

**Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names
Outside the Republic of Poland
Комиссия по стандартизации географических названий
за пределами Республики Польша
Komisja Standaryzacji Nazw Geograficznych
poza Granicami Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej**

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Report of Poland on the situation in the standardization of geographical names (for the period since the 18th Meeting of the Baltic Division in St. Petersburg)

1. National names authorities

There are two commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names in Poland:

Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographical Objects (established in 1934), affiliated to the Minister of the Interior and Administration, establishes names used within Poland's boundaries. After receiving the opinion of the Commission the Minister publishes names' changes in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*.

The new composition of the Commission was appointed in mid-2017, for 4-years term. The Commission composes 13 members: 7 representatives of scientific institutions (4 linguists, 1 geographer, 1 cartographer, and 1 historian) and 6 representatives of central government offices (Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, Statistics Poland).

Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland (established in 1951), affiliated at the Surveyor General of Poland, responsible for: standardizing Polish geographical names of the world, establishing the principles of romanization from languages which use non-Roman writing systems, representing Poland on UNGEGN forum, and participation in international conferences and meetings devoted to geographical names.

The Commission composes 18 members – representatives of scientific institutions (linguists, geographers, and cartographers) and representatives of central government offices (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography).

Both commissions meet several times a year.

2. Official names

Names of administrative units (voivodships, counties and communes) and their seats are set by acts of Parliament and regulations of the Council of Ministers, while names of localities and physiographic objects, according to the *Act of 29 August 2003 on official names of localities and physiographic objects*, are standardized by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects and next approved by a regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration published in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*.

The new edition of the national gazetteer entitled *List of official names of localities and their parts* was published in October 2015¹. The list contains 103,086 official names of localities and their parts, of which: 915 names of towns and cities, 43,068 – villages, 6,710 – parts of towns/cities, 36,263 – parts of villages, 5,132 – settlements, 4,619 – hamlets of villages.

Changes of the names given in the list are published each year in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*, and come into force on January 1 – these changes are effect of changes in the names, as well as changes in a type of a locality (changes of a type can be also result of changes of boundaries of cities and towns). Since 2016 the following changes were made:

- January 1, 2017: 4 new locality names were established, 87 names were changed (including 43 changes of the name, 11 changes of the name and the type of locality, and 33 changes of the type of locality only), and 85 names were abolished (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 23 December 2016 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2016, item 2251);

- January 1, 2018: 19 new locality names were established, 57 names were changed (including 25 changes of the name, 7 changes of the name and the type of locality, and 25 changes of the type of locality only), and 93 names were abolished (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 14 December 2017 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 2401);

- January 1, 2019: 4 new locality names were established, 20 names were changed (including 6 changes of the name, 2 changes of the name and the type of locality, and 12 changes of the type of locality only), and 32 names were abolished (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 13 December 2018 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2018, item 2447).

Changes in types of localities are also caused by shifts in the administrative limits of cities and towns regulated by the Council of Ministers. Since 2016 the following such changes were made:

- 28 localities changed its type (4 for “town”, and 24 for “part of town”) as a result of granting localities the status of town and enlargement of boundaries of towns (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 19 July 2016 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, and Change a Name of a Commune*, Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1134);

- 21 localities changed its type (7 for “town”, and 14 for “part of town”) as a result of granting localities the status of town and enlargement of boundaries of towns (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 24 July 2017 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, Change a Name of a Commune, and Change Seats of Authorities of Certain Communes*, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1427);

- 53 localities changed its type (10 for “town”, and 43 for “part of town”) as a result of granting localities the status of town and enlargement of boundaries of towns (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 25 July 2018 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns and Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities*, Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1456, and the *Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 December 2018 on*

¹ The list is available on the website: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/official_names.php.

Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities in Świętokrzyskie Voivodship and Establishing Its Boundaries, Journal of Laws of 2018, item 2478).

Moreover, on January 1, 2017, the name of "Wąbrzeźno" commune (Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship) was changed into "Ryńsk" commune (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 19 July 2016 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, and Change a Name of a Commune*), on January 1, 2018 the name of "Słupia (Konecka)" commune (Świętokrzyskie Voivodship) was changed into "Słupia Konecka" commune (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 24 July 2017 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, Change a Name of a Commune, and Change Seats of Authorities of Certain Communes*), and on January 1, 2019 Ostrowice commune (Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship) was abolished (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 7 August 2018 r. on Abolishing Ostrowice Commune and Establishing the Boundaries of Drawsko Pomorskie Commune and Złocieniec Commune*).

