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

Report of Spain

Submitted by Spain

Summary**

The present report refers to the situation in Spain regarding activities related to the standardization and officialization of geographical names

Spain is a multilingual country where competences for the standardization and officialization of geographical names are distributed among different public administrations, mainly the Spanish Government and the Autonomous Communities.

The National Geographic Institute is responsible for maintaining and publishing the Basic Gazetteer of Spain, which contains georeferenced names on topographic cartography at scales of 1:25,000 and smaller, both in Spanish and in the corresponding joint official languages. This gazetteer takes the form of a database containing approximately 1,200,000 geographical names with their corresponding descriptive attributes. In addition, the Autonomous Communities are gradually publishing their gazetteers containing official or standardized georeferenced names on topographic cartography at a scale greater than 1:25,000 of the respective Autonomous Community.

All these gazetteers are coordinated through the national gazetteer project, in the form of a viewer that integrates the toponyms published by the various competent bodies.

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Abbreviations used

IGN: National Geographic Institute of Spain.

CSG: Superior Geographic Council.

INSPIRE: Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe.

NGBE: Basic Geographic Gazetteer of Spain.

NGN: National Geographic Gazetteer.

CENG: Specialized Commission on Geographic Names.

**CURRENT SITUATION AND PROGRESS MADE IN THE FIELD OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
IN SPAIN**

This document details the progress made by Spain in the standardization of geographical names and publication of gazetteers since the presentation of the last report at the 29th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

With regard to the standardization or officialization of geographical names in Spain, it should be borne in mind that the distribution of powers in this area reflects both the administrative organization and the linguistic reality of our country.

Spain is a State made up of seventeen autonomous communities and two autonomous cities. Furthermore, as recognized by the Spanish Constitution, there are co-official languages along with Spanish or Castilian in those autonomous communities that so establish in their Statute of Autonomy. By virtue of this constitutional provision, Catalan, Basque, Galician, Valencian and Occitan are proclaimed co-official languages. Finally, as also indicated in the constitutional text, the richness of the different linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural heritage that will be the object of special respect and protection.

Based on this reality, the competences are distributed among different public Administrations, mainly the General Administration of the State and the Autonomous Communities and are described in a wide range of regulations that establish who has the obligation to carry out the officialization and the procedure to do so.

Law 7/1986 on the Regulation of Cartography establishes that the Central Registry of Cartography of the National Geographic Institute is responsible for the formation and conservation of the National Geographic Gazetteer.

Royal Decree 1545/2007, which regulates the National Cartographic System, expands and develops the issues related to the gazetteers. It defines the National Geographic Gazetteer as a dynamic registry of information that gathers the georeferenced names to be used in official cartography and indicates that it must be registered in the Central Registry of Cartography¹. It will be formed by the harmonization of the Basic Geographic Gazetteer of Spain, carried out by the National Geographic Institute, and the Geographic Gazetteers of the autonomous communities, carried out by the competent bodies in matters of toponymy of each one of them. The selection and treatment of the names included in the National Geographic Gazetteer must conform to the toponymic criteria approved by the Permanent Commission of the High Geographic Council at the proposal of the Specialized Commission on Geographic Names.

THE BASIC GEOGRAPHIC GAZETTEER OF SPAIN

As provided for in Royal Decree 1545/2007, the National Geographic Institute creates and maintains the Basic Geographic Nomenclature of Spain. In the NGBE are registered the official names of the autonomous communities, provinces, islands, municipalities and local population entities, as well as their variations

¹ The Central Registry of Cartography is a body attached to the Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, through the National Geographic Institute, which guarantees the reliability and interoperability of official geographic data.

agreed upon by the competent public administrations. It also contains the toponyms corresponding to the orography, hydrography, communication routes, natural districts and other formations, geographically referenced on topographic cartography at a scale of 1:25,000 and smaller. The Central Registry of Cartography will form the Basic Geographic Gazetteer of Spain from the names of which there is evidence in the archives of the National Geographic Institute and the Hydrographic Institute of the Navy, establishing the necessary coordination with the National Institute of Statistics, with the General Directorate of Cadastre and with the Registry of Local Entities.

