

2 March 2023

English

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

2023 session

New York, 1–5 May 2023

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda *

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their
countries and on the progress made in the
standardization of geographical names**

Report of Cyprus

Submitted by Cyprus **

Summary

The report refers to the activities of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of the Republic of Cyprus for the period 2021–2022.

The first section of the report includes a brief summary. The second section contains background information on strategic goals and the work of the subcommittees, as well as details regarding the establishment of the Committee, the legislative and structural framework within which it operates and the main principles followed. The third and fourth sections includes brief descriptions, respectively, of its main duties, and of its actions and main achievements. Conclusions and recommendations are set out in the fifth section.

The Committee regularly maintains a website (www.geoportal.gov.cy) that provides relevant content, such as on the historical background of the Committee, legislation, reports, maps and developments, as well as several editions of the gazetteer and online tools.

The Committee also regularly maintains a complete gazetteer for all geographical names in Cyprus. All geographical names and toponyms therein are gathered by authorized bodies and are derived from authoritative information, official large-scale cadastral maps and the land registers of the Department of Lands and Surveys. The gazetteer is available online. The Committee continues to carry out tasks related to the collection, standardization and romanization of the geographical names in Cyprus, according to United Nations specifications and transliteration standard 743 of the Hellenic Standardization Organization (ELOT 743), and to promote public awareness.

* GEGN.2/2023/1

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An edition of the gazetteer, entitled “Gazetteer of sea geographical names of Cyprus” was prepared by the Committee. The gazetteer is available online and is based on a national hydrographical database that is regularly updated. The Permanent Committee also distributes the gazetteer to all interested persons and organizations.

Odonyms in Cyprus are provided and maintained by the municipal and community councils. They are approved by six district officers who operate under the Ministry of the Interior. All new toponyms and updates thereto are regularly communicated to the Committee, for verification and correction in order to achieve uniformity and standardization throughout the island. A complete catalogue of toponyms is maintained by the Department of Postal Services and is available online.

All geographical names and toponyms are also included in the geoportal (www.geoportal.gov.cy), INSPIRE Geoportal and the national open data portal. Geographical names and other geospatial information are accessible online for searching, viewing, downloading, printing, as well as being directly accessible through a geographic information system. The Committee continues to help citizens gain access to and use this information.

The Committee participates actively in conferences, sessions, working groups of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. In addition, the Committee has submitted a series of 14 technical papers that are included in bulletins of the Group of Experts. The Committee has also helped to design the cover page of the previous 10 editions of the bulletin.

Cyprus uses a fully functioning and globally aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for the national standardization of authorized geographical names, to identify locations, taking into account issues associated with culture and heritage. It is essential to ensure consistency and accuracy in referring to places in the community, and the geographical names are therefore made easily accessible for national and international use, thereby fostering communication and cooperation. The Committee recognizes the great importance of geographical names, which are an indispensable part of cultural heritage and play a significant role in the sustainable development of the country.

1. Summary

This brief National Report refers to the period 2021-2022, in relation to the activities of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus (CPCSGN).

The first section of the report includes a brief summary. The second section includes background information on strategic goals and work of sub-committees, details regarding the establishment and operation of the CPCSGN, the legislation and the structure under which it operates, and the main principles followed. The third section includes a brief description of the main duties of CPCSGN. The fourth section includes actions and main achievements, which are briefly described and explained. The last section includes conclusions and recommendations.

2. Background Information and Strategic Goals

Cyprus is privileged to have most of its geographical names included in ancient texts from Homer to Herodotus, the tragic poets and Strabon, up to ancient cartographers, like Claudius Ptolemaeus, and from medieval cartographers, like Abraham Ortelius, up to lord Horatio H. Kitchener, who mapped Cyprus in the 19th Century at the beginning of the British rule of the island. The name of the island “Kypros” was mentioned by Homer 3000 years ago.



