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English

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

2023 session

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

Item 13 of the provisional agenda *

Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

Submitted by the Working Group on Exonyms**

Summary:

The report describes the activities of the Working Group on Exonyms since the 2021 session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held on-line 3– 7 May 2021. The 23rd meeting of the Working Group, a business meeting, was held on 4 May 2021 as a side event of the 2021 session.

The 24th meeting, a workshop, was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute from 31 August to 3 September 2022. This meeting was held back to back with the meeting of the Terminology Working Group, convened by Trent Palmer.

Two main themes were proposed for the 24th meeting: "Remaining ambiguities of the endonym/ exonym divide" which was carried over from the planned meeting in March 2020 that had to be cancelled last minute due to measures taken in response to the onset of COVID-19, and "Exonyms and Cultural Heritage" following UNGEGN Decision 2/2021/12.

The meeting was attended in person by ca.25 experts from 15 countries. Live on-line streaming of the meeting was made available as well. 16 papers were presented and discussed. As a result of an intensive deliberation, the working group agreed on a draft recommendation that calls for a reconsideration of past UNGEGN resolutions that requested a blanket reduction of exonym use.

* GEGN.2/2023/1

** Prepared by Kohei Watanabe, Convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms

Report of the Working Group on Exonyms

1. Organisational Aspects

The Working Group on Exonyms was established in 2002 by the 8th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin. Resolution VIII/4 specifies its tasks with taking measures for “the categorization of exonym use, the publication of pronunciation guides for endonyms and the formulation of guidelines ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms”.

1.1 WG meetings held

1st Meeting: Berlin, 6 September 2002, in the framework of the 8th UNCSGN

2nd Meeting: Prague, 24-26 September 2003, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre

3rd Meeting: New York, 2004, in the framework of the 22nd UNGEGN session

4th Meeting: Ljubljana, 19-20 May 2005, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

5th Meeting: Vienna, 2006, in the framework of the 23rd UNGEGN session

6th Meeting: Prague, 17-18 May 2007, hosted by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre.

7th Meeting: New York, 29 August 2007, in the framework of the 24th UNGEGN session

8th Meeting: Timișoara, 9-11 September 2008, hosted by the West University of Timișoara, the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the Romanian Military Institute of Cartography and the Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn House

9th Meeting: Nairobi, 11 May 2009, in the framework of the 25th UNGEGN session

10th Meeting "Trends in Exonym use": Tainach (Austria), 28-30 April 2010, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names and the Catholic Educational Centre “Sodalitas”

11th Meeting: Vienna, 4 May 2011, in the framework of the 26th UNGEGN session, but outside UN facilities, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names

12th Meeting: Gdańsk, 16-18 May 2012, hosted by the Polish Main Office of Geodesy and Cartography

13th Meeting: New York, 6 August 2012, in the framework of the 10th UNCSGN

14th Meeting "The Endonym/ Exonym Divide (1)": Corfu, 23-25 May 2013, hosted by the Greek UNGEGN delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Corfu

15th Meeting: New York, 29 April 2014, in the framework of the 28th UNGEGN session

16th Meeting "The Endonym/ Exonym Divide (2)": Hermagor (Austria), 5-7 June 2014, hosted by the Austrian Board on Geographical Names

17th Meeting "Criteria for the use of Exonyms": Zagreb, 14-16 May 2015, hosted by the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, Zagreb

18th Meeting: Bangkok, 26 April 2016, in the framework of the 29th UNGEGN session

19th Meeting "Survey of Exonym Use": Prague, 4-6 April 2017, hosted by the Czech Geodetical Office and Land Survey Office

20th Meeting: New York, 9 August 2017, in the framework of the 30th UNGEGN session

21st Meeting "Categorisation of Exonyms": Riga, 24-26 September 2018, hosted by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, in collaboration with the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia

22nd Meeting: New York, 2 May 2019, in the framework of the 2019 UNGEGN session

23rd Meeting On-line, 4 May 2021, in the framework of the 2021 UNGEGN session

24th Meeting "Remaining ambiguities of the endonym/ exonym divide / Exonyms and Cultural Heritage": Ljubljana, 31 August - 3 September 2022, hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute

1.2 WG proceedings published

JORDAN Peter, OROŽEN ADAMIČ Milan, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2007), Exonyms and the International Standardisation of Geographical Names. Approaches towards the Resolution of an Apparent Contradiction (Wiener Osteuropa Studien, 24). Wien – Berlin: LIT Verlag, 240p., ISBN 978-3-8258-0035-2, ISSN 0946-7246.

JORDAN Peter, BERGMANN Hubert, BURGESS Caroline, CHEETHAM Catherine (eds.) (2011), Trends in Exonym Use. Proceedings of the 10th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Tainach, 28-30 April 2010 (Name & Place, 1). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 328p., ISBN 978-3-8300-5656-0.

WOODMAN Paul (ed.) (2012), The Great Toponymic Divide. Reflections on the definition and usage of endonyms and exonyms. Warszawa: Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, 302p. ISBN 978-83-254-1967-7.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2014), The Quest for Definitions. Proceedings of the 14th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Corfu, 23-25 May 2013 (Name & Place, 3) Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 295p., ISBN 978-3-8300-7747-3.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2015), Confirmation of the Definitions. Proceedings of the 16th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Hermagor, 5-7 June 2014 (Name & Place, 4). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 244p., ISBN 978-3-8300-8422-8.

JORDAN Peter, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2016), Criteria for the Use of Exonyms. Proceedings of the 17th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Zagreb, 14-16 May 2015 (Name & Place, 6). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 170p., ISBN 978-3-8300-8946-9.