Additionally names of some physiographic objects have been changed:

- January 1, 2017: 3 new names were established (for reservoir, hill and uroczysko spot), 5 names were changed (for mount, part of a forest, forest, road, lake), and 10 names were abolished (for pond, windmill, forest, 4 fields, meadow, stream, lake) (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 23 December 2016 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2016, item 2251);

- January 1, 2018: 33 new names were established (for 21 reservoirs, 4 oxbows, 5 ponds, river, ditch, swamp) and 14 names were changed (for 10 hills, forest, oxbow, stream, canal) (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 14 December 2017 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2017, item 2401);

- January 1, 2019: 9 new names were established (for 2 ponds, 4 oxbows, 2 reservoirs, canal) and 6 names were changed (for part of a fores, stream, oxbow, river, 2 lakes) (*Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 13 December 2018 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Physiographic Objects*, Journal of Laws of 2018, item 2447).

3. Multilingual areas

Consistent with the definitions 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.

The Act lays down that traditional names in a minority language for localities, physiographic objects and streets may be used as "additional names" alongside geographic names established in the Polish language. The additional names may be established for objects located in communes inhabited by a minority in whose language these names are used, constituting at least 20 per cent of residents. Names of inhabited localities may also be established for communes, which do not fulfill the quantitative criterion for the number of residents belonging to a minority. In the case of such localities, an additional name may be introduced provided that, as a result of social consultations, over 50 per cent of residents were in favor of this name.

Since 2005 additional names in minority languages were introduced for 1252 localities. This number consists of 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 2 communes². In this number 31 Kashubian names in 4 communes were established since mid-2016.

4. Exonyms

Standardizing exonyms is the task of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland. The Commission's decisions do not have normative power but are recommendations. The Commission meets at least 4 times yearly, delivering its opinions on proposals standardizing Polish geographical names of the world, their amendments or elimination from the list of recommended exonyms.

The list of Polish exonyms, entitled *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world*, was prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland and published in the end of 2013³. It lists Polish names for 13,359 geographical objects that lie outside the boundaries of Poland. The list has been published in Polish only, but the inset in English, that includes translation of introductory part of the publication, has been also prepared.

The list is regular updated⁴. Since mid-2016 the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland standardized 160 Polish exonyms, changed 130 exonyms and delisted 31 exonyms. The most changes are result of the preparation of the second edition of the *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world*. This edition is scheduled to be published in the end of 2019 and includes Polish names for 13,595 geographical objects that lie outside the boundaries of Poland.

The Commission also works on extension the list. In 2016-2018 works on collection of the original non-Latin names were realized. To the date names from the following areas were obtained: 9 countries that use the Cyrillic alphabet, 2 countries that use the Greek alphabet, 31 countries that use the Arabic script (+ Hebrew and Tigrinya names), 12 countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia, and Ethiopia. Names in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Tibetan are still remain to be developed.

The Commission has decided to elaborate an addendum to the list containing the Polish names of the most important buildings and other urban objects. Works on this annex started in 2014, and their completion is planned for 2020. The annex will contain names for around 1500 buildings and other urban objects. In the period 2016-2019 list of buildings from Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Oceania, Russia, and Western Europe were completed.

5. Toponymic data files

The National Register of Geographical Names (PRNG) is maintained by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography (till the end of 2017 by the Main Geodetic and Cartographic Documentation Centre subordinated to the Surveyor General of Poland). Currently the Register holds approximately 252,300 names of which app. 124,600 are names of localities and its parts, app. 127,700 are names of physiographical objects (app. 22,400 are names of water objects, app. 35,700 are names of land shaping objects, and app. 69,600 are names of other objects). In the Register the following types of names are collected: official names (i.e. names published by a regulation of the Minister, app. 134,800 names), standardized names (i.e. names adopted by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographical Objects but not yet published by a regulation of the Minister, app. 15,000

² Full, consistently updated, list of the additional names in minority languages is available on the website: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/files/list_of_minority_names.pdf.

³ The list is available on the website: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wpngs_en.php.

⁴ Information on the updates (in Polish only) is available on the website: <http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/wpngs.php>.

names), unstandardized names (i.e. other names listed on topographic maps or other sources, app. 102,500 names), and minority names (app. 1,250 names).

Since 17 July 2014 on the basis of the *Geodetic and Cartographic Law of May 17, 1989* all data from PRNG are available free of charge on the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography website⁵. The data are published in the following formats: .shp, .xls and .gml, separately for names of localities and names of physiographic objects and updated every 3 months. Additionally, through a national access point⁶, it is possible to searching, browsing, and viewing names with attributes according to accepted criteria. PRNG is available in OGC (*Open Geospatial Consortium*) standard WMS (*Web Map Service*). Updating data occurs 1 time per week.

Moreover, the Central Statistical Office runs the database of official geographical names named *National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country* [Krajowy Rejestr Urzędowy Podziału Terytorialnego Kraju]. That database contains a regularly updated list of units of the territorial division, a specification of names of localities (102,912 names as of 23rd August 2019) and a specification of names of streets (273,672 names as of 23rd August 2019)⁷.

6. Country names

In consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Council for the Polish Language the fourth edition of the *Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories* was published in the end of 2017⁸. The list contains 195 countries recognized by the Republic of Poland and 69 non-self-governing territories. Attached to the register is a list of nine territories with undetermined or disputed international status and others.

