

Minutes, 16th Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms, Hermagor, Austria, 5th -7th June 2014

The WG met in the Alpen-Adria Hotel in the Municipality of Hermagor-Preseggersee, in the Austrian federal province of Carinthia [Kärnten]. The meeting was hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names and attended by 28 experts from 17 countries (see list of participants attached).

The convenor opened the meeting and welcomed all participants to his home town and place of birth, as well as the representatives of federal province and municipality. He emphasised that according to the business meeting in New York (15th Meeting, WGE) and the 28th UNGEGN Session, this meeting is the last attempt to find new definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* and that the next meeting of the WG will be devoted to another agenda item, i.e. criteria for the use of exonyms.

Gabriele SCHAUNIG, Deputy Governor of the Federal Province of Carinthia, and Siegfried RONACHER, Mayor of Hermagor-Preseggersee, extended a warm welcome to all participants on behalf of province and municipality, respectively. These welcome addresses were followed by a geographical and historical introduction to place and region by the convenor, as well as by a historical account of Carinthia and an introduction to the namespace of southwestern Carinthia by the Klagenfurt-based linguist Heinz-Dieter POHL.

This opening was followed by three sessions with a total 18 papers, 30 minutes presentation time each, including discussion. The papers are listed below and will be published as Volume 4 of *Name & Place*, edited by Paul WOODMAN and Peter JORDAN.

Session 1: The endonym/exonym divide – general aspects (Chair: Peter JORDAN, Austria)

JORDAN, Peter: The endonym/exonym divide – On the state of our discussions

NYSTRÖM, Staffan (Sweden): Endonym and exonym: definitions and some useful subterms

HAUSNER, Isolde (Austria): Are exonyms and endonyms onomastic or toponymic terms?

PÄLL, Peeter (Estonia): Spelling differences and exonyms

CRLJENKO, Ivana (Croatia): Practical benefits of knowing the definitions of exonym and endonym when creating the list of exonyms/foreign names

MATTHEWS, Phil (New Zealand): Endonyms, exonyms, boundaries and standardization

BUŠS, Ojārs (Latvia): Don't we have at least some endonyms for foreign geographical features?

BELL, Herman (United Kingdom): A multilingual environment: Its relevance for defining 'endonym' and 'exonym'

SABBĀR, Halim (United Kingdom), in the author's absence presented by Herman BELL: Disenfranchising indigenous languages. The need to define 'endonym' and 'exonym' with accuracy and fairness

Session 2: The endonym/exonym divide – macroregional views (Chair: Sungjae CHOO, Republic of Korea)

TANABE, Hiroshi (Japan): Difficulties of the exonym/endonym dichotomy from the viewpoint of East Asian place names

CHOO, Sungjae; KIM, Heesu (Republic of Korea): The endonym/exonym divide in the context of the Korean language

ZAGÓRSKI, Bogusław R. (Poland): Endonym-exonym divide: observations based on Polish-Persian toponymic equivalences

MIKESY, Gábor; POKOLY, Béla; BÖLCSKEI, Andrea (Hungary): The exonym/endonym divide: Examples highlighting different aspects in Central Europe

CALVARIN, Élisabeth (France) in the author's absence presented by Peter JORDAN: La toponymie et l'or noir - ou la toponymie dans le monde industriel (Toponymy and the crude oil – or the toponymy in the industrial world).

Session 3: The endonym/exonym divide – national views (Chair: Béla POKOLY, Hungary)

MAREK, Tomáš (Czech Republic): View of members of the Czech Commission on Geographical Names on exonyms

GERŠIČ, Matjaž; KLADNIK, Drago (Slovenia): Slovenian geographical names as exonyms

ZYCH, Maciej (Poland): The new list of Polish exonyms

WOODMAN, Paul (United Kingdom): Endonyms and exonyms in the “Near Abroad”: The role of Russian in the toponymy of Kazakhstan

Before starting the general discussion on new definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* the convenor provided some information on the excursion to the White Lake [Weißensee] on the last day of the meeting and addressed briefly three further items:

- (1) **Proceedings of the Hermagor meeting:** He proposed to publish them again in the book series *Name & Place*, invited Paul WOODMAN to function again as his co-editor and proposed to define 31st October 2014 as the deadline for submission of manuscripts. This was accepted by Paul WOODMAN and the audience.
- (2) **Homepage of the WG:** The convenor noted that the website has been substantially reworked, is constantly updated and contains comprehensive information on WG meetings and publications. He expressed his sincere gratitude to Matjaž GERŠIČ, who did all this work and will further maintain the homepage.
- (3) **Next WG meeting:** The convenor recalled the Algerian offer, officially expressed by Brahim ATOUI at the business meeting in New York, to host the next WG meeting in Oran, Algeria, in 2015. He also mentioned that he had received some other preliminary and so far unofficial offers. He added that the question of a next meeting needs not to be decided now and that the WG had still some time for consideration.

