

# Practice, Policies and Trends of Exonym Use

## 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting, UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, Tainach, Austria, 28-30 April 2010

The 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms (WGE) was devoted to the general topic “Practice, Policies and Trends of Exonym Use”. It was organised in conjunction with a meeting of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen, StAGN), the co-ordinative body on geographical names for German-speaking countries (26-28 April), and parallel meetings of the UNGEGN Dutch and German-speaking Division (DGSD) and the East Central and South-East Europe Division (28<sup>th</sup> April evening). Thus, a whole week from Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, to Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> April, was spent on discussing geographical names in the charming little village of Tainach (in Slovene: Tinje; Fig. 1 shows the church) in the bilingual (German/Slovene) area of Carinthia [Kärnten], the southernmost province of Austria close to Slovenia and Italy facing the Karawanken/Karavanke mountain range. The Catholic Educational Centre “Sodalitas” provided for accommodation, catering as well as all the meeting facilities and services and contributed with its kind staff largely to a nice atmosphere. The whole sequence of meetings was attended by 60 experts, of whom 42 from 23 countries and all six continents took part in the WGE Meeting.

Due to the fact that Wednesday was the temporal link between the three meetings, the WGE Meeting started, fortunately supported by fine and warm spring weather, with a common excursion to nearby Klagenfurt and Maria Saal on the theme “Carinthia – a bilingual region”.

A first highlight was the visit to the Slovene/German bilingual kindergarten and elementary school attached to the Hermagoras/Mohorjeva Publishing House in Klagenfurt, where children from Slovene-speaking, but in growing numbers also from German-speaking families are educated in both languages in such a way that a day in Slovene is followed by a day in German language. Most impressive was a performance of Slovene songs by a group of pupils (Fig. 2).

This visit was followed by a guided tour through the downtown area of Klagenfurt (Fig. 3), Carinthia’s capital, including the Hall of Coats of Arms in the provincial parliament, where the Prince’s Stone is exposed, a monument of early democracy in the Slavonic principality of Carantania. Sitting at this stone, the designated prince had to stand a hearing by representatives of his future subjects.

The excursion was concluded by a visit to the church of Maria Saal (in Slovene: Gospa Sveta), an outstanding architectonic monument in Romanesque and Gothic style located on a hill and surrounded by fortifications. It had predecessors already from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when this place was the germ of Christianisation among the Slavonic population of Carantania.

Thursday and Friday were then devoted to the WGE Meeting proper comprising 29 paper presentations and an intensive discussion on guidelines for the use of exonyms (see Fig. 4 and 5).

After some words of welcome extended to the participants by a representative of the Educational Centre, by Helen KERFOOT, UNGEGN chair, and Peter JORDAN, WGE co-convenor and convenor in charge, who combined them with a cultural-geographical introduction into the host region of Carinthia, the sequence of papers on geographical names started with a paper of Paul WOODMAN (United Kingdom) presenting a balanced view from the outside on bilingual toponymy in Carinthia. Unfortunately the paper could only be read in absence of the author, who had been – due to ash cloud problems – prevented from coming. Pierre JAILLARD (France) and Henri DORION (Canada) continued with raising basic questions

on the relation between exonyms and international standardisation and bilinguality, resp. Béla POKOLY (Hungary) referred to country names as exonyms. The sequence of general and principal observations on exonym versus endonym use was continued by Rainer DORMELS (Austria), who spoke about practice and policies of endonym use in the naming of sea bodies, Sungjae CHOO (Republic of Korea), who contributed on names of seas as transboundary features, by Hubert BERGMANN (Austria) highlighting the use of exonyms in dictionaries, Peeter PÄLL (Estonia) on exonyms in the context of script conversion, Bogusław ZAGÓRSKI (Poland) referring to the endonym/exonym divide by the example of names of Arab countries and their major cities, Peter JORDAN (Austria) continuing the discussion on the nature of the endonym, to which also Drago KLADNIK and Mimi URBANC (Slovenia) contributed from a Slovenian perspective. Concluding this general section Pavel BOHÁČ (Czech Republic) raised the question why transboundary features caused a problem in exonymy focusing on the relation between feature and name.

Two papers were then devoted to the EuroGeoNames (EGN) database: While Ferjan ORMELING (Netherlands) highlighted the collection and rendering of exonyms, Roman STANIFERTL (Austria) was focusing on the handling of border crossing features within EGN.

The remaining majority of papers were right to the point of the Meeting's general topic, i.e. practice, policies and trends of exonym/endonym use in various countries. Margarita AZCÁRATE LUXÁN (Spain) contributed on the situation in Spain, Maria del Mar BATLLE (Spain) to Catalan specifics. Herman BELL (Sudan) spoke on Nubian geographical names, Eman ORIEBY (Egypt) on practice of exonym use in Egypt. Phil MATTHEWS (New Zealand) referred in this context to New Zealand, Sirkka PAIKKALA (Finland) to the situation in Finland. Maciej ZYCH (Poland) presented in two papers at first Polish geographical names of undersea and Antarctic features and then the Polish list of geographical names of Europe. Elka JAČEVA-ULČAR (FJR of Macedonia) referred specifically to the toponymic implications of the Law on Territorial Organization of the Republic of Macedonia as of 2004 and Remus CREȚAN (Romania) highlighted origins of Romanian toponyms on an ethnic background. Gábor GERCSÁK (Hungary) spoke on English exonyms of geographical names of Hungary, Imrich HORŇANSKÝ (Slovakia) on exonym standardization and use in Slovakia. Nina SYVAK (Ukraine) concluded this section by presenting a paper on names of orographic features in the Ukrainian Carpathians.

The last two hours of the Meeting were devoted to a general discussion on guidelines for the use of exonyms. According to the terms of reference of the WGE, developing such guidelines is one of the Working Group's major tasks. It has indeed very actively been pursued in the last three years (6<sup>th</sup> WGE Meeting in Prague 2007). Also UNGEGN experts not involved into the business of WGE will remember that already several draft versions have been presented and discussed in UNGEGN sessions as well as during the Ninth UN Conference in New York 2007, not to speak of WGE meetings. Based on these earlier drafts and discussions Peter JORDAN presented a revised version of guidelines and conducted the discussion on it item per item. The discussion developed – as usual – lively and controversial. As at earlier occasions no consent could be achieved on a more substantial number of criteria, which would really serve as a hint for somebody looking for advice. So it was decided not to pursue anymore the goal of a UN recommendation, but just to elaborate a Working Paper in the sense of a partial opinion. This paper is to integrate as many suggestions from the discussion as possible, but should not get inconsistent and insubstantial by doing so. It may in this way preserve its potential to serve as a handout for people looking for advice.

Edited by Peter JORDAN, Hubert BERGMANN, Caroline BURGESS and Catherine CHEETHAM most of the papers presented at the Meeting will be published as proceedings by LIT Publishers very likely early in 2011, so that they will be available by the 26<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN Session in Vienna, 2-6 May 2011, at the latest.

Peter JORDAN (Co-convenor)