

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

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**An overview of ECSEE Division meetings, its past and
some future perspectives...**

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On the UNGEGN web home page we can read: »In 1959, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) paved the way for a small group of experts to meet and provide technical recommendations on standardizing geographical names at the national and international levels. This meeting gave rise to the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) and to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The UNCSGN is held every five years, and UNGEGN meets between the Conferences to follow up the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Conferences and to ensure continuity of activities between Conferences. Today, UNGEGN is one of the seven self-standing expert bodies of ECOSOC, with over 400 members from over 100 countries. «

UNGEGN functions through 23 geographical/linguistic divisions and through working groups, currently addressing issues of training courses, digital data files and gazetteers, romanization systems, country names, terminology, publicity and funding, and toponymic guidelines.

East Central and South-East Europe Division of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names is a body of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). UNGEGN is one of the seven expert bodies of ECOSOC.

Some of the main goals of UNGEGN are to encourage national and international geographical names standardization, to promote the international dissemination of nationally standardized geographical names information and to adopt single romanization systems. UNGEGN's goal for every country is to decide on its own nationally standardized names through the creation of national names authorities or recognized administrative processes.

The United Nations Conference on the standardization of geographical names is held every five years. To make the work easier, UNGEGN Divisions have been formed. **East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)** is one of the 23 UNGEGN Divisions. The 16 countries joined in the **ECSEED** are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine.



(Map by Željko Hecimović, 2010)

Two enclosed tables have been created as a joint effort of Béla Pokoly (Hungary), Pavel Boháč (Czech Republic), Imrich Horňanský (Slovakia) and Željko Hecimović (Croatia). In the first table it is an overview of all UNGEGN meetings and ECSEE Division Sessions. The second table is showing the list ECSEED chairing persons, period and country of the presidency.

Table 1: An overview chart of UNGEGN meeting and sessions and the ECSEE Division Sessions (Béla Pokoly, Pavel Boháč, Imrich Horňanský, Željko Hecimović and Milan Orožen Adamič).

UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names	UNGEGN Session/Meeting	ECSEE Division Sessions	Location	Year
	1st UNGEGN Meeting		New York	1960
	2nd UNGEGN Meeting		New York	1966
1st UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			Geneva	1967
	1st UNGEGN Session *		New York	1967
	2nd UNGEGN Session		New York	1970
	3rd UNGEGN Session		New York	1971
		1st ECSEE Division Session	Prague	1971
	4th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		London	1972
2nd UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			London	1972
	4th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		London	1972
	5th UNGEGN Session		New York	1973
		2nd ECSEE Division Session	Budapest	1975
	6th UNGEGN Session		New York	1975
		3rd ECSEE Division Session	Budapest	1977
	7th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		Athens	1977
3rd UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			Athens	1977
	7th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		Athens	1977
	8th UNGEGN Session		New York	1979
		4th ECSEE Division Session **	Warsaw	1979
		5th ECSEE Division Session **	Warsaw	1981
	9th UNGEGN Session		New York	1981
		6th ECSEE Division Session	Warsaw	1982
	10th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		Geneva	1982
4th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			Geneva	1982
	10th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		Geneva	1982
		7th ECSEE Division Session ***	Sofia	1983
	11th UNGEGN Session		Geneva	1984
	12th UNGEGN Session		Geneva	1986
		8th ECSEE Division Session ***	Sofia	1987

	13th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		Montréal	1987
5th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			Montreal	1987
	13th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		Montréal	1987
		9th ECSEE Division Session ****	Bratislava	1989
	14th UNGEGN Session		Geneva	1989
		10th ECSEE Division Session ****	Prague	1991
	15th UNGEGN Session		Geneva	1991
	16th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		New York	1992
6th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			New York	1992
		11th ECSEE Division Session ****	Bratislava	1992
	16th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		New York	1992
		12th ECSEE Division Session *****	Budapest	1993
	17th UNGEGN Session		New York	1994
		13th ECSEE Division Session *****	Budapest	1996
	18th UNGEGN Session		Geneva	1996
		14th ECSEE Division Session	Budapest	1997
	19th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		New York	1998
7th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			New York	1998
	19th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		New York	1998
		15th ECSEE Division Session	Ljubljana	1999
	20th UNGEGN Session		New York	2000
		16th ECSEE Division Session	Ljubljana	2001
	21st UNGEGN Session - 1st part		Berlin	2002
8th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			Berlin	2002
	21st UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		Berlin	2002
		17th ECSEE Division Session	Prague	2003
	22nd UNGEGN Session		New York	2004
	23rd UNGEGN Session		Vienna	2006
		18th ECSEE Division Session	Prague	2007
	24th UNGEGN Session - 1st part		New York	2007