Starting the general discussion lasting three hours and moderated by the convenor, the convenor initially noted that this was – according to the decisions in New York – the last opportunity to arrive at a conclusion regarding new definitions. He also stated that it will very likely be too much to expect that every expert present will agree to new definitions and suggested that a qualified majority should be sufficient for having them passed. As a starting point for the discussion he proposed to depart from the definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* as proposed by Staffan NYSTRÖM (2014, p. 38) and just slightly been amended as regards the definition of the *exonym* by himself (amendments in bold letters):

Endonym: “Name of a geographical feature locally accepted and used in the area where the feature is situated. *Examples:* [...]”

Exonym: “Name of a geographical feature not locally accepted or used in the area where the feature is situated and differing in its form from the endonym(s) in **its (their) nominative singular of the noun** in the same **non-ideographic** script. *Examples:* [...]”

He then proposed to structure the discussion into the following sub-items:

- (1) Do we agree that we have to define umbrella terms that are not operational for standardisation purposes?
- (2) Do we agree that *officiality* is not an essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide and that it needs therefore not to be part of the definitions?
- (3) Do we agree that *language* is not an essential criterion for the endonym/exonym divide and that it needs therefore not to be part of the definitions?

- (4) Do we agree that the divide should be confined to differences in writing?
 (5) Do we agree that there is no third term necessary besides *endonym* and *exonym* – even for oceans and large seas?

In response to the convenor's suggestion that a qualified majority should be sufficient for having new definitions passed, since the full consent of every expert present to new definitions is unrealistic, Alexandros STAVROPOULOS referred to UNGEGN's Rules of Procedure and the Statute of UNGEGN ruling that all decisions in UNGEGN have to be taken unanimously.¹ The convenor replied that strict reference to this principle would obstruct any innovation and scientific discussion, since it was always the case that new ideas need some time to gain ground and that it is rarely so that everybody is at the same level of the discussion.

He added that he conceives UNGEGN and especially its working groups rather as scientific discussion fora with the task to prepare and elaborate UN resolutions on a scientific basis than as political bodies. UNGEGN and its working groups should make it possible to discuss items thoroughly and propose results on a sound scientific basis.

He also questioned whether it was in fact so that UN resolutions can only be taken unanimously. His experience with the Romanisation systems of the Bulgarian and the Ukrainian Cyrillic alphabet adopted at the 10th UNCSGN in 2012 was a different one: Although a certain group of countries had expressed their objection to these systems until the very end in the 10th UNCSGN and already earlier in UNGEGN sessions and working group meetings, these systems were finally adopted. Alexandros STAVROPOULOS responded that if this group of countries would have insisted on the Rules of Procedure, the respective resolutions could not have been passed. In what concerns the convenor's other arguments, he observed that the authors of the Rules of Procedure, probably scientists themselves, must have been well aware of them. The fact that they anyway proceeded with the adoption of the rule of consensus, despite that awareness, amply proves the importance they attached to it. Staffan NYSTRÖM stated that he was not sure, whether every single term in the UNGEGN Glossary of Toponymic Terms would find the consent of every single UNGEGN expert and UNCSGN delegate. Paul WOODMAN remarked that he would like to avoid a voting on new definitions in the WG (which, however, had not been intended by the convenor).

The convenor concludes this discussion item by stating that the WG will try to find a compromise acceptable for everybody as regards new definitions.

Before entering into the discussion according to the structure proposed by the convenor, Alexandros STAVROPOULOS, supported by Maciej ZYCH, Bogusław ZAGÓRSKI, Monica DUMITRASCU and others requested that the discussion should take the current definitions as the point of departure and not start with new definitions:

Endonym – Name of a geographical feature in one of the languages occurring in that area where the feature is situated. Examples: Vārānasī (not Benares); Aachen (not Aix-la-Chapelle); Krung Thep (not Bangkok); al-Uqşur (not Luxor); Teverya (not Tiberias). (UNGE GN Glossary 2002 + Addendum 2007, p. 10)

¹ UNGEGN Rules of Procedure, Rule 23, para. 1, entitled "Consensus" stating "On all except procedural matters, the Group of Experts, its linguistic/geographical divisions and its working groups shall arrive at decisions by consensus. In the event that a consensus is not achieved, the matter shall be deferred for reworking and resubmission". Statute of UNGEGN (Principles), article II, para 1: "The Group of Experts shall act as a collegiate, consultative body; accordingly, agreement on non-procedural matters shall be reached by consensus and not by voting."

