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Exonyms

**List of English names of major geographical features
situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland**

Submitted by Poland **

Summary:

The list of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of Poland has been prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland, which is aimed at foreign authors who describe Polish objects in English. The list includes the names of only those objects that are most likely to appear in foreign language publications. The following are the largest features, or those best known for their tourism value and historical significance: voivodeships (provinces), major cities and towns, major historical regions, major landforms (geographical regions), major water features, national parks and other important sites (in total, the names of 126 objects). The list does not include a complete list of features; it is limited primarily to forms that differ in English from their Polish names, which has resulted in a reduction in the number of names of localities.

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List of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland

The *List of English names for major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland*, published at the end of 2021, was prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland, having in mind foreign authors who describe Poland in English. English exonyms for features from Poland are quite commonly used, both by foreign authors and by Polish authors writing in English, but there were no general publication showing which names are recommended.

The task of drawing up this list of English names for major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland results from the provisions of paragraph 3(1)(5) of the *Regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration of 24 March 2000 on the manner and scope of activity of the National Council of Geodesy and Cartography and the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland and principles governing payment of their members* (Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 26, item 316 and of 2009 No. 107, item 897), pursuant to which the scope of activities of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names outside the Republic of Poland shall include: ‘recommending foreign names for important geographical features located in the territory of the Republic of Poland for international use, excluding names established pursuant to Art. 12 of the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language.’

Due to the large number of geographical features located in Poland, the Commission decided to include in the list only the names of only those objects that are most likely to appear in foreign-language publications. These are the largest features, or those best known for their tourism value and historical significance. The list includes designations of voivodships (provinces), names of major cities and towns, major historical regions, major landforms (geographical regions), major water features, national parks and other important sites.

The list does not contain a complete list of features, it is limited primarily to forms that differ in English from Polish names, which in particular has reduced the number of locality names. However, in some cases forms identical to Polish names have been included – this was done when a German name is commonly used in English instead of a Polish name or when a Polish name with omitted diacritical marks is used (e.g. Lodz instead of the correct spelling Łódź). Names formerly used (historical names) are not included in the list.

For names where no generic term is used (such as regions, mountain ranges, mountains, hills, lakes), it is recommended to use only the English names contained in this list. Where the name of the object is not included in the list, the Polish name should be used, taking into account any letters specific to the Polish language (with diacritical marks).

This list includes the names of the most important geographical features, which consist of a generic term and a specific element. For names not featured in the list, a translation of the generic term into English is allowed. Similarly, due to English language rules, it is possible to add an English generic term to names that do not have such a term in Polish (especially the names of lakes, rivers, mountain peaks). However, in any case, the full Polish name may be retained in the English text.

The list includes names of 126 features. Names of all 16 first-level administrative units (Polish: *województwo*) are included here. The names of these units are commonly translated into English, but these translations are very diverse – there have been no uniform guidelines so far. Firstly, a different translation of the Polish generic term *województwo* is used – either an adaptation of the Polish term to the form *voivodship* or *voivodeship* (there are two ways of spelling) found in English dictionaries, or the term was translated into corresponding general terms *province* or *region*. In addition, two word orders are used: with the generic term at the beginning or at the end of a name. The specific element

itself is sometimes written in Polish or English, in the nominative or adjective form. As a result, the name of one voivodship can be (and in fact was!) written in more than 20 different ways (e.g. *Województwo Mazowieckie*, *Mazowieckie Voivodship*, *Mazowieckie Voivodeship*, *Mazowieckie Province*, *Mazowieckie Region*, *Mazowsze Voivodship*, *Mazowsze Voivodeship*, *Mazowsze Province*, *Mazowsze Region*, *Voivodship of Mazowsze*, *Voivodeship of Mazowsze*, *Province of Mazowsze*, *Region of Mazowsze*, *Mazovia Voivodship*, *Mazovia Voivodeship*, *Mazovia Province*, *Mazovia Region*, *Voivodship of Mazovia*, *Voivodeship of Mazovia*, *Province of Mazovia*, *Region of Mazovia*, *Mazovian Voivodship*, *Mazovian Voivodeship*, *Mazovian Province*, *Mazovian Region*). The Commission established two alternative terms in this case: *voivodship* and *province*, and the Polish spelling of a specific element (*Mazowieckie Voivodship*, *Mazowieckie Province*) – the term *voivodship* corresponds to the Polish term *województwo*, and the term *province* is internationally more widely understood what type of unit is meant (however, its equivalent in Polish is the term *provincia*).

The list includes the names of 12 cities. The general assumption of the list is to provide only the names of those features for which English exonyms are recommended. In the case of cities, exonyms exist only for Warszawa (*Warsaw*) and Kraków (the English exonym *Cracow* is used interchangeably with the endonym *Kraków*). However, it was decided to include several other cities in order to emphasize that names in full Polish spelling should be used for them – in English texts German names or Polish names without diacritics are sometimes used, which the Commission considers incorrect (e.g. *Szczecin* not: *Stettin*; *Gdańsk* not: *Danzig*, *Gdansk*; *Wrocław* not: *Breslau*, *Wroclaw*; *Łódź* not: *Lodz*).

