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

Report of Cyprus, 2023-2024 **

Submitted by Cyprus

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1. Summary

This brief National Report refers to the period 2023-2024, in relation to the activities of the Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names of Cyprus (CPCSGN).

The first section of the report includes a brief summary. The second section includes background information, the third section includes CPCSGN's main duties, the fourth section includes CPCSGN's strategic goals and their relation to UNGEGN's vision.

The fifth section includes actions and main achievements, which are briefly described and explained:

- CPCSGN Website
- Book – Names of Countries and Capitals
- National Gazetteers
- Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names
- Toponymic Guideline Editions
- EuroGeographics Products and Databases
- Odonyms
- Geographical Names Accessibility
- Collection and Standardization of Geographical Names
- Participation in Meetings and Conferences
- Publication of Articles

The last section includes conclusions and recommendations.

2. Background Information

Cyprus is privileged to have most of its geographical names included in ancient texts from Homer to Herodotus, the tragic poets and Strabon, up to ancient cartographers, like Claudius Ptolemaeus, and from medieval cartographers, like Abraham Ortelius, up to lord Horatio H. Kitchener, who mapped Cyprus in the 19th Century at the beginning of the British rule of the island. The name of the island “Kypros” was mentioned by Homer 3000 years ago.

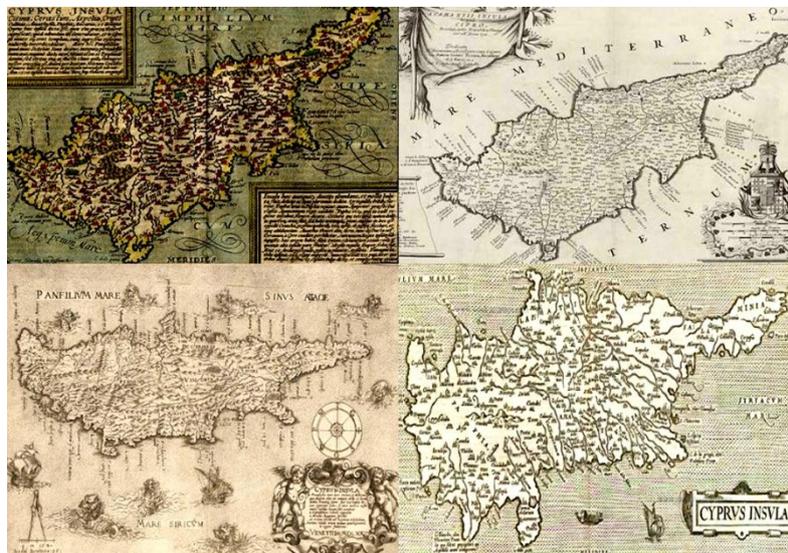


Fig. 1: Examples of historic maps of Cyprus

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CPCSGN) was officially established by the decision of the Council of Ministers no.15.769 of 21.4.1979 and constitutes the only competent National Authority for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Cyprus. According to law N.66(I)/98 and the regulations ΚΑΠ 443/2001, the Committee acts under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth.

According to Law N.66(I)/1998 and regulations ΚΑΠ 443/2001, the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, as the Competent Authority, appoints the President and the members of the Committee every five years. The Committee consists of a President and nine members.

The members of the Committee have extensive experience and background in the areas of linguistics, diplomacy, archaeology, cartography, surveying, geodesy, photogrammetry, topography, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Information Technology (IT), literature, law, public sector management, etc.

The Committee is subdivided into five subcommittees, which deal with specific issues as follows:

1. Publications
2. Standardization and transliteration
3. Awareness
4. Development and update of website
5. Updating of Gazetteers

In the exercise of its powers, the Committee selects from the existing types of geographical names, a single type for official and international use, after examining them, based on linguistic, grammatical, aesthetic, social and historical criteria.

The Committee collects data from the fields of history, linguistics, archaeology, literature, cartography and folklore that help the etymology, spelling and standardization of toponyms and names of the municipalities and the communities of Cyprus.

Law N.71(I)/2013 criminalizes the alteration of geographical names and toponyms and the illegal issue, import, circulation, supply, distribution and trade of maps, books or other documents, in conventional or digital form, which contain geographical names and toponyms of the Republic, imprinted differently than those specified in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law, or those contained in the official Toponymic Gazetteer.