Fig. 1: Map of Cyprus, “Isola di Cipro” by F. Bertelli, 1562

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CPCSGN) was officially established by the decision of the Council of Ministers no.15.769 of 21.4.1979 and constitutes the only competent National Authority for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Cyprus. According to law N.66(I)/98 and the regulations ΚΔΠ 443/2001, the Committee acts under the auspices of the Ministry of Education Sport and Youth.

According to Law N.66(I)/98 and regulations ΚΔΠ 443/2001, the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, as the Competent Authority, appoints the President and the members of the Committee every five years. The Committee consists of a President and nine members.

The members of the Committee have extensive experience and background in the areas of linguistics, diplomacy, archaeology, cartography, topography, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Information Technology (IT), literature, law, public sector management, etc.

The Committee is subdivided into five subcommittees, which deal with specific issues as follows:

1. Publications
2. Standardization and transliteration
3. Awareness
4. Development and update of website
5. Updating of Gazetteers

In the exercise of its powers, the Committee selects from the existing types of geographical names, a single type for official and international use, after examining them, based on linguistic, grammatical, aesthetic, social and historical criteria.

The Committee collects data from the fields of history, linguistics, archaeology, literature, cartography and folklore that help the etymology, spelling and standardization of toponyms and names of the municipalities and the communities of Cyprus.

Law N.71(I)/2013 criminalizes the alteration of geographical names and toponyms and the illegal issue, import, circulation, supply, distribution and trade of maps, books or other documents, in conventional or digital form, which contain geographical names and toponyms of the Republic, imprinted differently than those specified in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law, or those contained in the official Toponymic Gazetteer.

As mentioned in UNGEGN Strategic Plan vision: *“Every country should have a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names that identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage, and to have these names easily accessible for national and international use - facilitating consistent worldwide use of geographical names to foster communication and cooperation”*.

CPCSGN strongly supports and fulfils the above vision, and also the strategic aims and goals of UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 – 2029, such as protection of culture, heritage, language recognition, promotion, exchange of knowledge, establishment of resilient geographical names infrastructure, etc. CPCSGN’s activities and duties are aligned with all relevant UN resolutions and strategic objectives.

3. CPCSGN Main Duties

The Committee mainly deals with the following duties:

1. Handles all matters related to the standardization of geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus.
2. Records the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus, studies all related issues, and submits to the Competent Authority for approval its suggestions on standardization and coding of geographical names.
3. Represents the Republic of Cyprus in international meetings of the United Nations (UN) on issues of its competence, and cooperates with the UN and other international organizations, and the corresponding national committees of other countries, to attain the objectives provided in legislation.
4. Advises the competent local authorities for naming or renaming of streets, and the spelling of geographical names.
5. Monitors the implementation of the standardization of geographical names and the Greek to Roman alphabet transliteration system of the Greek Organization for Standardization (ELOT 743), which

was accepted by the Fifth Conference of the United Nations, as a standard of the International Standardization Organization (ISO 843.3) and was adopted by the Council of Ministers.

4. Actions and Achievements

4.1 CPCSGN Website

The CPCSGN regularly maintains a website, where all relevant information is available. The address of this website is: <http://www.geonoma.gov.cy>. The website includes information regarding the historic background of CPCSGN, legislation and regulations regarding its operation, the organizational structure, announcements, activities, documents from our participation in conferences and other events, documents regarding the transliteration of geographical names in roman alphabet, several editions, maps, etc. The website also includes a complete and fully searchable national gazetteer. A very helpful tool was developed for the automatic transliteration of geographical names from greek to roman alphabet, based on ELOT 743 of the Hellenic Standardization Organization (based on ISO843 of the International Standardization Organization) which is available on-line at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/index.php/typopoiisi/metagrafi-ellnikou-alfavitou>

ΜΕΤΑΓΡΑΦΗ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΥ ΣΤΟ ΡΟΜΑΝΙΚΟ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟ

Τελευταία ενημέρωση : Δευτέρα, 29 Νοεμβρίου 2021 11:42

Πληκτρολογήστε το κείμενό σας, στο πλαίσιο αριστερά. Αυτόματα θα πραγματοποιηθεί η μεταγραφή των ελληνικών χαρακτήρων σε λατινικούς σύμφωνα με το πρότυπο ΕΛΟΤ 743 (που είναι ταυτόσημο με το Διεθνές Πρότυπο ISO 843).

