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Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries

and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names

Report of the Russian Federation

Submitted by the Russian Federation **

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** Prepared by the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography

1. Legislative framework for naming of geographical objects in the Russian Federation

The legislation of the Russian Federation for geographical names is based on the Constitution of the Russian Federation and includes the Federal Law “On Names of Geographical Objects” No. 152-FZ of 18.12.1997 as well as expounding them normative legal acts of the Russian Federation.

The Federal Law “On Names of Geographical Objects“ is applied to standardization, usage, registration, and storage of names of geographical objects in the Russian Federation, on continental shelf and in the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation as well as of geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers in the high seas and Antarctica.

The following normative legal acts are in force in the Russian Federation:

1. Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 28.11.2018 No. 681 “On the Assignment of the Names of Persons with Outstanding Merit to the Motherland to Certain Geographical Objects”.

2. Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 15.11.2012 No. 1167 “On the Procedure to Coordinate Proposals on Naming of Some Geographical Objects or on Renaming of Some Geographical Objects”.

3. Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 19.11.2014 No. 1221 “On Approval of the Rules for Assignment, Alteration and Cancellation of Addresses” which set that place names within the address structure must coincide with those registered in the State Catalogue of Geographical Names.

4. Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 22.05.2015 No. 492 “On the Scope of Addresses Information Included to the State Address Register, Procedure for Inter-departmental Information Cooperation to Maintain the State Address Register, on the Procedure for Alternation and Annulment of Some Acts of the Government of the Russian Federation” which approved the “Rules for Inter-departmental Information Cooperation to Maintain the State Address Register”, including providing information from the State Catalogue of Geographical Names.

5. Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 07.03.2019 No. 245 “On the Approval of Rules of Consideration of Proposals on Assignment to Some Geographical Objects of Names of the Persons Having Special Merit to the Motherland and Use of These Names”.

6. Decree of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation of 27.03.2014 No. 171 “On Approval of the Procedure for Examination of Proposals on Naming and Renaming of Geographical Objects and Conclusion Issuing”.

7. Decree of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation of 27.03.2014 No. 172 “On Approval of the Procedure for Registration of Geographical Names, Releasing of Gazetteers and Dictionaries of Geographical Names as well as Development and Maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names”.

8. Decree of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation of 29.05.2015 No. 322 “On Approval of the Procedure for Identification of the Existing Names of Geographical Objects in the Russian Federation, on its Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Russian Federation as well as of Geographical Objects Discovered or Identified by Russian Researchers in the High Seas and Antarctica”.

The enlisted legislative acts related to names of geographical objects are accessible on the official website of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography (Rosreestr) <https://rosreestr.ru/site/activity/geodeziya-i-kartografiya/naimenovaniya-geograficheskikh-obektov/zakonodatelstvo-rf-o-naimenovaniyakh-geograficheskikh-obektov/>.

2. The Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography (Rosreestr) is an authorized federal executive body in the field of names of geographical objects in the Russian Federation.

In the field of names of geographical objects, Rosreestr performs following functions:
development of state policy and legal regulation in the field of names of geographical objects;
creation and maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names;
normalization of names of geographic objects in Russian language;
expert examination of proposals on assigning names to geographical objects and on renaming geographical objects, issuing expert opinions on such proposals;
coordination of contents of dictionaries and reference books of names of geographical objects prior to publication, which are prepared and published by federal executive authorities and public authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

As part of the expert examination, Rosreestr is working in coordination with the relevant interested federal executive bodies on proposals on the assignment of names to railway stations, seaports and river ports, airports, geographical objects of the territorial sea, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, geographical objects, discovered or identified by Russian researchers within the high seas and Antarctica, or on the renaming of such geographic objects.

As part of the maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names, work is being carried out to register and record the names of geographical objects of the Russian Federation, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation and geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers within the high seas and Antarctica, as well as identifying existing names of geographical objects.

In 2019-2021 within the expertise of Rosreestr, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted 58 regulations to assign 60 names to geographical objects and rename 36 geographical objects.

These names of geographical objects immortalize the names of hydrographers, who made a significant contribution to the exploration and research of the Arctic, participants in the Great Patriotic War, researchers of the Arctic, Primorsky Territory and Lake Onega.

Taking into account the interests of the citizens of the Russian Federation, the names were given to settlements in such constituent entities of the Russian Federation as Republic of Buryatia, Chechen Republic, Krasnodar Territory, Vladimir, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Moscow, Chelyabinsk regions and many others.

