
United Nations Group of Experts on

Geographical Names

Second session

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda *

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

Report of the Republic of Turkey

Submitted by the Republic of Turkey**

* GEGN.2/2021/1

** Prepared by the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of the Republic of Turkey

Report of the Republic of Turkey

Summary

The body responsible for the standardization of geographical names in the Republic of Turkey is the “Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T)”. BEGeoN_T is affiliated to, hosted by and chaired by Ministry of Interior and carries out its activities in cooperation with the representatives of various national institutions. The said Board is not the single authority and carries out its work with the participation of several other official institutions the names of which will be mentioned in the following pages.

This report gives a brief background information on BEGeoN_T and highlights the main activities of BEGeoN_T during the period of 2019-2020. The activities summarized in the Report are as follows:

- 1. Historical background of BEGeoN_T**
- 2. Country Names and Capitals**
- 3. Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names**
- 4. Geographical Names Index of Turkey and its Environment**
- 5. Settlements Database of Turkey**
- 6. Future Plans and Goals**

1. Historical background of Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey

Works on standardization of geographical names in Turkey started in the late 1930s, when the Ministry of Interior established a special committee for the standardization of settlement names. Currently, standardization of geographical names in Turkey is legally under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, and works to standardize different categories of geographical names are carried out in coordination with various national institutions.

The “Special Commission for Building Name Changes” was established under the Ministry of Interior in 1952 for standardization of the names of cities, districts, villages, as well as other geographical names. This Commission, including experts from universities and national institutions, continued its work until 1975. Then, to gather and coordinate all standardization activities, the General Directorate of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior established a committee for standardization of geographical names.

The “Directive on the Working Principles and Procedures of the Board of Experts for Geographical Names”, no. 4431, entered into force with the approval of the Ministry of Interior on 15.07.2004, following the meetings held by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with participation of representatives of other relevant national institutions. The Board of Experts for Geographical Names held its first meeting in 2004 and has been actively carrying out its work since then.

2. Country Names and Capitals

In accordance with the latest changes and the recommendations of relevant institutions, the “List of Countries and their Capitals” was updated on November 2020 and published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in English and Turkish. The list was updated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the contributions of other relevant national institutions. The list is a reference point for individuals, map manufacturers and institutions to check capital and country names and is widely used, and consulted by the general public and other institutions.

The list is available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/Terminoloji/the-list-of-countries-and-their-capitals.pdf>

3. Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names

The “Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names” of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was translated into Turkish by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and submitted to the relevant member institutions and directorates for review and recommendations. Currently, all relevant national institutions have reviewed the Glossary and submitted their proposals. The updates on the Glossary will soon be finalized.

4. Geographical Names Index of Turkey and its Environment

1:250,000-scale Geographical Names Index of Turkey and its Environment, prepared by the General Directorate of Mapping and approved by the Turkey Group of Experts of on Geographical Names, is published with its metadata from general web pages and the index is continuously updated. In this index, geographical names in 1:250,000-scale maps is presented with their features and coordinates, and their detailed explanations are included in their metadata.

5. Settlements Database of Turkey

Settlements Database of Turkey, created by the General Directorate of Mapping, is being updated continuously in accordance with the data sent by Ministry of Internal Affairs, when a settlement’s name/feature changes or a new settlement is established. Within this database, it is possible to access changes in features of settlements in the historical process.

6. Future Plans and Goals

- a) The “Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names” is planned to be submitted in the next UNGEGN meeting.

- b) The next regular meeting of the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T) will be held in April 2021. The meeting will provide a ground for consultation on topics on the agenda and coordination between the relevant institutions of Turkey. It will also contribute to the preparations of Turkey for the UNGEGN Meeting in May 2021.
- c) Preparation of a draft National Toponymy List Project will be further discussed between the relevant national institutions.
- d) Preparations regarding the Draft Project of Pronunciation of Province and District Names of Turkey will be further discussed and detailed between relevant national institutions. Voice recordings of each province/district names are currently ready.
- e) Services that enable viewing and downloading of feature information of data via web and GIS applications will be made available to users free of charge, which belong to Administrative Centres and Geographical Location Names layers, which is under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Provincial Administration and will be published within the scope of Turkey Geographic Information System (TUCBS).
- f) Detailed information on Turkey Geographic Information System (TUCBS) can also be forwarded to the relevant UN body for cooperation and coordination purposes.
- g) Works regarding a draft of marine geographical names and undersea feature names have been completed and will be further discussed between the relevant national institutions.