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English

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**United Nations Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names**

**2023 session**

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

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**

**National Report of Türkiye**

Submitted by Türkiye

Summary \*\*

Türkiye currently belongs to the "Asia South-West Division (excluding Arabic)", the "East Central and South-East Division", and the "Romano-Hellenic Division".

The Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the 21st Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in Berlin, on 26 August – 6 September 2002, were attended by a delegation presided by the General Directorate of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior. A National Report was prepared for this meeting and the works carried out were explained, and together with that report, a map showing the civil administrative structure of Türkiye and the names of all settlements were delivered to the UN organization officials through our permanent mission to the UN.

The 22nd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in New York, on 20-29 April 2004 was attended by a delegation presided by the General Directorate of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior.

At the meeting of Group of Experts, the division reports were read by the heads of divisions and the national reports were submitted in summary, and the copies of Turkish National report were also distributed to all participants as the UN document No.29.

Appreciation was shown to Türkiye as the 7th column of the "Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features" drawn up in 6 languages was prepared and forwarded in Turkish and copies of the document were distributed to the participants in addition to the division report.

"The Directive on Working Procedures and Principles of the Board of Experts on Geographical Names" which has been prepared by our Ministry with the considerations of other institutions and organizations in order to make studies on geographical names in our country entered into force with the Ministerial approval No.4431 dated 15 June 2004.

"The Board of Experts on Geographical Names" formed in accordance with Article 4 of the Directive started its activities by establishing various working sub-groups in its meetings held in our Ministry on 12 October 2004 and 6 May 2005.

Türkiye participates in these conferences and meetings with a committee established by the Board of Experts on Geographical Names.

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\*GEGN.2/2023/1

\*\* The full report was prepared by Türkiye.

The list of “Names and Capitals of Countries” prepared and finalized by the Working Sub-group on Names and Capitals of Countries in accordance with Article 6 of the “Instruction on Working Procedures and Principles of the Board of Experts on Geographical Names” has been put into practice with the Ministerial approval No.153 dated 9 January 2012.

It has been deemed appropriate by the Presidential Decree no. 6188 dated 7 October 2022 to name certain submarine formations in the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea which are still unnamed and discussed by the Board of Experts on Geographical Names.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Legal Status and Standardization Authority

The initiative to standardize geographic names in Türkiye started in the late 1930s, when the Ministry of Interior established a special committee for the standardization of settlement names. Today, the standardization of geographic names is still under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior in order to unify the activities carried out by different national institutions.

Standardized geographic names are publicized when they appear in the publications of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the use of country names and capitals, on official topographic maps produced by the Directorate General of Mapping, and on nautical charts produced by the Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography.

### 1.2. National Institutions for the Standardization of Geographic Names

While the standardization of geographic names is legally under the authority of the Ministry of Interior, the standardization of different categories of geographic names is carried out by several institutions, in a coordinated manner.

**Ministry of Interior, the Special Commission for Name Change:** This Committee was established by the Ministry of Interior in 1952 with the mandate to standardize administrative units, prominent settlements and natural geographic details, except for those within municipal boundaries, such as roads, parks and streets. This committee, which included experts from universities and State institutions, worked at irregular intervals until 1975.

'The Regulation on the Establishment, Duties and Working Principles and Procedures of the Commission of Experts for Name Change', was promulgated in 1983, establishing the basis of national committee on geographic names. However, it was repealed by the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1986 due to difficulties in its implementation.

The Board of Experts on Geographical Names: Finally, in order to unify, accelerate and coordinate all standardization-related activities, this board was established by the Directorate General of Provincial Administration (IIGM) of the Ministry of Interior for the standardization of geographic names, with the participation of experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Language Association (TDK), Turkish Historical Society (TTK), Universities, the Directorate General of Land Registry and Cadastre (TKGM) and the Directorate General of Mapping (HGM), on 15.07.2004 . It is structured as a board of ministries and academic experts, and is authorized to standardize all kinds of geographic names. It is also responsible for proposing names for exonyms, marine and submarine details and celestial bodies other than the earth.

**Local Authorities:** Local Authorities are authorized to name geographic details that are directly related to municipalities, such as urban areas, roads, intersections and parks, which are outside the authority and responsibility of the “Ministry of Interior”.

**Ministry of National Defense, Directorate General of Mapping (HGM):** It is Türkiye's National Mapping Institution and is responsible for producing and updating topographic map series at scales ranging from 1:25 000 to 1:500 000, which is the base map of the country. Apart from map production, HGM is also authorized to collect geographic names from relevant local and national institutions during fieldwork for map revision. This institution has contributed to the standardization of the names on the base map. Especially in cases of uncertainty, the toponymical information of the base maps (1:25 000) is adopted as the official name.

## 2. The Administrative Units of Türkiye and Geographic and Statistical Regions

### 2.1. The Administrative Units of Türkiye

Since 1930, various studies have been carried out on the standardization of the names of administrative units, settlements and the natural details, and some of these studies have been published by the Ministry of Interior at various intervals.