The first version of this gazetteer was published in 2013 and since then annual revisions of its information have been published. This toponymic corpus, which has around 1.200.000 toponyms, specifies such important characteristics as the language of the toponym, the source from which it comes and the status in which it is found, in addition, of course, to other indispensable attributes such as its coordinates and data that relate them to the world of statistics.

The NGBE is distributed free of charge in two ways. The first is through a web feature service (WFS), in accordance with the Network Services Regulation, the Technical Guidance for the implementation of INSPIRE Download Services and version 2.0 of the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) following the data model described in the document D2.8.I.3 Data Specification on Geographical Names – Technical Guidelines. This ensures the interoperability of the information between different users. The second way to access this information is by downloading it directly from the IGN Download Center portal², following a proprietary data model through files with *.accdb or *.csv extension.

In addition, it also has a viewer that allows, in an agile way, the consultation of the geographic names contained in the NGBE³.

It is a consolidated and widely distributed database that complies with all international and national standards and allows the correct dissemination of toponymy in society.

THE GEOGRAPHIC GAZETTEERS OF THE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES

The Autonomous Communities are also creating and publishing their own gazetteers. At the time of writing this report, the following gazetteers have been published:

- Geographic Gazetteer of Andalusia.
- Geographic Gazetteer of Aragon.
- Geographic Gazetteer of the Balearic Islands.
- Digital Geographic Gazetteer of Castilla-La Mancha.
- Official Gazetteer of Catalonia.
- Geographic Gazetteer of the Community of Madrid.
- Valencian Toponymic Gazetteer.
- Official Geographic Gazetteer of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.
- Geographic Gazetteer of the Official Toponymy of the Principality of Asturias.

All public administrations must publish their gazetteers and services following the guidelines of the spatial data interoperability and compatibility regulations and must offer their information in an integrated and interoperable way through spatial data services, that is, network services, such as location, visualization, download services. Specifically, they must comply with the precepts dictated by Law 14/2010 of July 5, 2010, on geographic information infrastructures and services in Spain (LISIGE), Commission Regulation

² <https://centrodedescargas.cnig.es/CentroDescargas/informacion-geografica-referencia>

³ https://visualizadores.ign.es/nomenclator_ngbe/

(EU) No 1089/2010 of 23 November 2010 implementing Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards interoperability of spatial data sets and services, the document D2.8.I.3 Data Specification on Geographical Names – Technical Guidelines and to COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 976/2009 of 19 October 2009 implementing Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the Network Services.

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL GAZETTEER

For the materialization of the National Geographic Gazetteer, which is defined in Royal Decree 1545/2007 as a dynamic register of information that includes the georeferenced names to be used in official cartography, a consensus was reached within the Specialized Commission on Geographic Names (CENG) of the Superior Geographic Council (CSG) on the creation of a viewer that would allow the information contained in the different Spanish official gazetteers to be displayed in the same environment. In order to join this project, the gazetteers had to comply with the minimum requirements imposed by the aforementioned interoperability and data model regulations, i.e., all use the same data model and be served in an interoperable way through network download services. At the time of writing this report, the gazetteers that are effectively part of the National Geographic Gazetteer are:

- Basic Geographic Gazetteer of Spain.
- Geographic Gazetteer of Andalusia.
- Geographic Gazetteer of Aragon.
- Official Gazetteer of Catalonia.
- Valencian Toponymic Gazetteer.

This viewer⁴ has been designed to keep updated with the latest versions of the information of the adhered gazetteers and is prepared to incorporate new gazetteers as they are published, as long as they fulfil the minimum requirements already exposed.

CONCLUSIONS

The regulations on geographical names in Spain ensure coordination between all the public administrations with competence in this area. This is materialized through the creation of the different gazetteers: the Basic Geographic Gazetteer of Spain, which covers all of Spain and is of state competence; the different regional gazetteers, which are framed within the territorial scope of their respective autonomous communities, all of them coordinated through the National Geographic Gazetteer. This geographic information is made available to all users free of charge, which facilitates access to information, encourages the correct use of official names and contributes to the dissemination of toponymy in society.

⁴ https://visualizadores.ign.es/nomenclator_ngn/