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**Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda:  
Activities relating to the Working Group  
on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers**

**Undertaking work on the publishing of a national gazetteer of Poland  
Taking official publications of hydronyms as examples**

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## **Undertaking work on the publishing of a national gazetteer of Poland taking official publications of hydronyms as examples**

1. Consistent with the regulation presently in force in Poland, physiographical objects are subject to standardisation. Work is concluding on a new edition of official place names (ojkonyms), being treated by the Polish standardisation organ as of priority importance. Work is being undertaken simultaneously on publishing an official list of Polish hydronyms. This is also the first step in a wider programme, the purpose of which is to elaborate official names of physiographical objects in Poland, that is also oronyms, names of caves, landscape parks, reserves etc. The ultimate target of this programme is publication of a comprehensive Polish national gazetteer.

2. Poland is a country with a varied land structure. Many kinds of hydrographic features appear here: rivers, streams, canals, lakes, pools, springs, ponds etc., and also one sea. The number of these objects names (taking historical entries into account) may reach as many as around 50,000. Hydronyms are of quite exceptional importance for human communication, since hydrographic features constitute excellent terrain orientation points. Unambiguous identification of these objects is also important in water management.

The social functioning scope of hydronyms varies: the names of large rivers, lakes and canals are of national range, the names of small features (such as ponds) are known mainly to local communities. Some features have only one name while others carry even several.

The first mention of hydronyms on the territory of contemporary Poland goes back to Roman times with mention being made then, for instance of *Vistlam* around 44 AD. In general it can be claimed that Polish hydronyms have been well documented since the Middle Ages, their number changing with the passage of time. Certain natural features have disappeared due to human activity, for instance marshes, while others have appeared: land drainage ditches, canals and artificial reservoirs.

Several layers can be distinguished among contemporary hydronyms. The oldest reaching back to pre-Polish and even pre-Slavonic times, linking Poland with the grand Indo-European family. The names of Poland's largest rivers belong to this layer: *Wisla (Vistula)*, *Odra (Oder)*, *Bug*, *Warta* and *Nysa*. The younger onomastic layer in Polish hydronymics stems from the Slavonic language group comprising terms known through the whole Slavonic area, e.g.: *woda (water)*, *strumien (stream)*, *potok (torrent)*, *jezioro (lake)*, *staw (pond)*, *studnia (well)*, *gleboki (deep)* etc. The newest layer of hydronyms arose on the foundations of the Polish language. Very often these are names created from existing place names, e.g. *Wrzesianka* from the name *Wrzesnia* city. Polish hydronyms also include several borrowed as the result of linguistic contacts. Most come from the German language but many are also of Baltic, east-Slavonic, Slovakian, Czech and even Romanian origin.

3. The comprehensive standardisation of contemporary Polish hydronyms began by collecting hydronyms from various sources: incomplete lists of official names published to the present, names from hydrographic, linguistic and cartographic elaborations. That programme was submitted to the meeting of the UNGEGN Regional Section in Ljubljana in 2001 and to the UN Conference in Berlin in 2002. Work on standardising Polish hydronyms are reaching conclusion at present. The Surveyor General of Poland has published a list of official Polish hydronyms in two parts in alphabetic order: the first containing names of

flowing waters, the second with names of standing waters. They hold similar, though not identical, data characterising a feature, illustrated by the following examples.

#### Names of flowing waters

Name of object	Genetive	Kind of object	Recipient	Coordinates (longitude)	Coordinates (latitude)	Remarks
Bug	-u	River	Narew	52 32'00"	21 15'12"	
Odra	-y	River	Bay of Szczecin	53 35'19"	14 35'20"	
Wisla	-y	River	Baltic Sea	54 21'42"	18 57'07"	
Bachorza	-y	Canal	Zgłowiaczka	52 38'20"	18 52'39"	
Buzek	-zka	Old river bed	Bug	50 42'15"	24 04'12"	
Kamiennik	-a	Stream	Kaczawa	51 00'55"	15 53'24"	

#### Names of standing waters

Name of object	Genetive	Kind of object	Commune	County	Province	Latitude	Longitude	Remarks
Mamry	Mamr	Lake	Wegorzewo rural district	wego-rzew-ski	warmins-ko-mazur-skie	54 10'21"	21 41'54"	
Morskie Oko	-ego -a	Lake	Bukowina Tatrzańska	tatrzański	malopołskie	49 11'51"	20 04'15"	
Wielki Staw	-ego -u	Pool	Zarszyn	sanocki	pod-karpackie	49 37'22"	22 01'12"	
Goluchowskie Jezioro	-ego -a	Reservoir (artificial)	Goluchów	pleszewski	wielkopolskie	51 50'11"	17 56'01"	
Helena	-y	Spring	Rabka – town	nowotarski	malopołskie	49 36'29"	19 57'27"	

The recipient has been defined in the case of flowing waters, while administration affiliation (commune, county, province) has been defined for standing waters. Obviously, the set of generic terms is different for the two parts. For flowing waters these are: *canal, stream, ditch, river, old river bed, rivulet*, while for standing waters these are: *lake, pond, waterfall, bay, reservoir (artificial), spring*.

The publication holds a total of above 12 000 names of flowing waters and names of standing waters. This is Poland's first such voluminous and comprehensive list of official hydronyms. The standardisation of caves, along similar principles, is envisaged in the imminent future.