Administrative units (provinces, districts, villages) are established and named in accordance with the Law on Provincial Administration no. 5442. The provinces and districts are established and named by the laws enacted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Other administrative units and geographic details, except villages and smaller settlements, are named with the favourable opinion of the Provincial Assembly, the Provincial Administration Board and the Governor, and the approval of the President upon the proposal of the Minister of Interior. The Directorate General of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior has the authority to keep the records of the names of the villages, to standardize them, and to instruct the secretariat to conduct these studies. Geographic names are determined in consultation with language and history experts.

The Directory on the Names of Physiographic (Natural) Details has been created by the Special Commission for Name Change of the Ministry of Interior between 1965-70 and 1975-76. This directory, together with geographic details and the former names, was published in 1977 in the book “Yeni Tabii Yer Adları – 1977” (New Name Index for Natural Places – 1977) by the Directorate General of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior.

The Directorate General of Mapping has participated in EuroGlobalMap (EGM) project of Euro Geographics, a higher association of national cartography institutions in Europe, representing Türkiye. In this project, Türkiye has provided the geographic names and the borders of provinces and districts to be included in EGM central database in 2003.

### 2.2. Gazetteers

The first directory of place names in Türkiye which consists of 30.000 records collected from topographic maps scaled 1/500.000, has been published by the Directorate General of Mapping in 1977, as a directory consisting of geographic names and their coordinates as an enclosure to the New Atlas of Türkiye covering the maps scaled 1/500.000.

A new name index for places consisting of 45,000 names for details shown on a 1/250,000 scale Joint Operations Graphics (JOG) was prepared between the years 1997-1998 in ESRI Arcinfo layer and table (Microsoft Excel) formats. Prepared in accordance with NATO STANAG 2213, this directory contains 58 different types of details, including settlements, man-made details, landmarks, transport, rivers, lakes, mountains, physiography, vegetation and prominent regions. This name index for places will be updated after the completion of the Joint Operations Graphics, 30 % of which was formed until the end of 2003. The information compiled for each detail consists of name, detail type, UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) right and up values, latitude and longitude values, JOG sheet number and sheet publication dates.

Third edition base maps are created by using digital techniques. Currently, about 1500 sheets have been produced. The resulting vector and raster maps are kept in the geographic database. In parallel with this production, the geographic names in the database will be utilized to create **the Digital Toponymic Database of Türkiye**.

In 1986, at the Meeting of Experts on Geographic Names (UNGEGN), a list of 'Turkish Exonyms (equivalents) of the Aegean Islands' was submitted to the UN in Report WP29 and in 1987, a short list of 'Standardized Names of Marine and Submarine Details Around Türkiye' was submitted in Report E/CONF.79/INF/58. The directory of standardized names of submarines and maritime details around Türkiye was published by the Turkish Naval Forces, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography in 1992.

### 2.3 Book of Administrative Divisions and Database for the Settlements in Türkiye by the Ministry of Interior

In 2001, the Ministry of Interior renewed the registers of all settlements in Türkiye and made them publicly available in both printed and electronic format as in the book “Türkiye Mülki İdare Bölümleri” (Administrative

Divisions in Türkiye). This information is available in the database on the website of the Directorate General of Provincial Administration of the Ministry of Interior and is regularly updated ([www.icisleri.gov.tr](http://www.icisleri.gov.tr)).

The settlements of Türkiye are, respectively from top to bottom, provinces, districts, villages and their subdivisions. Data on settlements on 1/25,000 scale topographic maps were kept in a traditional archive in the Cartography Department of the HGM for years. This archive was converted into a relational database (Turkish Settlements Database (TYVV)) after three years of data entry and software development. The information compiled for each settlement consists of a unique identifier number, a nationally recognized place name, location (1:25,000 sheet name and right-up value), geographical coordinates (latitude-longitude), population, former names and the altitude of the centre of the settlement above sea level. While creating TYVV, the aim is not only to provide information for the production of digital topographic maps, but also to support its use for population and statistics, urban and regional planning, emergency services, map and atlas production, security, tourism, trade, etc. that need this information. TYVV is created by making use of the toponymy information collected during the field studies carried out for the production of topographic base map data and the articles of the Ministry of Interior regarding the standardization of the name of settlements or the establishment of settlements. The preliminary studies have been carried out for the distribution of TYVV on the web.

#### **2.4. Naming the Statistical Regions of Türkiye, and the Geographic Regions of Türkiye**

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – NUTS was determined for EUROSTAT in 2003 by experts from different institutions. NUTS is used for regional statistics collection and identification of the statistical regional units in the European Union (EU). For the geography of Türkiye, NUTS has been determined at three-levels by drawing from the borders depicting regional variations. There are respectively 12 and 26 regions at the 1st and 2nd levels of NUTS. These regional divisions have been published by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute). (Council of Ministers Decision no: 2002/4720 published on Official Gazette dated 22 September 2002).

Moreover, seven geographic regions of Türkiye are already identified for mapping, statistics, research, education and similar purposes. Currently, further research and studies are carried out in order to re-identify the geographic regions, taking into account the demography, vegetation, geomorphology, climate etc. by experts in institutes and universities. However, none of these studies has gained general acceptance and formalized by the geography and cartography community.

