Polish lists of geographical names of the World
Vol. 11. Europe – part 1

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In 1951, the Commission on Geographical Names (the name used until 1953, in the years 1953 to 1972 the Commission to Establish Geographical Names, 1973 to 1984 – the Commission on Standardization of World Geographical Names, 1984 to 2001 – the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside Poland, since 2001 – the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland), established in 1951 and attached to the Polish Geographical Society, began their work aimed at standardization of the usage of geographical names in Poland and at preparing the list of names considered correct and recommended to be used. Until 1956 the Commission had established 19,720 names of features from across the world, a large part of which were exonyms. The lists of established names were published regularly in the years 1952 to 1956 in the form of 15 volumes. 1959 saw the publication of the overall list of the corrected and updated names contained in the volumes, with approximately 25,000 names in it. The names included in that list were recognized by the Language Culture Commission of the Linguistics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences as the norm, and, consequently, they were widely used in many dictionaries, encyclopaedias and geographical studies.

In the later years, the Commission compiled and published only lists of the names of countries (1975 to 1977, 1986, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2007) and established Polish exonyms (1982 – Europe only, 1994 to 1996 – the whole world).

Nearly 50 years after the work on the first list was launched, in 2002, the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland (KSNG) started to work on *Nazewnictwo geograficzne świata* (*Geographical Names of the World*) developed by a large group of specialists: geographers, historians, linguists and cartographers. As work progresses, volumes with the names of separate regions of the world are published. So far, eleven volumes have been published: 1. *Ameryka, Australia i Oceania* (*Americas, Australia and Oceania*); 2. *Bliski Wschód* (*Middle East*); 3. *Afryka* (*Africa*); 4. *Azja Południowa* (*South Asia*); 5. *Azja Środkowa i Zakaukazie* (*Central Asia and Transcaucasia*); 6. *Białoruś, Rosja, Ukraina* (*Belarus, Russia, Ukraine*); 7. *Azja Południowo-Wschodnia* (*Southeast Asia*); 8. *Antarktyka* (*The Antarctic*); 9. *Azja Wschodnia* (*East Asia*); 10. *Morza i oceany* (*Seas and oceans*); 11. *Europa – część I* (*Europe – part 1*)[1]. The last volume 12. *Europa – część II* (*Europe – part 2*) is just being compiled. The lists are to include geographical names for a total of some 53,000 geographical features.

Over the last fifty years, the rules governing the establishment of the recommended names have changed. It is mainly about the correctness of the usage of exonyms. Initially, their broad usage or even translating the names which were not known in Poland into Polish were recommended. Later, with regard to UNGEGN's recommendations, more caution was exercised in this respect. However, the problem is complicated, it provokes controversy and disputes, and opinions and decisions made in this respect by the Commission were sometimes very disputable. Currently, the Commission's view is that one should not remove the names which are well-established in Polish and which, proving the relationships between Poland and sometimes distant countries, are part of Polish cultural heritage, which cannot be impoverished. It also refers to the territories historically associated with Poland and inhabited by a large Polish minority; for these areas it is particularly important to correctly establish names recommended to be used in Poland. At the same time, using original names facilitates contacts and enables usage of foreign sources, mainly the Internet. Hence, on one hand, it is necessary to protect those Polish names which deserve to be protected and, on the other hand, to eliminate names which were introduced rashly or those which are no longer used.

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[1] The electronic version of the lists in PDF format can be downloaded from the Commission's website: http://www.gugik.gov.pl/komisja/wydawnictwa_ngs.php

The solutions adopted by the Commission were the effect of heated discussions and are not devoid of subjectivity. It is because the criteria for establishing names cannot be unambiguous – even more because the language is living. Equally arguable is certainly the choice of names of geographical features included in individual volumes, although always special care was taken to include in them the biggest, the most significant, the most characteristic, the best known features or those referred to in literature.

The lists include two types of names – Polish exonyms and endonyms. The Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland standardizes exclusively Polish names without handling the standardization of endonyms, and the exonyms included in the lists are the only Polish names recommended by the Commission – the absence of an exonym for a feature is tantamount to stating that the Commission recommends no Polish name for it, even if that name can be found in some publications, and the only recommended form is the original name.

Efforts were made to include in the lists the official forms of endonyms originating from national names lists, topographical maps and other official sources. When it proved impossible, the most reliable international publications were used. Therefore sometimes the official name forms may be disputable because in spite of the fact that they were established with great care, there were sometimes obstacles which were difficult to overcome. They may have resulted from inaccurate source materials or even from differing, contradictory versions of names provided in official publications of governmental institutions or legislative authorities.

