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Geographical Names**

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Report: Divisions of the Group of Experts

**Report of the East Central and South-East Europe Division
of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical
Names**

Submitted by ECSEED**

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I. ECSEE division

With 18 member states, the East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED or ECSEE Division) is one of the largest divisions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The division's Chair does not have contacts for some members and some members do not cooperate with the division.

Since the end of 2021, Czechia has held the presidency of the ECSEE Division, following Slovakia. Since 1.1. 2025 the presiding country will be Hungary.

II. The Session reporting and documents

The previous meeting of the division, held under Czech presidency, took place in May 2023 in New York.

On 16 May 2024, the 28th meeting of the Division was held in Prague with the participation of some representatives of the member states. The national reports were presented in the first part of the meeting. National reports often provide inspiration for activities related to standardization, storage and accessibility of toponyms. Participants agreed that easy accessibility of geographical names and user-friendly interfaces were important and that it was appropriate to provide geographical names free of charge for browsing and possibly downloading. Names in minority languages and exonyms were often mentioned in national reports.

Delegates were provided with information from the 3rd session of UNGEGN, virtual meetings within UNGEGN, and reminded of the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029.

In the next part, experts presented their papers:

1. "Macau – history and changes of the name(s)" prepared by Vladimír Liščák (Czechia)
2. "Czechs in Hungary" prepared by Andrea Böleskei and Gábor Mikesy (Hungary)
3. "Highly accurate and detailed digital terrain model and its use in the field of geographical names" prepared by Eva Miklušová (Slovakia)
4. "Online Atlas of Field Names" prepared by Matjaž Geršič and others (Slovenia)
5. "Storage and data management of geographical names in Slovenia" prepared by Marija Brnot and presented by Matjaž Geršič (Slovenia)
6. "The difficult approach towards a decision/resolution on exonyms as parts of the cultural heritage" prepared by a guest of the meeting, expert Peter Jordan (Austria)
7. "Collecting, storing, and publishing of Croatian exonyms" prepared by Ivana Crljenko (Croatia)

A general discussion followed the presentations.

Two countries attended the meeting virtually and 7 countries attended in person, i.e. half of the member states. The meeting was attended by a number of guests, such as: Pierre Jaillard (Chair UNGEGN), Kohei Watanabe (chair WGE), Peter Jordan (ICOS a WGE). Some of them presented their papers.

The meeting was also held virtually. Some delegates had already spent two days in Prague attending the two-day meeting of the Working Group for Exonyms (WGE UNGEGN). Recordings of both meetings were made available for download to participants for their use.

The majority of member states support the conclusions of the Working Group on Exonyms. The meeting was held in Prague prior the division meeting. The proposals for modification of the UNGEGN recommendations and the course of the meeting were presented directly to the division delegates by WGE Chair Kohei Watanabe. The WGE meeting (held 14. and 15. 5. In Prague) had high attendance of member countries (in person or virtually).

After the meeting a professional excursion to Prague was organized for the delegates of the division and for the WGE members.

III. Divisional homepage

The East Central and South-East Europe Division has its own web site: <http://ecseed.zrc-sazu.si/Home.aspx>. The content of the division's website has been updated regularly during the Czech presidency, while the technical and operational aspects are still handled by Slovenia.

All documents from the 28nd meeting of the division (which was held in Praha) were added to the website.

IV. National activities

Below is brief information about the latest activities (2023-4) in some ECSEED countries: Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Croatia

The Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names (the Commission) in 2023 held eight meetings and worked continuously, through its working groups, on two documents (which are adopted) for the purpose of quality assurance of the Register of Geographical Names and in order to spread awareness about the topic of geographical names.

By applying the Law on Settlements and Law on State Survey and Real Estate Cadastre in 2023 the Commission issued 55 Opinions and 1 Recommendation on proposal for naming streets and squares and other geographic objects in certain local self-government units and, consequently, standardized 98 geographic names.

In order to spread awareness about the topic of geographic names in the Republic of Croatia and the development of the Register of Geographical Names, the State Geodetic Administration, in cooperation with the Commission, organized (in mid-October 2023) a conference dedicated to geographic names.

The information system of the Register of Geographical Names (website and network application) was updated and online services for viewing and downloading data from system database are available to public users.

Activities on the revision of some records in the database of the Register of Geographical Names started at the end of 2023.

The Commission continuously gives its expert opinions to the users / interested public, related to the suggestions for naming and / or changing the geographical names of geographical objects in the Republic of Croatia.

