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English

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

**2023 session**

New York, 1 to 5 May 2023

**Item 12 of the provisional agenda \***

**Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity,  
including indigenous, minority and regional languages and multilingual issues**

**Bilingual municipal maps in the Austrian federal province  
Carinthia**

Submitted by Austria \*\*

Summary:

In 2022, a hiking map was published that includes field and farm names in the bilingual (German/Slovenian) municipality of Zell/Sele, which is in the Austrian federal province of Carinthia (Kärnten). The new map was published by the municipality of Zell/Sele in cooperation with the Slovenian Ethnographic Institute Urban Jarnik in Klagenfurt, Austria, and the MapExplorer company. The map includes not only the official bilingual names of populated places, but also the bilingual names of all other geographical feature categories, including farm and field names. The Slovenian versions of such microtoponymy are based on local dialect forms, but adapted to standard Slovenian, while the German names are adapted to standard German. The adaptation was done in accordance with scientific principles and in close consultation with locals, so that they would not perceive these names as being “alien”, or not their own.

The new hiking map of the municipality of Zell/Sele is the first official municipal map in Carinthia that includes traditional, local Slovenian names for all geographical feature categories, thereby preserving geographical names that are components of the local minority language as intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, the map can serve as a benchmark for other municipalities in Carinthia.

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\*\* The report was prepared by Martina Piko-Rustia, Slovenian Ethnographic Institute Urban Jarnik

## **Bilingual municipal maps in the Austrian federal province Carinthia**

In 2022, a hiking map with field and farm names of the bilingual (German/Slovenian) municipality of Zell/Sele (Austrian federal province Carinthia [Kärnten]) was published. The publisher of the new map is the municipality of Zell/Sele in cooperation with the Slovenian Ethnographic Institute Urban Jarnik in Klagenfurt and the company MapExplorer.

The maps of municipalities in Carinthia are based on the official Austrian Map (ÖK 50), published by the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying [Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen, BEV] in Vienna [Wien], which represents all officially bilingual names of populated places in both languages. This official bilingualism of names of populated places (not of other feature categories) has largely been respected by municipal maps so far published in Carinthia, but not by all of them. This is due to constitutional municipal autonomy by which municipalities are free to decide to which extent minority names are taken into account on maps and other means of communication.

An example of good practice is the new hiking map for the municipality of Zell/Sele, on which names of all feature categories are shown in the two local languages, i.e., in addition to names of populated places also the (rivers, creeks, springs, reservoirs, etc.), landscapes, etc. (see Fig. 1). A specific of this map are the traditional local Slovenian farm and field names, which have been declared intangible cultural heritage by the Austrian UNESCO Commission in 2010. The names of farmsteads were derived from the official Index of Addresses, Buildings and Apartments [Adress-, Gebäude- und Wohnungsregister, AGWR] and partly corrected in cooperation with municipal officials. The farm names are shown on the map together with house numbers. The map presents also a rich variety of traditional field names still in active use – names for small units providing orientation in close vicinity of the farm as well as names known in a wider surrounding and thus providing orientation in a larger area. The collection of names on the map is very comprehensive and amounts to around 2,110 names including names for features located in sections of neighboring municipalities also recorded on this map.

Many of the geographical names handed down in the local Slovenian dialect were recorded in writing for the first time. Geographical names are landmarks, and it is important that they are spelled correctly so that their meaning and relation to reality is recognizable. The names are presented in standard German and standard Slovenian. The standard language forms are shaped based on traditional dialect names and their meaning and accorded with inhabitants so that the standard language form is accepted by them and not perceived as "alien".

The new map of the municipality of Zell/Sele is a milestone in the documentation of geographical names in southern Carinthia. An important precondition was the inclusion of the element "Slovenian field and farm names in Carinthia" in the list of intangible cultural heritage of the Austrian UNESCO Commission (2010). One of the reasons for this inclusion was a map published in 2008 for the marketing of farm products of Zell/Sele on which traditional local Slovenian farm and field names were documented for the first time. The map was published by the representation of Zell farmers and part of a EU cross-border project. So far, Slovenian cultural associations and interest groups have published ten maps for eight municipalities, accessible also on the FLU-LED web portal ([www.flurnamen.at](http://www.flurnamen.at), [www.ledinskaimena.si](http://www.ledinskaimena.si)).

The new hiking map of the municipality of Zell/Sele is the first official municipal map in Carinthia that reflects traditional local Slovenian names of all feature categories and thus preserves geographical names as components of the local minority language as an immaterial

cultural heritage. It may acquire benchmark function for other municipalities in Carinthia, e.g., the municipality of Bleiburg/Pliberk.

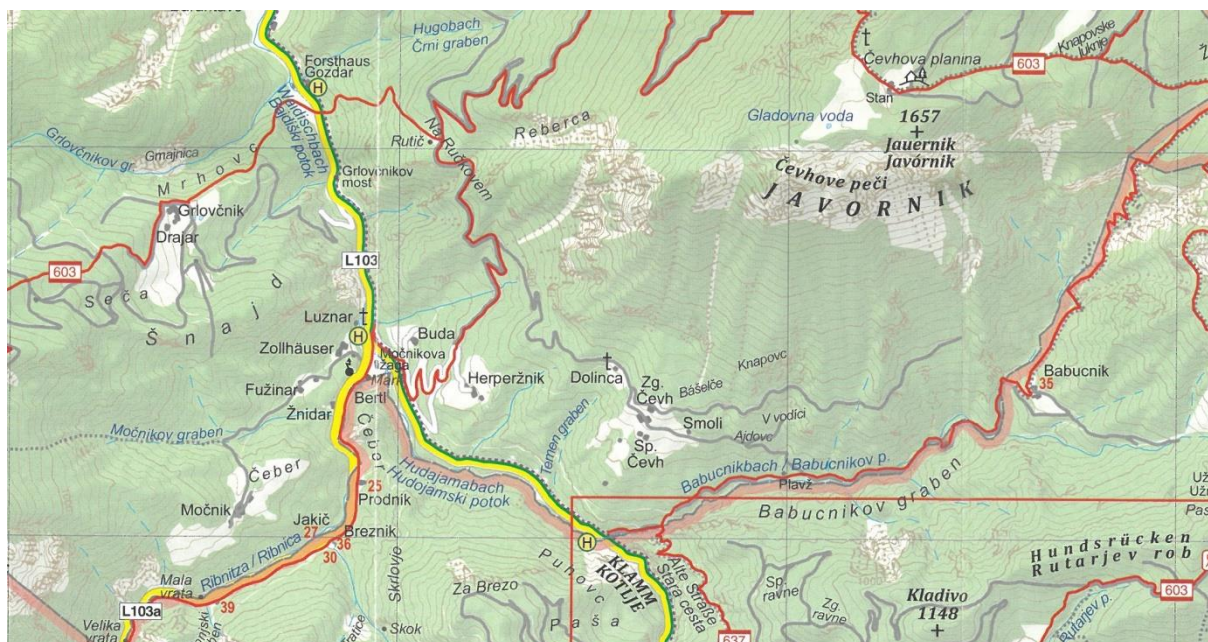


Fig. 1: Section of the bilingual municipal map of the bilingual (German/Slovenian) municipality of Zell/Sele (Austrian federal province Carinthia [Kärnten]): bilingual names of mountains, alpine pastures and water bodies

The Group of Experts is requested to:

- (1) Take note of a milestone in mapping minority names in the Austrian federal province of Carinthia.
- (2) Discuss the modes of minority place-name mapping in a comparative way.
- (3) Arrive at recommendations for minority place-name standardization taking into account the various historical, cultural, political and economic backgrounds.