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**Reports: Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the
standardization of geographical names**

Report of Poland for the period 2021–2023

Submitted by Poland **

Summary

The report of Poland covers the progress on geographical names issues made since the 2021 session of the new United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held from 3 to 7 May 2021.

Two commissions are engaged in the standardization of geographical names in Poland. The first, the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects, is affiliated with the Minister of the Interior and Administration and establishes names used within the boundaries of Poland. The second, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside Poland, is affiliated with the Surveyor General of Poland and is responsible, among other things, for standardizing Polish geographical names around the world, representing Poland in the Group of Experts and participating in international conferences and meetings devoted to geographical names.

The list of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of Poland was published at the end of 2021. Containing a limited number of names of the most such important features (the names of 126 objects), it is a guide to the English names of objects in Poland.

The national register of geographical names is maintained by the head office of geodesy and cartography, under the Surveyor General of Poland. Currently, the register holds the names of approximately 256,000 geographical features within the territory of Poland. The register, which has been expanded to include Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms), is available as open data.

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** Prepared by Maciej Zych, Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland

The sixth updated edition of the official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories was published at the end of 2021. The names of the countries, territories and their capitals included in the list have been approved by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Report of Poland 2021–2023

1. National standardization in Poland

1.1. Types of standardized names

Official names are established for the following types of geographical features from the territory of Poland:

- administrative units: voivodships (województwo – the first level administrative unit), counties (powiat – the second level administrative unit), communes (gmina – the third level administrative unit);
- localities (settlements all types);
- physiographic features;
- nature conservation areas: national parks, landscape parks, nature reserves, Natura 2000 areas, protected landscape areas, natural monuments and other protected areas;
- auxiliary units of a commune (rural administrative units, housing estates, districts);
- streets, squares, parks and other urban features.

Apart from official names, there are standardized names in Poland:

- names of physiographic objects (in case when an object does not have an official name),
- additional names of localities and physiographic objects in the languages of the minorities,
- names of such objects as railway stations, airports, harbors etc.,
- Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland (Polish exonyms).

1.2. Legislation concerning geographical names

The *Act of 29 August 2003 on official names of localities and physiographic objects*. In this Act the following are defined:

- objects for which official names are established,
- principles and the mode of establishing, changing and abolishing names of localities and their parts, and official names of physiographic objects,
- principles of the activity of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects,
- the way of establishing and proclaiming official lists of the names of localities and their parts and names of physiographic objects.

The other acts, that are relevant for establishing geographical names:

- the *Act of 24 July 1998 on the implementation of a three-level territorial division of the country* – official names of voivodships,
- the *Act of 5 June 1990 on the county self-government* – official names of the counties,
- the *Act of 8 March 1990 on the commune self-government* – official names of communes, auxiliary units of a commune, streets, squares, parks and other urban features
- the *Act of 16 April 2004 on environment protection* – official names of nature conservation areas,

- the *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language* – additional names of localities and physiographic objects, streets, squares etc. in minority languages,
- the *Act of 17 May 1989 “Geodesy and cartography law”* – Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland.

1.3. Organizations standardizing geographical names

There is no one separate authority dealing with geographical names standardization in Poland. There are, however, two advisory commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names:

- **Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects** [Komisja Nazw Miejscowości i Obiektów Fizjograficznych], affiliated to the Minister of the Interior and Administration, establishes names used within Poland’s boundaries (website: <http://knmiof.mswia.gov.pl/>);
- **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland** [Komisja Standaryzacji Nazw Geograficznych poza Granicami Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej], affiliated to the Surveyor General of Poland, responsible for standardizing Polish geographical names of the world (website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en>).

1.4. Changes in official names

Names of localities (settlements) and physiographic objects are established by the regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration after obtaining the opinion from the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects. The Commission pronounces judgments on applications coming from particular communes to the Minister which concern establishing, changing or abolishing Polish names of localities, their parts or physiographic objects (including changes of the officially established type of a particular locality or physiographic objects). Such changes are being published once a year, as a Minister’s ordinance in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland* [*Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*]. These changes always take effect on the 1st of January.

In the period 2021-2023 the following changes were made:

	New names	Changed names			Deleted names
		name only	name and type of feature	type of feature only	
January 1, 2022					
Localities	3	16	–	44	101
Physiographic objects	3	1	–	–	–
January 1, 2023					
Localities	7	10	13	254	475
Physiographic objects	10	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	23	27	13	298	576

A large number of deleted locality names is due to the process of verifying official place names and adjusting them to georeference databases. The deleted names are mostly the names of objects that appeared in the lists from the 1980s and have been included in the registers so far, but which cannot be located, whose names do not function and are not used by local authorities.