Czechia

Since the UN conference Czechia has continued to standardise names for the territory of the Czech Republic and also to standardise names outside this territory. The already standardised names are updated and an updated list of country names is maintained on the website of the Czech Office of Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre (ČÚZK) <http://www.cuzk.cz>. Standardised names are maintained according to the plan, especially names within the territory of the Czech Republic, which have been maintained with a number of attributes in the national database of

geographical names - Geonames - since 1997. All name data are gradually being centralized and converged in one office. Non-standardised names (official names, especially names of settlements) are kept in a nationwide database managed by the ČÚZK. Links to the register of names in the cadastral map have been established and data harmonisation has been completed in 2024. The Czech Commission for Geographical Names has issued new publications Names of States and Dependencies (published application) and Names of Europe, which will also be published as a public application. The Geonames database is supplemented with grammatical characteristics (grammatical gender and grammatical number) of Czech endonyms and simplified pronunciation according to IPA. The data is available free of charge.

- 14 – 15 February 2024, the country held a meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms in Prague.
- 5 September 2023 (Prague), Czechia held the 7th Joint Tripartite Meeting of Geographical Names Commissions of Czechia, Poland and Slovakia on
- Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use, 4th edition

Members of the Commission participated in:

- 14 November, 2023 (on-line): 4th Meeting of UNGEGN Bureau and Division Chairs
- 12 April, 2024 (on-line): 5th Meeting of UNGEGN Bureau and Division Chairs

Hungary

The structural framework has changed. The minister of public administration and regional development has been responsible for mapping and surveying from 1 January 2024. The legal basis did not change.

The committee held all its scheduled meetings.

The Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names (HCGN) paid special attention to the issue of minority names.

Significant progress has been made in digitising the results of recent fieldwork of the Gazetteer of Hungary.

Poland

Names of localities and physiographic objects are standardized by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects and next approved by a regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration published in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*.

The last, third edition of the national gazetteer entitled *List of official names of localities and their parts* was published in December 2019. The list contains 102,875 official names of localities and their parts, of which: 940 names of towns and cities, 43,057 – villages, 6,783 – parts of towns/cities, 36,044 – parts of villages, 5,137 – settlements, 4,585 – hamlets of villages.

Changes of the names given in the list are published each year in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland, and come into force on January 1 – these changes are effect of changes in the names, as well as changes in type of name.

Since 2005, additional names in minority languages were introduced for 1252 localities. This number consists of 359 German names, 827 Kashubian names, 30 Lithuanian names, 27 Belarusian and 9 Lemko names.

Official list of Polish geographical names of the world is regular updated.

- Prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland
- Published in the end of 2019
- Included Polish names for **13,599** geographical objects that lie outside the boundaries of Poland
- The addendum to the *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world* containing the Polish names of the most important buildings and other urban objects.

Slovakia

- The activities related to the standardization of geographical names inside and outside the territory of Slovakia are ensured continuously,
- ZBGIS (topographic) database is continuously updated, the content of the database has been gradually expanded through the addition of names from cadastral and forest maps and names of watercourses,
- Documentation on activities and selected lists of geographical names are published and updated,
- The standardized geographical names are updated and provided free of charge in these formats: GPKG, Esri SHP, Esri GDB and CSV. The data is accessible through WMS and WFS mapping services,
- Map Client ZBGIS - an interactive web map application of spatial ZBGIS data allows, among other things, analysing, viewing and searching through: updated standardized geographical names, variant and historical names and standardized exonyms,
- The project „Comprehensive revision and updating of geonames in the Tatra Mountains”,
- Geographical names standardization of names from cadastral maps, forestry maps and managed watercourses names according to schedule (21% districts of Slovakia are finished, 13% districts are in process of 72 districts of Slovakia – Bratislava and Košice are considered to separate district),
- Improvement of the methodological procedure and technology in the Ha item,
- Names standardization of: Habitats Directive Sites SCI – Hozelské slaniská.

New regulation - Decree of the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic No. 50/2024 Coll., amending and supplementing Decree No. 300/2009 Coll., which implements Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 215/1995 Coll. on Geodesy and Cartography, valid from 1st April 2024 (Vyhláška č. 50/2024 Z. z. Úradu geodézie, kartografie a katastra SR, ktorou sa mení a dopĺňa vyhláška č. 300/2009 Z. z., ktorou sa vykonáva zákon NR SR č. 215/1995 Z. z. o geodézii a kartografii, platná od 1.4.2024).

Slovenia

The CSGN permanent task is deciding about names (new or rename) of streets and settlements. The CSGN prepared detailed directions with purpose to improve the practise of naming streets and settlements. There has recently been made a progress on naming proposals. However, relatively often we get proposals for naming several short streets (sometimes even longer) with only one name. The CSGN rejects these proposals and propose designating and naming of several streets.