The names of countries, territories, and their capitals included in the register have obtained approval of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Information about the territory's political affiliation as well as footnotes explaining the status of countries and territories have been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The adjectives derived from names of countries and territories, as well as names of citizens and inhabitants have been provided in line with the opinion provided by the Orthography and Onomastics Unit of the Council for the Polish Language of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The list is published in Polish only, but the inset in English has been also prepared.

According to the *Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration on the manner and scope of activity of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland*, the *Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories* shall be published at least every two years, therefore the fifth edition of the list is scheduled to be published in October or November of 2019 (the publication has been submitted for printing).

As in the previous editions updates and corrections in endonyms are introduced in this fifth edition of the list. However, the main changes would concern on the adoption of new names for Swaziland and (FYRO) Macedonia. The first was replaced by *Eswatini*, while the following by the name of *North Macedonia* (*Macedonia Północna* in Polish). Changes in

⁵ The data from PRNG is available on the website: <http://www.gugik.gov.pl/geodezja-i-kartografia/pzgif/dane-bez-oplat/dane-z-panstwowego-rejestru-nazw-geograficznych-prng>.

⁶ National Geoportal: <http://www.geoportal.gov.pl>.

⁷ All names are accessible on the Internet website of the Central Statistical Office: http://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eTeryt/rejestr_teryt/udostepnianie_danych/baza_teryt/uzytownicy_indywidualni/przegladanie/przegladanie.aspx?contrast=default.

⁸ The list is available on the website: <http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/wykaz.php>.

country names have brought changes in adjectives from these country names and names of citizens used in Polish.

Other changes include adding the name of new capital city of Burundi (i.e. Gitega), a change of the name of capital city of Kazakhstan (i.e. Nur-Sultan), and a modification of Romanization systems for two languages: Mongolian and Tigrinia.

Finally, the main change in the fifth edition is concern the extension of information provided to entries for countries that use non-roman scripts. In the case of such 68 countries and territories names in non-roman scripts are included next to its Romanized forms. It means names in 40 languages and 20 writing systems (namely: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Cyrillic, Devanagari, Ge'ez, Georgian, Greek, Hebrew, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Sinhala, Tamil, Thaana, Thai, Tibetan, Tifinagh) are added to the list.

7. Romanization

One of the scopes of activity of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland refers to an establishment of romanization rules governing names of geographical objects originally expressed by means of non-Roman writing systems. As a part of its activity the Commission has adopted, for each language exclusively, both rules of transliteration and rules of Polish phonetic transcription. There are some exceptions for Asian languages – for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Lao, Burmese, and Khmer only a transliteration is recommended.

To the date the Commission has adopted romanization rules for 37 languages (36 national languages and one local language)⁹. Since 2012 works are carried out to verify the previously adopted romanization rules together with the elaboration of extended romanization tables (apart from the romanization table itself, it contains information on the language, writing system, rules for the use of capital letters, etc.). In the period 2016–2018 romanization rules for Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Persian, Mongolian, and Tigrinia has been verified and extended. In cases of Mongolian and Tigrinia Romanization rules have been changed: for Mongolian from the Mongolian National Center for Standardization and Metrology system of 2003 to the Mongolian National Center for Standardization and Metrology system of 2012, and for Tigrinia from the BGN/PCGN 1994 system to the BGN/PCGN 2007 system.

8. Co-operation with neighborhood countries and international organizations

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

- Session of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy “Place Names as Social Constructs” during the 33rd International Geographical Congress, (21–25 August, 2016, Beijing, China);
- 4th Czech-Polish-Slovak meeting on standardization of geographical names (6 December, 2016, Prague, Czechia);
- 19th meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms and meeting of the Working Group on Romanization Systems (6–8 April, 2017, Prague, Czechia);
- 28th International Cartographic Conference (2–7 July, 2017, Washington, USA), including meetings of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy;
- 11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and 30th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (7–18 August, 2017, New York, USA), including meetings of: the Working Group on

⁹ Rules of romanization adopted by the Commission are available on Commission’s web site: <http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/latynizacja.php>.

Exonyms, the East Central and South-East Europe Division, the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy, the Working Group on Romanization Systems, and the Working Group on Country Names;

- Joint meeting of the Working Group on Country Names and Working Group on Romanization Systems (19–20 March, 2018, Paris, France);
- 5th Czech-Polish-Slovak meeting on standardization of geographical names (11 April, 2018, Warsaw, Poland);
- 21st meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms (24–26 September, 2018, Riga, Latvia);
- 1st Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (29 April – 3 May 2019, 2019, New York, USA), including meetings of: the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy, the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology, the East Central and South-East Europe Division, the Working Group on Exonyms;
- 29th International Cartographic Conference (15–20 July, 2019, Tokyo, Japan), including meetings of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy and pre-conference workshop “Role and Structure of National Names Boards”.