

Consolidated text based on:
Journal of Laws of 2003, No.
166, item 1612, of 2005, No.
17, item 141.

THE ACT

of 29 August 2003

on official names of localities and physiographic objects¹⁾

Chapter 1

General provisions

Art. 1.

1. The Act determines:

- 1) rules and procedure for establishing, changing and abolishing official names of localities or their parts and official names of physiographic objects;
 - 2) operational rules of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects;
 - 3) manner of establishing and publishing registers of official names of localities or their parts and physiographic objects.
2. Provisions of the act shall not apply to establishing, changing and abolishing official names within the scope regulated by the regulations on environmental protection, and also when an official name is determined by a separate act.

Art. 2.

Definitions used in the act have following meanings:

- 1) settlement unit – spatially isolated area of housing with technical infrastructure object that is inhabited by people;
- 2) colony – settlement that has arisen as a result of an expansion of a locality outside of previously existing development, in particular: city colony, village colony;
- 3) city – settlement unit with a majority dense development and non-agricultural functions which has municipal rights or the status of city conferred in the procedure stipulated by separate provisions;
- 4) locality – settlement area or other built-up area having different name than other localities, and in case of the same name – belonging to different type;
- 5) uninhabited locality – locality with no person who stays there permanently or is registered for a permanent stay;

¹⁾ This act amends the following acts: the Act of 17 May 1989 – Geodesic and Cartographic Law, and the Act of 17 May 1990 on division of tasks and jurisdiction stipulated by special act between the organs of the commune and the organs of government administration and on amendment to some acts.

- 6) inhabited locality – locality with at least one person who stays there permanently or is registered for a permanent stay;
- 7) physiographic object – isolated component of geographic environment, in particular: lowland, upland, hill, mountain range, mountain, pass, valley, basin, cave, river, canal, lake, gulf, swamp, pond, artificial water reservoir, waterfall, forest, forest complex, wilderness, peninsula, island;
- 8) settlement – small settlement unit in the village territory with different (distinguishable) character of development or inhabited by the population related to a specific place or type of work, in particular: mill settlement, forest settlement, fishing settlement, railroad settlement, settlement after former state agricultural farm; a settlement can be separate or can constitute a part of other settlement unit;
- 9) housing estate – housing assembly that constitutes an integral part of a city or village;
- 10) hamlet – aggregation of a few households located outside the village development that constitutes integral part of this village;
- 11) type of locality – definition of the character of the locality developed in the process of settlement development, in particular: city, housing estate, village, settlement, colony, hamlet and their parts;
- 12) village – settlement unit with dense or dispersed development and existing agricultural functions, or services and tourism related to them, which does not have municipal rights or the status of a city.

Art. 3.

1. Official names are established, changed and abolished for:
 - 1) inhabited localities or their parts;
 - 2) uninhabited localities or their parts;
 - 3) physiographic objects.
2. When establishing official names referred to in w para. 1, also type of a given locality or physiographic object are established. Provisions of the act on establishing and changing official names of localities and physiographic objects shall apply accordingly to establishing and changing types of localities or physiographic object.

Chapter 2

The Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects

Art. 4.

1. The Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects, hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”, is formed as a consultative organ for establishing, changing and abolishing official names of localities or their parts and physiographic objects, hereinafter referred to as the “official names”.
2. The Commission acts at the minister competent for public administration.

3. The Commission is responsible for:
 - 1) giving opinions on motions on establishing, changing or abolishing official names;
 - 2) giving opinions on drafts of registers referred to in art. 9 para. 1;
 - 3) submitting motions on establishing, changing or abolishing official names of uninhabited localities and their parts;
 - 4) giving opinions on other issues concerning execution of the act.
4. The minister competent for public administration shall define the following, by way of a resolution:
 - 1) procedure of the Commission's work, taking into consideration the need to provide for efficient work of the Commission;
 - 2) the amount of the remuneration that the members are entitled to for the participation in meetings of the Commission, taking into consideration that maximum amount of remuneration cannot exceed 60% of the minimum remuneration determined in separate provisions.

Art. 5.