For names in the languages using a non-Roman alphabet the romanized form has been provided in accordance with the rules recommended by the Commission, to be applied in Poland for geographical names from a specific language. In the case of the majority of such languages, both Polish transcription form and transliteration form have been provided. It must be stressed that the Polish transcription form does not mean that we have to do with the Polish name – despite the fact that Polish letters were used, the name remains an endonym.

The above remarks refer also to volume 11 *Nazewnictwo geograficzne świata. Europa – część I* (*Geographical Names of the World. Europe – part 1*), dedicated to 21 countries of Central, Southern and Eastern Europe (the volume includes the names of geographical features situated in Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Kosovo, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia (including the Asian part), Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Hungary). It is the area for which many name materials exist and the detailed maps of individual countries are quite easily available. However, despite such an availability of materials, some naming issues are complicated as in most of the countries in question there are names in the national minority languages – in some countries national minority languages are official languages in the part of their territories, in other countries, although those languages are not official, names in those languages are used. Consequently, all due care was taken to provide official names in the languages of minorities, everywhere they occur, using mainly suitable legal acts and lists of names and maps.

The list includes the names of geographical features which, solely from the linguistic point of view, were considered by the Commission to be correct and in line with the knowledge gathered so far. In no case do these recommendations have anything in common with the Commission taking any stand on political matters or those relating to administrative status of each territory. Any stands on political issues, if they have to be taken, are always consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as for example was the case with recognizing Kosovo as a separate country or using the name Macedonia.

The volume opens with the list of recommended names of oceans and large physico-geographical or regional units, which in their size are bigger than the area of several countries. To follow are the names according to countries, for which an abbreviated Polish name and the name in their official languages have been provided. Then the names of individual geographical features have been listed, with a division into 54 categories (see Attachment 1). The occurrence of individual categories of geographical features depends on the specific character of a country. This is why in certain countries some categories do not occur. Within each category, the names have been listed alphabetically.

The entries relating to individual geographical features contain a Polish language name (exonym), if it is recommended (written in bold italics), and next the original name in the official language (endonym) – or original names if there are more than one official languages or a feature has official names in several languages. In reference to the countries in which two or three languages have the status of the official languages of the whole country (Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo), the names were listed in alphabetical order according to Polish names of those languages. In the case a given country has regional official languages or individual features have official names also in minority languages, the names in those languages have been provided after the names in the national language. In the case of non-Roman scripts, the first to go is the transcription of the original name and then its transliteration.

Examples of entry arrangement:

Jezioro Pskowskie; Pihkva järv
Rohaczów; Rahaczou (*trb.*), Rahačoŭ (*trl.*) [*blr.*]; Rogaczew (*trb.*), Rogačev (*trl.*) [*ros.*]
Mohacz; Mohács [*węg.*]; Mohač [*chorw.*]; Mohatsch [*niem.*]
Równina Zauralska; Zauralskoje płato (*trb.*), Zaural´skoe plato (*trl.*)
Čavina pećina [*boś.*, *serb.*]; Čavina špilja [*chorw.*]
Morava e Binçës; Përroi Morava e Binçës [*alb.*]; Binačka Morava [*serb.*]
Dudeştii Vechi [*rum.*]; Stara Beszenova (*trb.*), Stara Bešenova (*trl.*) [*bułg.*]

Sometimes only an exonym is provided; it means that a given geographical feature is not named in the country it is situated or no correct local name of any such feature was found. In the case of variant names in official languages, the main name of a feature comes first. For some features also historical names have been given, including the recently changed names.

A part of official languages from the countries included in the volume (Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Moldovan, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Hungarian, and minority languages: Gagauz, German, Polish, Romani, Swedish, Turkish, Italian) use Roman script – for geographical names in these languages the original form has been provided including all specific letters and diacritical marks. In case of Serbian and Montenegrin, which use both Cyrillic and Roman alphabets, exclusively the Roman form was used as the only recommended form for use in the Polish language studies (for both languages the tables of conversion between the Cyrillic and Roman alphabets have been provided). In accordance with the local legal regulations the Commission treated Moldovan and Montenegrin as separate languages although in most publications they are treated as Romanian and Serbian.

For names in other languages (Belarusian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Russian, Rusyn, Ukrainian), both the simplified Polish transcription form and the transliteration form have been provided in accordance with the following systems:
    – Belarusian (Belarus): the Belarusian national system of 2000

– Bulgarian (Bulgaria): the Bulgarian national system of 1972, as recommended by the UN in 1977

– Greek (Greece): the ISO 843:1997 system

– Macedonian (Macedonia): the UN romanization system 1977

– Russian (Belarus, Russia): the GOST 1983 system, as recommended by the UN in 1987

– Rusyn (Serbia – Vojvodina): the KSNG (Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland) system of 2008

– Rusyn (Northern Slovakia): the KSNG system of 2008

– Ukrainian (Ukraine): the Ukrainian national system of 1996

For Rusyn from Vojvodina (Pannonian Rysyn) and from Slovakia (Carpatho-Rusyn), Commission's own transliteration systems based on the GOST system have been developed. Complete tables of transcription and transliteration have been printed next to the lists of geographical names of each country.

