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## United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

**2019 session**

New York, 29 April–3 May 2019

Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

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

### Report of Norway

#### Summary\*\*

The full report provides an outline of progress and developments in Norway on geographical names since the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. One of the main issues addressed in the report concerns the proposed amendments to the Norwegian Place Name Act of 1990. The Ministry of Culture proposed several amendments to the Act in October 2018, three years after the previous amendment. The ongoing revision of the Act is aimed at finding a way to “democratize” the standardization of geographical names at the municipal level. The Ministry of Culture proposes giving the municipalities more authority with regard to geographical names matters by making it easier to standardize names according to local spoken and written usage, independent of linguistic recommendations. A reorganization of the name consultancy service, administrated by the Norwegian Language Council, has also been proposed. The amendments are expected to be passed and enter into force by mid-2019.

The Norwegian Mapping Authority is responsible for running and developing the Central Place Name Register. There are 987,000 named places, some of which have several forms, amounting to 1,009,200 names in the register. In addition, some of the names have variant spellings, totalling 1,196,000 name forms. In total, there are 112,000 authorized spellings in the register.

The Government proposed a new municipal structure to the Parliament for both municipalities and counties. Since 2017, the number of municipalities has diminished from 428 to 422, and the number of counties from 19 to 18. In 2020, there will be 354 municipalities and 11 counties. Because of the ongoing local government reform, a revised version of the toponymic guidelines for Norway is being revised for the 2019 session.

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\* [GEGN.2/2019/1](#).

\*\* The full report was prepared by Ingvil Nordland, Kjetil Ringen and Peder Gammeltoft. The report will be available at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEKN/1st\\_session\\_UNGEKN.html](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEKN/1st_session_UNGEKN.html), in the language of submission only, as document GEGN.2/2019/76/CRP.76.



A renewed regulation for the Place Name Act entered into force in May 2017, allowed the use of Skolt Sámi names in South Varanger municipality next to or instead of names in North Sámi. Skolt Sámi is not an official language in Norway and is no longer spoken within Norway. However, geographical names in Skolt Sámi are still in use, and the May 2017 amendment has given the Skolt Sámi language higher status in Norway.

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