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Geographical Names
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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**

Report of Lithuania

Submitted by Lithuania **

Summary:

The full report covers the two-year period (2021–2022) since the second session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The following are the matters included in the report:

Lithuania is a member of the Baltic Division of the Group of Experts. A representative of Lithuania is a Vice-Chair of the Division for a 4-year period which started in 2021. The delegation of Lithuania participated in two divisional meetings of the Group of Experts that were held during the reporting period. Lithuanian geographical names experts also contribute to the working group of Lithuanian Standards Board Technical Committee 86 on digital geographic information.

As of 17 July 2021 the requirements of the Open Data Directive of the European Union had been included in the national legal system, as well as in the Law on the right to receive information and data reuse of the Republic of Lithuania. Open data from the address registry is available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public Licence for reuse purposes.

The official spatial dataset of Geographic Place Names for the Republic of Lithuania (see https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/web/gv_drlt_en) is updated annually based on the State mapping programme. In 2022, the search application programme interface for the dataset was significantly improved.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is responsible for the standardization of place names in Lithuania at the national level on a regular basis. Starting on 27 October 2022, before registering a hydrographic object into the State cadastre of rivers, lakes and ponds, the State Commission must provide an inference upon request of the cadastre administrator.

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Place names as a form of oral tradition are included in the intangible cultural heritage inventory managed by the National Cultural Centre of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

REPORT OF LITHUANIA

1. National institutions working in the field of standardization of geographical names

Lithuania is a member of UNGEGN Baltic Division. A representative of Lithuania is a Vice-Chair of the division for a 4-year period which started in 2021.

State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is responsible for the standardization of geographical names on the national level in Lithuania. Starting on 27 October 2022, before registering a hydrographic object into the State cadastre of rivers, lakes and ponds, the State Commission must provide an inference upon request of the cadastre administrator.

Counties, districts, municipalities, wards, residential areas, streets, buildings, and address objects are registered in the address registry of Lithuania and maintained on regular basis. The registry is administered by the State Enterprise Centre of Registers (SE “Centre of Registers”).

The National Land Service under the Ministry of Agriculture (The National Land Service under the Ministry of Environment starting from 2023-01-04) is responsible for the State mapping program for the period of 2021-2023. The management and annual update of the Spatial Data Set of Geographic Place Names for the Republic of Lithuania (GV_DRLT) is included in the program.

The representatives of the National Land Service, the National Centre of Remote Sensing and Geoinformatics “GIS-Centras” or SE “GIS-Centras” (the State Enterprise Agricultural Data Center from 2023-01-03), Vilnius University Department for Cartography and Geoinformatics of the Institute of Geosciences contribute to the working group of Lithuanian Standards Board Technical Committee 86 on digital geographic information.

The initiatives in the field of standardization during the reference period are positively evaluated by Lithuanian experts of geographical names: 1) the initiative of the European Commission for preparing the project of the Code of Practice on standardisation in the European Research Area, 2) the initiative of the United Nations for strengthening the cooperation between the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and UNGEGN as their activities are closely related.

The expert group working on naming of geographical objects of the territory of Lithuania was formed at the end of 2015 by the National Land Service. The group consists of nine representatives of the state institutions (National Land Service, State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, SE “Centre of Registers”, SE “GIS-Centras”, Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, Institute of the Lithuanian Language, Lithuanian Cartographic Society, and Institute of Geosciences of Vilnius University). The group was active till the end of 2022.

2. The legal framework, the state of normative and methodological documents while performing the geographical names standardization

Geographical names as a form of oral tradition are included in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory managed by the Lithuanian National Cultural Center of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. Submitters – The Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture, the Lithuanian Geographical Society, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 2019. The Inventory can be found at <https://savadas.lnkc.lt/en/elements/element-list/place-names-the-tradition-of-memory-and-usage/>

As of 17 July 2021 the requirements of the Open Data Directive of the European Union had been included in the national legal system, as well as in the Law on the right to receive information and data reuse of the Republic of Lithuania. Spatial data of address registry and georeference base cadastre, Geographical Names implementing the European Union directive INSPIRE is available as open data for reuse purposes. At the same time the amendment to the Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania, which has been in effect until now, announced that from the 1st of July in 2021 state spatial data sets, including GV_DRLT, were opened and provided to the users under the Creative Commons public licences.