9th UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names			New York	2007
	24th UNGEGN Session - 2nd part		New York	2007
		19th ECSEE Division Session	Zagreb	2008
	25th UNGEGN Session		Nairobi	2009
		20th ECSEE Division Session	Zagreb	2011
	26th UNGEGN Session		Vienna	2011

* 2nd UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1972, London, United Kingdom, Working Paper E/CONF.61/L.85

** 9th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 17 - 27 February 1981, New York, USA, Report of the Session, ESA/RT/C/GN/7

*** 5th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1987, Montreal, Canada, Working Paper E/CONF.79/L.72

**** 6th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1992, New York, USA, Working Paper E/CONF.85/L.82

***** 18th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 12 - 23 August 1996, Geneva, Switzerland, Report of the Session, GEGN/18

Las year, in 2010 it was so more than half a century, since 1st UNGEGN Meeting was held in New York (20 June - 1 July, 1960). First UNGEGN Session was also in New York, seven year later in 1967 (22nd September). Quite a long time ago and many things have been done. 1st ECSEE Division Session was eleven year later in Prague (1971, 4-6 October), so this year we are faced with 40 years of the ECSEE UNGEGN Division meetings, quite a long time, we can say tradition already. This was the reason for this paper and an attempt to create simplified overview. Our intention was not to do a detail history research, but to find out some basic facts of the some roots of our activity.

Table 2: **ECSEED chairing persons, period and country of presidency.**

Chair	Period	Country	Source document
Sándor Radó	1972-1977	Hungary	
M. Szymczak	1977-1982	Poland	
Verner Raynov	1982-1987	Bulgaria	5th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 1987, Montreal, Canada, Working Paper E/CONF.79/L.72
Imrich Horňanský	1987-1992	Czechoslovakia (Slovakia)	
Béla Pokoly	1992-1998	Hungary	
Milan Orožen Adamič	1998-2002	Slovenia	
Pavel Boháč	2002-2007	Czech Republic	
Željko Hecimović	2007-	Croatia	

It was found out that 7 countries Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia (Slovakia), Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Croatia have been charring ECSEE since 1972.

The following colleagues: Sándor Radó, M. Szymczak, Verner Raynov, Imrich Horňanský, Béla Pokoly, Milan Orožen Adamič, Pavel Boháč and Željko Hecimović have been physically in duty in their countries. However it is understandable that many others have also been involved.

The geographical name standardization efforts are having from country to country different organizational and administrative positions. In Slovenia, for example National Commission is directly under the government and financed through Ministry for environment. However this year, because financial crisis, many government commission and other government bodies have been reduced and now it is no money planned for the work of Geographical names body in spite of the fact that its duties are defined in state place names law. Details are presented in separate paper "Report of Slovenia", Submitted by Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia and Commission for Standardization of Geographical Names of Republic of Slovenia

If we try to do an overview of the ECSEE papers it is clear that this is not an easy task. In all these years many papers have been presented and I am afraid we do not have a complete overview. However it is clear that national reports are the backbone of all UNGEGN work. It is also very important triggered discussion based on national reports and exchange of experiences. Special part of these reports are information's about geographical names standards and facts. It is expected that national standardization body's conclusions and recommendations are on ECSEE meetings and other UNGEGN bodies accepted.

After being involved for many years in different UNGEGN bodies I know that our work was very extensive and I believe that it has deep sense. We can be proud on the past and it is giving us strength and ideas for future and new generations to come.

I think, that we should trigger an initiative for a giving sort of UNGEGN award. It should be given to distinguished colleagues being involved in UNGEGN activities for many years. This can be symbolic gesture, a word of thanks you for people leaving the best in their hearts with us. So far, as I know nothing like this has been given. I have already have in mind that distinguished colleague Paul Woodman from Great Britain, for example, must be decorated.

It is a must to have different kind of meetings. The best part of all meetings is open discussions, exchanges of opinions and better understanding of problems. Work on geographical names issues, I am sure, will go on. We can be proud on the road crossed.

It should be all the time in front of us how to do and act in future.