Ελληνικοί χαρακτήρες	Κατά το πρότυπο ΕΛΟΤ 743
Λεωφόρος Μακαρίου	Leofóros Makariou
Αγίου Ανδρέου	Agíou Andréou
Μεγάλου Αλεξάνδρου	Megálo Alexandrou
Αγίας Αικατερίνης	Agías Aikaterínis
Πλατεία Ελευθερίας	Plateía Eleftherías
Λήδρας	Lídras
Ονασαγόρου	Onasagórou
Ανεξαρτησίας	Anexartísias
Δημοσθένη Σεβέρη	Dimosthéni Sevéri
Λεωφόρος Στροβόλου	Leofóros Strovólou

ΠΙΝΑΚΑΣ ΜΕΤΑΓΡΑΦΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟΥ ΣΤΟ ΡΟΜΑΝΙΚΟ ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΟ ΚΑΤΑ ΕΛ.Ο.Τ

Α	Β	Γ	Δ	Ε	Ζ	Η	Θ	Ι	Κ	Λ	Μ	Ν	Ξ	Ο	Π	Ρ	Σ	Τ	Υ	Φ	Χ	Ψ	Ω
a	v	g	d	e	z	i	h	t	k	l	m	n	x	o	p	r	s	t	y	f	ch	ps	o
αι	ει	οι	ου	ευ	αυ	ηυ	γγ	γκ	γξ	γχ	ντ	μπ											
ai	ei	oi	ou	ev ⁽¹⁾	av ⁽¹⁾	iv ⁽¹⁾	ng	gk	nx	nch	nt	b ⁽³⁾											mp ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾
				ef ⁽²⁾	af ⁽²⁾	if ⁽²⁾																	

(1) Μπροστά από τα σύμφωνα: β, γ, δ, ζ, λ, μ, ν, ρ και όλα τα φωνήεντα (2) Μπροστά από τα σύμφωνα: θ, κ, ξ, π, σ, τ, φ, χ, ψ και στο τέλος των λέξεων
 (3) Στην αρχή της λέξης (4) Στο μέσο της λέξης (5) Στο τέλος της λέξης

Fig. 2: Greek to Roman Web Application – Transliteration based on ELOT 743

4.2 Book – Names of Countries and Capitals

A book including a list of names of countries and capitals was submitted during the 10th UN Conference and the 27th Session of UNGEGN and was also distributed to many government departments, ministries, academic institutions, schools, and interested citizens. This book is regularly distributed to any interested persons in hardcopy form. It is also available on CPCSGN's website for viewing and downloading:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/chores-protevouses/index.html>.

4.3 National Gazetteers

The existing national gazetteers prepared by the CPCSGN in 1982 and 1987 respectively are:

- (i) The “*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*”
- (ii) The “*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*”

All geographical names and toponyms included in these gazetteers were derived from the official large-scale cadastral maps and the land registers of the Department of Lands and Surveys. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus is currently available on CPCSGN’s website at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/cygazetteer/index.html>.

All cadastral maps of Cyprus have been digitized and their information was categorized and stored in digital relational databases and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), along with many other layers of spatial information. Based on these databases, it is possible to easily identify and locate any geographical name in Cyprus. The CPCSGN continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and the romanization of the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus, according to ELOT 743.

4.4 Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names

An additional edition was prepared by the CPCSGN titled: “*Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names of Cyprus*”. The gazetteer was initially presented and submitted to the 11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names that took place in New York, in August 2017. This Gazetteer is available at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/thalassia-toponymia/index.html>

This work has been planned and worked out on the basis of the principles, the rules and the recommendations of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and it is the result of the joined efforts of all members of the CPCSGN and the Department of Lands and Surveys.

