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**East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)**

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**Activities of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names  
December 2008 – December 2010**

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**Activities of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names  
December 2008 – December 2010 with examples on its rulings  
(decisions, advices, recommendations)**

## **1. About the Committee**

The Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names was established in its present form 21 years ago. It held its first meeting on 30 January 1990 during the time of political and economic transitions both in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries.

The former Committee on Geographical Names, established in 1963, had worked until 1989 within the framework of the Hungarian national authority on geodesy and cartography.

Some members who were active in the original committee still are members of our present body like Mr. Lajos Balogh and, most notably *Mr. Ervin Földi*, the main author of several basic Hungarian toponymic publications in the 1970s and 80s.

The legal basis of national names standardization in Hungary and of the Committee itself is Gov. Decree No. 303/2007. (XI. 14.) Korm. (on the establishment and recording of official geographical names in Hungary).

The Committee is a decision-making and advisory body responsible for official geographical names in Hungary and on names suggested for use in Hungarian for features outside Hungary. Types of decisions that have taken place on the 7 sessions during the past two years are given with examples. Most of the decisions covered transportation features (railway stations, bridges), small area features, advice on street names and rulings on names for a few small physical features. Much time was also devoted to advice on the use of foreign features in Hungarian language (country names, names of localities, regions etc.).

High-level legal decisions on administrative names:

Decisions on names of communes, towns and cities are brought by the President of the Republic, those on counties (or provinces [Hung. Megye] ) by the Parliament. Before the decision is brought on names of communes however, the expert opinion of the Committee has to be collected by the Act on Local Governments.

## **2. Examples of rulings (decisions, recommendations, advices):**

*Expert opinion on names of*

- Settlements (wishing to separate) e.g. part of the town was advised to use the name. A part of the town village of Mosonmagyaróvár successfully separated and became an independent village on 3 October 2010 under the Mosonudvar. As we already reported on, in 2008 our Committee suggested this name because the original name of Újudvar, formerly a small farmstead in the large agricultural estate of Lajta-Hanság, could not legally be used. As no homonyms may exist among the Hungarian geographical names of towns or villages, so as there was another village in Hungary with that name (in County Zala) Újudvar a new name fitting the region was suggested and accepted by the local population.
- parts of settlements  
e.g. no artificial generic names should be used ( instead of Paradicsomi lakótelep /housing estate/ Paradicsom is sufficient in the town of Gyula)

- streets, squares (Mostly commemorative names – no public ground may be named after a living person and (at least in Budapest) there is a 25 year long waiting period after the death of a person to be eligible. Naming such features are in the authority of municipalities, with the committee can only give expert advice when asked. If the name is too long our committee advises to shorten it: titles and ranks (Dr., gróf /Hung. earl/, báró /baron/ are preferred not to be used. Thus a street named after Báró /Baron/ Wesselényi Miklós is normally called Wesselényi Miklós utca or just Wesselényi utca as it is in central Budapest.

*Decisions: physical features*

- one small unnamed hill near Budapest, important for tourists (Perem-hegy)
- an artificial lake, actually a reservoir also used for recreation near the city of Kecskemét (Széktó)

Names of traffic and communication (mostly railway stations, stops and a few bridges).

- There have been decisions on 12 railway stations. Of those one decision had to be rediscussed, as the first decision took the name of the planned railway stop of the neighbouring town (Pilisszentiván). The mayor of the town of Pilisvörösvár on whose territory the facility would be built could not agree to the name of this stop, carrying the name of the neighbouring town. A compromise was reached that better suited the requirements of the host town (Vörösvárbánya).
- We had approved the names of four bridges, one of them a major one, crossing the River Tisza at the city of Szeged, named “Móra Ferenc Bridge” (after a 19<sup>th</sup> c. Hungarian writer – not yet inaugurated)

*Recommendations for the use of foreign names in Hungary (exonyms)*

- Advice how to announce foreign railway stations in loudspeakers, that also had Hungarian exonyms. (In Hungarian announcements the familiar Hungarian exonyms are to be used, with the local official names have also to be included in all texts)
- Assistance was given to secondary schools on their list of toponyms intended for the subject of geography in final examination
- Advice on the use in Hungary of some country names (Georgia, United Kingdom)
- A recommendation in our December 2010 session was also brought on the naming of a sea area in Hungarian cartographic publications. It reads:

In view of the growing international practice, the Committee on Geographical Names endorses that the feature hitherto exclusively identified as *Japán-tenger* (Sea of Japan) in Hungarian cartographic publications be henceforth completed with the variant name in parenthesis *Keleti-tenger* (East Sea) in the form *Japán (Keleti)-tenger*.

*Advice on questions related to geographical names but not regulated precisely in Gov. Decree No. 303/2007.*

- The rail express operating between Hungary and Sibiu (Romania, Transylvania) may carry the name „Transsylvania expressz“ in Hungary.