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**Effective work programmes: Toponymic guidelines for
international use by map and other editors**

Fifth edition of the toponymic guidelines of Poland

Submitted by Poland **

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** The full report was prepared by Maciej Zych, Chair of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland

Fifth Edition of the Toponymic Guidelines of Poland

The fifth revised edition of the *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users* was published in December 2024.

1. History of Polish toponymic guidelines

During the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in 1982 in Geneva, Resolution No. 4 *Publication of Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors* was adopted. According to this resolution, countries were encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date toponymic guidelines for map and other editors to enable cartographers from other countries to treat correctly all problems of cartographic toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines. These guidelines were also intended to assist users in interpreting maps.

At the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (Montreal, 1987), Resolution No. 14. *Publication of Toponymic Guidelines* was passed. This resolution strongly encouraged countries to publish and maintain updated toponymic guidelines for map and other editors.

Following these recommendations, the first Polish toponymic guidelines was published in 1993. This publication was presented at the UNGEGN forum in 1996 in Geneva during the Eighteenth Session of UNGEGN. This relatively small booklet (28 pages) contained mainly information about the history of standardization and the collection of geographical names in Poland, along with additional information on the Polish alphabet, Polish pronunciation, and a limited glossary of terms.

In 1999, the second edition of the toponymic guidelines, entitled *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users*, was published. It was presented in 2000 in New York during the Twentieth Session of UNGEGN. This edition fulfilled the UNGEGN resolutions, including detailed information on the Polish language, geographical names standardization, source materials, and the administrative division of Poland. Additionally, glossaries of words necessary for the understanding of maps and lists of abbreviations used in official maps were included in separate chapters.

The third revised and updated edition of the toponymic guidelines was published in 2002 in English (under the same title as the previous editions: *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users*) and in Russian (entitled *Польское топонимическое руководство для издателей карт и других потребителей*). This edition was presented in 2002 in Berlin during the Eighth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

The fourth edition of the *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users* was published in December 2010. It was thoroughly revised and extended. In the eight years following the publication of the previous edition of the toponymic guidelines, significant changes took place in Poland, which concerned geographical terminology. In 2003, the *Act on Official Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects* came into force, regulating the rules of establishing, changing, and abolishing official geographical names. In 2005, the *Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language* was adopted, allowing the introduction of geographical names in the languages of national and ethnic minorities, as well as regional languages.

The changes included in this edition of the toponymic guidelines, apart from updating on the basis of the latest available materials, concerned more detailed information about Polish language, rules and legal frameworks for geographical name standardization, expanded terminology dictionaries and indices of abbreviations. Several maps were added to complement the text, along with a comprehensive section dedicated to national and ethnic minorities and communities using a regional language. The annexes were expanded with a dictionary of former geographical terms and the full list of officially established names in minority languages. Unlike previous editions, this edition was bilingual – English and Polish.

This publication was presented during the Twentieth Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of UNGEGN (Zagreb, February 2011) and the Twenty-Sixth Session of UNGEGN (Vienna, May 2011).

2. 2024 edition of the toponymic guidelines

Fourteen years after the previous edition, the fifth edition of the Polish toponymic guidelines was published. The title of the publication has remained unchanged: *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users*. The publication is still bilingual – all texts are presented in both English and Polish. Although the toponymic guidelines were originally intended for an international audience, they have also attracted significant domestic interest. This interest justified the decision to retain the Polish-language version alongside the English text (Fig. 1).

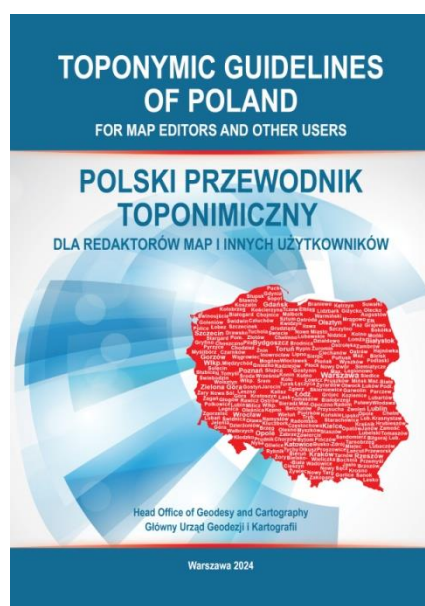


Fig. 1. The cover of the *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users*, 2024 edition.

