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News in Standardization of Geographical Names in Latvia, 2017-2018

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(The information from other institutions, submitted by **Sanda Rapa**,
Natālija Avotiņa, **Agris Timuška**, **Inita Vītola**, is included)

The 18th Meeting of the Baltic Division of the United Nations
Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)
Saint Petersburg, August 23 – 25, 2016





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The Main Topics

- 1. Legislation and names authorities**
- 2. Geographical names collection, maintenance and data distribution** → data bases, registers and other repositories, dictionaries
- 3. Geographical names in cartography**
- 4. Exonyms and renderings**
- 5. Links**



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Legal Basis

(the main legislative acts)

LAWS

- The State Language Law
- The Geospatial Information Law
- Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas

Amendments to the Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas have been prepared and submitted to the Government. The main goal of them – expanding the criteria for recognizing official villages to fit also small settlements with disperse built-up areas, not having specific urban elements. This allows to keep more than 4000 disperse populated places registered in the National Address Register



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Legal Basis

(the main legislative acts)

REGULATIONS OF THE CABINET OF MINISTERS

- Regulations on Toponymic Information – **was amended in April, 2018, to establish the control of the State Language centre over the naming and renaming of villages and smaller address features as well as all small man-made geographical features (local governments have to ask an opinion of the State Language Centre in all these cases now)**
- Regulations on Addresssing



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Informative report on geographical names information

Mentioned above amendments have been
prepared to implement the recommendations of
the **informative report**
on the field of geographical names information
prepared in 2015- 2016 by involved ministries
and other institutions



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Names Authorities – decision makers (no changes since 2013)

**Parliament,
Government**



names of cities and upper level administrative units

**ministries and state
institutions**



names of the features they are responsible for (e.g. Ministry of Transportation is responsible for roads and road names)

**all local (or self-)
governments**



names of villages, homesteads, farms, factories, cemeteries, parks, ponds, reservoirs and other man-made features

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names of natural features, excluding those important for maritime navigation



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Names Authority - supervisor of the geographical names standardization

**State Language
Centre**



gives conclusions binding for authorities approving official names; the Geographical Names Sub-commission (linguists, geographers and cartographer) evaluates official names proposals and complaints, drafts conclusions etc.)

In 2017-2018:

- 1) a conclusion regarding the **official names proposals for 271 nature features** is prepared and submitted to LGIA.
- 2) **5 conclusions** regarding the official names proposals for **6 street names, 2 estate names and 1 lake name** prepared and submitted to local governments.



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Names Authorities – advisors, consultants, reserchers

**Latvian Geospatial
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(LGIA)**



advisory and scientific body in some particular directions of geographical names standardization

**Latvian University
(Institute of Latvian
Language)**



advisory, scientific and consulting body

**State Language
Agency**



consulting and educational body

Public webpage <https://www.valodaskonsultacijas.lv/> since 2018 maintains answers on different questions on spelling and pronunciation including spelling and pronunciation of geographical names in Latvian



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Geographical Names Collection and Maintenance

Names collection



excerption from literature, maps, unpublished materials etc.

decisions of names authorities

field work (very limited amount)

crowd sourcing (electronic **Tautas vietvārdu datubāze**, Latvian Language Institute, Latvian University, since 2017 <https://vietvardi.lv/talka/>, **more than 5000 names**)

Data maintenance



electronic systems
one significant card file



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The main Latvian Geographical Names Data Repositories

Latvian Geographical Names Database

National Address Register

Latvian Place Name Card Index (or Card File)

Other initiatives collecting geonames or operating with a significant amount of them – Register of Cadastre, Latvian and foreign geographical names database of «Jāņa sēta Map Publishers» (no public access), upes.lv, ezeri.lv, melioracija.lv, historia.lv, Zudusī Latvija (zudusilatvija.lv) etc.



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Latvian Geographical Names Database

maintained by Latvian Geospatial Information Agency:

164 000 names for **125 000** features

serves needs of cartography, natural feature names standardization, research work in applied toponymy

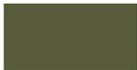
Location of names related features is characterized by coordinates of the point and areal objects centres, and mouths of flowing water features.

