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**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**
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Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity,
including indigenous, minority and regional languages
and multilingual issues****Utilization of communal autonomy to implement additional
bilingual names of populated places and streets in Carinthia****Summary****

An improved political climate between the German-speaking majority and the minority of Slovenes in the Austrian Province of Carinthia now allows the utilization of communal autonomy (a principle of the Constitution) to implement additional bilingual town signs and new bilingual street names. While that possibility always existed, implementation was not previously possible because the German-speaking majority in all bilingual communes but one would not have passed such a decision in favour of the minority. Now, the opportunity to implement bilingual place names in addition to the 164 defined in amendment No. 46/2011 to the National Minorities Act has been used by three communes in various ways. Experience has shown that the introduction of street names replacing bilingual names of populated places poses new challenges to bilingual communes. The recommendations of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names regarding the naming of urban traffic areas in 2017 (see [E/CONF.105/21](#) and [E/CONF.105/21/CRP.21](#)) referred explicitly to the value of using field names and/or other traditional local names when applying new names. Those recommendations contributed to the conservation of traditional local place names of the minority as street names.

* [GEGN.2/2021/1](#).

** The full report was prepared by Martina Piko-Rustia, Urban Jarnik Slovene Ethnographic Institute; Nanti Olip, National Council of Carinthian Slovenes; Pavel Apovnik, Community of Carinthian Slovenes; and Teodor Domej, Slovenian Science Institute – Klagenfurt. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/71/CRP.71, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.