A large number of changes in the type of locality, that took place in 2023, results from the issue of local authorities adapting to the new requirements of the regulations on registering localities, streets and addresses. Separate address numbering may be carried out in independent localities, and not in parts of localities, hence local authorities applied for changing the type of numerous non-independent localities (mainly parts of villages) into independent localities.

2. Exonyms

Standardizing of Polish exonyms is the task of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland affiliated at the Surveyor General of Poland. The Commission's decisions do not have normative power but are recommendations.

The last edition of the list of Polish exonyms, entitled *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world*, was published at the end of 2019. It lists Polish names for 13,599 geographical objects that lie outside the boundaries of Poland. The Commission regular updates the list of Polish exonyms. Information on the updates is available on the Commission's website (<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/urzedowy-wykaz-polskich-nazw-geograficznych-swiata2> in Polish only).

In the period 2021-2023 the following changes in Polish exonyms were made:

Meeting No.	New exonyms	Changed exonyms	Deleted exonyms
115 (16.06.2021)	19	35	115
116 (06.10.2021)	–	–	–
117 (21.11.2021)	25	11	4
118 (16.03.2022)	9	3	2
119 (11.05.2022)	7	6	–
120 (08.06.2022)	–	–	–
121 (21.09.2022)	11	1	2
122 (09.11.2022)	–	1	–
123 (07.12.2022)	3	–	–
124 (01.03.2023)	5	–	–
TOTAL	79	57	123

At the same time, work on supplementing the list with the declension of exonyms (genitive and locative), adjectives, as well as the original spelling for endonyms written in non-Roman writing systems was completed.

In addition, the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography has prepared the geoportal (<https://prng.geoportal.gov.pl/>) that allows browsing of Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms) on the map along with obtaining information on a given object contained in the *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world* (fig.1).



Fig. 1. A view of the geoportal with Polish exonyms.

Due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the frequency of using the names of geographical features from the territory of Ukraine has increased significantly. Due to various incorrect forms of names appearing in the media, and especially the use of names in the forms introduced by the Russian occupier, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland took a position in which it stated that either traditional Polish exonyms or names in the form established by the Ukrainian authorities should be used for the territory of Ukraine, while Russian names or Ukrainian names introduced by the illegal authorities of the occupied territories should not be used. Moreover, the Commission will not take into account any naming and administrative changes made by the Russian occupation authorities in Ukraine. The Commission also prepared a list of recommended Polish names for localities from Ukraine. The list contains names for 1610 localities.

Apart from preparing the list of Polish exonyms for geographical features, the Commission has been also preparing a list of Polish exonyms for buildings and other urban features. The list includes the names of the most important buildings for which Polish names are used and will contain the names of about 1,700 features. In the period 2021-2023, the Commission discussed Polish names of buildings in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

A new publication prepared by the Commission is the *List of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland* published at the end of 2021. The list, containing a limited number of names for the most important features (names of 126 objects), is a guide indicating which English names of objects in Poland are considered correct by the Commission. English exonyms for features from Poland are quite commonly used, both by foreign authors and by Polish authors writing in English, but there has been no general publication showing which names are recommended. The list is available in two versions with texts in Polish (<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/wykaz-angielskich-nazw-wazniejszych-objektow-geograficznych-polozonych-na-terytorium-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej>) and English ([https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications](https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/en/other-publications)).

3. Toponymic data files and gazetteers

3.1. Databases

The National Register of Geographical Names [Państwowy Rejest Nazw Geograficznych – PRNG] is maintained by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography subordinated to the Surveyor General of Poland. Currently (as on 17th January 2023) the Register holds names of 255,808 features from the territory of Poland, of which 124,571 are names of localities and its parts and 131,237 are names of physiographic features (22,877 names of water objects, 33,306 names of land shaping objects, and 75,054 names of other objects). In the Register the following types of names are collected: official names (i.e. names published by ordinance of the Minister – 137,828 names), standardized names (i.e. names adopted by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects but not yet published by ordinance of the Minister – 26,587 names), unstandardized names (i.e. other names listed on topographic maps or other sources – 91,393 names), and minority names (1,252 names). Since 2021, PRNG also included Polish geographical names of the world (Polish exonyms – 13,448 names as on 17th January 2023).

Moreover, the Statistics Poland 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 (102,311 names as of 9th January 2023) and a specification of names of streets (292,097 names as of 9th January 2023).

The General Directorate for Environmental Protection runs the Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms [Centralny Rejestr Form Ochrony Przyrody] that includes all areas of nature conservation in Poland (national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, protected landscape areas, Natura 2000 areas, natural monuments and other protected areas) with their names, if they exist¹.

