

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)
East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)

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Report of Cyprus

Submitted by Cyprus*

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UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

**19th Session of the East, Central and South-East Europe Division
Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

**Zagreb, Croatia
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Paper submitted by the Republic of Cyprus

Prepared by Mr. Prodromos Vasileiou, the President of the Cyprus Permanent
Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names

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Introduction:

Cyprus began dealing with the geographical names since 1950 to resolve some inconsistencies and contradiction of spelling, for mapping and administrative purposes. In 1962 an ad-hoc committee was set up to meet the Decision No. 814 (xxi) of 27 April, 1961 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations regarding the standardization of geographical names, which recommends and encourages all countries members of U.N. to submit information and methods adopted in their countries on the subject.

The Cyprus Republic complying as well, with the resolutions of the U.N. Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names has kept abreast of the subject and participated to the first conference held in Geneva in 1967. Since then, Cyprus participates to all conferences, Sessions and Divisions' Meetings to which Cyprus is a member.

National Standardization:

(Item 3 of the general agenda)

- *Field collection and office treatment of names*

The task for collection standardization and Romanization of the Greek alphabet according to ELOT 743, of the geographical name of Cyprus was entrusted to the "Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names" (C.P.C.S.G.N.)

Almost all the toponyms were gathered on field by appropriate and authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus since 1878 and later periods.

The methodology and the procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms and the area names of Kypros – Cyprus are described in the attached document prepared and submitted firstly upon request to the President of UNGEGN Mrs Helen Kerfoot for the exchange of experiences between the countries. It was also submitted during the 8th Regional Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) held in Tehran in May 2008. In summary it comprises the following:

- A. Introduction, the history of the mapping of Cyprus
- B. Procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms in 7 consecutive steps and
- C. Standardization of Geographical Names. This was also divided in 7 consecutive steps.

- *Administrative structure of the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (C.P.C.S.G.N.)*

The C.P.C.S.G.N. was officially established in 1977 by decision of the Council of Ministers and constitutes the only competent National Authority for the Standardization of Geographical Names. There is no any change of the status, the law and the proceedings about the Committee and the Advisory Committee since the 18th Session of the East, Central and South East Europe Division held in 2007.

Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors:

(Item 4 of the general agenda)

This has been prepared and presented in draft form (limited copies) during the 22nd Session of UNGEGN. Now after some corrections and amendments will be soon published as first official edition and will be submitted to the coming Conference.

Toponymic data files and gazetteers:

(Item 5 of the general agenda)

- *National Gazetteers*
The existing gazetteers prepared by the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1982 and 1987 respectively are:
 - (i) The “*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*” (about 2000 entries).
 - (ii) The “*A*” Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus” (about 67000 entries)
- *Other publications*
A Booklet/Guide for the Standardization of Names.
This has been compiled and published in December 2007.
It includes a large number of items to cover all the sectors involved with naming and geographical names, to ensure the unified and consistent use of the names e.g. guides and principles for the standardization of names, the Romanization system of the Greek alphabet, the language, phonemes and pronunciation, grammar, diacritics, abbreviations, guides and principles for toponyms (street names). It includes table of all the names of towns and villages of Cyprus as they have been used and approved for hundreds of years by both the Greek and the Turkish communities and as they have been standardized by the C.P.C.S.G.N. It is consisted of 109 pages, it is suitable for local use and needs, and it is written in the Greek language.
- *UNGEGN Promotional Brochure*
After some corrections the translated in the Greek language in collaboration with Greece, the UNGEGN Promotional Brochure will be published as 2nd Edition by the end of 2008 and distributed after January to the Universities, Secondary schools, Government and Semi Government Offices, Cultural Centres etc.

Writing systems and pronunciation of names:

(Items 7 and 8 of the general agenda)

The transliteration of the Greek alphabet into the Roman writing system, was prepared jointly by the Permanent Committees for the standardization of

Geographical Names of Greece and Cyprus and approved by the U.N. during the Fifth conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987, ELOT 743. In December 1988, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus gave instructions for its obligatory application to all Government and Semi - Government Sectors.

The Romanization writing system of the Greek alphabet has began to be implemented also in the private sector, in the press, in books and studies.