Besides that:

- named flowing water features are characterized by rough geometries (lines)
- drawing of named areal feature geometries (willages, forests, bogs),
launched in 2013, continues

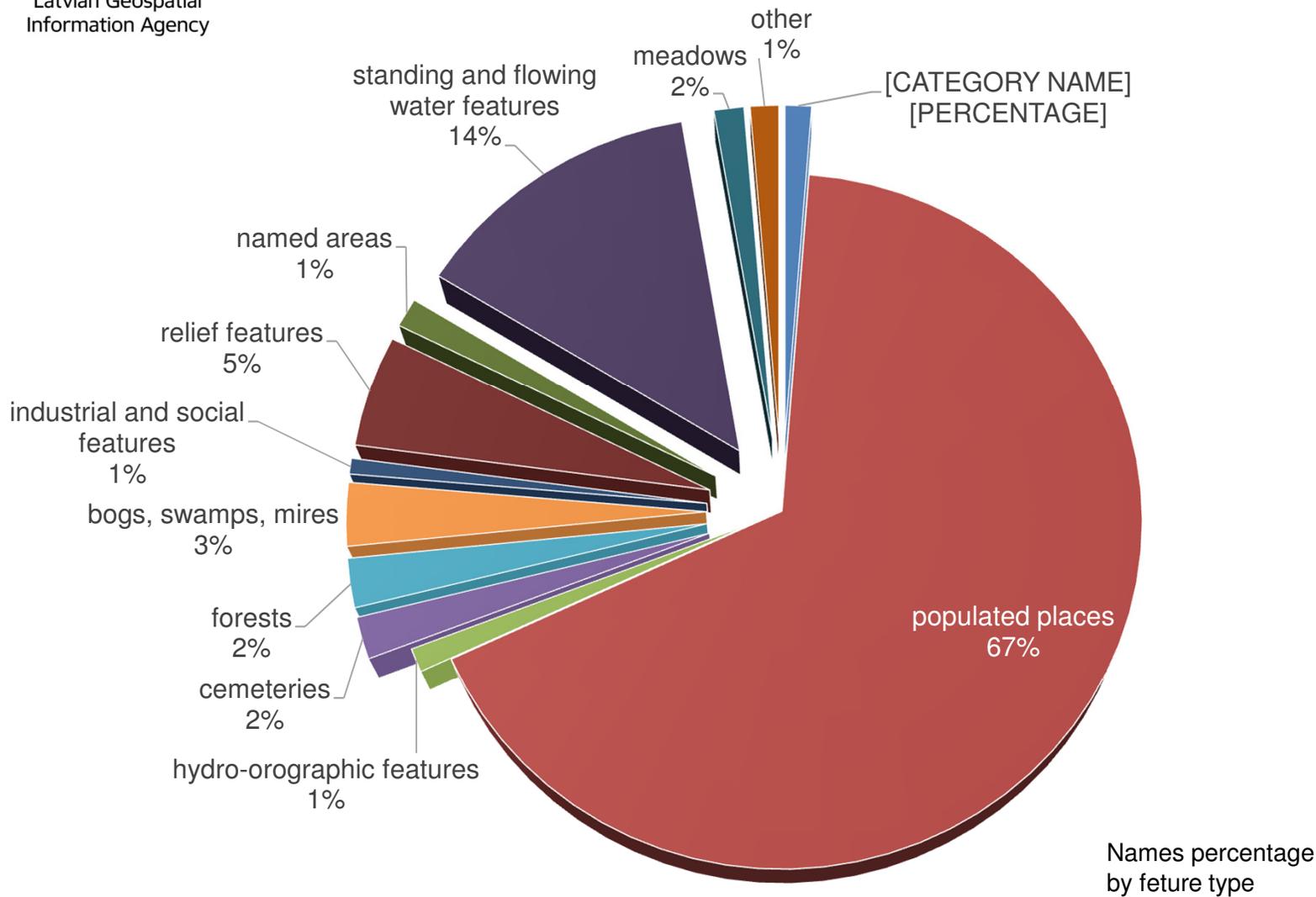
Short public version on the Web (Edition 8) <https://vietvardi.lgia.gov.lv>

offers access to **135 000 names of 101 000 features** located in territory of Latvia, conspective related information
(user interface in Latvian only)



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Latvian Geographical Names Database - Contents





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Latvian Geographical Names Database

