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Report: Divisions of the Group of Experts

**Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of
the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

Submitted by ECSEED

*GEGN.2/2023/1

**Prepared by the East Central and South-East Europe Division

I. ECSEED chairing

Czechia took over the division chairing of the East Central and South-East Europe Division in January 2022. This is a report of main activities from this chairing.

II. The Session reporting and documents

The 26th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED) of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) convened by the ECSEED's Chairperson was held in Praha, Czechia, on 18 May 2022.

6 participants attended the Session in person and 2 countries on-line. There were 16 participants from ECSEED countries and 2 from non- ECSEED countries (Austria).

There were 8 national reports submitted to the Session: national report of Bulgaria, national report of Croatia, national report of Czechia, national report of Hungary, national report of Poland, national report of Slovenia, national report of Slovakia and national report of Ukraine.

Special presentations followed the national reports. The main topics were:

1. The Problems of minority languages
2. Historical changes of names
3. Gazetteers and data files
4. UNGEGN, cooperation

Future recommendations concerned the model of national reports.

All papers, national reports and special presentations are published on the ECSEED web site.

The delegates made the following recognitions, conclusions and recommendations:

- a) The delegates from participating countries recognized positive achievements and the progress made in the work of geographical name standardization. The delegates recommend that the ongoing process must continue.
- b) Delegates were asked to cooperate on international projects for the publication of geographical names:
 - The Open Gazetteer of EuroGeographics
 - UNGEGN's Programme of Work on geographical names data management
- c) Delegates agreed that there is usually a need for exonyms in their languages.
- d) The next 27th session of the division is planned to be held in 2023 in New York in parallel with the upcoming meeting 3rd UNGEGN session on geographical names standardization.

List of documents

No.	Title	Prepared by	Country
1	National Report of Bulgaria	Stanislava Valcheva	Bulgaria
2	National Report of Czechia	Sarka Hejdova, Land Survey Office	Czechia
3	National Report of Hungary (Report on geographic name management in Hungary - activities, fieldwork, data processing)	Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names Gabor Mikešy, Laszlo Lippmann	Hungary
4	National Report of Poland	Maciej Zych, chair Commission on Geographical Names	Poland
5	National Report of Slovakia	Zuzana Michalkova, Geodetic and Cartographic Institute	Slovakia
6	National report of Slovenia	Matjaz Gersic, Geografski institut Antona Melika	Slovenia
7	Hinan, Zhuya, Qiongya, or Qiongzhou Island? Historical changes of names of the largest China's island	Vladimir Liscak, chair Czech Commission on Geographical Names	Czechia
8	Geographical Names of Czechia on the Ottoman Map from 1914	Boguslaw Zagorski, Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland	Poland
9	Geographical names management	Darina Porubcanova, Geodetic and Cartographic Institute	Slovakia
10	The Problems of minority languages settlement names in Hungary	Attila Sasi, Lechner Knowledge Centre	Hungary
11	The Open Gazetteer of EuroGeoGraphics and Exonyms	Roman Stani-Fertl, EuroGeoGraphics	Austria
12	UNGEGN's Programme of Work on geographical names data management - findings, challenges and obstacles	Marija Brnot Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia and Pier-Giorgio Zacchedu. Director of the EuroGeoNames project	Slovenia
13	How to reconcile UN resolutions on exonyms and on place names as cultural heritage	Peter Jordan, Working group on Exonyms of UNGEGN, Austrian Academy of Sciences	Austria
14	Inaugural meeting UNGEGN and other matters	Irena Svehlova, chair ECSEED, Czech Commission on Geographical Names	Czechia

III. Other joint activities of the Member States of the Division:

The participants of the 26th meeting were acquainted with the materials from the virtual inaugural meeting with UNGEGN, the webinar Developing digital gazetteers using free and open-source software and were reminded of the current UNGEGN concept - all in the UNGEGN contribution - Inaugural meeting UNGEGN and other matters (Irena Svehlova).

The majority of member states support the conclusions of the meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms in Ljubljana hosted by Slovenia and the proposals to modify the UNGEGN recommendations. Majority of the member states (8) participated in the meeting, chaired by Kohei Watanabe either in person or on-line. Many of them with expert contributions. See: <http://ungegn.zrc-sazu.si/Activities>

Representatives of the Division's member states (4) actively participated in the UNGEGN Terminology Working Group meeting in Ljubljana, led by Trent Palmer. In particular, they were interested in the newly proposed definition of exonym and also in the terms being prepared to complete the glossary for the standardization of geographical names. They also got acquainted with the prepared application for terms related to standardization using the Austrian UNGEGN Glossary application.

Since 2013, 6 joint meetings of the Geographical Names Commissions of the three neighboring countries of Czechia, Poland and Slovakia have been held. The meetings are held successively in the capitals of these countries, and the host countries change as well. The 2022 meeting was held at the invitation of the Slovak Geographical Names Commission in Bratislava and the 2023 meeting will take place on 19 September in Prague under the patronage of the Czech Geographical Names Commission.