Also glossaries of geographical terms have been provided for each language. The glossaries comprise geographical terms which appear in the listed names as well as other major terms. The most extensive glossary is the one for terms used in Ukrainian.

Language	Number of geographic terms
Albanian	55
Belarusian	128
Bosnian	54
Bulgarian	80
Croatian	97
Czech	70
Estonian	56
Greek	147
Lithuanian	66
Latvian	50
Macedonian	68
Russian	227
Romanian	64
Serbian	77
Slovak	53
Slovenian	71
Ukrainian	271
Hungarian	71

Tab. 1. Number of type terms included in glossaries for individual languages

The publication *Nazewnictwo geograficzne świata. Zeszyt 11. Europa – część I* (*Geographical Names of the World. Vo. 11. Europe – part 1*) comprises names for a total of 9,179 geographical features. 4,728 out of those features have Polish exonyms and because of the fact that there are two exonyms for some of the features, the list comprises a total of 4,843 Polish names (Tab. 2).

	Number of features	**Number of features with exonyms**	**Number of exonyms**
Great regions	15	15	17
Albania	222	31	32
Belarus	841	628	631
Bosnia and Herzegovina	187	22	24
Bulgaria	454	70	71
Croatia	254	38	40
Montenegro	152	15	16
Czechia	429	279	281
Estonia	199	25	27
Greece	582	300	306
Kosovo	126	16	17
Lithuania	893	868	877
Latvia	195	53	58
Macedonia	226	11	11
Moldova	162	52	53
Russia	1150	835	881
Romania	346	131	134
Serbia	223	30	33
Slovakia	665	541	550
Slovenia	562	25	27
Ukraine	1049	669	680
Hungary	247	74	77
total	**9179**	**4728**	**4843**

Tab. 2. Number of features and exonyms included in the volume

The most extensive list relates to the names of Russia, which stems directly from the size of this country and from a huge Polish literature on Russia. No fewer features are included in the Ukraine list; also lists relating to Lithuania and Belarus are extensive – the number of listed names results from the fact that those countries are linked to the history of Poland.

More than a half (51.5%) of the features included in the list have their established Polish exonyms. Undoubtedly, this is the region of the world with the greatest number of exonyms, which results directly from the close neighbourhood of Poland and multiple historical and cultural ties with Poland.

The greatest number of features with Polish names are located in Lithuania – Polish names have been provided for nearly all the listed features (97.2%). On one hand, it is the effect of the centuries long shared statehood, as a result of which Polish names were used for all localities and most other features from the territory of contemporary Lithuania. On the other hand, this is the result of a large Polish minority in Lithuania, which constitutes 6.7% of that country's population and is the largest national minority in Lithuania[2]. The majority of Lithuanian features with Polish names are features located in Vilnius and its neighbourhood, where Poles constitute a significant proportion of the population (Vilnius city municipality – 18,9%, Vilnius district municipality – 61,3%, Šalčininkai district municipality – 79,5%,

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[2] Data of the Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania from the 2001 census: http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/pages/view/?id=1731

Trakai district municipality – 33,2%[3]) and where even small features have Polish names. According to the definitions of exonym[4] and endonym[5] accepted by UNGEGN those names are not exonyms but endonyms, while according to the definition used by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names[6] the said names are exonyms because in Lithuania, Polish geographical names are not sanctioned and are not admitted to public use.

A great number of Russia-located features which have Polish names is a consequence of that country's size and extensive Polish literature on it. In Russia, there are many large and significant geographical features, for which Polish translations have been provided, which is very easy as Polish and Russian are similar languages.

Similarly, the consequence of the size of the country and historical and cultural ties with Poland are a great many of exonyms for features from the territory of Ukraine. Most of the features with Polish names are located in the western part of the country, however quite a lot of features from the Crimean Peninsula as well as from the eastern part of the country have Polish names.

Belarus is yet another country which was closely tied with Poland throughout centuries. Many centuries of shared statehood and a large Polish minority contribute to the fact that several Polish exonyms are used for that country. Just like in the case of Lithuania, the greatest number of Polish names refer to features located in the areas of compact settlement of the Polish minority – in the Hrodna Province Poles constitute 24.8% of the population, and in other districts of that province the proportion of Poles is as much as 83% (Poles constitute 3.9% of the whole Belarus' population)[7] – and yet according to UNGEGN's definition those names should not be treated as exonyms.