As far as the pronunciation of the Romanization writing system, a “Note on Pronunciation” is shown on the face of some maps and to some other editions.

For this purpose, also a special leaflet is prepared, showing in detail the transcription and transliteration of the Greek alphabet, how the characteristics of the Greek Script are transcribed and how the pronunciation of vowels and consonants are expressed.

List of Country Names and Capitals:

(Item 9 of the general agenda)

This list has been compiled and presented in draft form during the U.N. 8th Conference in Berlin.

Today this has been revised and updated and is anticipated to be published by the beginning of the next year.

Exonyms:

(Item 10 of the general agenda)

The preparation of a list of the Cyprus exonyms is scheduled to be completed in 2009.

Toponymic education:

(Item 15 of the general agenda)

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names strongly believes that the training courses and seminars in toponyms and the standardization of Geographical Names in general, are of great value, useful and very effective.

The exchange of experience between the Countries members of a Division or other Countries, in the general treatment of geographical names could be most useful for all of us to see that resources for one activity can also benefit another.

Our aim and it is in our program, is to establish a small team of experts on the standardization of geographical names, members of the C.P.C.S.G.N., who will organize courses and provide at national level of good professional training for personnel involved in toponymic works and the treatment of geographical names, specially on the needs of the local users.

Implementation of Resolutions and the aims and functions of UNGEGN:

(Item 16 of the general agenda)

In order to achieve even the utmost of the aims and functions of UNGEGN and of course for the unification of Geographical Names for the benefit of all the people all over the world, the necessity of the countries members through their National Committees is coming more and more essential for the implementation of the UN and UNGEGN Conferences Resolutions. We comply to these resolutions and we are looking forward for the good results on this issue.

Other information:

(Item 17 of the general agenda)

- *The Geographical Names as Part of the Cultural Heritage*

This item, as you all remember, was evolved as one of the major topics and many papers have been presented during the 9th United Nations conference on the Standardization of geographical names in August 2007 supporting that geographical names are part of the cultural heritage of each country and as such must be protected. Among others Mrs. Helene-Marie Gosselin, Unesco Representative to the United Nations and director of the Unesco New York Bureau in her speech, to the above 9th Conference, referred to the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. She indicated that the geographical names constitute an important element of linguistic heritage and traditions.

We may refer also to resolution VIII/9 which urges countries to proceed with the systematic collection of geographical names and the promotion of a greater understanding among the wider public of the significance of inherited geographical names with respect to local, regional and national heritage and identity.

For the safeguarding of geographical names as part of the cultural heritage a GeoNames 2008 symposium is organized by UNGEGN Dutch and German Speaking Division and other Austrian Academies of Sciences Institutes, which took place in Vienna on 19-21 May 2008.

Taking into account the great meaning of all the above and not only, I may suggest to the Secretariat of this 19th Session to promote to the coming 24th UNGEGN Session the discouraging of changing of geographical names, which could lead to the loss of cultural and historical heritage and also to endorse and reaffirm previous resolutions concerned on the topic III/16, VI/9 and VIII/9 and IX/4.

- *Odonyms (street Names)*

For the last 5-7 years there has been an increased request to C.P.C.S.G.N. to offer its services to the Government Municipal and Communal Authorities for the standardization and transcription the Greek alphabet to the Roman alphabet, of the old and new odonyms (street names). In Cyprus the odonyms are subject to the Ministry of Interior, the Municipalities and the Communal Authorities. All the names given are referred to the C.P.C.S.G.N. not only for standardization and transcription, but for orthographical correction if necessary and for uniformity all over the island.

More than 35.000 odonyms have been treated. Shortly we intend to construct an index of all the odonyms to be at the disposal of the Authorities in order to move all on the same Romanization writing system.

- *Works in progress*

A revised and improved 2nd Edition of the “*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*” consisting of about 2.500 names.

A revised and improved 2nd edition of the “*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*” consisting of about 68000 names.

Toponymic data files.

Thanks to the hosting country:

Finally, please allow me to express our faithful thanks and appreciation to the hosting country, the State Geodetic Administration and the Croatian Geodetic Institute for their kind invitation to participate to this perfectly organized and highly qualified work done for this meeting of the East, Central and South-East Europe Division. I wish every success.