
**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
Second session
New York, 3 – 7 May 2021
Item 4b of the provisional agenda *
Reports of the Divisions of the Group of Experts**

Report of the Dutch and German Speaking Division

Submitted by the Dutch and German Speaking Division **

Summary

The Dutch- and German-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names consists of experts from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Suriname and Switzerland.

The full report contains an overview of the activities undertaken in relation to geographical names by the Division, as well as joint activities by its members and the countries represented by them, in the period since the 2019 session of the Group of Experts, in response to the resolutions adopted at the various United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names. It also contains references to general developments concerning geographical names policy, collection and standardization in the participating countries over the same period, the details of which are discussed in the respective national reports submitted under item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda. The activities and achievements are reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions.

* GEGN.2/2021/1

** Prepared by Tjeerd Tichelaar, Chair of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division

Introduction

The Dutch and German-speaking Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names consists of experts from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Suriname and Switzerland. This report contains an overview of the activities undertaken in relation to geographical names by the Division, its members and the countries represented by them in the period since the first session of the “new” United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in 2019, in response to the resolutions that had been adopted at the various Conferences. It also addresses general developments concerning geographical names policy, collection and standardization in the participating countries over the same period. The activities and achievements are reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions.

The following DGSD members are currently in charge of official functions within UNGEGN:

- Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany) is the convenor of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management (formerly Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers) of UNGEGN since 2009. He was co-convenor from 2007 to 2009.
- Peter Jordan (Austria) functions as UNGEGN’s liaison officer to the International Cartographic Association (ICA), He was convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms 2006-2017.
- Gerhard Rampl (Austria) is the coordinator for the Toponymic Guidelines of UNGEGN since 2014 Mr. Rampl is also rapporteur of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation.
- Tjeerd Tichelaar (Netherlands) chairs the DGSD.

Res. I/7 and II/19 Regional meetings

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

The following meetings of the Dutch- and German-Speaking Division have taken place:

- during the First Session of the reformed United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names in New York, USA, 29 April to 3 May 2019
- online on 14 January 2021
- online on 23 April 2021

DGSD and individual members were involved in the GeoNames symposium ‘Place Names and Migration’ organized in Vienna, Austria from 6 to 8 November 2019 at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO). A book based on the contributions to this symposium was compiled by Allison Dollimore & Peter Jordan (eds.) and published in Hamburg, Germany by Verlag Dr. Kovač in 2021. A detailed report was submitted to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN under agenda item 12 (GEGN.2/2021/76).

Dutch DGSD members were also present at the meeting of the German Permanent Commission on Geographical Names (StAGN) that was convened at this event.

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

A team of Dutch experts currently and formerly involved in UNGEGN, spearheaded by Mr. Jasper Hogerwerf of Kadaster, the Netherlands' Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency, initiated a fresh attempt to realize the establishment of a national geographical names authority. The context, details and current state of affairs of this project are presented in the country report of the Netherlands (GEGN.2/2021/65).

In the German speaking countries, the ongoing process of geographical names standardization is supervised by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen, StAGN). StAGN met three times since the last UNGEGN Session in 2019. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic a meeting in autumn 2020 had to be cancelled and the meeting in spring 2021 was held virtually. But never the less the work has been going on.

The latest achievements of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names are reported on in the country report of Austria (GEGN.2/2021/91).

Res. II/13 Publication of romanization systems (and other resolutions concerning romanization)

Co-commissioned by the Dutch Language Union, in which DGSD member states Belgium, the Netherlands and Suriname cooperate, a web application is being developed to romanize personal names and geographical names from several non-Roman scripts to Roman script. A separate report on this application is submitted to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN by the Netherlands under agenda item 15 (GEGN.2/2021/XX).

Res. VI/13: Training courses

DGSD members remain involved in the activities of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, the chair of which was in 2017 transferred from Ferjan Ormeling of the Netherlands to Peder Gammeltoft of Denmark (currently Norway). The Netherlands submit a paper on streamed audio-visual lectures on toponymy to 2nd Session of UNGEGN under agenda item 10 (GEGN.2/2021/66).

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

Minority toponyms were well covered in several contributions to the abovementioned 2019 GeoNames symposium 'Place Names and Migration' in Vienna, see the report submitted by Austria under agenda item 12 (GEGN.2/2021/76).

A historical account of the changing policy regarding Frisian and other minority language toponyms in the Dutch province of Fryslân is submitted to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN under agenda item 12 ('Putting Frisian names on the map', GEGN.2/2021/68).

Papers on the utilization of communal autonomy to implement additional bilingual names of populated places and streets in Carinthia (GEGN.2/2021/71) and a comparative study of southern Carinthia, Austria, and the Těšín/Cieszyn region in Czechia ('Place-Name Politics in Multilingual Areas', GEGN.2/2021/75) are submitted to this session by Austria.

Germany contributes a paper to this session about the efforts of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen/StAGN) to fill in gaps in the coverage of non-administrative landscape names that are important for the self-identification of

German citizens nationwide in terms of their relationship with their geographical environment ('Naming blank areas – processes of landscape naming and renaming in Germany', GEGN.2/2021/45).

Res VIII/4: Exonyms

StAGN published the third issue of its list of German exonyms as a database. A description is presented to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN by Germany under agenda item 13 (GEGN.2/2021/46). Note this list also allows the implementation of the recommendations laid down in resolutions VIII/4, V/13, III/18, III/9, IV/20 and II/28.

Under agenda item 12, Germany submits a paper to this session to describe a project in which StAGN collected endonyms and exonyms in the languages of Germany's neighbouring countries (i.e. Czech, Danish, Dutch, French, Polish) for landscapes located resp. partly and completely within the current boundaries of Germany ('Foreign Names of Landscapes in Germany', GEGN.2/2021/77).

The Commission on Foreign Language Names ('Commissie Anderstalige Namen', until 2017 as Working Group on Foreign Geographical Names/'Werkgroep Buitenlandse Aardrijkskundige Namen' exclusively occupied with exonyms), an expert group commissioned by the Dutch Language Union in which DGSD member states Belgium, the Netherlands and Suriname cooperate, celebrated the 50th anniversary of its exonym branch in 2018. A historical account of its mandate and achievements is presented to this session by the Netherlands under agenda item 13 (GEGN.2/2021/67).

A paper presented to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN by Austria (GEGN.2/2021/73) highlights exonyms as a part of the cultural heritage and suggests a UN resolution appreciating this aspect.

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

In a paper submitted to the 2nd Session of UNGEGN under agenda item 14 (GEGN.2/2021/48), Germany reports on the status of the Open Regional Gazetteer that was prepared to meet the toponymic demands of the European Commission and other European users. The production of this web-based service was initiated under the umbrella of EuroGeographics, the European Association of National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities, and realized under the lead of the German Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG). It was published in April 2019.

The special theme of the 2nd Session of UNGEGN: Geographical Names Supporting Sustainable Development and Management of the Pandemic

The special theme of the 2nd Session is addressed in a paper submitted by Austria, describing the efforts made by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names (AKO) and the Austrian Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying (BEV) to harmonize names of features crossed by Austria's border in response to the observation that inconsistencies in the naming or description of border crossings potentially reduced the effectiveness of emergency measures taken on different sides of the boundary to contain the covid-19 pandemic (GEGN.2/2021/72).