Informācija par objektu

Pamatnosaukums: Sidrabe/Mazplatone
Nosaukums Adrešu klasifikatorā: Sidrabe
Nosaukumi: Mazplatone
Ietilpst (ietek) objektā:

Objekta veids: vidējciems
Obj. stāvoklis: pastāv

Sastādīšanas datums: 04.11.1998
Pēd. izmaiņu datums: 04.09.2014
Kartes lapas nosaukums: ELEJA (ID=32)

Administratīvā vai teritoriālā piederība:

Lielplatones pagasts, Jelgavas novads, agrāk Jelgavas rajons

Skaitliskais raksturojums

Vērtība: ~ 150,0 iedz.
Avots: Pagasta padome (Pag. pad.)
Apraksts: 22.08.2006.

Atrašanās vieta kartē

Platums: 56.4366(56° 26' 12")
Garums: 23.6385(23° 38' 19")
Avots: Topo1 50mil

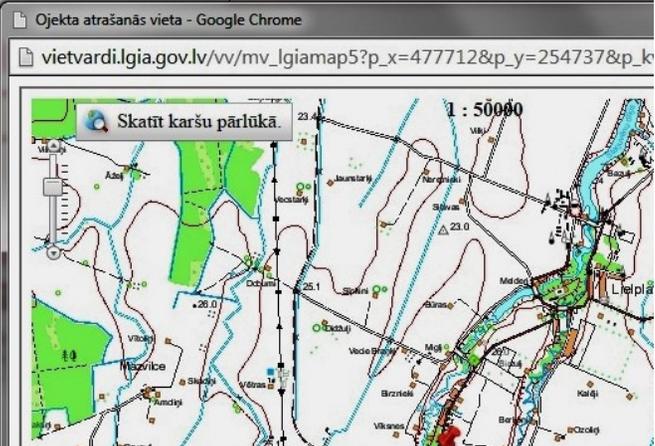
[Parādīt visus slāņus](#)

Nosaukumi (2)

Nosaukums	Nosaukums oficiāls [avots]	Nosaukums ievadīts (datums)	Nosaukuma forma	Fonētiskā rakstība
Sidrabe	Jā [AR]	18.12.2008		
Mazplatone	Nē			Mazplatuone

Avoti (5)

Avota veids	Avota saīsinājums	Avota pilns nosaukums	Sējums, lappus
Oficiāls avots	AR	Valsts Adrešu reģistrs	
Oficiāls avots	Pag. pad. lēm.	Pagasta padomes lēmums	Nr.13., 23.10.0
Oficiāls avots	Pag. pad. lēm.	Pagasta padomes lēmums	Nr.13., 23.10.0
Oficiāls avots	Pag. pad. lēm.	Pagasta padomes lēmums	Nr.2., 20.04.99
Publicēta literatūra	LCiem1 2007	Latvijas ciemi. Nosaukumi, ģeogrāfiskais izvietojums. – R., LĢIA, 2007.	142





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National Address Register

maintained by the State Land Service,
includes:

names of all administrative and territorial units -110
counties, 497 civil parishes, 76 cities and towns;

6.314 officially recognized villages (number of official
villages is decreasing),

17.559 streets

223.210 houses, other buildings and land units
intended for buildings (data on May 1, 2018)

Search is available on the data distribution portal of the State
Land Service of Latvia: <https://www.kadastrs.lv>
(in Latvian and English)



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Latvian Place Name Card Index

The Latvian Place Names Card index (or card file)

(approximately 1 000 000 domestic geographical names) is maintained by Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia (since the very beginning of 19th century, no public access)

