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English

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Geographical Names

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Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda^{*}

Reports: Divisions of the Group of Experts

Report of the Romano-Hellenic Division^{}**

Submitted by the Romano-Hellenic Division

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Summary

Since the 2023 Session of UNGEGN, the Romano-Hellenic Division (RHD) has carried out the following activities:

- a. Updating of its own web pages;
- b. Organisation of the 4th International Scientific Symposium;
- c. Cooperation for the International Conference on Place Names of the Italian Centre for Historical-Geographical Studies;
- d. Dissemination actions on the importance of geographical names for the achievement of the SDGs.
- e. Planning of activities for the next two years

a. Updating of its own web pages

In this regard, RHD reports that all the proceedings of the previous symposiums organized in the past years in Italy have been made available for free download on the division's web pages, included in the portal of the Italian Geographic Military Institute (<https://igmi.org/en/toponomastica/genung/8.divisione-romano-ellenica>).

b. Organisation of the 4th International Scientific Symposium

RHD held its fourth International Scientific Symposium focused on "Toponyms as a means of expressing identification, location, possession, belonging, division, and respect for peoples' cultures" in Roma [Rome], Italia, at the headquarters of the Italian Geographical Society (IGS), from 11th to 13th September 2024. The symposium was organized in close cooperation with the Italian Geographical Society and the Italian Geographic Military Institute (IGMI), with the auspices of all the Italian Geographical Societies and Associations. The RHD welcomed 70 requests for participation from 10 countries and hosted 33 presentations by experts from UNGEGN, academics, and scholars in geography, history, linguistics, and cartography.

Scientific contributions were preceded by greetings from the President of IGS, Prof. Claudio Cerreti, the Commander of IGMI, Maj. Gen. Luigi Postiglione, the Chair of UNGEGN, Mr. Pierre Jaillard (France), the Honorary Chair of UNGEGN, Ms. Helen Kerfoot via web, and Prof. Carla Masetti on behalf of the Italian Geographical Societies and Associations.

The proceedings of the symposium will also be made available in the same way as indicated in the previous paragraph, within the current year, by IGMI.

c. Cooperation for the International Conference on Place Names of the Italian Centre for Historical-Geographical Studies

RHD cooperated with the Italian Centre for Historical-Geographical Studies for the International Conference on "Place Names, Perceptions and Territorial Portraits. Critical Lessons, Methods and new Perspectives between Research and Didactics" held at University of Salerno (Italy), 10th - 11th December 2024.

About 80 scholars attended the conference with many interesting presentations and discussions about the meaning of place names, their history and orthography and various cartographic aspects, and also the debate on critical toponymy. Among the presentations, it is certainly worth mentioning the significant example of the application of Artificial Intelligence for the reconstruction of landscapes of the past through micro-toponymy and historical maps, and the contribution that toponymy can offer for research in the historical, environmental and social fields.

d. Dissemination actions on the importance of geographical names for the achievement of the SDGs

All the previous activities, combined with lessons and conferences involving local toponymic authorities, map agencies, universities, schools and the public bodies concerned, have been at underlining and disseminating the importance of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The most significant result achieved in this field was the response to the solicitations received in Italy. In particular it is worth mentioning the wider involvement of IGMI technicians and members of the Italian Geographical Society which offers the guarantee of an ever-increasing attention from the Italian universities, research and schools in the field of standardisation of geographical names and the importance of the SDGs. At the same time, this could work as a model to be applied in other countries as well.

e. Planning of activities for the next two years

For the next two-year period, the main actions of the RHD will be aimed to:

- Organise its 5th International Scientific Symposium on the contribution that geographical names can offer to the achievement of the Strategic Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda;
- Activate close cooperation and exchanges with the ICA/IGU Joint Commission on Toponymy.
- Redesign and enrich the content of its Division webpage;
- Continue the dissemination of the importance of the standardisation of geographical names for SDGs.