

The EuroGeoNames project as a regional European geographical names endeavour co-funded by the European Commission
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Within the module “EuroGeoNames as a regional European geographical names endeavour co-funded by the European Commission” it will be demonstrated how the EuroGeoNames project integrated authoritative names of European countries within a European spatial data infrastructure and associated web services.

The increasing use of public domain geographical information, especially geographical names data raises an interesting question given the pedigree of such data - who decides where (for the general population) European places are and how they are spelled?

Considering the multilingualism and cultural richness in Europe, the people use different spellings and languages when talking about the same location and even within a country more than one spelling may be used. This is the European situation that should be considered as a prestige value and not as an obstacle! Thus, full richness, completeness and high quality of European data seem only to be guaranteed if the data providers are the European countries – creating and maintaining the source data – themselves.

According to existing popular web services using public domain data sources the answer would appear to be that by default and in lieu of an European alternative, it is not the respective National Mapping and Cadastral Agency (NMCA) – or another national institution – that decides where e.g. Bruxelles/Brussels is located and how it is spelled.

Within the EU-funded period (September 2006 until February 2009) the EuroGeoNames (EGN) project consortium has implemented a web (gazetteer) service infrastructure for providing official geographical names data in Europe together with the European NMCAs to help you to find the official spelling of a name, together with its spelling in other languages, its geographical location, its pronunciation, etc.

The official geographical names data kept decentrally in the EU countries is linked to and searchable via so-called ,Web Feature Services – WFS’. The data maintenance and updating process remain in the responsibility of the countries, which have collected and maintained them.

After the end of the EU-funded period some countries like Slovenia, Latvia, The Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Cyprus, Norway and Germany have already completed their EGN implementation. Additional countries like Belgium, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Czech Republic, Spain, Greece and France will finish their implementation either before May 2009 or until the end of 2009 at the latest.

In spring 2009 the EGN project coordination will be transferred to EuroGeographics – the association of the European NMCAs. The aim within the following “implementation phase 2009 - 2012” is then the connection of at least “EU27”, i.e. EU Member States.

EGN provides the link to authoritative names of Europe to be made available for web service use cases like property services, internet news agencies and mainly for services of the European Commission itself.

More information about the EGN infrastructure & services is available through:
www.eurogeonames.com