The sea names were extracted from the Hydrographic Database of the Integrated Land Information System of Cyprus. All names are based on the official cadastral maps, land registers, topographic maps, and other official evidence, in close coordination with the central government and the local authorities.

The sea names are also accessible as e-services through Cyprus Geoportal. The collection and processing methodology is fully described in the edition. A total of 47 maps on scale 1:25000 have also been prepared for this purpose. A cross reference to the maps, along with coordinates, and other useful information, are given for each name within the gazetteer.

Hard copies of the book were delivered to government ministries and departments, academic institutions, semi-government organizations, associations, and many other interested organizations and persons. Hard copies are still made available for free to any interested organization or person.

This gazetteer is supplemented by a series of maps that are available for free download at:

<https://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/el-gr/maps/Pages/default.aspx>

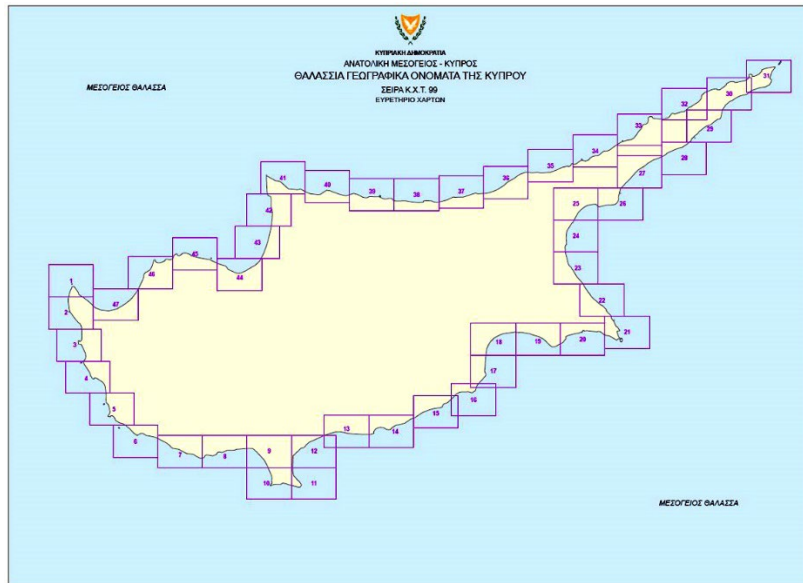


Figure 3: Cyprus, Sea geographical names map series

4.5 Toponymic Guideline Editions

CPCSGN prepared two toponymic guideline editions, in Greek and English languages. These editions are available on CPCSGN's website, and also on UNGEGN's website:

<https://www.geonoma.gov.cy/index.php/ekdoseis>

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/nna/documents/Cyprus_Toponymic_Guidelines_Eng.pdf