3. CPCSGN Main Duties

The Committee mainly deals with the following duties:

1. Handles all matters related to the standardization of geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus.
2. Records the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus, studies all related issues, and submits to the Competent Authority for approval its suggestions on standardization and coding of geographical names.
3. Represents the Republic of Cyprus in international meetings of the United Nations (UN) on issues of its competence, and cooperates with the UN and other international organizations, and the corresponding national committees of other countries, to attain the objectives provided in legislation.
4. Advises the competent local authorities for naming or renaming of streets, and the spelling of geographical names.
5. Monitors the implementation of the standardization of geographical names and the Greek to Roman alphabet transliteration system of the Greek Organization for Standardization (ELOT 743), which was accepted by the Fifth Conference of the United Nations, as a standard of the International Standardization Organization (ISO 843.3) and was adopted by the Council of Ministers.

4. Strategic Goals

As mentioned in UNGEGN Strategic Plan vision: *“Every country should have a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names that identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage, and to have these names easily accessible for national and international use - facilitating consistent worldwide use of geographical names to foster communication and cooperation”*.

This framework is based on shared principles that:

- Identify Locations Clearly: Geographical names should be accurate and standardized to ensure that they clearly identify locations.
- Respect Culture and Heritage: The geographical names should respect the culture and heritage of the regions they represent, acknowledging the significance of these names to local communities and their historical context.

- Provide Accessibility for National and International Use: The geographical names should be easily accessible for both national and international use, ensuring that they can be used in a variety of contexts and formats.
- Maintain Global Consistency: Facilitate consistent worldwide usage of geographical names, allowing for clearer communication and cooperation between countries and regions.

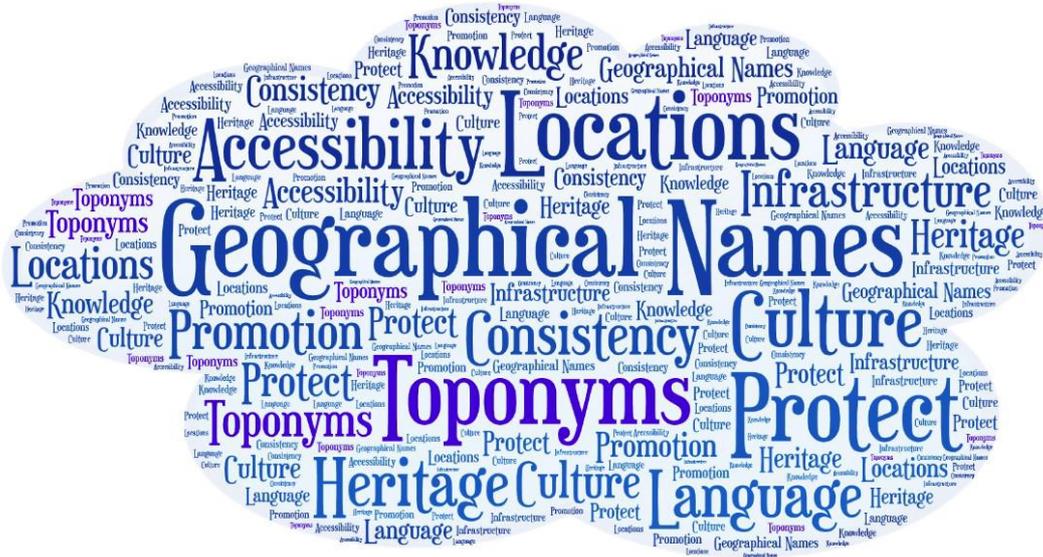


Fig. 2: Strategic Plan vision principles adopted in Cyprus

CPCSGN strongly supports and fulfils the above vision, and also the strategic aims and goals of UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 – 2029, such as protection of culture, heritage, language recognition, promotion, exchange of knowledge, establishment of resilient geographical names infrastructure, etc. CPCSGN’s activities and duties are aligned with all relevant UN resolutions and strategic objectives. Relevant geographic databases exist, along with e-services that distribute and make available the geographical names of Cyprus internationally.