JORDAN Peter, ŠVEHLOVÁ Irena, WOODMAN Paul (eds.) (2018), A Survey of Exonym Use. Proceedings of the 19th UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Prague, 6-8 April 2017 (Name & Place, 7). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 191p., ISBN 978-3-8300-9997-0.

DOLLIMORE Allison, WATANABE Kohei (eds.) (2019), The Classification of Exonyms, Proceedings of the 21st UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms Meeting, Riga, 24-26 September 2018 (Name & Place, 8), Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 204p., ISBN 978-3-339-11122-7

1.3 Members, Convenors

The Working Group is open to all those who are interested in the topic. The group keeps contacts with ca.100 experts from more than 30 countries. Meetings are usually attended by more than 30 experts. Those who wish to attend or be informed about the activities of the Working Group should please contact the Working Group Convenor.

Convenors:

2002-2004: Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ (Slovenia)

2004-2006: co-convenors Peter JORDAN (Austria), Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ

2006-2012: convenor in charge Peter JORDAN, co-convenor Milan OROŽEN ADAMIČ

2012-2017: Peter JORDAN

2017-: Kohei WATANABE

1.4 WG website

The WG maintains a website accessible under <http://ungegn.zrc-sazu.si>. It is hosted by the ZRC SAZU, Anton Melik Geographical Institute and updated by Matjaž Geršič. It contains a.o. detailed reports of all WG meetings as well as links to all publications of the WG, and also files contributed from members on the outcome of their activities on exonyms, such as lists of exonyms used in their languages.

2 Activities since the last UNCSGN /UNGEGN session in 2021

Since the 2021 UNGEGN session (virtual, 3-7 May 2021), the Working Group held one business meeting and a workshop meeting

2.1. 22nd Meeting: Virtual (on-line), 4 May 2021

The Working Group met on 4 May 2021 during the 2021 UNGEGN session which was held virtually (on-line). This was attended by ca. 75 participants, and the convenor, Kohei Watanabe chaired the meeting.

The summaries of seven papers that were submitted to item 13 (exonyms) in the 2019 UNGEGN session were presented by each author on this occasion and discussed by the participants, as not all papers were provided the opportunity to be presented orally in the main session.

Members' activities on Exonyms since May 2019 were presented, by members from Finland, Austria, Poland, and Greece.

Introduction and discussion on the previously disseminated draft recommendation "Exonyms as a part of the intangible cultural heritage". Various comments supporting and opposing to the draft were received. Considering the received comments and also the need to revise the draft, the conclusion was that the discussion will be continued, and the submission as a proposed recommendation be postponed to 2023. Some participants mentioned the need of an in-person meeting to discuss this topic.

2.2. 24rd Meeting: Ljubljana, 31 August - 3 September 2022

The 24th meeting, a workshop, was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia hosted by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute from 31 August to 3 September 2022. This meeting was held back to back with the meeting of the Terminology Working Group, convened by Trent Palmer.

Two main themes were proposed for the 24th meeting: "Remaining ambiguities of the endonym/exonym divide" which was carried over from the planned meeting in March 2020 that had to be

cancelled last minute due to measures taken in response to the onset of COVID-19, and "Exonyms and Cultural Heritage" following UNGEGN Decision 2/2021/12.

(a) The meeting was attended in person by ca.25 experts from 15 countries. Live on-line streaming of the meeting was made available as well. 16 papers were presented and discussed.

The papers presented and discussed at the meeting are as follows:

Marko Snoj: *Geographical names in Slovenia*

Roman Stani-Fertl: *Toponyms are indisputable constituents of cultural heritage*

Gábor Mikešy & Andrea Bölcskei: *Hungarian exonyms as cultural heritage*

Brahim Atoui: *Exonyms: between old recommendations for reduction and even abolition and new ones, recommending rather, their valorization: what perspectives: cultural or political stakes?*

Peter Jordan: *How to reconcile UN resolutions on exonyms and on place names as cultural heritage*

Pierre Jaillard: *How to apply our general objectives to exonyms in a consistent way*

Marc-Alexandre Beaulieu: *On defining a concept related to endonymy and exonymy*

Peter Jordan: *Can a place name simultaneously be endonym and exonym?*

Uršula Krevs Birk: *Exonyms and Endonyms of the German-Slovene Language Pair*

Bogusław Zagórski: *Slovenia in Arabic atlases: a study in toponymy*

Irena Švehlová & Klára Steinerová: *Czech Names of States and their Territorial Parts*

Ivana Crljenko: *Towards the end of the project on Croatian Exonyms*

Roman Stani-Fertl: *Exonyms Management of the Open Gazetteer of EuroGeographics*

Sungjae Choo: *Thoughts on "exonyms giving rise to international problems".*

(Paul Woodman: *Endonyms, exonyms and international features*) discussed on-line

(Paul Woodman: *Endonyms, exonyms and the UNGEGN Glossary*) discussed on-line

(b) Regarding the recommendation (decision) proposal carried over from the 2021 Session, a new draft "on the use and safeguarding of exonyms" had been distributed prior, and discussed at the meeting. Intensive deliberation took place in the meeting, among a core group of voluntary participants, as well as among the plenary.

As a result, the working group agreed on a draft recommendation text that calls for a reconsideration of past UNGEGN resolutions that requested a blanket reduction of exonym use. This is to be proposed at the 2023 UNGEGN session. Please refer to GEGN.2/2023/107/CRP.107 for further details.

(c) On the last day of the meeting, a fieldwork excursion to the Kočevska region took place, which was organised by Matjaž Geršič (ZRC-SAZU). This was a very impressive and geographically comprehensive fieldwork, incorporating cultural and historical as well as natural aspects of the Karst landscape.

This meeting was only made possible thanks to the generous support and hard work of the staff of Anton Melik Geographical Institute, to which the WG is very grateful.