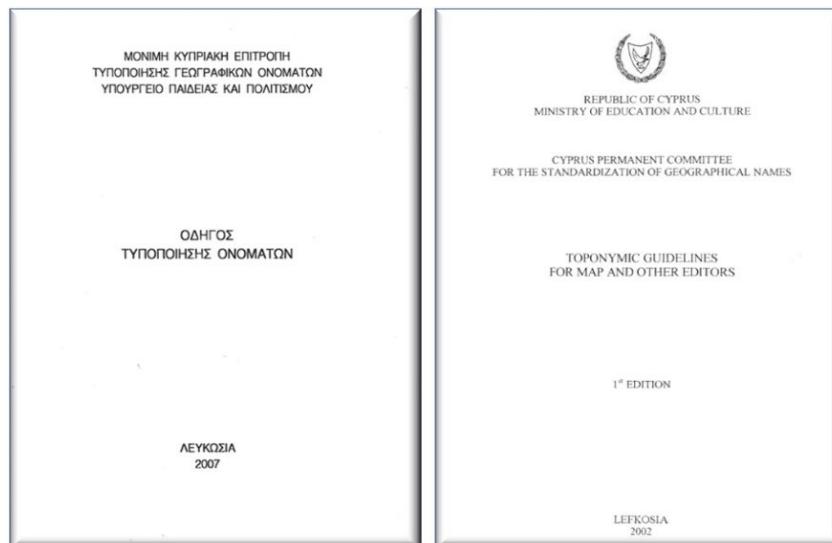


Fig. 4: Toponymic Guideline Editions in Greek and English

4.6 EuroGeographics Products and Databases

Major geographical names of member organizations are also included in EuroGeographics' products and digital databases such as: EuroGlobal Map, EuroRegional Map, EuroBoundary Map, and Open Maps for Europe.

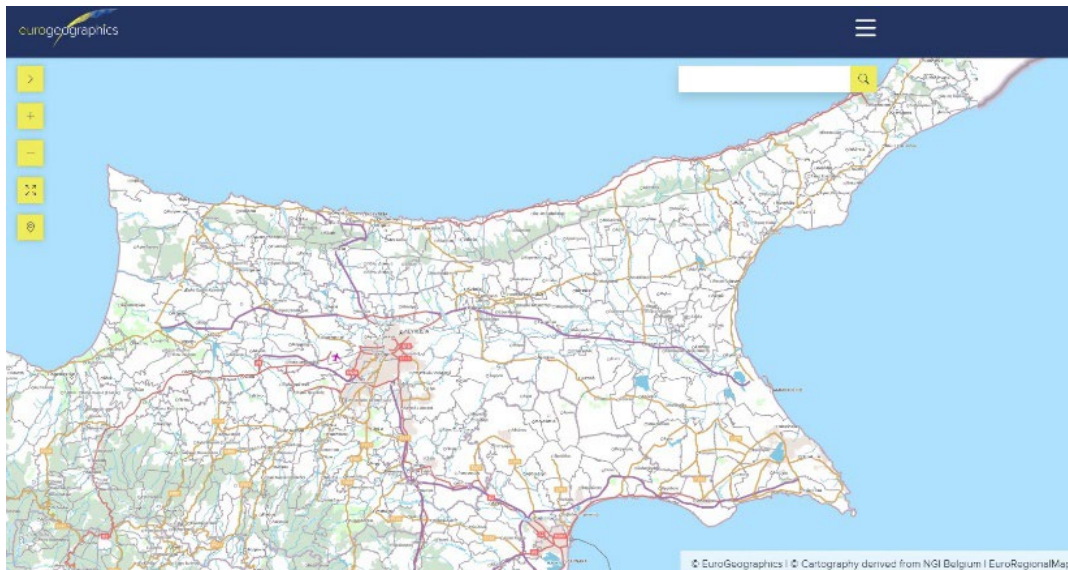


Fig. 5: Cyprus, Open Maps for Europe, Open Gazetteer, EuroGeographics

4.7 Odonyms

Odonyms in Cyprus, based on relevant legislation, are given and maintained by the Municipal and Community Councils. These odonyms, are under the approval of the respective District Officers, which operate under the Ministry of Interior. All official street names are communicated to the CPCSGN, for checking and correction, in order to achieve uniformity all over the island.

A complete catalogue of odonyms is maintained by the Department of Postal Services at:

<https://www.cypruspost.post/el/ekdoseis>

In addition, the Department of Lands and Surveys maintains street names in separate layers, as a part of the Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) of the National Integrated Land Information System (NILIS), thus making them available for several uses, through geospatial databases and web e-services. A variety of standard and ad-hoc maps are produced through this system. Geographical names are extremely important, and they are always included in mapping products and applications.

4.7 **Geographical Names Accessibility**

All geographical names and toponyms are included in the Geoportal of Cyprus at: www.geoportal.gov.cy. The Geoportal consists of two main parts these being: (a) INSPIRE Spatial Data Infrastructure Geoportal, and (b) DLS-Portal (The portal of the Department of Lands and Surveys).

