

THEME: 1e – National names standardization: International names standardization (inc. exonyms/country names)

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Chair, Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland

Standardization of geographical names of the world (exonyms) in Poland

There are two commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names in Poland: the **Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects**, which is responsible for names used within Poland's boundaries and the **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland**, which is responsible for the geographical names of objects outside Poland.

The first commission, dealing with names from the territory of Poland, was established in 1934. It operated for the needs of the administration. However geographers noticed the lack of a systematic nomenclature of foreign geographical features, which should be used in the Polish language. For this reason the Geographical Names Commission was established in 1951 (initially at the Polish Geographical Society than at the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Sciences) as a scientific body to unify the geographical names of the world used in Polish and to formulate the rules for their use.

Initiation of the works on standardization of geographical names on the UN forum, appointment of UNGEGN, and adoption of the first resolutions on exonyms in 1972 were the impulse for the establishment of an official body in Poland. Consequently in 1973 the Prime Minister appointed the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names of the World, subordinated to the then Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology. Since 1997 the commission (under the current name) is affiliated at the Surveyor General of Poland.

Nowadays the commission operates on the basis of *Geodesy and Cartography Law* and the regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration. The tasks of the commission, as defined in this regulation, include, among others:

- establishing, changing and abolishing the recommended Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms),
- publishing lists of the recommended Polish geographical names of the world, including the list of country names,
- establishing the principles of romanization from languages which use non-Roman writing systems,
- recommending foreign names of important geographical objects located in the territory of Poland,
- cooperation with international organizations and appropriate authorities of other states active in the field of standardization of geographical names,
- providing representation of Poland on conferences and international meetings devoted to the issue of standardization of geographical names.