

Eleventh United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names

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Exonyms

The New website of the Dutch Language Union on Dutch Exonyms

Submitted by the Netherlands**

Summary

1. The Dutch Language Union has restyled its website in May 2017. Its commission on Foreign Geographical Names has added new functionality, allowing for easier access to both the written forms and the audio files of all Dutch exonyms. The website provides the Dutch versions of short and long country names, their adjectives, the names of their male and female inhabitants (singular and plural) and the endonym of the country name as well as the official language of that country. Moreover, and that forms the main contents, Dutch versions of the names of important towns, regions and other features are given. In this report the website's functionality is explained.

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2. The website (<http://over.taalunie.org/dutch-language-union>) of the Dutch Language Union (Aruba, Belgium, Curacao, Netherlands, Sint-Maarten, Suriname) has been restyled and since May 9, 2017 its section on Foreign Geographical Names (Buitenlandse aardrijkskundige namen, <http://namen.taalunie.org>) has been renewed as well. The new functionality allows for easier access both to the written forms as well as to the audio files of the Dutch exonyms.

The Working Group on Foreign Geographical Names (Werkgroep Buitenlandse aardrijkskundige namen) of the Dutch language Union (in the fall of 2017 it will be upgraded to permanent commission status) with linguists, cartographers, representatives from governments concerned, the press and publishing houses as members, has defined the required functionality and checked the results. They also work at keeping the files up to date and as an extra service they try to provide endonyms for features in the news from non-Roman script areas, converted according to UN-accepted conversion systems.

Contents of the website on standardized Dutch exonyms

3. The section on exonyms (Buitenlandse aardrijkskundige namen in het Nederlands) can be found at <http://namen.taalunie.org>. Its goal is to standardise the spelling of the names of those features for which the Dutch language has its own generally accepted forms. The basic assumptions of the list of exonyms are the following:

- Adherence to the 1947, 1996 and 2005 Spelling Acts for the Dutch language
- UNGEEN Resolution V-15, aiming at a reduction of the use of exonyms

The website provides the Dutch versions of short and long country names, their adjectives, the names of their male and female inhabitants (singular and plural) and the endonym of the country name as well as the official language of that country. Moreover, and that forms the main contents, Dutch versions of the names of important towns, regions and other features are given. Two- and three-letter and numeral ISO-codes for the various countries are added as well.

4. In the justification section, the selection criteria for the exonyms are explained as well as the script conversion systems used, the use of articles and cases, an explanation of the way the nature of the named features is shown, an explanation of the sequence of the information provided, how features beyond a single sovereignty and historical names are dealt with, and finally, as a special issue for the Dutch language, the rendering of the u: phoneme (as in book (French -ou-, German -u-) which traditionally is spelled -oe- in Dutch).

Moreover, the site contains a section on Dutch name versions used in the Dutch language area in France, a section on Dutch versions of place names in Wallonia and a section on the place names in Frisia (Fryslân), the Frisian-language province in the Netherlands, where Frisian place names are shown with their Dutch equivalents, indicating which of the two is the official form.

Finally, the site contains the Toponymical guidelines for the Netherlands, version 4 (2012).

Functionality

5. The names from a specific country can be accessed through a world map on which one may click the respective country, or through an alphabetical list of country names, which will result in a country page with all the relevant information (see figure 1). Transnational features can be accessed through a map of the world's oceans or a map of the continents, so names of features like the Greater and Lesser Antilles can be found at the North and Central America page; features like Near East, Middle East, Indochina can be found under Asia. Undersea topography names (ridges, basins and trenches) and sea names alike can be found at the World's oceans page. There is an alphabetical gazetteer of all the 2082 Dutch exonyms standardised in this website.

[Aardrijkskundige Namen](#)
[Alle Landen](#)
[Continenten](#)
[Alfabetische lijst](#)
[Wereldzeeën](#)
[Vertaalhulp](#)

Historische benamingen

Suriname

Suriname

Continent: Zuid-Amerika
 ISO 3166 alpha 2: SR ISO 3166 alpha 3: SUR
 ISO 3166 numeriek: 740
 Taal: Nederlands

Dutch name	Land	Country name	Local name
	Nederlandse naam Suriname	Plaatselijke naam Suriname	
	Officiële landnaam	Official country name	
	Nederlandse naam Republiek Suriname	Plaatselijke naam Republiek Suriname	
	Hoofdstad	Name of capital	
	Nederlandse naam Paramaribo	Plaatselijke naam Paramaribo	
	Bijvoeglijk naamwoord	Country name adjective	
	Surinaams		
	Inwoneraanduiding	Inhabitant of country or capital	
	Surinamer (m) Surinaamse (v) Surinamers (mv) Paramariboër (m) ■ Paramaribose (v) ■		
	Overige namen	Other named features	
	Nederlandse naam	Plaatselijke naam	
	naam		
	Historische benamingen	Historical names	
	Nederlandse naam	Plaatselijke naam	

Figure 1 – Sample web page from the Dutch Language Union website on foreign geographical names.

Names in green lettering can be clicked and the related audio file will then be played. A glossary translating much-used generic name parts from some 50 other languages into Dutch is added as well.

Historical names that transcend present state boundaries can also be found under the names of the various continents.

Although the Working Group on Foreign Geographical Names strived to arrive at univocity, and therefore wanted to have one name version as the official exonym, this proved not always to be possible as sometimes the customary spelling in the Netherlands and in the Dutch-speaking part of

Belgium (Flanders) could not be reconciled. In such cases the existence of exonym versions valid in only one of the Dutch language union member states is indicated by #.

Special symbols refer to variant names, an information sign **i** will refer to additional information, a percentage sign % will indicate that in Dutch the local endonym is either always used or increasingly used.

Future work:

6. Although the website was launched in May 2017, it still isn't complete, and many corrections and additions still have to be realized. Additional functionality is still to be installed, for instance also the possibility of allowing the users to locate seas and oceans on a world map. The index or gazetteer for now only contains exonyms, in future it should also contain endonyms, so that it would be possible, as a third mode of access, next to the map and the country name entry, to type in an endonym and find out whether a current Dutch exonym exists. A number of small corrections on the world map and continental maps still needs to be applied.