovenian official full name is *Kraljevina Esvatini*.

The Slovenian official short name for North Macedonia is *Severna Makedonija* and the Slovenian official full name is *Republika Severna Makedonija*.

## 6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Slovenia is actively involved in several international projects (cartographic, geographic or linguistic) about geographical names. CSGN members also participate in a number of international meetings in the field of geographical names:

- 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms and meeting of the Working Group on Romanization Systems. Riga, Latvia, 24-26 September 2018.
- UNEGN Scientific Symposium and Joint Divisions and Working Group Meetings (including WG on Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers). Brussels, Belgium, 10-13 October 2018.
- Symposium Minority Names in Public Space – Problems, Challenges, Solutions. Vienna, Austria, 22-23 November 2018.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the East central and South-East Europe Division. Bratislava, Slovakia, 13 February 2019.

## 7. OTHER ACTIVITIES

Some projects in which participate researchers of the Anton Melik Geographical Institute and Fran Ramovš Institute of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts:

### 7.1 What's your house called? *Nomen vulgare*, since 2009

The main purpose of the project is to collect and preserve traditional house names that are part of the intangible cultural heritage. In 2009 the Regional development agency for Upper Gorenjska RAGOR started with the collection, documentation and publication of old local house names in Gorenjska region. In the project are so far involved 16 municipalities in which area were collected more than 9000 house names. Great interest in the municipalities for this project shows that the old house names are an important part of the rural area, which is due to the modern way of life doomed to oblivion, such projects could take care of the preservation of important intangible cultural heritage of Slovenian territory.