All major historical regions are listed here. Exonyms are used for 14 of them – English exonyms are well established for some of the regions (e.g. *Mazovia*, *Kashubia*, *Pomerania*, *Silesia*); for other regions, various forms of exonyms are used in English texts, and in these cases the Commission chose one form considered the most appropriate (e.g. *Greater Poland* not: *Great Poland*; *Lesser Poland* not: *Little Poland*; *Gdańsk Pomerania* not: *Eastern Pomerania*). Endonyms are given for three regions to emphasize that occasionally encountered English exonyms are not recommended (*Podlasie* not: *Podlachia*; *Polesie* not: *Polesia*, *Polesye*; *Warmia* not: *Varmia*).

13 names of water objects are mentioned. These are: the name of the sea (*Baltic Sea* – commonly used English exonym), the names of 5 bays – all the main bays of Poland, as well as the names of 5 rivers and 2 lakes. In the case of rivers, the English exonym exists only for one river – *Vistula*. Other river names are listed as examples to emphasize that in English texts full Polish spelling should be used for them – it is not recommended to use German names for them, which is sometimes found in English texts (*Odra* not: *Oder*; *Warta* not: *Warthe*, *Varta*; *Nysa Łużycka* not: *Lusatian Neisse*, *Western Neisse*, *Neisse*; *Nysa Klodzka* not: *Eastern Neisse*). Due to the rules of the English language, river names can be written in three different forms: *the Warta*, *the River Warta*, *the Warta River*. The two lake names included in the list are given only as examples showing how to add an English generic term to a Polish name that does not contain a generic term, e.g. Polish: *Śniardwy* – English: *Lake Śniardwy*.

The list includes the names of 40 landform features. The names of vast objects were selected as well as the names of several smaller ones as examples of the use of names. It is customary in Polish geographical practice, that the names of physiographic features are translated into English in English language texts – the generic term is often translated and the form of the specific element is changed from adjective to nominative (e.g. the authors of the new physico-geographical division of Poland, published in 2018, provided the names of all 431 regions in Poland in Polish and in English: 344 mesoregions, 59 macroregions, 28 higher-level regional units), however, the Commission believes that the form of the specific element should, as a rule, remain unchanged.

There are listed here:

- 14 names of mountain ranges: both features for which traditional English exonyms exists (*[the] Carpathians, [the] Tatra Mountains / [the] Tatras*) and other features as examples of the correct rendering of a Polish name in English (e.g. Polish: *Beskid Niski* – English: *[the] Beskid Niski Mountains*, Polish: *Góry Świętokrzyskie* – English: *[the] Świętokrzyskie Mountains* not: *Holy Cross Mountains, Święty Krzyż Mountains*),
- 3 names of peaks as examples of rendering the Polish name in English, e.g. Polish: *Rysy* – English: *[Mt] Rysy* (if the Polish name does not have a generic term, then this Polish name can be given in English, without an English generic term or with an English generic term); Polish: *Babia Góra* – English: *Babia Góra* (in the case of an adjective name, in English, the Polish name together with the Polish generic term should be used, not a form like *Babia, Mt Babia* or *Mt Babia Góra*),
- 4 names of foothills and basins (exonyms found in literature are included, e.g. Polish: *Pogórze Karpackie* – English: *[the] Carpathian Foothills*; Polish: *Przedgórze Sudeckie* – English: *[the] Sudety Foreland*),
- 4 names of uplands (exonyms found in literature are given, e.g. Polish: *Wyżyna Śląska* – English: *[the] Silesian Upland*),
- 6 names of lowlands (exonyms found in literature are given, e.g. Polish: *Nizina Mazowiecka* – English: *[the] Mazovian Lowland*),
- 4 names of lakelands (exonyms found in literature are given, e.g. Polish: *Pojezierze Pomorskie* – English: *[the] Pomeranian Lakeland*),
- 2 names of islands – there are no recommended English exonyms for islands, the names of these islands are given to emphasize that Polish names should be used for them, as sometimes German names appear in English texts (*Wolin* not: *Wollin*; *Uznam* not: *Usedom*),
- 3 names of peninsulas (e.g. Polish: *Mierzeja Wiślana* – English: *[the] Vistula Spit*).

In addition, the names of all 23 Polish national parks are listed. These names are in the form used by park authorities. In the most cases, the specific element is not translated – it is left in the Polish version, but its form is changed from an adjective to a noun in the nominative case, while the generic term is translated (e.g. Polish: *Białowiecki Park Narodowy* – English: *[the] Białowieża National Park*). However, in the case of four park names a different pattern for forming the English name is used – in two park names the specific element is left in the form of an adjective (e.g. Polish: *Świętokrzyski Park Narodowy* – English: *[the] Świętokrzyski National Park*), and in two park names an exonym for the specific element is used (e.g. Polish: *Tatrzański Park Narodowy* – English: *[the] Tatra National Park*).

The list also includes exemplary names of 3 forest areas (e.g. Polish: *Puszcza Kampinoska* – English: *[the] Kampinos Forest*). One name of the UNESCO heritage site is also mentioned here, in order to emphasize that in this case the Polish toponym should not be used, but the German name: *Auschwitz-Birkenau. German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp* (the name of this former camp is used in the German form also in the Polish language texts).

It should be emphasized that the list has been prepared from the Polish perspective – the English forms that are the most appropriate from the Polish point of view have been selected. The list refers to Poland, therefore Polish names were preferred in the case of cross-border features – other names of such cross-border features may be preferable when describing in English other countries or Europe in general.

The list is available in two versions with texts in Polish (<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/wykaz-angielskich-nazw-wazniejszych-obiektow-geograficznych-polozonych-na-terytorium-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej>) and English (<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications>).

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (1) Comment and provide input on similar work being carried out in other countries.