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**UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS  
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

**20<sup>th</sup> Session of the East, Central and South-East Europe Division  
Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

**Zagreb, Croatia  
9-11 February, 2011**

**Paper submitted by the Republic of Cyprus**

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### 1. Introduction:

- 1.1. It is with great pleasure that the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Republic of Cyprus participates to the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the East, Central and South East Europe Division (ECSEED).
- 1.2. The United Nations in recognizing the great meaning and value of Geographical Names all over the world and the difficulty caused in the work to all the users of them due to the lack of standardized names, undertook international efforts for the standardization of geographical names and the transcription of non roman alphabets to the roman alphabet for immediate and continued international communication. Also, these efforts were undertaken in order to safeguard the geographical names as part of the cultural heritage.
- 1.3. The Cyprus Republic complying with the resolutions of the U.N. Conferences for the Standardization of Geographical Names has kept abreast of the subject and participates actively to all relevant conferences Sessions and Divisions' Meetings to which Cyprus is a member.

### 2. National Standardization

(Item 3 of the agenda)

#### 2.1 *Field collection and office treatment of names*

The G.P.C.S.G.N. continues the task for the collection, Standardization and Romanization of the Greek alphabet according to ELOT 743, of the geographical names of Cyprus. 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 microtoponyms of Cyprus and the office treatment are described in detail and distributed to all the participants during the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of our Division.

#### 2.2 *Administrative structure of the 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. According to the law and the proceedings the committee acts under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Minister appoints every 5

years the members of the Committee. In 2009 the most members of the Committee were re/appointed and is consisted of 10 members. Parallel to the C.P.C.S.G.N. an Advisory Committee exists which was re-appointed . Is consisted of 5 experts all academics.

### **3. Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors:** (item 4 of the agenda)

3.1 These Toponymic Guidelines have been prepared and presented originally in draft form during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of UNGEGN. Today, although some corrections and amendments were completed, unfortunately they have not yet been published as first official edition. It is anticipated to be published within this year.

### **4. Geographical Names as Culture, heritage and identity** (item 5 of the agenda)

4.1 As it is always pointed out at the United nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, geographical names of all countries are significant not only for contemporary use but also for history itself. Famous scholars and researchers on this topic of geographical names said, that these are voices of our ancestors preserved in the form of carvings on the ground. These voices help us to communicate with our past. During human history there have been cases of peoples, who moved, integrated and were lost as linguistic groups. But even in that case, their language remained as a background of the place names they used. Through their place names we learn about their existence, their space and their culture.

4.2 During the 9<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical names (2007), many countries supported that the geographical names are part of the cultural heritage of each country and as such they must be protected. The UNESCO representative to the U.N. in her speech to the above 9<sup>th</sup> Conference, referred to the issue of safeguarding the geographical names as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

4.3 We may recall U.N. Conferences Resolutions on the Standardization of Geographical Names which promote a greater understanding among the wider public of the significance of inherited geographical names with respect to local, regional and national heritage and identity.

4.4 Taking into account the great meaning of all the above and not only, we must discourage any changes of geographical names, which could lead to the loss of cultural and historical heritage, thus implementing as well, the respective resolutions concerned on the topic III/16, VI/IX, VIII/9, IX/4 etc.

## **5. Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers**

(item 6 of the agenda)

### *5.1 National Gazetteers*

The existing gazetteers prepared by the C.P.C.S.G.N. in 1982 and 1987 respectively are:

- (i) The “*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*” (about 2000 entries)
- (ii) The “*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*” (about 67.000 entries)

Both need to be updated.

### *5.2 Other publications*

A Booklet / Guide for the Standardization of Names 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, guides and principles for the standardization of names, the Romanization system of the Greek alphabet, the language and pronunciation, grammar, diacritics, abbreviations, guides and principles for toponyms etc. It is suitable specially for local use and needs.

### *5.3 UNGEGN promotional Brochure*

The UNGEGN Promotional Brochure translated in the Greek language and after some corrections it has been published as 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition in 2009.

- 5.4 Both, the Booklet / Guide and the UNGEGN Promotional Brochure, greek version were distributed to the Universities, Secondary schools, Government and Semi Government Offices, Cultural Centres, individuals interested on the topic etc.

## **6. Writing Systems and Pronunciation of Names**

(items 8 and 9 of the agenda)

- 6.1 The Transliteration of the Greek alphabet into the Roman writing system was approved by the UN during the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1987 as 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.

- 6.2 A special leaflet is prepared, showing in detail the transcription and transliteration of the Greek alphabet to roman script and how the pronunciation of vowels and consonants are expressed. Moreover, the pronunciation of the Romanization writing system, a “Note on the pronunciation” is shown on the face of the most maps and to some other editions.

## **7. Country Names**

(Item 9 of the agenda)

The draft form of the list of Country Names and Capitals already distributed during the 8<sup>th</sup> UN Conference in Berlin has been revised and updated and will be published within 2011.

## **8. Toponymic Education**

(Item 15 of the agenda)

A small team of experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names, members of the C.P.C.S.G.N. has been established and organize on request courses and professional training seminars for personnel and others involved with the treatment of geographical names.

## **9. Hosting Country**

To the hosting country the Republic of Croatia, The State Geodetic Administrative and Croatian Geodetic Institute, to the President of the ECSEED, we express our faithful thanks and to the organizing committee of this meeting we address our congratulations for the perfect organization.

Thank You