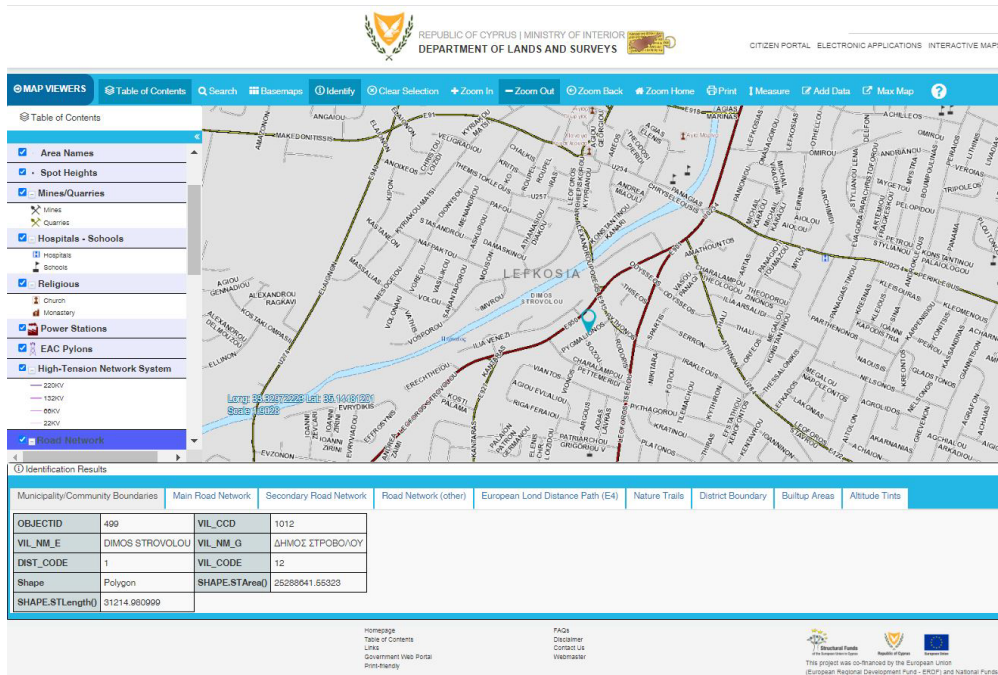


Figure 6: DLS-Portal Interactive Maps including geographical names <https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapviewer>

Geographical names and other geo-spatial information are fully accessible on-line and are available for searching, viewing, printing, downloading and direct accessing via GIS, through DLS-Portal, and also through the European Commission’s INSPIRE Geoportal.