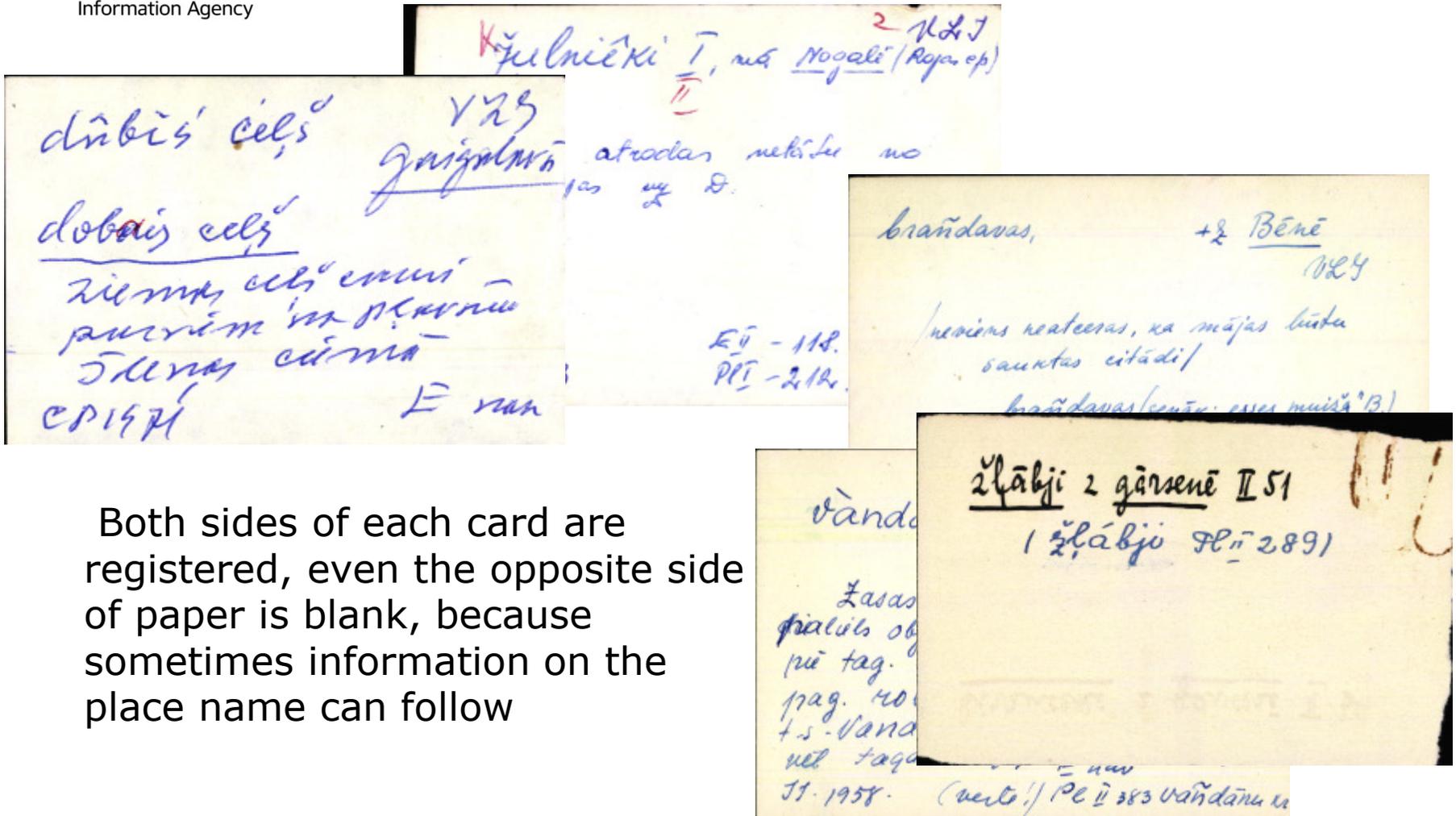
Digitizing of the basic part of the Card Index - 842 000 geographical names - is completed. The work is continuing.

In 2017, the **Electronic Historical Latvian Dictionary** (<http://www.tezaurs.lv/lvvv>) based on the "Corpus of Early Written Latvian Texts" (<http://www.korpuss.lv/senie/>) was opened. More than 480 historical proper names from historical sources (the Lord's Prayer of the 16th century, dictionaries of the 17th century, texts of oaths and laws, religious texts, so-called dedication poetry) have been processed and included in the dictionary so far. **Search query for place names is *nloc*. 'nomen loci'**



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Latvian Place Name Card Index – card examples



Both sides of each card are registered, even the opposite side of paper is blank, because sometimes information on the place name can follow



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Latvian Place Names Dictionary – new volumes on «S»

The next volume of the linguistic dictionary «Latvijas vietvārdu vārdnīca» (Latvian Place Names Dictionary, in Latvian) comprising toponyms “Saba-Sēža”, was published by the Latvian Language Institute, University of Latvia, in 2017