3. National competition “Great Names of Russia”

The organizers of the competition were the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, the Society of Russian Literature, the Russian Geographical Society, the Russian Historical Society, and the Russian Military Historical Society.

All interested citizens of the Russian Federation took part in the competition.

The idea of the competition is to determine the names of outstanding compatriots, which names will be given to country’s major airports.

The goal is to maintain the connection of times and to popularize the culture and history of Russia.

In order to perpetuate the memory of prominent state, military and public figures, representatives of science, art, culture, sports and other people, who have merit to the Motherland, the following regulatory documents have been adopted:

Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 28.11.2018 No. 681 “On the Assignment of the Names of Persons with Outstanding Merit to the Motherland to Certain Geographical Objects”;

Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 07.03.2019 No. 245 “On the Approval of Rules of Consideration of Proposals on Assignment to Separate Geographical Objects of Names of the Persons Having Special Merit to the Motherland and Use of These Names”.

The names of persons who have rendered special services to the Motherland are assigned to airports, railway stations, sea and river ports by the President of the Russian Federation on the proposal of the Government of the Russian Federation and on the proposals of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation.

The use of names of prominent figures for naming of geographical objects is carried out for educational, informational, tourist and other purposes, as well as in order to ensure the operation of transport infrastructure.

According to the results of the National competition “Great Names of Russia” with the participation of Rosreestr 45 of the largest airports in Russia were named after outstanding compatriots.

4. Celebration in 2020 of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War

As part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, Rosreestr and the Center of Geodesy, Cartography and SDI have prepared the publication “Names of Heroes on the Map of Russia”.

The publication is dedicated to the names of the heroes of the Great Patriotic War and the heroes of military operations of modern realities, whose names were immortalized in the names of geographical objects by decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation, on the proposal of citizens, public organizations, authorities and according to the results of an expert examination carried out by Rosreestr.

The publication includes information about more than 30 geographical objects of the Russian Federation, named after the heroes. This is a tribute to memory, great respect and endless gratitude to the defenders of our Motherland.

Based on the results of cooperation between Rosreestr and the State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus, project “Streets of Heroes on the Map of Belarus” was prepared and made publicly available. This project memorizes heroic pages in the history of our countries – the Great Patriotic War and popularizes the names of geographical objects of our states (<https://rosreestr.gov.ru/site/press/news/rosreestr-i-goskomimushchestva-belarusi-po-sluchayu-75-y-godovshchiny-okonchaniya-vtoroy-mirovoy-voy/>).

In 2020, atlas “The Roads of Military Glory 1941-1945” was published, which is a joint Russian-Belarusian project prepared to the anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

5. Cooperation with the Russian Geographical Society

2020 marked the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Russian Geographical Society.

The main activities of the Russian Geographical Society are expeditions and research, education and enlightenment, nature conservation, publication of books, popularization of geography and the history of our country.

Rosreestr works closely with the Russian Geographical Society on the assignment of names to geographical objects, which were discovered and explored during the expeditions of the Russian Geographical Society, as well as when creating fundamental cartographic works.

The Russian Geographical Society has a toponymic commission that deals with theoretical toponymy, the study of folk geographic terminology, and the introduction of toponymy into the programs of higher educational institutions. In 2019 - 2020 54th and 55th (online) all-Russian student conferences on toponymy were held.

6. Information support in the field of names of geographical objects

Maintenance of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names, registration and accounting of geographical objects of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers within the high seas and Antarctica is carried out on an ongoing basis.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is based on an information search system that provides the building of a database about objects and their names, its storage, processing and the issuance of information registered in it at the request of interested parties free of charge.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names consists of two independent sections:
the first section – geographic objects of the land part of the Russian Federation;
the second section – geographic objects of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation, the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as geographic objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers in the high seas or in the Antarctic.

Currently, the State Catalogue of Geographical Names comprises information about 790 745 geographical objects, including information about 1816 names of geographical objects of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as the names of geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers within the high seas and Antarctica.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is maintained by the Center of Geodesy, Cartography and SDI, which is subordinate to Rosreestr. The data of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names are available on the official website of the institution: <https://cgkipd.ru/science/names/>.

The open data set “State Catalogue of Geographical Names” is published on the official website of Rosreestr in compliance with the Federal Law of 09.02.2009 No. 8-FZ “On Ensuring Access to Information on the Activities of State Bodies and Local Self-government Bodies” as well as for the implementation of the Concept of Openness of Federal Executive Bodies.

