

**United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

**East Central and South-East Europe Division (ECSEED)**

---

**The Nineteenth Session of the  
East Central and South-East Europe Division  
of the UNGEGN**

Zagreb, Croatia, 19 – 21 November 2008

Item 3 of the agenda

Document Symbol: ECSEED/Session.19/2008/22

**Procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms and  
the area names of Kypros (Cyprus)**

Submitted by Cyprus\*

---

\* Prepared by Mr. Prodromos Vasileiou, the President of the Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names, Cyprus.

# **CYPRUS PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
LEFKOSIA – CYPRUS**

## **Procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms and the area names of Kypros (Cyprus).**

### **A. Introduction**

In 1878, when the British undertook the administration of Cyprus, one of the first steps taken was the survey and mapping of Cyprus. The Survey work was completed in 1882 with the production of a topographical map at the scale of 1:63360 covering the whole island.

In 1883, the cadastral survey has been started as the revenue survey and was completed in 1929 and the plans prepared were at the scales of: 1:5000 and 1:2500, for Rural areas and 1:1250, 1:1000 and 1:500 for built up areas.

Before 1878 there was not any mapping for Cyprus except of some maps and nautical charts of Cyprus at the scale of 1:250,000 and 1:500,000 and some other smaller scales, prepared by some foreign cartographers.

From 1929 to 1960, other topographical and mapping activities were of secondary importance. It was confined mostly with the production of the administration and Road Map and some other thematic maps.

In 1969, a photogrammetric unit was established in the Department of Lands and Surveys and a mapping project at scale 1:5,000 was launched and continued until 1980, covering most parts of the island (south part). Unfortunately due to the Turkish military occupation of its northern part since 1974, it has been an obstacle to the completion of the task.

From the beginning of the cadastral survey work(1883) and parallel to it, the recording of the toponyms of Cyprus has been a continuous task of Cyprus, continued after its independence (1960) and is still being carried out sporadically in our days. At first the recording of the toponyms was done for the purpose of the Land Registry office and for the declaration and registration of property, since these geographical names constitute one of the required elements of identification in administrative and legal documents.

## **B. Procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms**

Although there were not found any written instructions about the procedure of collecting and recording the toponyms when the survey work started, however, from some notes found, other in English and other in Greek and Turkish ,on documents in the Department of Lands and Surveys, the official mapping agency, proof the following procedure:

- Step 1:** Creation of selected special bodies of Land Surveyors and Cartographers from the Department of Lands and Surveys.
- Step 2:** Visit the villages and come into direct conduct with the Community Authorities and the inhabitants.
- Step 3:** The Community Authorities appoint an experienced representative or representatives who accompany the body at his work on field.
- Step 4:** The body is mainly charged for the mapping of the area but parallel to it is charged as well, to record on the sketches all the names of the various sites and, just as they are declared by the Community authorized Representative(s) and where possible to make a cross checking with the inhabitants.
- Step 5:** As the recording of these toponyms is connected as well, with the registration of property, it is communicated for checking to the inhabitants who are interested. The plans with the toponyms thus prepared are exposed at the Community Office, where the inhabitants check their accuracy and correctness.
- Step 6:** The Community Authorities submit, if there are any objections, to the Director of the Department of Lands and Surveys. If not, the inhabitants whose Land property is recorded, they themselves approve them. Thus the toponyms have the elements of democracy.

**Step 7:** Besides the names of the towns and villages, toponyms and other geographical names, there are thousands of microtoponyms, which depict the different localities and these also have a historical continuity. New toponyms can be created, to state a certain anthropogeographical entity or a certain ownership. All these constitute an essential part of the ownership, which the most of them are not shown on the cadastral plans. All these however, are collected this time, by an experienced Local Enquiry Land Clerk, cross checked and are recorded in conjunction with the already official toponyms shown on the Cadastral plans, and which are to be shown on the title deeds to be issued and exposed again to the inhabitants for checking the correctness and approval.

### **C. Standardization of Geographical Names**

Up to 1967 the year of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.N Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, except of the verification of the material collected after field checking and some orthographical corrections, nothing other has been done regarding its Standardization or transcription.

After 1967, Cyprus complying with the resolutions of the UN. conference, to which Cyprus participated and participates since then continuously, has kept abreast of the subject and decided on the occasion of the systematic mapping project (1969) at scale 1:5,000, by photogrammetric methods, to proceed systematically with the collection of any supplementary or new names and the standardization of all the geographical names.

The methodology adopted was the following:

**Step 1:** On every completed photogrammetric plot at scale 1:5,000 are transferred from the cadastral plans all the toponyms already approved.

**Step 2:** An experienced team of Cartographers and Land surveyors visit the area covered by the photogrammetric plot (1X1.5 Miles) and come into direct contact with the respective Community Authorities and the inhabitants

**Step 3:** Appointment by the Community of the representative(s) who will accompany the team on field.

**Step 4:** Re-assure or correct the toponyms already transferred on the plot and record any new toponyms.

- Step 5:** After the completion of the field work for every photogrammetric plot all the geographical names shown on it are transferred on special lists with their co-ordinates and with the description of each item.
- Step 6:** The lists prepared are processed by a glossologist (linguist), who submits them to the (Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (C.P.C.S.G.N.) for scrutiny and approval.
- Step 7:** The C.P.C.S.G.N. proceeds with the transliteration of the Greek alphabet into the roman writing system ELOT 743. This system has the advantage of reversibility and can be computerized.

All the above toponyms which were gathered on field by appropriate and authorized bodies and checked repeatedly constitute all the official toponyms Greek and Turkish of the Republic of Cyprus, which are used by its people then and today. Enough of the above geographical names belong to ancient texts from the depths of history and these include works by such notable names as Homer, Herodotus, and Strabon up to ancient cartographers, like Claudius Ptolemaeus and from medieval cartographers, like Ortelius up to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1878) when the British undertook the rule of the island.

Prodromos Vasileiou  
President