

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)

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National Report of Turkey

Submitted by Turkey*

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Item 4 of the provisional Agenda

NATIONAL REPORT OF TURKEY (2002-2008)

Submitted by Turkey**

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Summary

Many efforts employed by various bodies have been gathered under an umbrella and 'The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T)' which is responsible for standardization of geographic names, has been founded in July 2004 after a directive of Ministry of Interior which is stating terms of reference for establishment, tasks and responsibilities. The Board is organized as a joint inter-ministerial and academic body in order to co-ordinate and to accelerate efforts of standardization and it will carry out its tasks in parallel with UNGEGN. The Board has been given legal competence to standardize all categories of geographical names in Turkey, and will also be responsible for exonyms, names of maritime and undersea features and extraterrestrial name proposals. The Board is able to establish working groups in order to achieve its responsibilities.

Some of the representatives of the Board from different organizations are as follows; General Directorate of Provinces Management-Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Society for Turkish Language, Turkish Standards Institute, Statistics Institution of Turkey, Society for Turkish History, Universities, General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of Turkish Navy.

Standardized geographical names are prescribed as they take place in publications of the Ministry of Interior and on topographic maps produced by General Command of Mapping- Ministry of Defense and nautical charts produced by Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of Turkish Navy.

In practice, standardization of topographic, nautical, local names is carried out by General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography and local municipal boards, respectively with authorization of Ministry of Interior and the Board.

1. Organizational Activities

Since the Twenty-Second session of UNGEGN held in Berlin in 2002, the legal status of National Geographic Names Authorities has been changed by means of Official Declaration of Ministry of Interior. Besides some preliminary works have been planned and handled during this period of two years.

1.1 Historical Background

Attempts to standardize geographical names in Turkey started in late 1930s, when the Ministry of Interior set up a special committee on standardization of names of populated places. Foundation and naming administrative units -provinces, districts, sub-districts and villages- are done by means of Law of Provinces (law number 5442) dated 1949. Naming or renaming an administrative unit or a natural geographic feature is accomplished by different local and governmental procedures according to type of administrative unit in hierarchy. This procedure comprises decisions of General Council of Province, Administrative Committee of Province, Governor and finally triple decree of Minister of Interior, Prime Minister and President of the Republic. However, foundation and naming of a province or a sub-province is executed by Parliament. General Directorate of Provinces Management is authorized to register and standardize names of villages with approval of Minister of Interior.

The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names was set up in 1952 by the Ministry of Interior and was authorized to standardize names of administrative units, inhabited places and natural geographic features except roads, parks and streets in the districts of municipalities. Though not in a regular basis, the Committee, which consisted of experts from universities and national bodies, worked until 1975.

Although, terms of reference for establishment, tasks and responsibilities of a national board on geographic names called 'Committee of Experts for Standardization of Geographical Names' was approved in 1983, an abrogation was followed in three years after publication due to shortfalls rising from implementation.

Standardized geographical names are prescribed as they take place in publications of the Ministry of Interior and on topographic maps produced by General Command of Mapping- Ministry of Defense and nautical charts produced by Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of Turkish Navy.

In practice, standardization of topographic, nautical, local names is carried out by General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography and local municipal boards, respectively with authorization of Ministry of Interior and the Board.

1.2 Legal Status of the Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN-T)

Many efforts employed by various bodies have been gathered under an umbrella and 'The Board of Experts for Geographical Names of Turkey (BEGeoN_T) which is responsible for standardization of geographic names, has been founded in July 2004 after a directive of Ministry of Interior stating terms of reference for establishment, tasks and responsibilities. A draft document prepared by General Directorate of Provinces Management-Ministry of Interior with contribution of other members has been discussed and made definite by a council –this council becomes shell of future establishments-invited by the Ministry. After that, the document has been published as a directive by Ministry of Interior. The Board is organized as a joint inter-ministerial and academic body in order to co-ordinate and to accelerate efforts of standardization and it will carry out its tasks in parallel with UNGEGN. The Board has been given legal competence to standardize all categories of geographical names in Turkey, and will also be responsible for exonyms, names of maritime and undersea features and extraterrestrial name proposals.

Some of the representatives of the Board from different organizations are as follows; General Directorate of Provinces Management-Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Society for Turkish Language, Turkish Standards Institute, Society for Turkish History, Universities, General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, General Command of Mapping, Department of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography of Turkish Navy.

The Board may create working groups in order to achieve its responsibilities.

1.3 BEGeoN-T Activities

The Board organizes two General Assembly (GA) meetings every year. During these meetings, recent developments, achievements of working groups, decisions about questions arising from several institutions are held.

In October 2004 GA, five working groups have been established considering parallel activities of UNGEGN and national needs. These are; 'Technical Infrastructure', 'Exonyms of Country Names and Capitals', 'Toponymy Guide', 'Glossary of Toponymic Terminology' and 'Gazetteer and Geographical Names Database'. Members from participating organizations or an expert proposed may take part in working groups.

In May 2005 GA, General Command of Mapping reported activities and results of working groups in which it was taking part as an active member. These studies have been evaluated and investigated by other institutions. The Turkish version of the UNGEGN brochure has been prepared and submitted to the approval of UNGEGN. After this approval it will be published. The Board decided to set some new working groups namely 'Determining Deficiencies in use of Populated Places Names and Standardization of anomalies about use of Geographical Names', 'Medium Scale Gazetteer', 'World Gazetteer', and 'Geographical Names of Surroundings of Turkey'.

The 'Concise Gazetteer of the World at scale 1:30 M', revision of 'Gazetteer at scale 1:250.000', 'Concise Gazetteer of neighbouring regions of Turkey' are planned works which are assigned to new working groups in the Board. The latter work is dependent on examination of actual and old Turkish maps in order to collect Turkish exonyms.

Since its foundation, The Board is working for the production of documents titled 'Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features', 'Turkish exonyms of countries and capitals' based on list of ISO 3166, 'Toponymy Guidelines for Authors, Map and Other Editors', 'Glossary of Toponymic Terminology', 'Gazetteers and names databases at several scales', 'Marine, Nautical and under sea names'.

1.4 Participating Activities of UNGEGN Divisions and other International Bodies

BeGeoN_T participated several Division meetings such as East Central and South-East Europe Division and Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic).

List of 'Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features' of Romano-Hellenic Division and geographical features on base topographic maps of Turkey are merged to be a part of the Guide.

A new project - EuroGeoNames – has been designed and proposed to Eurogeographics by German-Dutch cooperation. This project addresses critical issues to the implementation of an operational European Spatial Data Infrastructure at European level. EuroGeoNames project is in line with the goals and aspirations of INSPIRE and

resolutions of UNGEGN. Turkey is a contributing participant of the project as Reference Group member. Turkey is planning to make accessible the (official) national geographical names database held by General Command of Mapping by giving permission to use geographical names data free of charge for single inquiries for non-commercial applications. Commercial use will be agreed upon at project commencement between the Project Coordinator and participating bodies.