5. Actions and Achievements

5.1 CPCSGN Website

The CPCSGN regularly maintains a website, where all relevant information is available. The address of this website is: <http://www.geonoma.gov.cy>. The website includes information regarding the historic background of CPCSGN, legislation and regulations regarding its operation, the organizational structure, announcements, activities, documents from our participation in conferences and other events, documents regarding the transliteration of geographical names in roman alphabet, several editions, maps, etc. The website also includes a complete and fully searchable national gazetteer. A very helpful tool was developed for the automatic transliteration of geographical names from greek to roman alphabet, based on EL0T 743 of the Hellenic Standardization Organization (based on ISO843 of the International Standardization Organization) which is available on-line at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/index.php/typopoiisi/metagrafi-ellnikou-alfavitou>



Fig. 3: CPCSNG website (www.geonoma.gov.cy)

5.2 Book – Names of Countries and Capitals

A book including a list of names of countries and capitals was submitted during the 10th UN Conference and the 27th Session of UNGEGN and was also distributed to many government departments, ministries, academic institutions, schools, and interested citizens. This book is regularly distributed to any interested persons in hardcopy form. It is also available on CPCSNG's website for viewing and downloading:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/chores-protevouses/index.html>.

5.3 National Gazetteers

The existing national gazetteers prepared by the CPCSNG in 1982 and 1987 respectively are:

- (i) The "*Concise Gazetteer of Cyprus*"
- (ii) The "*A Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus*"

All geographical names and toponyms included in these gazetteers were derived from the official large-scale cadastral maps and the land registers of the Department of Lands and Surveys. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus is currently available on CPCSNG's website at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/cygazetteer/index.html>.

All cadastral maps of Cyprus have been digitized and their information was categorized and stored in digital relational databases and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), along with many other layers of spatial information: <https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapviewer>. Based on these databases, it is possible to easily identify and locate any geographical name in Cyprus. The CPCSNG continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and the romanization of the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus, according to ELOT 743.

5.4 Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names

An additional edition was prepared by the CPCSNG titled: "*Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names of Cyprus*". The gazetteer was initially presented and submitted to the 11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names that took place in New York, in August 2017. This Gazetteer is available at:

<http://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/thalassia-toponymia/index.html>

This work has been planned and worked out on the basis of the principles, the rules and the recommendations of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and it is the result of the joined efforts of the CPCSNG and the Department of Lands and Surveys.

The sea names were extracted from the Hydrographic Database of the Integrated Land Information System of Cyprus. All names are based on the official cadastral maps, land registers, topographic maps, and other official evidence, in close coordination with the central government and the local authorities.

The sea names are also accessible as e-services through Cyprus Geoportal. The collection and processing methodology is fully described in the edition. A total of 47 maps on scale 1:25000 have also been prepared for this purpose: https://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/xartes_category/thalassia-geografika-onomata-tis-kyprou-seira-k-ch-t-99/. A cross reference to the maps, along with coordinates, and other useful information, are given for each name within the gazetteer.

Hard copies of the book were delivered to government ministries and departments, academic institutions, semi-government organizations, associations, and many other interested organizations and persons. Hard copies are still made available for free to any interested organization or person.

This gazetteer is supplemented by a series of maps that are available for free download at: <https://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/el-gr/maps/Pages/default.aspx>

5.5 Toponymic Guideline Editions

CPCSGN prepared two toponymic guideline editions, in Greek and English languages. These editions are available on CPCSGN's website, and also on UNGEGN's website:

<https://www.geonoma.gov.cy/index.php/ekdoseis>

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/nna/documents/Cyprus_Toponymic_Guidelines_Eng.pdf

5.6 EuroGeographics Products and Databases

Major geographical names of member organizations are also included in EuroGeographics' products and digital databases such as: EuroGlobal Map, EuroRegional Map, EuroBoundary Map, and Open Maps for Europe.

5.7 Odonyms

Odonyms in Cyprus, based on relevant legislation, are given and maintained by the Municipal and Community Councils. These odonyms, are under the approval of the respective District Officers, which operate under the Ministry of Interior. All official street names are communicated to the CPCSGN, for checking and correction, in order to achieve uniformity all over the island.

A complete catalogue of odonyms is maintained by the Department of Postal Services at:

<https://www.cypruspost.post/el/ekdoseis>

In addition, the Department of Lands and Surveys maintains street names in separate layers, as a part of the Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) of the National Integrated Land Information System (NILIS), thus making them available for several uses, through geospatial databases and web e-services. A variety of standard and ad-hoc maps are produced through this system. Geographical names are extremely important, and they are always included in mapping products and applications: https://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/xartes_category/odikoi-chartes/.

