

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names**

Second session

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

Item 13 of the provisional agenda *

Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

Submitted by the Working Group on Exonyms **

Summary:

The report provides a description of the activities of the Working Group on Exonyms since the 2019 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in New York from 29 April to 3 May 2019. The twenty-second meeting of the Working Group, a business meeting, was held in New York on 2 May 2019 as a side event of the 2019 session. During the meeting, among other things, a summary of as yet unresolved issues regarding exonyms was presented. For the twenty-third meeting, a workshop was planned to be held in Ljubljana from 19 to 21 March 2020, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute. Regrettably, the meeting had to be cancelled at the last minute, owing to movement restrictions put in place in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

In the meantime, in the middle of 2019, a book was published containing 17 full papers of the 19 papers presented at the twenty-first meeting of the Working Group, held in Riga from 24 to 26 September 2018. The book, entitled *The Classification of Exonyms*, is volume 8 of the series Name and Place – Contributions to Toponymic Literature and Research, published by Verlag Dr. Kovač.

* GEGN.2/2021/1

** Prepared by Kohei Watanabe, Convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

1. Organisational Aspects

The Working Group on Exonyms was established in 2002 by the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin. Resolution VIII/4 specifies its tasks with taking measures for “the categorization of exonym use, the publication of pronunciation guides for endonyms and the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms”.

1.1 WG meetings held

1st Meeting: Berlin, 6 September 2002, in the framework of the 8th UNCSGN

2nd Meeting: Prague, 24-26 September 2003, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre

3rd Meeting: New York, 2004, in the framework of the 22nd UNGEGN session

4th Meeting: Ljubljana, 19-20 May 2005, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

5th Meeting: Vienna, 2006, in the framework of the 23rd UNGEGN session

6th Meeting: Prague, 17-18 May 2007, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre.

7th Meeting: New York, 29 August 2007, in the framework of the 24th UNGEGN session

8th Meeting: Timișoara, 9-11 September 2008, hosted by the West University of Timișoara, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography and the Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn House

9th Meeting: Nairobi, 11 May 2009, in the framework of the 25th UNGEGN session

10th Meeting: Tainach (Austria), 28-30 April 2010, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names and the Catholic Educational Centre “Sodalitas”

11th Meeting: Vienna, 4 May 2011, in the framework of the 26th UNGEGN session, but outside UN facilities, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names

12th Meeting: Gdańsk, 16-18 May 2012, hosted by the Polish Main Office of Geodesy and Cartography

13th Meeting: New York, 6 August 2012, in the framework of the 10th UN Conference

14th Meeting: Corfu, 23-25 May 2013, hosted by the Greek UNGEGN delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Corfu

15th Meeting: New York, 29 April 2014, in the framework of the 28th UNGEGN session

16th Meeting: Hermagor (Austria), 5-7 June 2014, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names

17th Meeting: Zagreb, 14-16 May 2015, hosted by the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, Zagreb

18th Meeting: Bangkok, 26 April 2016, in the framework of the 29th UNGEGN session

19th Meeting: Prague, 4-6 April 2017, hosted by the Czech Geodetical Office and Land Survey Office

20th Meeting: New York, 9 August 2017, in the framework of the 30th UNGEGN session

21st Meeting: Riga, 24-26 September 2018, hosted by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, in collaboration with the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia

22nd Meeting: New York, 2 May 2019, in the framework of the 1st UNGEGN session

1.2 WG proceedings published

JORDAN Peter, OROŽEN ADAMIČ Milan, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2007), Exonyms and the International Standardisation of Geographical Names. Approaches towards the Resolution of an Apparent Contradiction (Wiener Osteuropa Studien, 24). Wien – Berlin: LIT Verlag, 240p., ISBN 978-3-8258-0035-2, ISSN 0946-7246.

JORDAN Peter, BERGMANN Hubert, BURGESS Caroline, CHEETHAM Catherine (eds.) (2011), Trends in Exonym Use. Proceedings of the 10th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Tainach, 28-30 April 2010 (Name & Place, 1). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 328p., ISBN 978-3-8300-5656-0.

WOODMAN Paul (ed.) (2012), The Great Toponymic Divide. Reflections on the definition and usage of endonyms and exonyms. Warszawa: Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, 302p. ISBN 978-83-254-1967-7.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2014), The Quest for Definitions. Proceedings of the 14th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Corfu, 23-25 May 2013 (Name & Place, 3) Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 295p., ISBN 978-3-8300-7747-3.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2015), Confirmation of the Definitions. Proceedings of the 16th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Hermagor, 5-7 June 2014 (Name & Place, 4). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 244p., ISBN 978-3-8300-8422-8.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2016), Criteria for the Use of Exonyms. Proceedings of the 17th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Zagreb, 14-16 May 2015 (Name & Place, 6). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 170p., ISBN 978-3-8300-8946-9.