3. The status of national geographical names data sets, catalogues, registry information

The main operations of developing national geographical names data sets, catalogues and registry information are as follows:

3.1. The address registry is the primary data source of official geographical name information. There are 10 counties, 60 municipalities, 544 wards, 20,976 residential areas, 58,789 street names, 1,079, 941 address points registered in the address registry in February in 2023 and provided to users (<https://www.registrucentras.lt/p/1187>). Historical data of residential areas and streets is available for users also.

3.2. The data layer VIETOV_T of the georeference base cadastre is the source of geographical names for objects that are not registered in the address registry. Over 64 thousand actual geographical names are collected in the data layer VIETOV_T for the objects of the whole territory of Lithuania in February in 2023 (<https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/atviri-duomenys#grpka>). The layer VIETOV_T is the main source for GV_DRLT.

3.3. Nearly 160, 000 geographical names are collected and maintained in the GV_DRLT in February in 2023. The historical geographical names are among them. Application programming interface (API) search service (<https://www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai/Home/PageIntegrate>) was significantly improved in 2022;

3.4. The interactive e-service for the review, search, provision and statistical analysis of the spatial data of the GV_DRLT is provided in the SDI portal since 2014 at www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai. The data search functionality of the GV_DRLT is implemented using Elasticsearch technology and was improved in 2022;

3.5. Using interactive e-service the registered users have a possibility to add missing place names to the GV_DRLT data set here www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai. It's a crowdsourcing platform for collecting geographical names. Users have added several hundred missing geographical names using this functionality;

3.6. The National Land Service contributed with its content to the Open Gazetteer provided by Eurogeographics. Open Gazetteer is a web feature service (WFS) of authoritative geographical names as maintained in the source data of the national mapping agencies (NMA);

3.7. A comparative database of hydronyms is created and related data is collected at Vilnius University Department for Cartography and Geoinformatics of the Institute of Geosciences. The purpose of creating the database is to show the names of small hydrographic objects on topographic maps during the periods: Russian Empire at the map scales 1:21,000 and 1:42,000; Interwar Poland 1:25,000 and 1:100,000; in the post-war Soviets 1:25,000, in Lithuania (after the independence of Lithuania in 1991) 1:50,000. The project is ongoing;

3.8. Users can find e-dictionaries, e-services and other Lithuanian language resources in the Lithuanian language resources information system "E-Language" (<https://ekalba.lt>). "E-Language" system is the source of geographical names also. [Geoinformation Database of Lithuanian Toponyms](#) and [Database of Historic Toponyms](#) are just several examples. The system is managed by the Institute of Lithuanian Language. The system launched in 2015. It have grown over 2018-2020 years and was

improved in 2021. Besides, the variance of words in relation with geographic location is under the focus in geolinguistic researches in the Center of Geolinguistics in the Institute of the Lithuanian Language.

4. Main cartographic works released during 2021-2022

The visualisation of geographical names in GV_DRLT map (www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai/map) was improved in 2022.

5. Information about participation in international events related with standardization of geographical names

The delegation of Lithuania participated in two divisional meetings of the Group of Experts that were held during the reporting period:

5.1. The representatives of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, National Land Service, SE “GIS-Centras” participated with presentations in the 21th meeting of the UNGEGN Baltic division that was held virtually on the 23rd-24th of September in 2021, at the invitation of Estonian Ministry of Finance, Land Board and the Institute of the Estonian Language;

5.2. The representatives of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, the Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture, and SE Agricultural Data Center participated in the 22nd meeting of the UNGEGN Baltic division that was held on the 15th-17th of March in 2023 in Warsaw at the invitation of the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography.

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