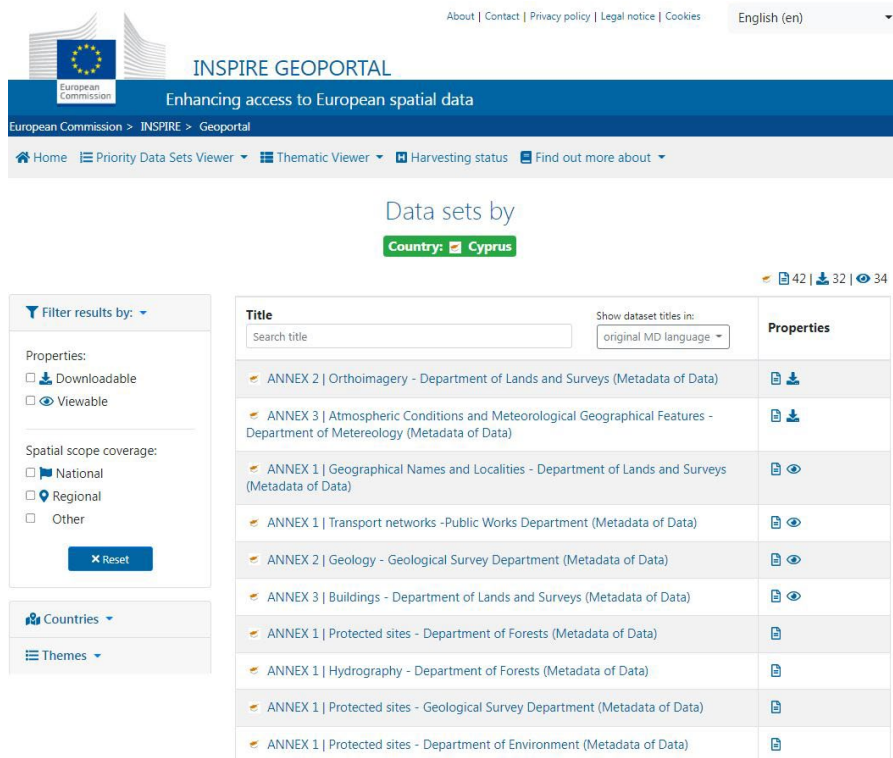


Figure 7: EC INSPIRE Geoportal

<https://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/results.html?country=cy&view=details&theme=none>

The Internet Services platform (DLS-Portal) is a landmark in the modern history of the Republic of Cyprus, as following intensive efforts lasting many years, geo-spatial information was given full access to the public, with on-line services via the Internet, through a platform of electronic services. The whole concept is based on a 24-hour available, fast and friendly service.

A new IT customer-centric culture is embedded in the platform, focusing on the citizen via the availability of electronic services. The Government's target is the elimination of time-consuming bureaucratic procedures in the acceptance of applications and the ease of access into core data. The target is to continuously improve currently available services, through the gradual inclusion of new applications.

As of September 2022, the geographic part of the Cyprus Land Information System (LIS) has been upgraded and is now based on the most modern technology of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The new implementations are based on Arc/GIS Pro software from ESRI, which, in 1999, had also implemented the first computerized LIS, as far as the geographical part of the GIS is concerned, which was then based on ESRI's ArcInfo software. The new system has already been implemented, and the old system, has been decommissioned since August 1, 2022. Technical experts studied and analyzed all existing processes and developed all the necessary workflows, with which all processes are handled, with the ultimate goal being the faster and better service to the citizen.

Geographical names occupy a significant part of the Land Information System, the web applications and e-services that have been developed. Examples are: district (region) names, town and village names, parish names, toponyms, hydrographic names, etc.

A significant amount of data is available on the National Open Data Portal of Cyprus. Toponyms and other geographical names are also very easily accessible and available through this portal.

The screenshot shows the data.gov.cy website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with options like Home, Datasets, Organizations, Request Data, Impact, and More. Below the navigation, there is a 'View published' button. The main content area features a dataset titled 'Τοπωνύμια (Τοπογραφικά Στοιχεία ΓΚΒΔ) - Κτηματικός / Χωρομετρικός Χάρτης'. The dataset description includes a rating section (4 stars), a total of 0 votes, and a category of 'Επαρχίες, Δήμοι και Ζώνες'. The description states that the dataset consists of toponyms from the cadastral map of the district of Nicosia, available via WMS. Below the description, there is a 'Data and Resources' section with four entries: 'Τοπωνύμια - Τοπογραφικά Στοιχεία ΓΚΒΔ (esriREST)', 'Τοπωνύμια - Τοπογραφικά Στοιχεία ΓΚΒΔ (json)', 'Τοπωνύμια - Τοπογραφικά Στοιχεία ΓΚΒΔ (wms)', and 'Τοπωνύμια - Τοπογραφικά Στοιχεία ΓΚΒΔ (SOAP)'. Each entry has a 'Go to resource' button. On the left side, there is a 'Data Extent' map showing the location of the dataset in Cyprus, with labels for 'CYPRUS' and 'LEBANON'.

Figure 8: Toponyms – Open Data of Cyprus
<https://www.data.gov.cy>

4.8 Use of Authoritative Geographical Names for monitoring the pandemic

Authoritative geographical names continued to play a significant role for monitoring COVID-19 pandemic and emergency services. Geographical names appeared in several platforms that were used and still are operational for monitoring the pandemic.