1. The Commission consists of:
 - 1) the chairperson who is a linguist, appointed for a term of 4 years by the minister competent for public administration from among the persons suggested by the President of Polish Academy of Science;
 - 2) deputy of the chairperson, appointed for a term of 4 years by the minister competent for public administration upon the motion of the chairperson of the Commission from among the members of the Commission referred to in sub-para. 4;
 - 3) secretary who represents the minister competent for public administration;
 - 4) six members appointed for a term of 4 years by the minister competent for public administration from among the scientists proposed by councils of faculties of tertiary-level schools and scientific council of committees and institutes of Polish Academy of Science – from the domains of: linguistics, history, geography and cartography;
 - 5) one representative of: the Minister of National Defense, the minister competent for culture and protection of national heritage, the Surveyor General of Poland and the President of the Central Statistical Office, appointed for a term of 4 years by the minister competent for public administration;
 - 6) secretary of the Joint Commission of the Government and the National and Ethnic Minorities, formed on the basis of the provision of art. 23 of the Act of 6 January 2005 on the national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language (Journal of Laws Nr 17, item 141).
2. The minister competent for public administration dismisses a member of the Commission before the end of the term:
 - 1) if he or she hands in his or her resignation;
 - 2) upon the motion of the organ which proposed the candidate as the member.
3. Administrative service of the works of the Commission is provided by the office at the minister competent for public administration.

4. Costs of the Commission's activity are covered from the part of the national budget held by the minister competent for public administration.

Chapter 3

Official names of localities or their parts and of physiographic objects

Art. 6.

1. An official name is established for:
 - 1) localities or their parts – in first and second case of declension, and for cities and villages – also in adjective form created from the established name;
 - 2) physiographic objects – in first and second case of declension.
2. Entities carrying out public tasks in the territory of the Republic of Poland shall use official names established in accordance with this act, taking into consideration appropriate cases of declensions.

Art. 7.

1. Official names, subject to art. 1 para. 2, are established, changed or abolished, by way of a regulation, by the minister competent for public administration, after carrying out proceedings referred to in art. 8.
2. The regulation referred to in para. 1 should define previous official name, changed name, type of locality or physiographic object, first and second cases of declension, and in case of names of cities and villages – also adjective form created from this name.

Art. 8.

1. The official name is established, changed or abolished upon the motion of the council of the commune in which territory the locality or physiographic object is located.
2. Council of the commune presents a motion referred to in para. 1 to the minister competent for public administration through the voivode. In the event of the motion on the name of inhabited locality, the commune council shall earlier carry out relevant consultations with the citizens of this locality, in the procedure referred to in art. 5a para. 2 of the Act of 8 March 1990 on the commune self-government (Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 142, item 1591, of 2002, No. 23, item 220, No. 62, item 558, No. 113, item 984, No. 153, item 1271 and No. 214, item 1806, and of 2003, No. 80, item 717 and No. 162, item 1568).
3. The official name can be established, changed or abolished by the minister competent for public administration on his or her own initiative, and also on the initiative of the Commission. Prior to establishing, changing or abolishing the official name, the minister addresses the council of the commune, county head, voivode of local jurisdiction and Commission, and in case of physiographic object also voivodship council – on the

opinion. The opinion of commune council is preceded by carrying out a consultation with the citizens of the relevant locality.

4. The motion referred to in para. 1 includes:

- 1) the resolution of the commune council on establishing, changing or abolishing official name, together with the justification;
- 2) in case of physiographic object – also opinions of council of relevant voivodships;
- 3) discussion on the result of the consultation with the citizens of the relevant locality;
- 4) opinion of the county head in the area of which locality or physiographic object is located, as the organ competent for geodesy and land management;
- 5) topographic map with marked borders of the relevant locality, its parts or physiographic object;
- 6) information on financial costs of suggested change.

5. The requirement to obtain an opinion is considered to be fulfilled:

- 1) if the opinion referred to in para. 3 is not expressed within 60 days from the date of the application for the opinion;
- 2) if the opinion referred to in para. 4 sub-para. 2 and 4 is not expressed within 30 from the date of the receipt of the application for the opinion.

6. The voivode shall provide the minister competent for public administration with the motion referred to in para. 1, not later than within 30 days from its receipt, enclosing his or her own opinion. The motion handed over by the voivode shall be judged by the Commission.

7. The motion referred to in para. 1 shall be submitted to the minister competent for public administration until 31 March of the year preceding the year in which the official name is going to be established, changed or abolished.

