

**UNGEGN 2023 Session National Reports, Agenda item 4**  
**Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you for the opportunity to give a brief introduction to the Transcriptor, a web application that aims to help Dutch language users with the automated transcription of geographical names and personal names from non-Roman scripts into the Latin alphabet. The Transcriptor was formally launched in March 2022.

The algorithm used by the Transcriptor applies the romanization rules per alphabet or country. If a user provides a name, either in non-Roman script characters or in Roman script, the tool provides the correct romanization according to the UN system and according to many other existing romanization systems that are in use worldwide, including for place names for example the system used on traffic signs and for personal names the systems used in passports. To recognize the name that is provided by a user, the tool contains a dynamic database module, searching various online sources, such as Wikidata and GeoNames, for existing names and spelling practices in various languages.

The tool also takes into account the list of common exonyms as maintained by the Dutch Language Union. The advised form in Roman script for a name will be either the form according to the romanization system recommended by the UN, or a common exonym if it is in the Dutch exonyms list, or a form in a Dutch transliteration system if that is the commonly used romanization system in Dutch. The first two language modules of the Transcriptor launched in March 2022, are Ukrainian and Russian. For these two languages indeed a common Dutch transliteration system exists and so the Transcriptor primarily advises the name romanized according to this Dutch system. But in every search result, the name is also provided according to the other romanization systems included in the Transcriptor.

The slide shows you how the Transcriptor web interface looks like. In this example you can see the result when you enter the Ukrainian place name Kamianets-Podilskyi in Cyrillic characters. At the top right you will see the Dutch transliteration, with links to the Dutch Wikipedia and the location in OpenStreetMap; then in the blue bar the name history of the city based on Wikidata, followed by a list of other transliteration variants used in English, in German, in science and geography (including the UN system), systems used in libraries and in data exchange.

The Transcriptor was developed by a team of IT and language specialists, with support from the Dutch Language Union. The aim is to add more language modules in the future, the first being Arabic. More information on the tool can be found in a paper submitted to the previous UNGEGN session two years ago, [Conference Room Paper 120 of 2021](#). The web application can be found on the internet at [transcriptor.nl](http://transcriptor.nl) and at [transcriptor.be](http://transcriptor.be). Thank you.