
25th Session, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
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Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

Submitted by the Working Group on Exonyms*

* Prepared by Peter Jordan (Austria), Co-convenor, Working Group on Exonyms

1 Organizational aspects

The Working Group on Exonyms was established in 2002 by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin. Resolution VIII/4 specifies its tasks with taking measures for “the categorization of exonym use, the publication of pronunciation guides for endonyms and the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms”.

WG meetings held:

1st Meeting: **Berlin**, September 6, 2002, in the framework of the 8th UN Conference

2nd Meeting: **Prague** [Přaha], September 24-26, 2003, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre

3rd Meeting: **New York**, 2004, in the framework of the 22nd UNGEGN Session

4th Meeting: **Ljubljana**, May 19-20, 2005, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

5th Meeting: **Vienna** [Wien], 2006, in the framework of the 23rd UNGEGN Session

6th Meeting: **Prague** [Přaha], May 17-18, 2007, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre.

7th Meeting: **New York**, August 29, 2007, in the framework of the 24th UNGEGN Session

8th Meeting: **Timișoara**, September 9-11, 2008, hosted by the West University of Timișoara, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography and the Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn House

Currently the Working Group comprises 61 official members and associated experts from 27 countries (see Appendix).

Elected co-convenors are Peter JORDAN (Austria, peter.Jordan@oeaw.ac.at) and Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia, milan@zrc-sazu.si). After Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ had been appointed Slovenian ambassador in Croatia in 2006, Peter JORDAN acts as the convenor in charge.

The WG maintains a website accessible under <http://www.zrc-sazu.si/wge>. The webmaster is Mimi URBANC (Slovenia).

2 Activities

Two meetings of the WG were held since its last report to the 24th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, New York, 20 and 31 August 2007 (WP 11):

7th Meeting, New York, August 29, 2007

In the framework of the 9th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names the Working Group on Exonyms had a short business meeting. It was attended by 22 experts. It was agreed to elaborate guidelines for the use of exonyms as the next major project of the WG. Such guidelines would have to be based both on the acceptance of the exonyms' functionality as well as on political sensibility. It was postulated that the next meeting of the WG should have the character of a workshop with the main task of drafting guidelines. It was decided to come back to an earlier invitation by Mr. Remus CREȚAN (Romania) confirmed by

the Romanian delegation to the Conference, to hold the meeting in Timișoara, Romania, in September 2008.

8th Meeting, Timișoara, September 9-10(11), 2008

The 8th Meeting was organized as a joint meeting with the ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases (CNRA) and took place in Timișoara (Romania). It was hosted by the West University Timișoara (represented by Rector Ion TALPOS), the Romanian Academy of Sciences (represented by Șerban DRAGOMIRESCU), the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography (represented by Colonel Marin ALNIȚIEI) and the Adam Mueller Guttenbrunn House, the cultural center of Germans in the East of the Pannonian Basin, the Meeting's actual venue. Remus CREȚAN, professor of geography and toponomastics at the West University, was the main local organizer, made the engine running and provided for a very convenient atmosphere.

It was the intention of the meeting to gather experts on geographical names and cartographers to discuss

- (1) the topic of exonyms and their application in various communicative situations
- (2) the general structure and in particular the chapter on geographical names of a "cook book" for atlas editors.

The two subsequent meetings were accessible not only for the members of the respective subgroup, but for all other participants interested. The meetings were linked by a common excursion to the city of Timișoara and its multicultural surroundings guided by Remus CREȚAN and his colleagues. The meetings were preceded by a UNGEGN toponymic training course for young toponymists in Romania and neighbour countries.

A participation of 48 colleagues from 18 countries and 4 continents exceeded most expectations. The organizers were especially pleased to welcome Helen KERFOOT, UNGEGN Chair, and Ferjan ORMELING, UNGEGN Vice-Chair. It was very valuable to have UNGEGN experts also participating in the ICA commission meeting. This resulted in many inputs to the "cook book" chapter on geographical names and thus had indeed the synergy effects that were expected.

The first day of the WGE Meeting (9th September) saw the following paper presentations:

Introduction into city and region and into the Romanian namescape

Sorina VOICULESCU (Romania): Cultural aspects of Timișoara

Remus CREȚAN (Romania): On the toponymy of the Banat

Șerban DRAGOMIRESCU (Romania): Exonyms in Romania – an evaluation of the last 30 years

Ioan Sebastian JUCU (Romania): A short analysis of the street names of Lugoj. A comparative approach before and after 1990.

Exonyms

Paul WOODMAN (United Kingdom): The spelling of the country name Romania in British official usage: from uncertainty to standardization

Pierre JAILLARD (France): Exonymes et diversité culturelles

Bogusław R. ZAGÓRSKI (Poland): Exonyms in the Arab World – in Arabic and international cartography

Ivana CRLJENKO (Croatia): Exonyms in Croatian lexicographical editions: Some remarks about their uneven and inconsistent use

András DUTKO (Hungary): List of Hungarian exonyms

Zsombor BARTOS-ELEKES (Romania): The discussion on terminology of the terms exonym and endonym

Most of these papers will be published in a special issue of the *Reviews of Historical Geography and Toponomastics (RHGT)* edited by Remus CREȚAN.

The full second day (10th September) was devoted to the discussion and elaboration of guidelines for the use of exonyms and had the character of a workshop.

As a starter into the discussion Peter JORDAN presented again his paper E-CONF-98-36-Add1 ("Criteria for the use of exonyms"). After most intensive discussions highlighting and confronting in fact all the various opinions brought forward in more recent debates in UN Conferences, UNGEGN Sessions and Working Group meetings, the outlines of future guidelines were formulated and accepted by all experts present. Peter JORDAN (Austria) and Phil MATTHEWS (New Zealand) were charged to elaborate them into a paper to be disseminated once again to the members of the Working Group before it will be submitted to the 25th UNGEGN Session in Nairobi.

Appendix:

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