### **3. Standardization of Terminology and Toponymy**

#### **3.1. Country Names and Exonyms**

The Turkish equivalents of country names and capitals were compiled and corrected by HGM in the ISO 3166 standard (1997-2002), in accordance with the document E/CONF.94/CRP.11 published by UNGEGN. This list is an extended version of the "Turkish Equivalents of European Countries and Capitals" published by HGM in 1992. The List of Country Names and Capitals, which was prepared by the Board of Experts on Geographical Names and approved by the Minister of Interior dated 09.01.2012 and numbered 153, was presented to the UN at the 10th Meeting of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in New York, USA on 30 July-10 August 2012.

The List of Country Names and Capitals is updated by the Board upon the proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in response to the changes in country names and capitals over time ([www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr)).

#### **3.2. Toponymy Guide, Dictionary of Geographic Details (Glossary) and Spelling Rules for Mapping and Other Editors**

“Toponymy Guide of Türkiye” was first submitted at the UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names (Genoa) in 1982 (E/CONF.74/L.7). The new version, prepared after the Toponymy Guide has been updated, will be published at an ulterior date. Although this work has been initiated by the HGM, experts in cartography, geography and linguistics from universities, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Turkish Language Association, the Turkish Historical Society and the Directorate General of Land Registry and Cadaster are involved in it.

“Multilingual Dictionary of Geographic Details (Glossary)” was prepared by the Roman-Greek division and submitted to the 21st Session of the UNGEGN. Since Türkiye is a member of this division, Turkish equivalents of geographic details were prepared and added to this glossary in 2003. “Multilingual Dictionary of Geographic Details” combines with the list of details on the basic topographic map of Türkiye. After being checked and edited by experts from the fields of cartography, geography and linguistics, the new expanded list will be made available to the international community of geography, in Turkish and English. The final version of geographic details list will be a part of the second edition of the "Toponymy Guide of Türkiye".

A study is being carried out by the Turkish Language Association on the spelling rules of geographic details in Turkish. This study will be used in the preparation of the new version of the "Toponymy Guide of Türkiye" for mapping and other editors.

### **3.3. Glossary of Terminology for the Standardization of Geographic Names**

The 4th version of the "Glossary of Terminology for the Standardization of Geographic Names (Glossary)" submitted by the UNGEGN working group at the Seventh UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names is being translated into Turkish. This glossary contains 375 terms, including cross-references. These terms are divided into three categories: the terms in the first group have singular and exact equivalents in Turkish; some of the terms in the second group have a single Turkish equivalent, while others have multiple Turkish equivalents; the terms in the third group either do not have Turkish equivalents or have close Turkish equivalents based on their definitions. HGM and the Turkish Language Association are carrying out this study. This glossary will be published for national use as soon as it is finalized, and submitted to the UNGEGN.

### **3.4 Works on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Historical Names**

In order to preserve cultural heritage and historical place names, works are being carried out by many institutions, particularly by the Turkish Historical Society (TTK). Within this framework, TTK is preparing an inventory of cultural assets that will cover the whole of Türkiye and its surroundings. Another work carried out for this purpose is the creation of a comprehensive historical database. A significant part of this database contains data on the determination of the administrative structure in different sections over time in the Central Black Sea, Çukurova and Ankara regions, which were selected as pilot regions for study. These data are used to analyze the changes and transformations of both the administrative structure and the socio-economic and cultural formations which were shaped on this structure. This study will cover the whole of Türkiye in the long run. Another study is underway at the Turkish Historical Society to determine the demographic structure of the nomadic tribes in Türkiye between the 15th and 17th centuries. The historical names of settlements and other geographic names obtained as a result of this research are being uploaded to a large-scale database, aiming at determining the links between the previous and contemporary society and the former and new place names. The ‘Atlas of the Turkic World’, from the beginning to the present, and publications about historical geography are other works carried out by TTK aimed at the preservation of cultural heritage and historical place names.

## **4. Participation in Regional Division Activities**

### **4.1. Division 8: South-West Asia (except Arabic)**

Information about 50 details was excerpted from the 1:250 000 scale Türkiye Place Name Directory (Gazetteer) and forwarded to the Secretariat of Division in Tehran. This list consists of geographic details such as settlements, rivers, mountains, islands, seas and their locations, types of details, source material and up-to-date information.

### **4.2. Division 20: Roman - Greek**

The 'Multilingual Dictionary of Geographic Details (Glossary)' in Italian, French, English, Greek, Spanish and Romanian was submitted at the 21st Session of UNGEGN Conference in 2002. The names of geographic details in the Glossary were translated into Turkish in 2003 in order to add a Turkish column to the

Glossary, and added to the list. This study was reviewed by Ankara University, Faculty of Languages, Department of History and Geography. However, the Turkish equivalents of the detail names that are not on the list, but are frequently found on the maps of Türkiye, have not yet been added to the dictionary.