

Statement by the representative of Greece
(4th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names –UNGEGN)
Agenda item 4b, Tuesday, 29 April 2025

Mr Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. As you well know, Greece has been and continues to be a staunch supporter of the work of the UNGEGN and reaffirms its respect and support for the technical nature of this work, as well as for the need to avoid politicization.

Having said that, in the framework of Agenda Item 4b) and with reference to the Report submitted by the Republic of Türkiye to the 2025 Session of the UNGEGN (GEGN.2/2025/154/CRP.154/10.3.2025), Greece would like to state the following:

A. In section 2.2. “Gazetteers” (last paragraph), there is a reference to two lists, submitted by Türkiye to the UN in 1986 (WP29 of the 12th Session of UNGEGN, Geneva, 29.9-7.10.1986) and in 1987 (Report E/CONF.79/INF/58) titled “Turkish Exonyms of the Aegean Islands” and “Standardized names of undersea and maritime features around Turkey”, respectively, despite the fact that this section (2.2.), as well as the whole Chapter 2 (“Administrative Units of Türkiye and Geographic and Statistical Regions”), pertain to geographical information within Turkish territory. Greece reiterates that these lists are incompatible with the aims and guidelines of international standardization of geographical names for the reasons presented in the respective meetings in 1986 and 1987.

B. In section 3.4 “Works on the Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Historical Names”, the fourth paragraph makes reference to the Turkish “Project for Identifying Historical Turkish Artifacts Abroad”, adding also that “inventory work was carried out in 19 countries”.

The reason for the inclusion of this specific paragraph to the Report is not clear, as it concerns the alleged identification of historical Turkish artifacts abroad and not geographical names, historical or other, unlike the other paragraphs of this section. The only geographical names used in this paragraph are the ones of the countries where the artifacts in question were allegedly identified.

Moreover, while that paragraph uses the names of the countries, where the relevant artifacts were allegedly identified (Bulgaria, Serbia etc), it fails to do so solely in the case of artifacts allegedly identified in Greece, opting for the term “Aegean Islands” instead. This paragraph thus creates the erroneous impression that “the Aegean Islands” are a country themselves, since they are listed alongside the names of countries, and not a part of Greece.

It is clear that this reference is misleading since it fails to identify Greece next to other States mentioned in the fourth paragraph of Section 3.4 of the Report.

Thank you