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English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
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Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Reports: Divisions of the Group of Experts**

**Report of the Baltic Division of the United Nations Group of
Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

Submitted by the Baltic Division**

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** Prepared by Vita Strautniece, Chair of the Baltic Division (Latvia) in collaboration with divisional members

Summary:

The report covers the two year period (2019-2020) since the 1st UNGEGN Session.

Five countries — Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation — are members of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN. Accordingly with the principle of rotation Latvia is coordinating country for a period of 4 years from 2017. Divisional Chairperson is Ms. Vita Strautniece (Latvia), divisional Vice-chair – Mr. Maciej Zych (Poland).

One Divisional meeting – the 20th Meeting of the Baltic Division – was held in Latvia (September, 2019). The Division was represented in the 1st Session of UNGEGN (New York, 2019). Experts from the Baltic Division member states have participated in the continuous work of the UNGEGN Working groups (WG): the WG on Geographical Names Data Management (former –WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers), the WG on Romanization Systems, the WG on Toponymic Terminology, the WG on Country Names, the WG on Exonyms as well as in particular international events related to geographical names inside and outside UNGEGN.

Website of the Baltic Division <http://eki.ee/knn/ungegn> provides information on the Division and all meetings carried out since 1992.

(For more detailed information on the 20th Meeting of the Baltic Division and other activities during the period 2019-2020 see the full *Report of the Baltic Division of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)*)

1. Composition of the Division

The Baltic Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) formed in 1992, comprises five member states: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Russian Federation and Poland. Accordingly with the principle of rotation, Latvia is coordinating country for a period of 4 years from 2017. Divisional Chairperson is Ms. Vita Strautniece (Latvia), divisional Vice-Chair – Mr. Maciej Zych (Poland).

2. Divisional meetings

One Divisional meeting – the 20th meeting of the Baltic Division was held during the reporting period. It was hosted by the the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency and the Latvian Language Institute of Latvian University, in Riga (Latvia) on 24th–26th September, 2019. 45 participants representing all the member states of the Baltic Division attended the Meeting.

18 reports were presented and discussed. Information and experience on the status of work on national standardization of geographical names carried out in their countries including issues concerning national authorities on the standardization of geographical names and legislation in the field of naming of geographical objects; the status and development perspectives of national toponymic databases, cadastres, registers; the naming of urban objects, hillforts, natural features; place names collecting; minority and dialectal toponymy; linguistic aspects related to geographical names standardization etc. were presented and discussed.

The proposal to establish the Rules of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN was discussed. Participants agreed that: a) Draft Rules, submitted by Russia should be translated into English and distributed between members of the Baltic Division for consideration; b) the Rules should be discussed at the next, 21st meeting, of the Baltic Division.

Following the traditions of the Baltic Division, an exhibition of toponymic and cartographic materials including dictionaries and other geographical names related items from the member states was organized during the Meeting.

Minutes, presentations and other documents of the 20th Meeting of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN are published on the Divisional website (<http://eki.ee/knn/ungegn/>).

It was decided to hold the 21st Meeting of the Baltic Division in autumn 2020 in Tallinn. Unfortunately due the COVID-19 pandemic the Meeting was postponed to the September 2021.

3. Cooperation between Divisions of the UNGEGN and other cooperation

Experts of the Baltic Division member states (except Lithuania) participated in the 1st Session of UNGEGN (New York, 2019).

Besides that experts from Latvia, Estonia and Poland have taken part in the continuous work of UNGEGN Working groups: the WG on Geographical Names Data Management (former –WG on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers) (Latvia), the WG on Romanization Systems (Estonia, Poland), the WG of Toponymic Terminology (Poland), the WG on Country Names (Estonia, Poland) and the WG on Exonyms (Estonia, Latvia, Poland).

Experts from the Baltic Division member states took part also in particular UNGEGN working group meetings and other geographical names related events held in 2019-2020:

- The Meeting of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of UNGEGN in 2019 (Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan);
- The Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy workshop “Role and structure of national place-name boards”, 2019 (Tokyo, Japan);
- Toponymic sessions of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy during the 29th International Cartographic Conference of the International Cartographic Association, 2019 (Tokyo, Japan);
- GeoNames19 Symposium “Place names and migration”, 2019 (Vienna, Austria);
- The XLII session of the Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Remote Sensing of the Earth of the CIS Member States in 2020 (in an online format);
- The Meeting of the Working Group on Geographical Names of the Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Remote Sensing of the Earth of the CIS Member States in 2020.

In 2020, as part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War and as a result of cooperation between the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography and the State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus online projects “Names of Heroes on the Map of Russia” and “Streets of Heroes on the map of Belarus” were launched and published on the official websites of the agencies.

4. The website

Website of the Baltic Division <http://eki.ee/knn/ungegn/> is maintained by Estonia. It provides short information on the Division and contains records of all meetings of the Baltic Division since 1992 (minutes, agenda, list of participants, reports, photos).

Conclusion

The Baltic Division of UNGEGN held one meeting during the reporting period (in 2019). Experts from the member states have participated actively in UNGEGN and geographical names related other

activities. The exchange of information inside the Division, with other divisions and interested parties outside UNGEGN surely has contributed significantly to the national standardization of geographical names in each member state and helped to promote awareness about the importance of the geographical names standardization.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

Comment and provide input on similar work being carried out in other divisions