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**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names****2023 session**

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

Exonyms**The endonym/exonym divide as a core topic of
critical toponomastics****Summary****

The report is on a book, published in 2022, about the endonym/exonym divide in which the political and societal backgrounds of the divide are addressed based on its correspondence to the dichotomy of “mine” and “yours”, as well as to human territoriality. Accordingly, the distinction between endonym and exonym is treated as a core topic of critical toponomastics and is linked to the naming process. In addition, the mediating function of geographical names between humans and space is reviewed; the question of the reference area of endonyms and exonyms in geographical space (land and sea) is examined; how the use of exonyms is affected by power relations is addressed; the advantages and disadvantages of using endonyms and exonyms are weighed; and guidelines for the use of exonyms are presented. The book also contains an examination of some areas in which endonyms and exonyms are typically used and a discussion of the cultural-geographical and other perspectives on endonyms and exonyms. The delicate relationship between exonyms and standardization is addressed in the last part of the book.

* [GEGN.2/2023/1](#).

** The full report was prepared by the Honorary Chair of the Austrian Board on Geographical Names, Peter Jordan (Austria). It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2023/40/CRP.40, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/.