In 2022 Hungary have conducted a joint field survey with Slovenia in 8 settlements in the region of Szentgotthard, where the Slovenian minority lives in Hungary. It is a two-year project focusing on microtoponyms. The results of this project will be published in a book and a map. This is an excellent model of cooperation between two neighboring commissions, resulting in a common goal, particularly important in the minority field.

IV. Divisional homepage

The East Central and South-East Europe Division has its own web site: <http://ecseed.zrc-sazu.si/Home.aspx>. Since January 2018 there were some updates of the homepage in the experts and authorities section.

All documents from the 26th meeting of the division were added to the website.

V. National activities

Below is brief information about the latest activities in some ECSEED countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Bulgaria

The work concerning geographical names was affected by the global pandemic of COVID-19 and the unstable local political environment.

In the autumn of 2021, however, the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency (GCCA) started a 3-year project for the union of its three existing separate databases. Among the expected outcomes of the project are an enriched RGN database interlinked with the available cadastral information and better system functionality in providing data and services (incl. w. r. t. standardized geographical names). Possibilities for supplementing the RGN with geographical names from different local governmental institutions and non-profit organizations are being assessed as well.

Croatia

The Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names in 2022 held nine meetings and worked continuously, through its working groups, on four strategic documents (which are adopted) for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names.

With the implementation of the new Law on Settlements, local self-government units are obliged to obtain the opinion of the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names on the proposed name of the settlement, street or square. Activities (pilot project) on the revision of some records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names were completed with a review.

Cyprus

Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Republic of Cyprus (CPCSGN) has prepared an edition titled: “Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names of Cyprus”. This gazetteer is based on a national hydrographical database where regular updates are performed. CPCSGN distributes this edition to all interested persons and organizations.

CPCSGN participates actively in UNGEGN conferences, sessions and committees. In addition, CPCSGN submitted a series of 14 technical papers which are included in UNGEGN Bulletins. CPCSGN also helped in the design of the cover page of the last 10 editions of the Bulletin.

Czechia

The Czech Commission on Geographical Names has issued a new edition of the list of Czech exonyms, historical geographical names and names of States and their territorial parts, which is published as an open application.

A project on names of the world is available online (see <https://ags.cuzk.cz/jmenasveta.cuzk.cz>).

In terms of international cooperation, Czechia attended the 25th meeting of the East Central and South-East Europe Division in Bratislava. On 18 May 2022, the 26th meeting of the Division took place in Prague.

Hungary

The name of the basic territorial unit of Hungarian public administration (which is also the NUTS3 statistical unit of the European Union) has changed: the official generic term for *county* was *megye* until 31 December 2022, from 1 January 2023 it has been *varmegye*.

The Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names has noted the shortcomings and anomalies in minority place names and has devoted a special thematic session to this issue. Institutions interested in this topic were invited. A detailed database of settlements inhabited by minorities and of minority name forms has been prepared, and the national organisations of minorities have been asked to comment on and complete it. The responses and evaluation are being processed.

Poland

The list of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of Poland was published at the end of 2021. Containing a limited number of names of the most such important features, it is a guide to the English names of objects in Poland.

The national register of geographical names currently holds the names of approximately 256.00

geographical features within the territory of Poland.

Slovakia

In 2022, the Aerial Laser Scanning project was completed, resulting in DTM 5.0, DSM 1.0 and a classified point cloud. DTM 5.0 achieves an average vertical accuracy of less than 0.20m and the classified point cloud even less than 0.11m. On the ground of these very precise data authority has started checking the heights of mountain peaks, and densifying and refining the position of GN of the Tatra Mountains features.

The 6th joint meeting of the Geographical Names Commissions of Czechia, Poland and Slovakia was held in Bratislava 14 June 2022.

Slovenia

In September 2021 two important projects started - a three-year project for the standardization of hydronyms in the Republic of Slovenia from the Register of Geographical Names for a scale 1: 25,000, and a two-year project about microtoponyms in Raba Valley (Porabje).

A joint meeting of the Working Groups on Exonyms and Toponymic Terminology was organized in Ljubljana, 31 August - 3 September 2022. The meeting was attended by 23 delegates from 14 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America.

The President of the Slovenian Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CSGN) dr. Matjaz Gersic spent 3 months (from October 2022 till January 2023) as a visiting researcher at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He was hosted by dr. Ali Aldosary, member of the National Committee on Geographical Names in KSA. Their common research was dedicated to the challenges in the transformation of European geographical names into Arabic.

Ukraine

In 2021, user access to data on the geographical names of Ukraine was provided through the geoportal of the pilot project of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, which is still in its trial phase (www.nsd.gov.ua).

On 20 September 2022, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine amended the Law of Ukraine “On Geographical Names” to improve activities related to the establishment, regulation, accounting, registration, utilization and maintenance of geographical names.

VI. Action to be taken by the Group of Experts

Create a clear model of national report. It is possible to use our division's draft form.