The Commission regularly cooperate with translators, proofreaders, journalists and various public and governmental services about the correct use and spelling of geographical names, especially exonyms. Slovenian translators at the Council of Europe always consult the CSGN in case of ambiguity regarding the correct spelling of foreign names, which is good practise for the proper use of geographical names.

With the aim of later standardization, the review of the Italian geographical names in ethnically mixed area for a scale 1: 5,000 continues.

In September 2021, a three-year project for the standardization of hydronyms from the Register of Geographical Names for a scale 1: 25,000 was started. After the first reviewing of the linguistic and geographical correctness of hydronyms, in the spring 2023 hydronyms were sent for review to all Slovenian municipalities. About a quarter of the municipalities sent the results of the review. Currently a more detailed review of linguistic and geographical correctness is done and solving individual problematic names. The aim of the project is to prepare a list of hydronyms for the subsequent standardization at the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The process of the digitalization of the Commission for the Standardization of Geographical Names is completed. Forum for discussions of Commission's members on individual (re)naming issues is in use. The online platform is accessed at: <https://nodebb03.abak.si>.

Ukraine

The state of activities in the field of geographical names standardization in the intersessional period:

The State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre carried out activities in the following key areas in the field of geographical names standardization during the intersessional period:

- Improvement of the legislative and regulatory framework for activities related to geographical names;
- Providing state and local authorities, institutions, organizations and citizens with standardized geographical names;
- Creation and maintenance of the State Register of Geographical Names;
- Conducting an examination of proposals and decisions of state authorities and local self-government bodies on naming and renaming of geographical objects;
- Utilization and preservation of geographical names;
- International cooperation on geographical names.

The Order of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine dated July 07, 2023 approved the Procedure for Approval of the Contents of Catalogues, Reference Books, Dictionaries and Lists of Geographical Names prepared for publication and/or distribution on the Internet within the framework of their activities by scientific, research and other institutions, enterprises, organizations engaged in scientific (historical, geographical, toponymic, linguistic, etc.) research of geographical objects and their names, for the compliance of geographical names with the data of the State Register of Geographical Names.

In 2023–2024, the StateGeoCadastre performed activities on establishing and maintaining the State Register of Geographical Names, updating the State Register of Geographical Names with the names of geographical objects of Ukraine, taking into account significant changes in the administrative and territorial structure of Ukraine, and renaming geographical objects that had been made in accordance with the laws adopted in 2023.

The Law of Ukraine "On Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and Decolonisation of Place Names" dated March 21, 2023 sets out the requirements for renaming settlements and other geographical objects (streets, squares, plazas, railway stations, rocks, tracts, nature reserve objects, etc.) the names of which were associated with the Soviet Union, Russia or the Russian Empire.

The National Commission on State Language Standards recommended to change more than 1 400 names of Ukrainian cities, villages and towns that do not comply with the spelling, grammar and word-formation standards of the Ukrainian language or contain ideological elements related to Russian

imperial policy in Ukraine. This also includes names conventionally formed from the Russian language (for example, Yuzhne, Yuzhnoukrainka, Sievierodonetsk, Oktiabrsk, Pervomaisk, etc.).

At the same time, since the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, in 2022–2024, Ukraine has been undergoing a massive renaming of place names in settlements (mainly streets, boulevards, lanes, avenues, squares, plazas, embankments, bridges, subway stations, etc.).

Access to the data on geographical names of Ukraine is also possible through the National Geoportal of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure, operating in a trial mode (www.nsd.gov.ua), the free access to which has been temporarily restricted due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine for the period of martial law.

Representatives of the StateGeoCadastre attended the following events:

The Geospatial World Forum 2023 (Rotterdam, the Netherlands, May 2–5, 2023);

General Assembly of the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE) (Oradea, Romania, May 11–13, 2023) online, during which the membership of the StateGeoCadastre in the CLGE was approved; An online seminar with the UK Geospatial Commission (June 21, 2023) for representatives of executive authorities and other holders responsible for creating and updating geospatial data sets and metadata in Ukraine;

The 19th General Assembly of the International Cartographic Association and The 31st International Cartographic Conference (Cape Town, South Africa, August 13–18, 2023); Interactive map of Africa by the State Scientific and Production Enterprise "Cartographiia" was awarded the 3rd place at the International Cartographic Exhibition, and the Statute of the ICA was amended at the initiative of the StateGeoCadastre;

Joint UNECE, Eurostat, UN-GGIM Europe Workshop on Integrating Statistical and Geospatial Data (Belgrade, Serbia, October 4–5, 2023);

The IX CLGE Conference of the European Surveyor and the General Assembly of the CLGE (Paris, France, November 9–11, 2023);

The 10th Joint UN-GGIM: Europe – Eurostat – UNECE Meeting on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (Luxemburg, March 12–13, 2024).