Exonym – Name used in a specific language for a →geographical feature situated outside the area where that language has official status, and differing in its form from the name used in the official language or languages of the area where the geographical feature is situated. Examples: Warsaw is the English exonym for Warszawa; Londres is French for London; Mailand is German for Milano. The officially romanised endonym Moskva for Москва is not an exonym, nor is the Pinyin form Beijing, while Peking is an exonym. The United Nations recommends minimising the use of exonyms in international usage. See also →name, traditional. (UNGEKN Glossary 2002 + Addendum 2007, p. 10)

Alexandros STAVROPOULOS then addressed specifically *officiality* as the criterion, which is still part of the current definitions, but is to be eliminated as a differentiating criterion of the endonym/exonym divide from the new definitions, meaning that unofficial names, e.g. names used by local linguistic minorities, can have *endonym* status while official names authorised by the state were not necessarily *endonyms*. Supported and supplemented mainly by Bogusław ZAGÓRSKI, he hinted at the following two problems arising from this new approach:

- (1) Dissociation of *officiality* and *endonym* status would mean that in several countries a number of official names would lose their *endonym* status and turn into *exonyms*. This category of names, however, was certainly not in the scope of UNGEKN experts, when they passed UN resolutions demanding the reduction of *exonyms*. Eliminating *officiality* as a criterion for the *endonym/exonym* divide would therefore lead to a contradiction between the definitions of *endonym* and *exonym* on the one hand and UN resolutions on the other, which cannot be accepted. Together with new definitions it would be necessary to modify these resolutions.
- (2) “Mother countries” of cultural minorities could use the *endonym* status of non-official minority place names as a pretext and excuse for territorial claims or at least protective measures related to these minorities and their territories.

The convenor argued that the current definitions already classify place names in “well-established languages” – which need not to be official – as *endonyms*, conceded however, that according to the current definitions no name in an official language is an *exonym*. Staffan NYSTRÖM stressed in a comprehensive statement that besides terms operational for standardisation purposes, umbrella terms are also needed, which highlight the essence of a concept. Umbrella terms of *endonym* and *exonym* do not prevent the definition of operational sub-terms in line with the requirements of standardisation in general, and the needs of individual countries in particular.

Hiroshi TANABE hinted at the ambivalent role of UNGEKN as an expert group on the one hand, but also as a political body established for special purposes and representing countries and their governments on the other. This second role has also to be taken into account and will sometimes lead to discordance between scientific and practice-oriented, politically acceptable approaches. “Politics is always a matter of compromises and not just of scientific ‘truth’.”

After a short break the convenor recognises in a final statement that

- (1) new definitions of endonym and exonym are not accepted by a larger group of experts present;
- (2) convincing arguments especially against the elimination of *officiality* as a criterion for the endonym/exonym have been brought forward in this meeting;
- (3) the current definitions of endonym and exonym are in the given situation the optimum achievable.

He adds that the long and intensive discussion on the endonym/exonym divide and on new definitions of endonym and exonym has nevertheless been fruitful and by no means in vain. It has revealed a lot of aspects that had never been addressed before. By exploring all other possibilities and directions it has also made us sure that the current definitions are the best of all possible solutions. The whole discussion is moreover well-documented by four book volumes (and will additionally be documented by the next volume with the proceedings of the Hermagor meeting), so that all the arguments and findings will remain accessible and can be taken as a basis for future research.

He repeats that the main topic of a next WG meeting will be “Criteria for the use of exonyms”. This means reassuming a practice-oriented agenda item, which had already been intensively discussed up to the meeting in Tainach in 2010. The results of this earlier discussion can serve as starting point.

He recognises also the WG’s intention to continue its tradition of annual workshops. This means that the venue of a next meeting in 2015 has to be found and decided upon.

The convenor then closes the discussion as well as the 16th Meeting of the WG. He thanks all experts for their presence and valuable input, especially the paper presenters, the session chairs and the convenors of other UNGEGN working groups. He extends special thanks also to Paul WOODMAN, who – in spite of a sad event in his family – managed to come at least for the general discussion and the excursion. Bogusław ZAGÓRSKI thanks the convenor on behalf of all participants for hosting and conducting this meeting.

The day after the workshop most participants joined a bus excursion with explanations of the namescape to Hermagor and White Lake.

Peter JORDAN, Convenor
Vienna, June 24th 2014