

UN/ICA WEEK OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN TIMIȘOARA

(9–13 September 2008, Timișoara, Romania)

In the interval between September 9-13, 2008, Romania played host to the *UN/ICA Week of Geographical Names in Timișoara* organized by UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases, West University of Timișoara, Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, and Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn House (the venue of the Conference). The event represented a joint meeting of UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms (8th Meeting) and ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases (CNRA) *Geographical Names in National and Regional Atlases*, both meetings being actual workshops. Paper presentations was only a part of the programme, most of the time being devoted to discussing two very concrete projects, i.e. guidelines for the use of exonyms (in the WGE Meeting) and the chapter on *Geographical Names in National and Regional Atlases* within the “cook book” for atlas editors (in the CNRA Meeting), respectively. The two subsequent meetings were attended not only by the members of the respective sub-group, but also by other participants interested in the subject.

A participation of 54 colleagues from 20 countries and four continents surpassed most expectations. The Conference was attended by specialists from Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, France, the Republic of Korea, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, New Zealand, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, and Romania. The organizers had the pleasure to welcome Helen Kerfoot (UNGEGN Chair, Canada), Ferjan Ormeling (UNGEGN Vice-Chair, The Netherlands), Peter Jordan (Co-convenor, UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms, Chair, ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases, Austria), Pierre Jaillard (Commission Nationale de Toponymie, France), Paul Woodman (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names), Bogusław Zagórski (Commission on Standardisation of Geographical Names Outside Poland), Henri Dorion (Université Laval, Québec, Canada), Șerban Dragomirescu (Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy), Marin Alniței (Military Topographic Directorate, Romania’s Ministry of Defense). We appreciate the participation of the UNGEGN experts participating also in the ICA Commission meeting.

The opening address praised the organizing institutions represented by Peter Jordan, Helen Kerfoot, Remus Crețan, Șerban Dragomirescu, Ion Talpoș (the rector of West University of Timișoara), and by a member of the Timișoara Town Hall.

The *UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms* focused on exonyms in Romania (an evaluation of the last 30 years) (Șerban Dragomirescu), the spelling of the name *Romania* in “British official usage” (Paul Woodman), exonyms and cultural diversification (Pierre Jaillard), exonyms in the Arab World (Bogusław Zagórski), exonyms in Croatian lexicographical editions (Ivana Crljenko), a revised list of Hungarian exonyms (András Dutko), criteria for the use of exonyms in Austria (Peter Jordan), the toponymy of Banat (Remus Crețan), several cultural aspects of Timișoara City (Sorina Voiculescu). Zsombor Bartos-Elekes’ paper, *The discussion on terminology of the terms exonym and endonym* aroused hot debates.

At the meeting of the ICA Commission on National and Regional Atlases (CNRA) *Geographical Names in National and Regional Atlases*, the main topics under discussion focused on the current “cook book” concept, major ideas on rendering geographical names in national and regional atlases (Peter Jordan), and exonyms in school atlases in the Czech Republic (Vít Voželínek).

In-between the Conference meetings participants had the opportunity to see interesting collections of maps and post-cards displayed by some special guests of the organizers (the Banat Museum, the Ethnographic Museum) made available through the kindness of private local collectors of maps, etc.

Within the framework of the Conference, the UNGEGN Toponymy Training Course, held between September 6-8, 2008, was attended by young researchers from Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Romania. The lectures, delivered at the West University of Timișoara, Department of Geography, expounded on the functions of geographical names, the denomination process, standardisation of names, a historical outline of Romanian cartography, the role and contribution of UNGEGN, indigenous place-names in Romania, a field collection of names, elaboration of toponymic data files, production of gazetteers, exonyms in cartography, toponymic guidelines, minority names, toponymy for atlas editors, Romanization, Austrian toponymic guidelines. The lecturers were members of the UNGEGN, the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, the Faculty of Geosciences – University of Utrecht, West University of Timișoara, the Institute of Urban and Regional Research – Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, the Institute of Geography – Romanian Academy, the Military Topographic Directorate – Romania’s Ministry of Defense.

The Conference schedule included also a field trip along the Timișoara – Bazoșu Nou – Recaș – Lugoj – Buziaș – Bacova route, a multicultural region, a visit to the old and new centre of Timișoara (the Central Orthodox Cathedral, the Opera-House, the main old Square with its Catholic and Serbian cathedrals). Other sites of interest were Bazoșu Nou Arboretum, Recaș Vineyard Hall, Lugoj Town Hall, Buziaș Spa, and the Catholic Church of Bacova Village.

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