

UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES (UNGEGN)
WORKING GROUP ON EXONYMS

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Minutes

9th Meeting

11th May, 2009, 13.45 p.m., in Nairobi, UNON, Room 13

Provisional Agenda

- 1 Opening
- 2 Adoption of the Agenda
- 3 Report on activities since the 8th Meeting in Timișoara, 9-11 September 2008
- 4 Election of officers
- 5 Future activities
- 6 Date, place and thematic focus of the next meeting
- 7 Other matters
- 8 Closure

For attendance see Appendix..

Minutes

ad 1) The co-convenor opens the meeting at 13.45 p.m. and welcomes the experts present.

ad 2) The provisional agenda is adopted.

ad 3) Report. The co-convenor reminds of the 8th Meeting in Timișoara held in conjunction with the ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases, highlights the merits of the local organizers Remus CREȚAN, Marin ALNIȚIEI and Șerban DRAGOMIRESCU and thanks them for all their efforts. He mentions that proceedings of the joint meeting will be published as a special issue of “Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics” edited by Remus CREȚAN.

He then reports on the efforts to transform the basic consensus on guidelines for the use of exonyms achieved in Timișoara into a working paper or a draft resolution for the 25th UNGEGN Session in Nairobi. Together with Phil MATTHEWS (New Zealand) he had elaborated a comprehensive and detailed resolution text containing all criteria agreed upon in Timișoara (see enclosure 1). This draft was disseminated to the members of the WG for

approval. Prominent members of the WG, however, expressed major objections, in particular as regards length and detail. It was also argued that not all the criteria mentioned in this draft were valid. In reaction to these objections Paul WOODMAN (United Kingdom) elaborated a much shorter version of a draft resolution, which – with minor amendments and supplemented by some criteria for the use of exonyms with features under a single sovereignty – became the core of the working paper finally submitted to the 25th Session (see enclosure 2). By mistake, Pierre JAILLARD (France), one of the significant voices in the Timișoara meeting, had not been on the mailing list and had received neither the first nor the second paper version. Consequently, his principal objection against the second version became apparent only during the Session in Nairobi. For this reason, but also because he himself considered draft resolution as well as the WP in total neither as fully reflecting the Timișoara consensus nor as a real guide for the use of exonyms, the co-convenor did not further promote the draft resolution in the Session.

After a longer discussion it is agreed to take another effort and to aim at a concise resolution text with reference to an extended and comprehensive list of criteria for the use of exonyms – the latter just as a paper of the WG. Although this list of criteria would not have the authority of a resolution, it would express the (majority) opinion of the relevant WG and in this way offer guidance to people asking for it.

The proposal of Sirkka PAIKKALA (Finland) to investigate into current practice, trends and policies of exonym use in several countries comparatively and to provide thus for an empirical basis for the elaboration of guidelines for the use of exonyms is welcomed as an accompanying activity, but found as too comprehensive and time-consuming as a preliminary stage for the elaboration of guidelines.

The co-convenor reports also on an e-mail discussion on the “nature of the endonym” evolving from a paper of Paul WOODMAN on the application of the terminological endonym/exonym divide on names of seas. This discussion resulted in WPs No. 1 and No. 32 submitted to the Session as well as in additional WPs (Paul WOODMAN, Drago KLADNIK/Mimi URBANC) discussed just during a Workshop of the WG organized as a side-event of the Session. While both discussions brought some clarification of the two principal views, they could not be reconciled. It became, however, obvious that the core of the problem is the endonym/feature relation with trans-boundary features. It is decided to reassume this discussion at a next meeting of the WG.

ad 4) Election. The co-convenor recalls that the WG had been established in 2002 and that Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia) had been elected and active as convenor for the first four years. He further recalls that in 2005 Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ and Peter JORDAN (Austria) had been elected co-convenors and that Peter JORDAN had acted as a convenor in charge after Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ had been appointed Slovenian ambassador in Zagreb in 2006 and had not been able to participate actively in the work of the WG anymore. The co-convenor mentions that he does not intend to question Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ’s position as a co-convenor, since it would not be fair to vote on him in his absence, but that he wishes a vote on his function as a co-convenor (and convenor in charge) after having been active four and three years, respectively. He also asks whether a secret ballot is demanded. The latter is denied and Peter JORDAN is supported and encouraged to continue his function by several WG members. Ferjan ORMELING (Netherlands) asks Mimi URBANC (Slovenia) to elicit from Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ a statement on his future intentions a regards the WG.

ad 5) Future activities. As future activities of the WG the following are specified:

- to take another effort to elaborate guidelines on the use of exonyms, this time with the strategy to formulate a short draft resolution text with reference to a comprehensive list of criteria, the latter just as a paper of the WG;
- to continue the discussion on the nature of the endonym with a focus on the endonym – feature relation;
- to encourage comparative studies on practice, trends and policies in exonym use in various countries.

ad 6) Next meeting. The co-convenor's proposal to have the next meeting of the WG 28-30 April 2010 in Tainach, Carinthia, Austria, is welcomed by all members present. It is decided to hold the meeting in conjunction with a meeting of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN), 26-28 April, with a common excursion on Wednesday, 28 April. The venue will be an educational centre with a focus on the Slovene ethnic group in Carinthia in a small village 20 km East of Klagenfurt. It has a guest house and offers full board. Transfer from the Klagenfurt airport and railway station will be provided. The two working days of the WGE Meeting will see paper presentations and workshop discussions on the topics mentioned under Item 5. A first circular will be disseminated early in autumn 2009.

ad 7) Other matters. The co-convenors thanks Mimi URBANC for all her efforts in maintaining the WG website. It is up-to-date and contains, e.g., all WP on exonyms for the Session in Nairobi.

ad 8) The co-convenor closes the meeting at 14.45 p.m. and thanks all experts for participation.

Vienna, 30 May 2009

Peter Jordan
(Co-convenor, convenor in charge)

Appendix

Attendance, Working Group on Exonyms, 9th Meeting, Nairobi, 11th May 2009

No	Surname	Given name	Country	e-mail
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