5.8 Geographical Names Accessibility

All geographical names and toponyms are included in the Geoportal of Cyprus at: www.geoportal.gov.cy. The Geoportal consists of two main parts these being: (a) INSPIRE Spatial Data Infrastructure Geoportal, and (b) DLS-Portal (The portal of the Department of Lands and Surveys).

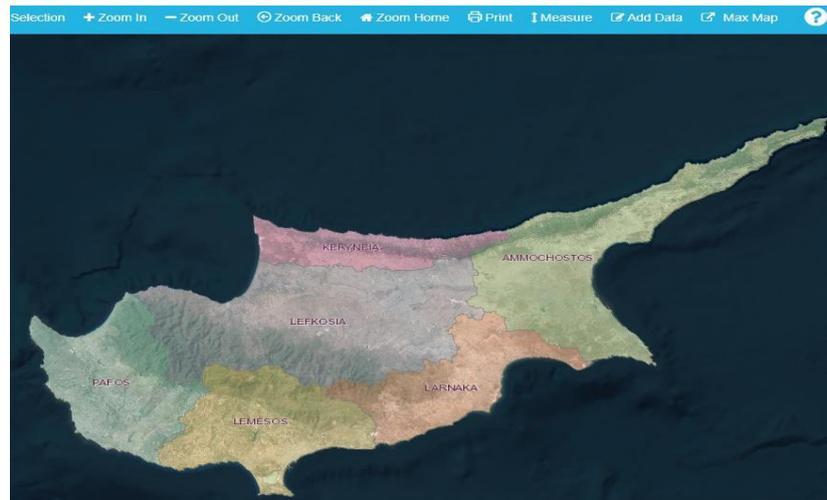


Figure 4: DLS-Portal Interactive Maps including geographical names
<https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapviewer>

Geographical names and other geo-spatial information are fully accessible on-line and are available for searching, viewing, printing, downloading and direct accessing via GIS, through DLS-Portal, and also through the European Commission's INSPIRE Geoportal:

<https://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/srv/eng/catalog.search#/results?country=cy>

The Internet Services platform (DLS-Portal) is a landmark in the modern history of the Republic of Cyprus, as following intensive efforts lasting many years, geo-spatial information was given full access to the public, with on-line services via the Internet, through a platform of electronic services. The whole concept is based on a 24-hour available, fast and friendly service.

A new IT customer-centric culture is embedded in the platform, focusing on the citizen via the availability of electronic services. The Government's target is the elimination of time-consuming bureaucratic procedures in the acceptance of applications and the ease of access into core data. The target is to continuously improve currently available services, through the gradual inclusion of new applications.

As of September 2022, the geographic part of the Cyprus Land Information System (LIS) has been upgraded and is now based on the most modern technology of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The new implementations are based on Arc/GIS Pro software from ESRI, which, in 1999, had also implemented the first computerized LIS, as far as the geographical part of the GIS is concerned, which was then based on ESRI's ArcInfo software. The new system has already been implemented, and the old system, has been decommissioned since August 1, 2022. Technical experts studied and analyzed all existing processes and developed all the necessary workflows, with which all processes are handled, with the ultimate goal being the faster and better service to the citizen.

Geographical names occupy a significant part of the Land Information System, the web applications and e-services that have been developed. Examples are: district (region) names, town and village names, parish names, toponyms, hydrographic names, etc.

A significant amount of data is available on the National Open Data Portal of Cyprus. Toponyms and other geographical names are also very easily accessible and available through this portal.

5.9 Collection and Standardization of Geographical Names

The CPCSGN continues the tasks for the collection, the standardization and transliteration of the geographical names of the Republic of Cyprus based on UN guidelines and ELOT743. All geographical names were gathered by authorized bodies during the mapping of Cyprus in 1878 and later periods. During the last two years, more than 700 geographical names, including among others ononyms, have been examined and processed, offering services to the central government, and local government authorities, for the standardization and transcription from the Greek to the Roman script according to ELOT 743.