8. Official names are established, changed or abolished on 1 January.

9. If the opinion on the motion referred to in para. 1 is negative, the minister competent for public administration immediately notifies, through the voivode, the applicant on the reasons of rejecting the motion.

Chapter 4

Registers of official names of localities or its parts and physiographic objects

Art. 9.

1. The minister competent for public administration, within five years from the effective date of the act, shall establish, by way of regulation, the list of official names of localities or their parts and, within ten years, the list of official names of physiographic objects, hereinafter referred to as the “lists”.
2. Official names shall be in the lists in first case of declension, in alphabetical order, defining type of locality or physiographic object, establishing location in the units of fundamental three-stage territorial division of the country and giving the ending of second case of the declension, and for cities and villages also adjective form of the name.

3. The registers also include:
- 1) seven-digit identifier of the locality from the national official register of territorial division “TERYT”;
 - 2) geographical coordinates of physiographic objects;
 - 3) in case of a part of the locality – name of the relevant locality.
4. The minister competent for public administration publishes, by way of an announcement in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland, valid registers of official names of localities or their parts and physiographic objects. Provisions of para. 2 and 3 shall apply accordingly.

Chapter 5

Amendments to effective provisions, interim and final provisions

Art. 10.

The following amendments are introduced to the Act of 17 May 1989 – Geodesic and cartographic law (Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 100, item 1086 and No. 120, item 1268, of 2001, No. 110, item 1189, No. 115, item 1229 and No. 125, item 1363, and of 2003, No. 162, item 1568):

- 1) art. 1 shall be read:

„Art. 1. The Act regulates issues concerning:

- 1) geodesy and cartography,
- 2) national land information system on area,
- 3) land and building register,
- 4) stock-taking and register of area utilities network,
- 5) boundary of real estate,
- 6) national geodesic and cartographic fund,
- 7) license to carry out geodesic and cartographic works,
- 8) serial numbering of real estate in localities.”;

- 2) the following chapter 8a shall be added after chapter 8:

„Chapter 8a

Serial numbering of real estate in localities

Art. 47a. Tasks of the commune include:

- 1) placing and maintaining plates with the names of streets and squares in cities and other localities in the area of the commune,
- 2) establishing numbering of built-up real estate and buildable real estate in accordance with the local spatial development plan, as well as keeping and updating register of real estate numbering.

Art. 47b. 1. Owners of built-up real estate and buildable real estate, in accordance with the local spatial development plan, shall place, on the real estate, in a visible place, a plate with the number of the real estate and maintain it.

2. The minister competent for construction, spatial development and housing shall determine, by way of regulation, the manner of establishing real estate numbering, taking into particular consideration the fact that real estate shall be numbered ex officio or upon the motion of the owner of the real estate.”.

Art. 11.

Sub-para. 1 in art. 1 of the Act of 17 May 1990 on division of tasks and jurisdiction stipulated by special acts between the organs of the commune and the organs of government administration and on the amendments to some acts (Journal of Laws No. 34, item 198, as amended²⁾) shall be repealed.

Art. 12.

Until the makeup of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects is appointed, however not longer than for one year from the effective date of the act, its tasks shall be carried out by the Commission on Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects formed on the basis of the regulation mentioned in art. 15.

Art. 13.

The motions on establishing or changing the official name, submitted and not examined before the effective date of the act, shall be considered as submitted within the time limit and procedure stipulated by the act.

Art. 14.

Provisions issued on the basis of the regulation mentioned in art. 15 remain valid until the issue of the executive provisions stipulated by the act, however not longer than for one year from the effective date of the act.

Art. 15.

The regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 24 October 1934 on establishing names of localities and physiographic objects and on the real estate numbering (Journal of Laws No. 94, item 850 and of 1948, No. 36, item 251, of 1971, No. 12, item 115, and of 1990, No. 34, item 198) expires.

Art. 16.

The Act enters into force after 14 days from the date of the announcement.

²⁾ Amendments to the act were published in the Journal of Laws of 1990, No. 43, item 253 and No. 87, item 506, of 1991, No. 95, item 425, No. 107, item 464 and No. 114, item 492, of 1995, No. 90, item 446, of 1996, No. 114, item 542, of 1997, No. 121, item 769, and of 1998, No. 162, item 1126.