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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 Poland, 2023–2025

Submitted by Poland **

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Report of Poland, 2023–2025

The report covers the two year period since the 2023 Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1–5 May 2023).

1. National standardization in Poland

1.1. Types of standardized names

Official names are established for the following types of geographical features within the territory of Poland:

- administrative units: voivodships (województwo – the first level administrative unit), counties (powiat – the second level administrative unit), communes (gmina – the third level administrative unit);
- localities (all types of settlements);
- physiographic features;
- nature conservation areas: national parks, landscape parks, nature reserves, Natura 2000 areas, protected landscape areas, natural monuments, and other protected areas;
- auxiliary units of a commune (rural administrative units, housing estates, districts);
- streets, squares, parks, and other urban features.

Apart from official names, there are standardized names in Poland:

- names of physiographic objects (in cases where an object does not have an official name),
- additional names of localities and physiographic objects in minority languages,
- names of such objects as railway stations, airports, harbors etc.,
- Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland (Polish exonyms).

1.2. Legislation concerning geographical names

The *Act of 29 August 2003 on official names of localities and physiographic objects* defined:

- objects for which official names are established,
- principles and procedures for establishing, changing and abolishing names of localities and their parts, as well as official names of physiographic objects,
- principles of the activity of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects,
- the process of establishing and publishing official lists of the names of localities and their parts and names of physiographic objects.

Other acts relevant for establishing geographical names include:

- *Act of 24 July 1998 on the implementation of a three-level territorial division of the country* – official names of voivodships,
- *Act of 5 June 1990 on the county self-government* – official names of counties,
- *Act of 8 March 1990 on the commune self-government* – official names of communes, auxiliary units of a commune, streets, squares, parks, and other urban features,
- *Act of 16 April 2004 on environment protection* – official names of nature conservation areas,
- *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language* – additional names of localities, physiographic objects, streets, squares etc. in minority languages,
- *Act of 17 May 1989 “Geodesy and cartography law”* – Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland.

1.3. Organizations standardizing geographical names

Poland does not have a single authority responsible for geographical name standardization. There are, however, two advisory commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names:

- **Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects** [Komisja Nazw Miejscowości i Obiektów Fizjograficznych], affiliated with the Minister of the Interior and Administration, establishes names used within Poland's boundaries (website: <http://knmiof.mswia.gov.pl/>);
- **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland** [Komisja Standaryzacji Nazw Geograficznych poza Granicami Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej], affiliated with the Surveyor General of Poland, is responsible responsible, among other tasks, for standardizing Polish geographical names of the world and representing Poland in UNGEGN (website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en>).

1.4. Changes in official names

Names of localities (settlements) and physiographic objects are established by the regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration upon receiving an opinion from the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects. The Commission pronounces judgments on applications coming from particular communes to the Minister which concern establishing, changing or abolishing Polish names of localities, their parts or physiographic objects (including changes of the officially established type of a particular locality or physiographic objects). Such changes are published annually in a Minister's ordinance in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* [Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej]. These changes always take effect on 1 January.

In the period 2023-2025 the following changes were made:

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	New names	Changed names			Deleted names
		name only	name and type of feature	type of feature only	
1 January 2024					
Localities	92	90	12	757	213
Physiographic objects	2	–	–	–	–
1 January 2025					
Localities	7	7	4	269	148
Physiographic objects	2	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	103	97	16	1026	361

A significant number of changes in the type of locality, that took place in 2024, resulted from local authorities adapting to new requirements of the regulations on registering localities, streets and addresses. Separate address numbering may be carried out in independent localities, and not in parts of localities, hence local authorities applied for changing the type of numerous non-independent localities (mainly parts of villages) into independent localities.

The large number of deleted locality names is due to the process of verifying official place names and adjusting them to georeference databases. Most deletions involve names of objects that

appeared in the lists from the 1980s and have been included in the registers so far, but which cannot be located, whose names do not function and are not used by local authorities.

