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**United Nations Group of Experts on**

**Geographical Names**

**Second session**

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

**Item 4 (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 the Netherlands**

Submitted by the Netherlands\*\*

### Summary

The report provides information on the developments, action and achievements in the Netherlands with regard to geographical names standardization during the period 2019–2021.

Some developments of importance are:

- Discussions on the standardization of geographical names in the Netherlands
- Publication of a web application to search and find toponymic data in the topographic database of the Netherlands
- Publication of a web application for the romanization of personal and geographical names
- Fiftieth anniversary of the Commission on Foreign Geographical Names of the Dutch Language Union

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\* GEGN.2/2021/1

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## **Report of the Netherlands 2019 - 2021**

2. The various relevant developments, actions and achievements have been reported under the headings of the relevant resolutions adopted by the consecutive United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN).

### **Res. I/7 and II/19 Regional meetings**

3. Representatives of the Netherlands participated in meetings of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division held in New York, USA, in connection with the First Session of the reformed United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 29 April to 3 May 2019.

4. Representatives of the Netherlands participated in the GeoNames symposium 'Place Names and Migration' held in Vienna, Austria, 6 to 8 November 2019. During this event, representatives of the Netherlands also participated in a meeting of the German Permanent Commission on Geographical Names (StAGN).

5. Representatives of the Netherlands participated in meetings of the Dutch- and German-speaking Division held online in January and April 2021 in preparation for the Second Session of the reformed United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

### **Res. I/4 and V/15 Establishment of national geographical names authorities**

6. The Netherlands are one of the few countries in Europe that have not yet established a national geographical names authority. Furthermore, there are no formal or informal rules or procedures for geographical names standardization agreed between the governmental agencies involved in the registration of geographical names, of which the municipalities and several national governmental agencies are the most important.

Representatives of the Netherlands in UNGEGN took the initiative to propose to the Geo Information Council (*GI Beraad*), an advisory body of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the standardization of geographical names on a national level by mutual discussion and agreement between the different governmental parties involved in geographical names registration.

In December 2018, the Geo Information Council provisionally approved the proposal of creating a standard and to apply it to the registration of new geographical names. At the same time, it asked for a further impact analysis to study the consequences of standardization for existing geographical names. By the end of 2019, no agreement between the various governmental parties involved could be reached on the next steps to be taken.

Representatives of the Netherlands in UNGEGN will continue to address the issue and reach out to the parties involved in geographical names registration in order to bring the discussion on geographical names standardization to a next level.

7. The Commission on Foreign Names of the Dutch Language Union (*Nederlandse Taalunie*), responsible for the regulation of Dutch exonym use and to advise on the standardization of foreign personal names, celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A separate report on the occasion of this anniversary, with a historical overview of the commission's work, has been submitted to this UNGEGN Session.

### **Res. II/13 Publication of romanization systems**

8. Co-commissioned by the Dutch Language Union, 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 has been submitted to this UNGEGN Session.

**Res. V/16 Publication of geographical names in their national official form**

9. A web application has been developed for searching and finding toponymic data in the topographic database of the Netherlands, using linked open data techniques. A separate report on this application has been submitted to this UNGEGN Session.

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

10. A historical overview on the development of Frisian names on Dutch topographic maps has been made, with an explanation of the current status of Frisian names in the geographical key registers as well as proposals for improvement of the current situation. A separate report on this matter has been submitted to this UNGEGN Session.

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

11. The initial phase of the project to check and update toponymic data in the Key Register Topography (*Basisregistratie Topografie*, BRT) in cooperation with local historical societies, will be completed in 2021. More information about this project can be found in a report and presentation to the Eleventh UNCSGN, E/CONF.105/87. The next steps to be taken in order to organize a regular update process for toponymic data in the topographic database are being discussed.

**Res. VIII/15 Support for training and publications**

12. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic ‘physical’ toponymy training courses were difficult to organize. A proposal to set up online streamed audiovisual lectures on toponymy has been submitted as a separate report to this UNGEGN Session.