Figure 5: Collection and Standardization of geographical names

5.10 Participation in Meetings and Conferences

In 2023 (May 1-5, 2023), the President of the Committee participated in the 3rd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.



Figure 6: Participation in UNGEGN 3rd Session, May 2023, New York

In 2024 (September 11-13, 2024), the President of the Committee participated in the Romano-Hellenic Division International Scientific Symposium “*Toponyms as a means of expressing identification, location, possession, belonging, division, and respect for peoples’ cultures*”, which took place in Rome, Italy. He also coordinated a part of the second day of the symposium consisting of 9 presentations, questions and discussions.



Figure 7: Participation in Romano-Hellenic Division International Scientific Symposium. Sep 2024, Rome

The President also organized monthly regular meetings of CPCSGN, to examine outstanding issues and take decisions.

5.11 Publication of Articles

In August 2023, an article of the Committee titled: “*Cyprus: Strengthening relationships, links, and connections*”, was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 65. The president of the Committee also designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no_65_revised.pdf

In December 2023, an article of the Committee titled: “*Cyprus: Geographical names supporting the International Decade of Indigenous Languages – Village Names*”. The president of the Committee also designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no_66_revised.pdf

In June 2024, an article of the Committee titled: “*Cyprus: Good practices emerging from relations between National Mapping/Geospatial Data Management Agency and Geographical Names Authority*” was published in UNGEGN Bulletin no. 67. The president of the Committee also designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no.67.pdf

In December 2024, an article of the Committee titled: “*Geographical names - Inseparable part of the cultural heritage of Cyprus*”. The president of the Committee also designed the cover page of the bulletin.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEKN_bulletin_no_68.pdf

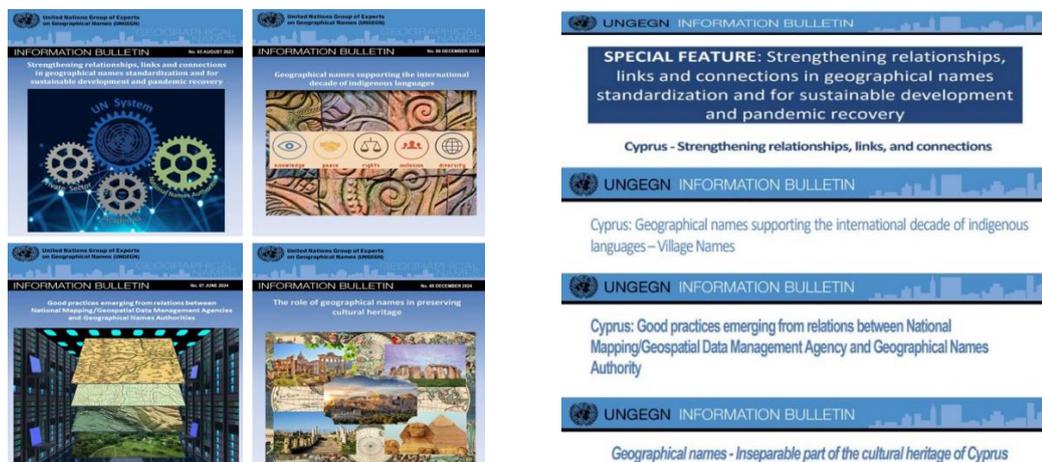


Fig. 8: Publication of Articles in UNGEGN Bulletins 2023-2024

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Cyprus has a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authoritative geographical names which identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage. Geographical names are easily accessible for national and international use, which foster communication and cooperation. In addition, the systems that have been implemented are solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible. Furthermore, it is evident that Cyprus monitors the availability of free and easily accessible authorized digital geographical names data, as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names. Consistency and accuracy are essential in referring to places in the community, thus reinforcing communication.

Geographical names are an important part of our geographical and cultural environment. They identify geographical entities of different kinds and represent irreplaceable cultural and environmental values of vital significance to people's sense of well-being and belonging. Geographical names in Cyprus are therefore of major importance. Society must bear the responsibility for respecting geographical names heritage and assuring that place name planning and use are carried out in such a way as to ensure that the place names are preserved.

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names recognizes the great importance of geographical names, raises awareness and provides professional support and consultancy to all interested organizations and individuals, following all authoritative procedures and standards. CPCSGN strongly supports and will continue to support the goals of UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021 – 2029.