7. National system of romanization of geographical objects names

The system of transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet with Latin letters GOST-83, adopted at the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal, 1987), is used in cartographic publications in national languages: <https://rosreestr.gov.ru/site/activity/geodeziya-i-kartografiya/naimenovaniya-geograficheskikh-obektov/zakonodatelstvo-rf-o-naimenovaniyakh-geograficheskikh-obektov/>.

This system is also used in the second section of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names to register information about the names and types of geographical objects of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian scientists within the high seas and Antarctica.

8. Participation in international forums and projects in the field of geographical objects names

During the reporting period, much attention was paid to international cooperation in the field of geographical names.

The Russian Federation participated in the first session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, which was held in May 2019 in New York (USA).

Rosreestr represents the interests of the Russian Federation on geographical names at various international platforms, representative of Rosreestr chairs the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division and participates in the work of the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

In order to improve the activities of the Baltic Division and the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the Russian Federation, represented by Rosreestr, has developed and submitted for consideration the draft Regulation on the Baltic Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the draft Regulation on the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

In addition, Rosreestr, within its powers, represents the Russian Federation at the Interstate Council for Geodesy, Cartography, Cadastre and Remote Sensing of the Earth of the CIS Member States (hereinafter referred to as the Interstate Council).

In 2019-2020, the XLI and XLII sessions of the Interstate Council were held. The Working Group on Geographical Names of the Interstate Council maintains the electronic Bulletin “Changes in Geographical Names of the CIS Member States”, which contains information on official changes in the names of geographical objects of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine in 1998-2020. The Bulletin is published on the official website of Rosreestr: <https://rosreestr.gov.ru/site/activity/geodeziya-i-kartografiya/naimenovaniya-geograficheskikh-obektov/informatsionnye-byulleteni-izmeneni-naimenovaniy-geograficheskikh-obektov/>.

In order to increase the information content of this Bulletin, Rosreestr has prepared a pilot project of an electronic cartographic resource based on the Bulletin data, with the ability to view geospatial data on changes in geographical names displayed on a cartographic base on the territory of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Information about the new name of a geographical object is displayed on an open cartographic base in national and in Russian languages as well as the old name is displayed in Russian language. Reference information is available for each object (the type of geographical object, its administrative-territorial reference, and geographical coordinates).

Rosreestr also participates on behalf of the Russian Federation in the consideration of geographical names within the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR). Within the framework of this participation, Rosreestr organized work on the inclusion in the SCAR Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica of geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers within the high seas and Antarctica and registered in the State Catalogue of Geographical Names.

Rosreestr and other national cartographic authorities of the Arctic states (Denmark including Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Canada, Norway, the United States, Finland and Sweden) signed a memorandum on mutual understanding and cooperation on the creation of the spatial data infrastructure (SDI) of the Arctic region. The participants – national cartographic authorities of the Arctic states reflected the main goals in the document: the provision of coordinated actions and efforts

to create a unified electronic cartographic framework of the Arctic region, the possibility of use of the SDI by governmental, scientific and other organisations, including the Arctic Council and its working groups, the maintenance of sustainable socio-economic development of the Arctic territories.

Within the framework of this project, based on the data of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names, a cartographic web-based service with geographical names of the Arctic region was created using the system of transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabet with Latin letters approved at the Fifth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal, 1987).

9. Improvement of legislation in the field of geographical objects names

In accordance with the Plan of Legislative Activity of the Government of the Russian Federation for 2021, a draft Federal Law “On the Names of Geographical Objects” (hereinafter referred to as the draft Federal Law) has been elaborated.

The draft Federal Law proposes to clarify the list of geographical objects, to provide for the widespread use of digital technologies that ensure digital transformation in the field of naming geographical objects, including the creation of a state information system for maintaining the State Catalogue of Geographical Names, which will provide full support for the documents necessary for assigning names to geographical objects – from filing an application to making a decision.

The draft Federal Law proposes to define the procedure for the preparation and consideration of proposals for the assignment of names to geographical objects and their renaming, as well as to regulate the procedure for taking into account the opinion of citizens regarding the assigned names to geographical objects.

Furthermore, decisions on naming geographical objects will be made not only by the federal executive authorities, but also by the state authorities of constituent entities the Russian Federation and local government bodies. In particular, the competence of constituent entities of the Russian Federation is to include the authority to make decisions on the assignment of names to administrative divisions of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in case of a positive conclusion of the expert examination carried out by the authorized federal executive body.

In addition, the draft Federal Law suggests that geographical objects include elements of the planning structure, as well as buildings and individual structures.

Points for discussion

The UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the report and the progress made by the Russian Federation;
- (b) Express its views on the report of the Russian Federation and discuss the issues raised in the report.