

8 February 2021
English
Original: Russian

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
2021 session**

Virtual, 3–7 May 2021

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*

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

Report of Belarus

Summary**

The naming and renaming of geographical objects is a living natural process that reacts to the cultural, political and social processes taking place in the country and meets the modern needs of society and the State. Given the importance of geographical names, special attention is paid to their standardization. A particular element of the standardization of Belarusian toponyms is the establishment of their normative form in the two official languages – Belarusian and Russian.

In Belarus, the naming of geographical objects is based on the principle of legality, with account taken of national interests, geographical, historical, natural, ethnic, ethnographic and other factors, and the opinions of citizens living on the territory of the relevant geographical object. The State protects geographical names as an integral part of the country's intangible historical and cultural heritage.

The Toponymic Commission of the Council of Ministers of Belarus was established in 1998 to develop a single approach to work involving the names of geographical objects. During the period from 1998 to 1 January 2021, the Commission held 85 meetings, as a result of which 54 names were assigned to newly formed geographical objects, 58 objects were renamed, and around 1,000 names of railway objects were standardized.

The State's policy relating to the names of geographical objects is implemented by the State Committee on Property of Belarus. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the State Committee on Property has been faced with the task of continuing uninterrupted its toponymic activities, in particular by setting up remote forms of interaction between experts from government agencies and other organizations on the one hand, and citizens on the other.

* [GEGN.2/2021/1](#).

** The full report was prepared by Irina Borodich, State Committee on Property of the Republic of Belarus. The report will be available, under document symbol GEGN.2/2021/30/CRP.30, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/2nd_session_2021/.



Thus, the State catalogue of names of geographical objects of Belarus continues to be maintained; this can be done through the website <http://maps.by>. In 2020, the experts who are authorized to maintain the State catalogue established 37 laws and regulations, on the basis of which 68 changes were made to the catalogue, including the naming of one new geographical object and the renaming of 17 existing objects. As at 1 January 2021, the State catalogue contained 36,465 names of geographical objects.

In 2020, work continued on the standardization of names used across the road network in order to establish uniform spelling of each name across various sources such as the national register of addresses, citizens' passports and information signs. As at 1 January 2021, the register of addresses contained 79,639 street names, including 1,379 in the capital, Minsk. The register is available on the Internet at <http://nca.by>. Because the register can be maintained remotely, citizens have been able to exercise their rights to register real estate and carry out real estate transactions without interruption.

In 2020, in order to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the State Committee on Property and the Toponymic Commission worked with citizens by email only, without any in-person contact. In the past year, 16 appeals were processed with regard to the practical application of domestic law on the names of geographical objects, including the naming and renaming of geographical objects and the use of toponyms.

The remote maintenance of toponymic resources, and electronic interaction on geographical names between government agencies and other organizations on the one hand and citizens on the other, are in keeping with current realities and are fostering the development of national toponymy during the COVID-19 pandemic.
