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English

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

2025 session

New York, 28 April – 2 May 2025

Item 6 (c) of the provisional agenda *

**Relationships, links and connections: International
organizations, including academia**

**Report of the Liaison Officer with the International Council
of Onomastic Sciences**

Submitted by the ICOS Liaison Officer**

Summary:

The report contains information on the International Council of Onomastic Sciences as a scientific organization, including its newsletter, journal (*Onoma*), four working groups, lecture series (Onomastics Online), summer school, congresses and cooperation efforts and affiliated organizations.

Activities during the reporting period that are most relevant to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names are the founding of a working group on toponymy in 2024 and the intention of the Council and its Working Group on Terminology to resume their efforts to harmonize onomastic terms with those in the glossary maintained by the Group of Experts.

The Council's Working Group on Toponymy has the task of promoting research on toponymy with a holistic approach, i.e. from the perspectives of all sciences engaged and relevant to onomastics. In detail, its tasks are the following:

- To propose and organize sessions on place names in the framework of relevant conferences and congresses
- To organize symposiums on toponymy in cooperation with local host institutions
- To develop, support and cooperate in toponymic research and book projects
- To cultivate international cooperation with relevant global organizations, including the Group of Experts, the International Organization for Standardization, the International Cartographic Association and the International Geographical Union, with the two last-mentioned organizations represented by the Joint International Cartographic Association/International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy.

The Working Group on Toponymy, which has 60 registered members from 32 countries on all continents, organized toponymic sessions at the Council's Congress and at the International Geographical Union Congress, both held in August 2024.

* GEGN.2/2025/1

** The full report was prepared by Peter JORDAN, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria, UNGEGN liaison with ICOS

1. The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) (<https://icosweb.net>)

The International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) is the international organization for all scholars who have a special interest in the study of names (place names, personal names, and proper names of all other kinds). The aim of ICOS is the advancement, representation and coordination of name research on an international level and in an interdisciplinary context. Everyone who is actively engaged in scholarly name research may become a member of ICOS. The official languages of ICOS are English, French, and German.

The annual membership subscription is 30 Euros (15 Euros for students), which entails a reduced fee at the ICOS Congresses. For members and students from low-income countries, the regular membership costs 20 EUR and the student membership is 10 EUR.

The congresses, which are held every three years, are organized on behalf of ICOS by one or more of its members. The General Assembly of ICOS including the election of officers is usually held in conjunction with the congresses. Staffan NYSTRÖM (Sweden) was elected President in 2024 for a term of three years succeeding in this function Katalin RESZEGI (Hungary), Yolanda G. LÓPEZ FRANCO (Mexico) and Peter JORDAN (Austria) were re-elected Vice-Presidents for another term of three years. The Board of Directors is composed of another four executive and five non-executive members.

ICOS's statutes are to be found on the website.

2. Newsletter

The ICOS Board issues newsletters in English, French, and German with matters of interest to the members. Links to all the newsletters from no. 10 (2004) onwards are available on the ICOS website. Since the last UNGEGN session, newsletters No. 32 and 33 have appeared.

3. Onoma (<https://onomajournal.org/>)

ICOS members receive the annual journal "Onoma". Onoma contains topical research reports as well as basic theoretical articles concerning all areas of scholarly name research, including place-name standardization. Since No. 34 (1999), each issue has been themed with a guest editor (or guest editors) caring for the volume. Currently Oliviu FELECAN (Romania) is acting editor-in-chief. He is supported by Alina BUGHEȘIU (Romania) and an editorial board chaired by Mats WAHLBERG (Sweden).

Recent volume:

- *Onoma* 58 (2023) 'Place names as a Part of the Cultural Heitage' (guest editor Peter JORDAN)

Forthcoming volumes:

- *Onoma* 59 (2024) 'American Onomastics' (guest editors Grant SMITH, Yolanda Guillermina LÓPEZ FRANCO, and Márcia SIPAVICIUS SEIDE)
- *Onoma* 60 (2025) 'Naming and renaming in Central and Eastern Europe due to the political upheavals in 20th and 21st century' (guest editors Žaneta DVOŘÁKOVÁ and Přemysl MÁCHA)
- *Onoma* 61 (2026) 'Bi- and multilingual place names as markers of national, regional and local space-related identity' (guest editor PETER JORDAN)

4. Working groups of ICOS

The *ICOS Working Group on Toponymy* was founded in 2024 with the task to promote research on toponymy with a holistic approach, i.e. from the perspectives of all sciences engaged and relevant in onomastics. In detail, the Working Group has the following tasks:

- (1) propose and organize sessions on place names in the framework of relevant conferences and congresses;

- (2) organize symposia on toponymy in cooperation with local host institutions;
- (3) develop, support and cooperate in toponymic research and book projects;
- (4) cultivate international cooperation with relevant global organizations like UNGEGN, the International Standardization Organization (ISO), the International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the International Geographical Union (IGU) the latter two represented by the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy.