Slovakia, Poland's southern neighbor, has also a number of features with established Polish names. A large part of so named features are situated in the areas around the Tatra Mountains, close to the border with Poland. These include the transborder regions of Spiš/Spisz and Orava/Orawa, historically associated with Poland, and the area of the Tatra Mountains themselves, which lie partially also in Poland – because of the fact that the Slovak part of the Tatra Mountains has been for years visited by large numbers of Polish tourists, almost each Tatra Mountains' peak, pass, valley, stream or lake has a Polish name.

Rather significant numbers of Polish exonyms occur also for features from the area of Greece (this is due to the fact that many geographical features from the areas of that country are associated with the classical culture), the Czech Republic (there is a large Polish minority in the north-eastern area of that country), and Romania (the Bukovina region associated with the history of Poland is inhabited by the Polish minority).

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[3] *Population by some ethnicities by county and municipality*, Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania: http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/pages/view/?id=1732

[4] According to the definition of exonym adopted by UNGEGN in 2007 at the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, it is a name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is widely spoken, and differing in its form from the respective endonym(s) in the area where the geographical feature is situated

[5] According to the definition of exonym adopted by UNGEGN in 2007 at the Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, it is a name of a geographical feature in an official or well-established language occurring in that area where the feature is situated.

[6] According to the definition of exonym adopted by the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names, outside the Republic of Poland in 2006, it is a name presently used in a country in official language or languages of this country for geographical feature situated outside its territory and different in graphical form from standardized endonym of this feature

[7] According to the data from the cenzus taken in 1999, after M. Kowalski *Polacy na Białorusi, Białorusini w Polsce – obraz pogranicza dwóch narodów*. Instytut Geografii i Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania PAN (*Poles in Belarus, Belarusians in Poland – image of the borderland of two nations*. Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Science): http://old.bialorus.pl/index.php?pokaz=polacy_bialorusini&&Rozdzial=polityka_mn

The smallest number of Polish names occur in post-Yugoslavia countries, such as Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The list *Nazewnictwo geograficzne świata. Zeszyt 11. Europa* (*Geographical Names of the World. Vol. 11. Europe – part 1*) is available in electronic version in PDF format, at the website of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland, but in Polish only: http://www.gugik.gov.pl/komisja/pliki/zeszyty/zeszyt_11.pdf.

Attachment 1
List and order of geographical names categories

- okręgi federalne (federal districts)
- jednostki administracyjne (administrative units)
- miejscowości (localities)
- części miejscowości (parts of localities)
- regiony ekonomiczne (economic regions)
- krainy, regiony (lands, regions)
- oceany (oceans)
- morza (seas)
- inne akweny morskie (other sea water bodies)
- zatoki (bays)
- cieśniny (straits)
- jeziora (lakes)
- grupy jezior (group of lakes)
- zatoki na jeziorze (bays on lakes)
- rzeki (rivers)
- kanały (canals)
- wodospady (waterfalls)
- lodowce (glaciers)
- bagna (swamps)
- wyspy (islands)
- grupy wysp, archipelagi (group of islands, archipelagos)
- wyspy na jeziorze lub rzece (islands on lakes or rivers)
- półwyspy (peninsulas)
- półwyspy na jeziorze (peninsulas on lakes)
- przylądki (capes)
- wybrzeża (coasts)
- przesmyki (isthmuses)
- pojezierza (lake districts)
- niziny, równiny (lowlands, plains)
- doliny (valleys)
- kotliny (basins)
- wysoczyzny (high plains)
- wyżyny, płaskowyże (highlands, plateaus)
- góry (mountains, ranges)
- szczyty (mounts, peaks)
- przełęcze (passes)
- lasy, puszcze (forests woods)
- jaskinie (caves)
- obszary ochrony środowiska (areas of environment protection)
- miejsca wydobycia lub występowania surowców mineralnych (places of mineral resources extraction or occurrence)
- drogi (roads)
- koleje (railroads)
- ulice (streets)
- place (squares)
- mosty (bridges)
- tunele (tunnels)
- inne obiekty komunikacyjne (other transport infrastructure)
- świątynie, klasztory, miejsca kultu (temples, monasteries, places of worship)
- forty, twierdze, zamki (forts, fortresses, castes)
- cmentarze, nekropole (cemeteries, necropolises)
- mauzolea (mausoleums)
- ruiny osiedli (ruins of settlements)
- inne zabytki (other historic monuments or sites)
- pozostałe obiekty (other objects)