Additionally, regulations of the Council of Ministers regarding boundary changes may bring changes of a type of locality (as the result of changes of boundaries of cities and towns). Based on this regulation 34 villages were granted town status and 53 rural localities were transformed into "part of the town" on 1 January 2024, and 7 villages were granted town status and 4 rural localities were transformed into "part of the town" on 1 January 2025.

During the period in question, the name of one local administrative unit was changed. On 1 January 2024, the name of "Słupsk" rural commune (in Pomorskie Voivodship), for the third level administrative unit, was changed into "Redzikowo" commune. Moreover, two new communes were established on 1 January 2025: "Grabówka" (in Podlaskie Voivodship) and "Szczawa" (in Małopolskie Voivodship).

1.5. Treatment of names in multilingual areas

In accordance with the definitions set out in the *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language*, national minorities (Belarusian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian and Jewish), ethnic minorities (Karaim, Lemko, Roma and Tartar) as well as a minority using a regional language (Kashubian) appear in Poland.

There is an ongoing discussion in Poland about granting the Silesian language the status of a regional language. In May 2024, the Polish Parliament passed an act on this matter. However, the president vetoed this act. Since there are not enough votes in Parliament to overturn the president's veto, the act will not be adopted at this time.

The Act stipulates that traditional names in a minority language for localities, physiographic objects and streets may be used as "additional names" alongside geographical names established in the Polish language.

As of 2023, additional names in minority languages had been introduced for 1,252 localities. This number includes 359 German names in 31 communes, 827 Kashubian names in 27 communes, 30 Lithuanian names in one commune, 27 Belarusian names in one commune, and 9 Lemko names in two communes. In January 2024, two more Kashubian names were added. At the same time, two parts of villages for which additional Kashubian names had been adopted were abolished (see point 1). As a result, the total number of localities with additional names in Kashubian remained unchanged. However, in December 2024, three more German names were introduced, bringing the total number of additional German names to 362.

1.6. Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors

The fifth revised edition of the *Polish Toponymic Guide for Map Editors and Other Users* was published in December 2024. Like the previous edition, released in 2010, it was prepared by members of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland. The new edition of the *Toponymic Guide* retains a structure similar to that of its predecessor. It comprises eight parts: (1) Polish language; (2) Polish geographical names; (3) National minorities, ethnic minorities and communities using regional language; (4) Standardization of geographical names in Poland; (5) Source materials; (6) Glossary of words necessary for the understanding of maps and geographical names databases; (7) List of abbreviations used on maps; (8) Administrative division of Poland. Additionally, three annexes are included at the end of the publication: (1) List of counties and

their seats by voivodships; (2) Dictionary of dialect and archaic topographic terms; and (3) a map titled "Republic of Poland. Administrative division".

The new edition incorporates updates reflecting changes in the principles and legal framework for the standardization of geographical names in Poland, available source materials (particularly maps and databases provided by the National Geodetic and Cartographic Service), data on national and ethnic minorities and communities using regional languages, as well as Poland's administrative division. The section on the Polish language has been expanded to include information about changes to the spelling of proper names that will take effect in 2026.

The publication is available exclusively in digital format (as a PDF file) and can be downloaded from the website of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland.: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/toponymic-guidelines-of-poland>.

2. Exonyms

The standardization of Polish exonyms is the task of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland, affiliated with the Surveyor General of Poland. The Commission's decisions serve as recommendations.

The last edition of the list of Polish exonyms, titled "Official list of Polish geographical names of the world", was published at the end of 2019. It includes Polish names for 13,599 geographical features located outside Poland's borders. The list is updated regularly. Between May 2023 and February 2025, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland standardized 17 Polish exonyms, changed 30 exonyms and delisted 26 exonyms. Information on updates is available on the Commission's website (<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/urzedowy-wykaz-polskich-nazw-geograficznych-swiata2>, available in Polish only).