The Working Group has a registered membership, a Chair and a Vice-Chair. Its members are to be members of ICOS or to gradually assume ICOS membership. The Chair is Peter JORDAN (Austria), the Vice-Chair Chrismi-Rinda LOTH (South Africa).

The WG has (as of 31 December 2024) 60 registered members from 32 countries and all continents:

- (1) Akbari, Fatemeh (Austria)
- (2) Alas, Marit (Estonia)
- (3) Alphey, Tristan (United Kingdom)
- (4) Atoui, Brahim (Algeria)
- (5) Baker, John (United Kingdom)
- (6) Bartos-Elekes, Zsombor (Romania)
- (7) Beaulieu, Marc-Alexandre (Canada)
- (8) Bijak, Urszula (Poland)
- (9) Birtles, Susan (Australia)
- (10) Bölcskei, Andrea (Hungary)
- (11) Bouhadjar Souad (Algeria)
- (12) Caiazzo, Luisa (Italy)
- (13) Crljenko, Ivana (Croatia)
- (14) du Plessis, LT (South Africa)
- (15) Felecan, Oliviu (Romania)
- (16) Ferland, Yaïves (Canada)
- (17) Garcia Quera, Núria (Spain)
- (18) Gautier, Laurent (France)
- (19) Geršič, Matjaž (Slovenia)
- (20) Gînsac, Ana-Maria (Romania)
- (21) Harvalík, Milan (Slovakia)
- (22) Herzen, Andrey A. (Russian Federation)
- (23) Herzen, Olga (Russian Federation)
- (24) Hionidis, Pandeimon (Greece)
- (25) Jordan, Peter (Austria)
- (26) Kang, Peter (China-Taiwan)
- (27) Kim, Sun-Bae (Republic of Korea)
- (28) Koch, Florian (France)
- (29) Loth, Chrismi Rinda (South Africa)
- (30) Mac Giolla Chomhghaill, Áindí (Ireland)
- (31) Mácha, Přemysl (Czechia)
- (32) Mamvura, Zvinashe (Zimbabwe)
- (33) Matthews, Philip (New Zealand)
- (34) Michalec, David (Czechia)
- (35) Momma, Haruko (United States)
- (36) Nasakina, Svitlana (Ukraine)
- (37) Neumüller, Kristina (Sweden)
- (38) Palagiano, Cosimo (Italy)
- (39) Parry, Rhian (United Kingdom)
- (40) Perono Cacciafoco, Francesco (China-Beijing)
- (41) Petrulovich, Alexandra (Sweden)
- (42) Pfukwa, Charles (Zimbabwe)
- (43) Racca, Sara (Switzerland)
- (44) Rangel Vicente, Montserrat (France)

- (45) Redkva, Yaroslav (Ukraine)
- (46) Reszegi, Katalin (Hungary)
- (47) Rieger, Marie A. (Italy)
- (48) Rusu, Mihai S. (Romania)
- (49) Santos Andrade, Karylleila dos (Brazil)
- (50) Sauvant, Michel (France)
- (51) Skorupa, Pavel (Lithuania)
- (52) Stani-Fertl, Roman (Austria)
- (53) Suviranta, Sami (Finland)
- (54) Tent, Jan (Australia)
- (55) Tort i Donada, Joan (Spain)
- (56) Wade, David (USA)
- (57) Wendl, Dávid (Hungary)
- (58) Wu, Shiyue (China-Beijing)
- (59) Zagórski, Bogusław R. (Poland)
- (60) Zschieschang, Christian (Germany)

The ICOS Terminology Group is chaired by Artur GAŁKOWSKI (Poland) and consists of 25 members representing different countries and languages. The aim of the group is to standardize scientific terminology in the field of onomastics. On the ICOS website the group has published lists of key onomastic terms in English, French and German, as well as in 20 other languages. The Group has earlier been cooperating with the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology and aims at resuming this cooperation with the goal of harmonizing the ICOS List of Key Onomastic Terms with the UNGEGN Glossary.

The WG has (as of 31 December 2024) 25 members from 19 countries and three continents:

- (1) Ainiala, Terhi (Finland)
- (2) Akbari, Fatemeh (Austria)
- (3) Bergmann, Hubert (Austria)
- (4) Bijak, Urszula (Poland)
- (5) Bölcskei, Andrea (Hungary)
- (6) Dvořáková, Žaneta (Czechia)
- (7) Farkas, Tamás (Hungary)
- (8) Gałkowski, Artur (Poland)
- (9) Gendron, Stéphane (France)
- (10) Harvalík, Milan (Slovakia)
- (11) Jordan, Peter (Austria)
- (12) Kvašytė, Regina (Lithuania)
- (13) Laansalu, Tiina (Estonia)
- (14) Lapierre, André (Canada)
- (15) Leino, Unni (Finland)
- (16) López Franco, Yolanda Guillermina (Mexico)
- (17) Morărașu, Nadia-Nicoleta (Romania)
- (18) Rapa, Sanda (Latvia)
- (19) Redkva, Yaroslav (Ukraine)
- (20) Schochenmaier, Eugen (Germany)
- (21) Sipavicius Seide, Márcia (Brazil)
- (22) Tort i Donada, Joan (Spain)
- (23) Valentová, Iveta (Slovakia)
- (24) Wahlberg, Mats (Sweden)
- (25) Zschieschang, Christian (Germany)

The ICOS Bibliography Group (IBOS) is chaired by Márcia SIPAVICIUS SEIDE (Brazil). The members of the Group, together with volunteers from many countries, maintain and update an Onomastic Bibliographic Anthology that is to be found at <https://icosweb.net/bibliographic-databases/>.