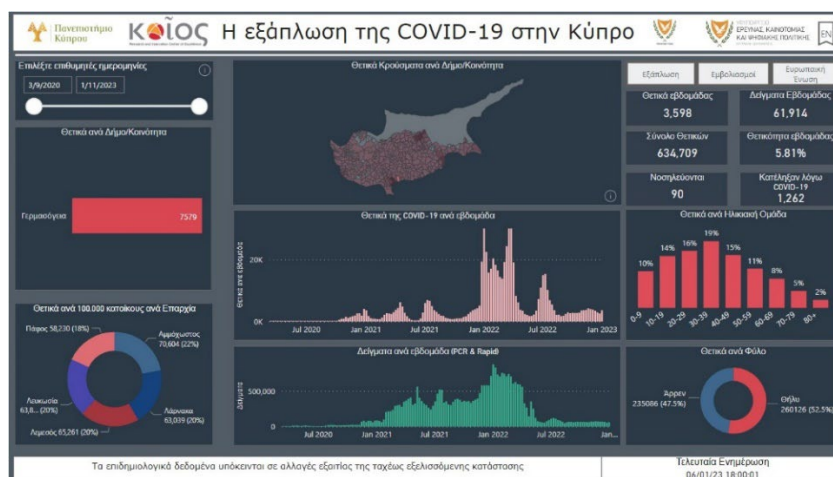


Fig. 9: Use of Authoritative Geographical Names in platforms for monitoring COVID-19 pandemic and emergency services

4.9 Collection and Standardization of Geographical Names

The CPCSGN continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and transliteration of the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus based on UN guidelines and ELOT743. All geographical names were gathered by authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus in 1878 and later periods. During the last two years, more than 1100 geographical names, including among others toponyms, have been examined and processed, offering services to the central government, and local government authorities, for the standardization and transcription from the Greek to the Roman script according to ELOT 743.

4.10 Participation in Meetings and Conferences

In 2021 (May 3-7, 2021), the President of the Committee participated in the 2nd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts for Geographical Names (UNGEGN), that took place on-line as a teleconference.

The President also organized monthly regular meetings of CPCSGN, to examine outstanding issues and take decisions. It's worth mentioning that the Committee was fully active during the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2021-2022, offering its services.

4.11 Publication of Papers

In June 2021, a paper of the Committee titled: *“Minority Names and Geographical Names in a Multilingual Setting in Cyprus”*, was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 61. The president of the Committee designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEGN_bulletin_no.61.pdf

In November 2021, a paper of the Committee titled: “*Geographical Names of Cyprus in an Urban Environment*”, was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 62. The president of the Committee designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no.62_updated.pdf

In June 2022, a paper of the Committee titled: “*Geographical Names of Cyprus as Indicators for the Environment*”, was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 63. The president of the Committee designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no.63_22Jun.pdf

In November 2022, a paper of the Committee titled: “*Cyprus: Making Geographical Names Data Accessible*”, was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 64. The president of the Committee designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no.64.pdf



Fig. 10: Publication of Papers in UNGEGN Bulletins 2021-2022

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Cyprus has a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authoritative geographical names which identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage. Geographical names are easily accessible for national and international use, which foster communication and cooperation. In addition, the systems that have been implemented are solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible. Furthermore, it is evident that Cyprus monitors the availability of free and easily accessible authorized digital geographical names data, as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names. Consistency and accuracy are essential in referring to places in the community, thus reinforcing communication.

Geographical names are an important part of our geographical and cultural environment. They identify geographical entities of different kinds and represent irreplaceable cultural and environmental values of vital significance to people’s sense of well-being and belonging. Geographical names in Cyprus are therefore of major importance. Society must bear the responsibility for respecting geographical names heritage and assuring that place name planning and use are carried out in such a way as to ensure that the place names are preserved.

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names recognizes the great importance of geographical names, raises awareness and provides professional support and consultancy to all interested organizations and individuals, following all authoritative procedures and standards.

CPCSGN strongly supports and will continue to support the goals of UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 – 2029.