In December 2024, a supplementary list of Polish exonyms for buildings and other urban objects, titled "Official list of Polish geographical names of the world. Supplement: List of names of buildings and other urban objects", was published. This list includes the names of 1,691 objects from 133 countries and territories, referring to features for which the use of Polish names is recommended. The list is available on the Commission's website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/official-list-of-polish-geographical-names-of-the-world-supplement-list-of-names-of-buildings-and-other-urban-objects3>.

Exonyms from both lists are included in the National Register of Geographical Names database (in a module dedicated to Polish geographical names of the world). This database also provides supplementing information, including the declension of exonyms (genitive and locative cases), adjectives derived from exonyms, and the original spelling of endonyms written in non-Roman writing systems.

The Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography maintains a geoportal dedicated to exonyms (<https://prng.geoportal.gov.pl/>), which allows users to browse Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms) on a map and access information on specific object contained in the module dedicated to Polish geographical names of the world within the National Register of Geographical Names database (Fig.1).



Fig. 1. A view of the geoportal with Polish exonyms.

3. Toponymic data files and gazetteers

3.1. Databases

The National Register of Geographical Names [Państwowy Rejestr Nazw Geograficznych – PRNG] is maintained by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, which operates under the authority of the Surveyor General of Poland. This register serves as an official reference database forming the basis for other spatial information systems that use geographical name data. The register consists of two parts. The first is the *Register of Geographical Names of the Republic of Poland*, which contains names of geographical features located wholly or partially on the territory of Poland, including Polish maritime areas. The second is the *Register of Geographical Names of the World*, which includes Polish-language names of geographical features located outside Poland (i.e. Polish exonyms). As of 6 February 2025, the Register contains names for 255,803 geographical features from the territory of Poland, including 124,320 names of localities and their parts and 131,483 names of physiographic features (22,884 names of water objects, 33,336 names of land shaping objects, and 75,263 names of other objects). The following types of names are collected in the Register: official names (i.e. names published by ordinance of the Minister – 137,769 names), standardized names (i.e. names approved by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects but not yet published by ordinance of the Minister – 26,681 names), unstandardized names (i.e. other names found on topographic maps or in other sources – 91,353 names), and minority names (1,255 names). Since 2021, the PRNG has also included Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms – 15,138 names as of 6 February 2025).

Moreover, Statistics Poland maintains a database of official geographical names called the National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country [Krajowy Rejestr Urzędowy Podziału Terytorialnego Kraju]. This database contains a regularly updated list of territorial division units, a specification of names of localities (102,046 names as of 6 February 2025) and a specification of names of streets (301,553 names as of 6 February 2025).

The General Directorate for Environmental Protection manages the Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms [Centralny Rejestr Form Ochrony Przyrody], which includes all areas of nature conservation in Poland (national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, protected landscape areas, Natura 2000 areas, natural monuments and other protected areas) along with their names, if they exist.

3.2. Open data

Since 17 July 2014, on the basis of the Geodetic and Cartographic Law of 17 May 1989, all data from the National Register of Geographical Names are available free of charge for any use. The Register is available through the national access point (National Geoportal: geoportal.gov.pl). The data are published in .shp, .xls, and .gml formats and are updated on the website regularly whenever changes are made to the Register. Additionally, through geoportal.gov.pl, it is possible to search, browse, and view names along with their attributes according to accepted criteria. More information, including a data download guide, is available at: <https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/en/data/national-register-of-geographical-names/> (also in English).

Moreover, the National Register of Boundaries [Państwowy Rejestr Granic] is available free of charge for any use via the National Geoportal (geoportal.gov.pl) in .shp and .gml formats. The Register includes the names of the units of territorial (administrative) division of Poland. More information, including a data download guide, is available at: <https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/en/data/national-register-of-boundaries/> (also in English).

The National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country, maintained by Statistics Poland, is available at: <https://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eTeryt/english.aspx?contrast=default> (however, browsing, searching and downloading are available only in Polish).

The Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms, maintained by the General Directorate for Environmental Protection, is available at: <http://crfop.gdos.gov.pl/CRFOP/index.jsf> and <https://geoserwis.gdos.gov.pl> (in Polish only).

Publications prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland are also available as open data:

- *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/list-of-polish-geographical-names-of-the-world>
- *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world. Supplement: List of names of buildings and other urban objects:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/official-list-of-polish-geographical-names-of-the-world-supplement-list-of-names-of-buildings-and-other-urban-objects3>
- *Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/country-names2>
- *Toponymic guidelines of Poland for map editors and other users:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/toponymic-guidelines-of-poland>
- *List of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications>
- *Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names (Polish edition):*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications>
- *Romanization rules:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/zasady-latynizacji>
- *List of Polish locality names from Ukraine:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/wykaz-polskich-nazw-miejscowosci-z-obszaru-ukrainy2>

4. Writing systems and pronunciation

One of the scopes of activity of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland refers to the establishment of “romanization rules governing names of states, non-self-governing territories, administrative units, localities, physiographic objects, and other geographical objects originally expressed by means of non-Roman writing systems”.

As a part of its activity, the Commission adopted both rules of transliteration (or international romanization) and rules of Polish phonetic transcription for each language. There are some exceptions for Asian languages – for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Lao, Burmese and Khmer only transliteration is recommended.

The rules of romanization adopted by the Commission are available on Commission’s website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/zasady-latynizacji>.

Since 2023, the following rules have been modified:

- Lao (Laotian) – clarified and expanded rules of transliteration (BGN/PCGN 1966 system),
- Thai – clarified and expanded rules of transliteration (system of the Royal Institute of Thailand).

5. Country names

In consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Council for the Polish Language at the Presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the seventh edition of the “Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories” was published at the end of 2023. The list contains 195 countries recognized by the Republic of Poland (namely: 193 member states of the United Nations Organization, as well as Kosovo and Vatican City) and 69 non-self-governing territories. Attached to the register is a list of three territories with undetermined or disputed international status.

The names of countries, territories, and their capitals included in the list have received the approval of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The footnotes explaining the status of countries and territories have been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The adjectives derived from the names of countries and territories, as well as the names of citizens and inhabitants have been provided in accordance with the opinion of the Orthography and Onomastics Unit of the Council for the Polish Language.

The list has been published only in Polish, however, an inset in English has also been prepared. This inset includes a translation of the introductory part of the publication (i.e., the editorial page, table of contents, “From the Publisher”, introduction, romanization rules, explanation of abbreviations, and the translation of the footnotes contained in the publication). In addition, four Polish-English dictionaries are included in this inset: names of countries, names of non-self-governing territories, names of territories with undetermined or disputed international status, and names of languages.

The list is available in a printed version as well as in PDF format on the Commission’s website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/country-names2>.

6. Cooperation with neighborhood countries and international organizations

Members of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland participated actively in the following events:

- 3rd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, 1–5 May 2023 (New York, USA), including meetings of: the Working Group on Exonyms (1 May), the East Central and South-East Europe Division (2 May), the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology (2 May), the Working Group on Romanization Systems (3 May), the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy (5 May);
- Toponymic sessions of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy during the 31st International Cartographic Conference of the International Cartographic Association, 14–18 August 2023 (Cape Town, South Africa);
- 7th Joint Tripartite Meeting of Geographical Names Commissions of the Czechia, Poland and Slovakia, 5 September 2023 (Prague [Praha], Czechia);
- 26th Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, 14–15 May 2024 (Prague [Praha], Czechia);
- 28th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of the UNGEGN, 16 May 2024 (Prague [Praha], Czechia);
- Toponymic session of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy during the European Cartographic Conference EuroCarto 2024, 11 September 2024 (Vienna [Wien], Austria);
- 23rd Meeting of the Baltic Division of the UNGEGN, 2–3 October 2024 (Vilnius, Lithuania).

Poland is the chair country of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN for the period 2021–2025.