

**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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Polish list of official names of localities and their parts – 2019 edition

In December 2019 the third edition of the “List of official names of localities and their parts” was published in Poland. The previous editions of this list were published in 2013 and 2015. The list was published on the basis of the “Act on official names of localities and physiographic objects”, which entered into force in 2003.

1. History of the standardization of names of localities in Poland

When Poland regained independence in 1918, it became necessary to standardize the geographical names of areas that throughout over a hundred years had been partitioned by Prussia, Austria-Hungary and Russia. During the 1921 census information on names of localities was collected, which resulted in the publication of the “Index of the localities of the Republic of Poland prepared based on the results of the First National Census of 30 September 1921 and other official sources” by the Central Statistical Office in the years 1923 to 1926 in 14 volumes.

In the second half of the Thirties the work on elaboration of official list of all locality names in Poland started. However, till 1939, i.e. to the II World War outbreak, only one volume of this list was published.

The period after World War II brought a necessity of works on standardization of names on vast areas of the so-called Recovered Territories. These works were undertaken by the Commission on Establishing the Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects. At first, the works were focused on establishing the names of localities. Lists of established names were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland. As a result, nearly 32,000 names of localities were established.

In the subsequent years, names from the remaining parts of the country were standardized. In 1980-82, the “List of official names of localities in Poland” was published. This 3-volume gazetteer includes approximately 111,000 names of localities and their parts.

2. Legal basis for establishing names of localities in Poland

Official names of localities in Poland are established based on the “Act of 19 August 2003 on official names of localities and physiographic objects”. The act sets out, among others, the rules and procedures of establishing, changing and abolishing official names of localities and their parts. It also specifies the types of localities, and the procedure for publishing lists of official names of localities and their parts.

Polish official names of localities and their parts may be established, changed or abolished upon request of:

- a commune council (the lowest administrative unit),
- the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects,
- the Minister of the Interior and Administration.

Practically, names are established upon request of commune councils only.

Any establishing, abolishing or changing of a name of locality comes into effect as of 1st January, pursuant to a regulation of the Minister published in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland.

3. List of official names of localities and their parts

At the beginning of 2013, the “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 13 December 2012 on the list of official names of localities and their parts” was published in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland. This first edition of the “List of official names of localities and their parts” contains 103,225 official names of localities and their parts from the entire territory of Poland.

In October 2015 the second, updated edition of this list was published in the Journal of Laws as the “Announcement of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 4 August 2015 on the list of official names of localities and their parts”. In this second edition, 103,086 official names of localities and their parts were listed.

The third edition of the list, published in 2019, includes all changes in names of localities introduced till January 1, 2019.

4. Contents of the list

The list contains 102,875 official names of localities and their parts.

The “List of official names of localities and their parts” of 2019 has been arranged as a table with eight columns.

The first one provides the official name of a locality or a part thereof. All names in the list have been put in alphabetical order. In the case of homonym names, priority was established pursuant to the alphabetical order of the voivodships they belong to (or, if this resulted inconclusive, the alphabetical order of the respective counties and communes). Where identical names of localities occurred within a single commune, they were arranged according to the alphabetical order of the locality type. Where identical names of parts of villages occurred within a single commune, they were put in the alphabetical order of the names of localities they form part of. The same principles applied to colonies and hamlets.

In the second column, the official type of the locality is provided. 23 types of localities are distinguished in the list, 6 of them are independent localities:

- city/town [Polish: miasto],
- village [wieś],
- housing estate [osiedle],
- colony [kolonia],
- settlement [osada],
- hamlet [przysiółek].

The third, fourth and fifth columns provide the administrative affiliation of the locality to a commune (the third level administrative unit), county (the second level administrative unit), and voivodship (the first level administrative unit).

A seven-digit identifier of locality from the National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country (TERYT) is provided in the sixth column.

The seventh column provides the genitive ending for names of all localities.

The last column features a derived adjective, however, only for cities, towns and villages.

The list includes 102,875 names, those of villages and parts of villages being the most numerous. The number of independent localities (i.e. cities and towns, villages, colonies, hamlets, housing estates and settlements) amounts to 51,446, which corresponds to a half of the total number of names.

The highest number of named localities has been observed in Małopolskie Voivodship (14,973), 86.7% of which are names of parts of localities. The smallest number of localities has been recorded in Lubuskie Voivodship (1,665) where 76.6% of all names are names of independent localities. The highest number of names of independent localities has been recorded in Mazowieckie Voivodship (8,270), which corresponds to 63.2% of all names, and the highest proportion of independent localities has been recorded in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship – 81.1%. The lowest

number of names of independent localities has been recorded in Opolskie Voivodship (1,165), which corresponds to 59.5% of all names, and the lowest proportion of independent localities has been recorded in Małopolskie Voivodship – 13.3%.

5. Additional information – database of the National Register of Geographical Names

Pursuant to the Act on official names of localities and physiographic objects, the “List of official names of localities and their parts” provides the situation of localities within the administrative division only (commune, county, and voivodship). Furthermore, pursuant to the “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 14 February 2012 on the National Register of Geographical Names” the Surveyor General of Poland maintains the database of the National Register of Geographical Names (PRNG). Each name in this database is accompanied by the geographical coordinates of a given feature. Hence, geographical coordinates can be found in the PRNG register for localities mentioned in the “List of official names of localities and their parts”.

The National Register of Geographical Names containing the names from the “List of official names of localities and their parts” supplemented with the geographic coordinates of the named localities allows for various geospatial analyzes. They may concern the distribution of localities by types.

However, from the point of view of geographical names, different spatial analyzes concerning the names themselves are more interesting. Such analyzes can also be performed on the basis of the National Register of Geographical Names. For example, names with specific endings (suffixes) may be search (as: -ów, -owo, -ew, -ino/-yno, -szczyzna, -ewice etc.) or names derived from specified words (like: dąb [oak], rzeka [river], łąka [meadow], zagroda [croft], młyn [mill], Józef [Joseph] etc.).

6. Further works

Geographical names constantly evolve, for example due to certain hamlets being abandoned by their residents, creation of new parts of localities, incorporation a locality to another locality etc. Furthermore, the type of a locality may change as a result of amendments to the administrative division – such changes usually are a consequence of extension of city/town limits when rural localities (villages, parts of villages, settlements etc.) become part of cities/towns.

Amendments to the “List of official names of localities and their parts” are introduced each year on January 1 in pursuance of regulations of the Minister on establishing, changing and abolishing of official names of localities announced in the “Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland”. These modifications are the result of both changes in the names themselves and changes in types of a locality (changes of a type can be the result of changes of boundaries of cities and towns). Moreover, regulations of the Council of Ministers on boundaries change might bring changes of a type of locality.

Altogether, after the publication of the “List of official names of localities and their parts” of 2019, 5 new locality names have been established, 82 names have been changed (including 18 changes of the name, 1 change of the name and type of locality, and 63 changes of the type of locality only), and 40 names have been abolished.

The next changes in locality names are expected on January 1, 2022.