The *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users* consists of eighth chapters and three annexes. The first chapter describes the Polish language, with the general characteristics of its literary language, general language, and dialects. The literary language is discussed in the greatest detail. This chapter also presents the Polish alphabet, including an overview of its letters and digraphs, along with their phonetic values. The phonological system of the Polish language and the rules of Polish pronunciation are also explained. Additionally, the principles of Polish orthography are described in details, including the spelling rules for geographical names – such as the use of capital and lowercase letters and hyphenated spelling. The chapter also provides information on upcoming changes to the orthography of proper names, which will come into effect in 2026. Separate sections address the rules for deriving adjectives from geographical names and the inflection of Polish geographical names. The chapter concludes with a brief characterization of Polish dialects.

The second chapter, titled *Polish Geographical Names*, provides a concise discussion of the types and origins of geographical names in Poland, as well as their linguistic classification. This chapter is complemented by Annex 2, which contains a dictionary of archaic topographic terms. This dictionary includes 128 terms that are still found as components of existing geographical names but are no longer used in contemporary Polish literary language.

The third chapter focuses on national minorities, ethnic minorities and communities using a regional language existing in Poland. It describes the legal framework established under the *Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language*, particularly in relation to the use of minority languages as supporting languages in communes and the introduction of geographical names in minority languages.

This chapter provides a brief characterization of all officially recognized minorities in Poland. These include national and ethnic minorities (Armenian, Belarusian, Czech, German, Jewish, Karaim, Lemko, Lithuanian, Roma, Russian, Slovak, Tartar, and Ukrainian) as well as a community using a regional language (Kashubian). The description of each minority includes information on population, geographical distribution, and whether geographical names in the minority language have been introduced. Five minority languages relevant to geographical names (Belarusian, Kashubian, Lithuanian, Lemko, and German) are briefly characterized as well. The characteristics of the Belarusian and Lemko languages include Romanization tables with recommended transliteration and Polish phonetic transcription for these languages.

The fourth chapter discusses the standardization of geographical names in Poland. It begins with a historical overview of the standardization of geographical names in Poland, including the standardization of the interwar period (1918-1939), the postwar period, and recent developments. The chapter also presents the rules governing the standardization of geographical names in Poland, the legal basis for this process, and the authorities responsible for geographical name standardization.

In the fifth chapter, the source materials for acquiring Polish geographical names are listed. This includes databases, topographic and other maps, lists of names, and toponymic websites.

The sixth chapter contains a glossary of appellatives, adjectives and other words appearing on Polish maps, particularly topographic maps. It covers 603 Polish terms. For nouns (appellatives), grammatical gender is provided, including plural forms, if they appear on maps. For adjectives, the full masculine singular form is given, accompanied by endings for the feminine and neuter genders.

In the seventh chapter five lists of abbreviations used in Polish maps are given, including:

- the list of explanatory abbreviations used on topographic maps (101 entries),
- the list of abbreviations of generic terms used as a part of geographical names (62 entries),
- the list of abbreviations of adjectives derived from proper names used in geographical names (9 entries),
- the list of abbreviations of adjectives derived from common names used in geographical names (15 entries),
- the list of abbreviations of prepositions used in geographical names (3 entries).

The final, eighth chapter describes the administrative division of Poland. It discusses administrative units at three levels: voivodships (first level), counties (second level), and communes (third level). The chapter characterizes the different types of authorities governing these units, the origin of their names, and the correct spelling rules for their names. Two annexes supplement this chapter: the Annex 1, which contains the list of counties and their seats arranged by voivodships, and the Annex 3 that provides the administrative map of Poland at a scale 1:2,500,000 on which voivodships, counties and their seats are marked.

The publication is available exclusively in digital format (as a PDF file) and can be downloaded free of charge 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>.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (1) Take note of the new edition of the *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users*.
- (2) Share experiences related to the development of toponymic guidelines in other Member States.
- (3) Provide comments and opinions on the content and layout of the Polish toponymic guidelines.
- (4) Provide feedback on whether toponymic guidelines should be published in a traditional format or as interactive online publications.