The Group has furthermore created an open bibliographical resource for all who are interested in the scientific study of names. The project is made with the help of Zotero libraries (https://www.zotero.org/groups/1001877/icos_bibliography_group_onomastics?/).

The WG has (as of 31 December 2024) 16 members from 14 countries and three continents:

- (1) Caiazza, Luisa (Italy)
- (2) Campo Yumar, Luis Ramón (Cuba)
- (3) Carvalhinhos, Patricia (Brazil)
- (4) Dvořáková, Žaneta (Czechia)
- (5) Farkas, Tamás (Hungary)
- (6) Felecan, Oliviu (Romania)
- (7) Fernández-Juncal, Carmen (Spain)
- (8) Harvalík, Milan (Slovakia)
- (9) López Franco, Yolanda Guillermina (Mexico)
- (10) Loth, Chrismi-Rinda (South Africa)
- (11) Schochenmaier, Eugen (Germany)
- (12) Sinkevičiūtė-Villanueva Svensson, Daiva (Lithuania)
- (13) Sipavicius Seide, Márcia (Brazil)
- (14) Syrjälä, Väinö (Finland)
- (15) Tort i Donada, Joan (Spain)
- (16) Tsepikova, Anna (Russian Federation)

The ICOS Young Scholar Network is a group for young scholars of onomastics. The purpose of the network is “to help young scholars integrate to the international onomastic community and to bring young scholars together by organizing various events”. See <https://icosweb.net/icos-young-scholar-network/>.

5. Onomastics Online

Initiated by Past President Katalin Reszegi and since 2022, ICOS has organized online lectures on various topics related to names and naming. Ten editions of the lecture series have been presented since the 3rd UNGEGN Session in 2023, and the series will be continued. The lectures can be attended either in real time via a Zoom platform, or afterwards on YouTube. Recordings of the lectures are published on the ICOS YouTube channel usually within a couple of days.

<https://icosweb.net/onomastics-online/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@theinternationalcouncilof2460>

6. Summer School

The ICOS Summer School 2023 was hosted by the University of Glasgow on 21–25 August on the theme ‘The Interdisciplinary uses of Onomastics’ and organized by Brittnee LEYSEN. The idea of an ICOS Summer School is to bring together young onomastic researchers from all over the world, to help them network and expand their onomastic knowledge.

<https://icosweb.net/blog/2023/01/31/icos-summer-school-2023/>

7. ICOS Congresses

The 28th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences was organized in Helsinki/Helsingfors, Finland, 19–23 August 2024, by the University of Helsinki, in collaboration with the University of Turku and ICOS on the theme ‘Sustainability of names, naming and onomastics’. The Congress saw 225 registered participants from 39 countries and all continents. Keynote speakers were Helen KELLY-HOLMES (Ireland), Jane PILCHER (United Kingdom), and Väinö SYRJÄLÄ (Sweden). 170 papers were presented, 161 of them in English, 7 in French and 2 in German. The proceedings of the Congress will be published online open access. A printed version will be available on request.

The 29th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences will take place in Vienna [Wien], Austria, 16–20 August 2027, hosted by the Austrian Academy of the Sciences and the Austrian Geographical Society.

8. Cooperation partners and affiliated organizations

ICOS cultivates cooperation and permanent exchange with other global umbrella organizations, i.e. besides UNGEGN the International Cartographic Organization (ICA), the International Geographical Union (IGU) and the International Standardization Organization (ISO).

ICOS is furthermore in permanent exchange with the following affiliated organizations:

- American Name Society (United States)
- Australian National Place-Name Survey (Australia)
- Centre of Onomastics in Baia Mare (Romania)
- Commission of Slavic Onomastics (Poland)
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Namenforschung (GfN) e.V. (Germany)
- English Place-Name Society (United Kingdom)
- Forschungsstelle für Namenkunde (Switzerland)
- International Institute of Jewish Genealogy (Israel)
- Names Society of Southern Africa (South Africa)
- NORNA (Nordic region)
- Onomastic Board of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Croatia)
- Onomastika Elkarte (Sociedad Vasca de Onomástica/Société Basque d'Onomastique) (Spain)
- Polish Onomastic Society [Polskie Towarzystwo Onomastyczne] (Poland)
- Slovak Onomastic Commission (Slovakia)
- Société française d'onomastique (France)