JORDAN Peter, ŠVEHLOVÁ Irena, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2018), A Survey of Exonym Use. Proceedings of the 19th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Prague, 6-8 April 2017 (Name & Place, 7). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 191p., ISBN 978-3-8300-9997-0.

DOLLIMORE Allison, WATANABE Kohei (eds.) (2019), The Classification of Exonyms, Proceedings of the 21st UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Riga, 24-26 September 2018 (Name & Place, 8), Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 204p., ISBN 978-3-339-11122-7

1.3 Members, Convenors

The Working Group is open to all those who are interested in the topic. The group keeps contacts with ca.100 experts from more than 30 countries. Meetings are usually attended by more than 30 experts. Those who wish to attend or be informed about the activities of the Working Group should please contact the Working Group Convenor.

Convenors:

2002-2004: Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia)

2004-2006: co-convenors Peter JORDAN (Austria), Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ

2006-2012: convenor in charge Peter JORDAN, co-convenor Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ

2012-2017: Peter JORDAN

2017-: Kohei WATANABE

1.4 WG website

The WG maintains a website accessible under <http://ungegn.zrc-sazu.si>. It is hosted by the ZRC SAZU, Anton Melik Geographical Institute and updated by Matjaž Geršič. It contains a.o. detailed reports of all WG meetings as well as links to all publications of the WG. Inventory of exonym lists in the Czech Republic, is a recent addition to the website.

2 Activities since the last UNCSGN /UNGEGN session in 2017

Since the 1st UNGEGN session in New York, 29 April - 3 May 2019, the Working Group held one business meeting, and published one book of proceedings.

2.1 Meetings

22nd Meeting: New York, 2 May 2019

The Working Group met on 2 May 2019 during 1st (new) UNGEGN session, in the UN headquarters in New York. Working Group convenor, Kohei Watanabe chaired the meeting, which lasted for about 75 minutes.

First, the convenor gave an overview on activities of the Working Group since the 20th Meeting in New York in 2017. Amongst others, he reported on the 21th Meeting of the WG in Riga, Latvia, 24-26 September 2018, where discussions took place on the Classification of exonyms.

Reports of other activities of members on exonyms followed. For example, Poland produced a new edition of their exonym list, Finland produced a website on their exonyms.

Open discussion was carried out on the accomplishment of the WG and questions still open: Peter Jordan provided a summary, and pointed out topics such as:

- 1) Exonym / endonym status of transboundary features
- 2) Adaptation of names to various languages (endonymoids)
- 3) Written or spoken exonyms (are exophones exonyms?)
- 4) Are phonetic transcriptions exonyms? (change of written form for better expression of local pronunciation)
- 5) Donor supplied exonyms
- 6) Exonyms for features without endonyms
- 7) History and changes of exonyms
- 8) Does language / officiality matter? can exonyms exist within the same language?

other participants raised topics such as:

- *) Examples of change of use from exonyms to endonyms (reduction of exonyms)
- *) Difficulties in implementing past resolutions on exonyms
- *) Tendency that practitioners would prefer "practical" (e.g. implementation of resolutions) rather than "theoretical" (e.g. definition) topics.

Finally, announcements were made on upcoming toponymy events, including the 23rd WG meeting in Ljubljana. This meeting was planned to take place in conjunction with the meeting of the Terminology Working Group, and was scheduled to take place 19 to 21 March 2020, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute. Regrettably, this meeting had to be cancelled last minute, due to restriction in movement due to COVID-19 response. Papers to be presented at the meeting were submitted, but they remain not yet being presented. The convenor is eager to set up an opportunity to make that possible and proceed with the work of the WG, as soon as the situation allows.

2.2 WG proceedings

In the period of 2019-20, we have published a book containing 17 full papers of the 19 papers presented at the 21st WG meeting in Riga, 2018. This book is the 8th volume in the toponymic book series "Name and Place", edited by Peter Jordan and Paul Woodman and have the full title as indicated below. The book can be ordered from publisher Dr. Kovač, Hamburg (email: info@verlagdrkovac.de, website: <http://www.verlagdrkovac.de>).

DOLLIMORE Allison, WATANABE Kohei (eds.) (2019), The Classification of Exonyms, Proceedings of the 21st UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Riga, 24-26 September 2018 (Name & Place, 8), Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 204p., ISBN 978-3-339-11122-7

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (a) Comment and provide input on issues they currently face regarding exonyms;
- (b) Suggest future directions and activities of the Working Group.