3.2. Open data

Since 17 July 2014 on the basis of the Geodetic and Cartographic Law of May 17, 1989 all data from the National Register of Geographical Names are available free of charge. The Register is available through a national access point – National Geoportal: geoportal.gov.pl. The data are published in .shp, .xls and .gml formats, and updated on the website on a regular basis each time changes are made to the Register. Additionally, through geoportal.gov.pl, it is possible to searching, browsing, and viewing names with attributes according to accepted criteria. More information, including a data download guide, is available at: <https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/dane/panstwowy-rejestr-nazw-geograficznych> (also in English).

Moreover, through National Geoportal: geoportal.gov.pl the National Register of Boundaries [Państwowy Rejestr Granic] is available (in .shp .gml formats). The Register includes names of units of territorial (administrative) division of Poland. More information, including a data download guide, is available at: <https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/dane/panstwowy-rejestr-granic?inheritRedirect=true> (also in English).

National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country, maintained by Statistics Poland, is available at: <https://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eTeryt/english.aspx?contrast=default> (however, browsing, searching and downloading is only in Polish).

Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms, maintained by the General Directorate for Environmental Protection, is available at: <http://crfop.gdos.gov.pl/CRFOP/index.jsf> and <https://geoserwis.gdos.gov.pl> (in Polish only).

Publication prepared by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland are also available as an open data:

- *Official list of Polish geographical names of the world:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/list-of-polish-geographical-names-of-the-world>
- *Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/country-names2>
- *Toponymic Guidelines of Poland for Map Editors and Other Users:*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/toponymic-guidelines-of-poland>
- *List of English names of major geographical features situated in the territory of the Republic of Poland*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications>
- *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* (Polish edition)
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/other-publications>
- Romanization rules
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/zasady-latynizacji>
- *List of Polish locality names from Ukraine*
<https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng/wykaz-polskich-nazw-miejscowosci-z-obszaru-ukrainy2>

¹ Central Register of Nature Conservation Forms is available on-line: <http://crfop.gdos.gov.pl/CRFOP/index.jsf>.

4. Country names

In consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Council for the Polish Language of the Polish Academy of Sciences the sixth edition of the *Official list of names of countries and non-self-governing territories* was published at the end of 2021. The list contains 195 countries recognized by the Republic of Poland (namely: 193 member states of the United Nations Organization, as well as Kosovo and Vatican City) 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 list have obtained approval of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 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.

The list has been published in Polish only, but the inset in English has been also prepared. This inset includes translation of introductory part of the publication, i.e.: editorial page, table of contents, “from the Publisher”, introduction, Romanization rules, explanation of abbreviations, as well as translation of the footnotes contained in the publication. In addition four Polish-English dictionary are included in this inset: names of countries, names of non-self-governing territories, names of territories with undetermined or disputed international status, and names of languages.

The list is available in printed version as well as in PDF format on the Commission’s website: <https://www.gov.pl/web/ksng-en/country-names2>.

5. 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:

- May 3–7, 2021 (New York, USA – in an online format): 2nd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, includings meetings of: the East Central and South-East Europe Division (28 April), the Working Group on Exonyms (4 May), the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy (5 May), the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage (6 May);
- August 22–27, 2021 (Kraków, Poland – in an online format): 27th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences;
- September 23–24, 2021 (Tallinn, Estonia – in an online format): 21st Meeting of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN;
- November 9, 2021 (Bratislava, Slovakia – in an online format): 25th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of UNGEGN;
- December 17, 2021 (Florence [Firenze], Italy): Toponymic sessions of the Joint International Geographical Union/International Cartographic Association Commission on Toponymy during the 30th International Cartographic Conference of the International Cartographic Association;
- May 18, 2022 (Prague [Praha], Czechia): 26th Session of the East Central and South-East Europe Division of UNGEGN;
- June 14, 2022 (Bratislava, Slovakia): 6th Joint Tripartite Meeting of Geographical Names Commissions of Czechia, Poland and Slovakia;
- August 31 – September 3, 2022 (Ljubljana, Slovenia): Joint 23rd Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms and Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Terminology;
- March 15–17, 2023 (Warsaw [Warszawa], Poland): 22nd Meeting of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN.

Poland is the chair-country of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN for the period 2021–2025.

On March 21, 2022 the *Joint statement by UNGEGN experts from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in response to the aggression against Ukraine* was published. In this statements, the experts of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland strongly condemned the extremely dangerous, wholly incomprehensible and completely unfounded aggression by the Russian Federation against independent Ukraine. The experts of the four states have decided to cease all contact with representatives of the Russian Federation within the Baltic Division and UNGEGN and called on all experts from all democratic states to do the same. The statement was posted on the web-site of the Baltich Division (http://www.eki.ee/knn/ungegn/joint_statement_on_ukraine_2022_03.pdf) and sent to the UNGEGN Chair and the UNGEGN Secretariat.