A new volume, comprising toponyms “Sgajevski-Slazduvēris”, is being prepared now (15,000 place names of the Card Index of the Institute will be compiled and processed)



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Names in Cartography – Latvian Geospatial Information Agency

Names only from the Geographical Names Database (official and unofficial) and from the National Register of Addresses (official names) are used

The most actual cartographic projects:

Topographic Map of Latvia, scale 1:50 000 – the 3rd cycle since 2012

Simplified Topographic Map of Latvia, scale 1:10 000 – **the 3rd cycle (since 2009) is complete, the 4th cycle is going now**



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Map Browsers Offering Names Search

Map Browser of the Latvian Geospatial information Agency **offers geographical names search on latest maps of Latvia** prepared by the Agency (in various scales - 1: 1 000 000 - 1:10 000).

The Geographical Names Database data, Address Register data and toponymic layer from the Topographic Map, scale 1:10 000, can be used for the search

Rough linear geometries of water streams from the Geographical Names Database also are available there

The public version of the Map Browser:

<https://kartes.lgia.gov.lv>

(user interface in Latvian and English)



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Map Browsers Offering Names Search

Jāņa Sēta public Map Browser **Balticmaps**, covering Latvia and European countries (geographical names are presented only in original languages - in original script (if Latin) or transliterated (if Cyrillic))

Available at:

<http://balticmaps.eu>

(user interface in Latvian, Russian and English)





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Endonyms and Exonyms

On maps prepared by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, foreign names only in original languages - in original script (if Latin) or transliterated (if Cyrillic) - are used

On school maps and cartographic products created only for domestic use, traditional exonyms are used, if existing. All other foreign geographical names are rendered into Latvian. Renderings keep (as far as it is possible), the sounding of the original name:

Великие Луки → Veļikije Luki

Санкт-Петербург → Sanktpēterburga

Кронштадт → Kronštate



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Exonyms and renderings

Exonyms and Latvian renderings are vitally necessary for communication in Latvian by reason the Latvian is a flexive language. Besides that exonyms are a part of our cultural history.

Examples of traditional exonyms:

Mõisaküla → Meizakila

Peipsi järv → Peipusa ezers

Naujoji Akmenė → Jaunakmene

Klykolių tvenkinys → Vadakstes ūdenskrātuve

Чудское озеро → Peipusa ezers

Финский залив → Somu jūras līcis



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Database of Exonyms and Renderings

The largest in Latvia database of exonyms and renderings - **Latvian and foreign geographical names database** is maintained by private cartographic enterprise «**Jāņa sēta Map Publishers**» (not available for public)

It contains **218 000 geographical names in their original languages with exonyms and renderings: 91 000 - into Latvian, 34 000 – into Estonian, 14 000 into Lithuanian, 10 000 into Russian**



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SOME USEFUL LINKS

1. Official Language Law ([unofficial translation](#)), actual version in [Latvian](#)
2. Geospatial Information Law ([unofficial translation](#)), actual version in [Latvian](#)
3. Regulations Regarding Geographical Names Information ([unofficial translation](#)), not amended version in [Latvian](#)
4. Regulations of the Addressing („Adresācijas noteikumi”, actual version, in [Latvian](#) only):
5. Data on administrative and territorial division of Latvia: Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas, actual version in [Latvian](#) with Annex 1 (list of cities). Annex 2 (list of municipalities and the territorial divisional units thereof), Annex 3 (schematic map of cities and municipalities 2010 - 2011) and [unofficial translation](#) of the previous version of the Law)



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SOME USEFUL LINKS

6. Geographical Names Database of Latvia, [public version \(in Latvian only\)](#), description in [English](#)
7. [Country Names List in Latvian](#) (2006)
8. LGIA Map Browser (in [English](#)), description in [English](#)
9. GISNET Map Browser - [Soviet topographic maps of Latvia and a national map \(scale 1:75 000, compiled in 1930-s\)](#)
10. Jāņa Sēta Map Browser [Balticmaps](#) (in Latvian, English and Russian)
11. Database of translated legislative acts - [search for unofficial English translations](#)



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Further and/or more detailed information could be obtained from:

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Natālija Avotiņa - Head of the Address Register Division, [State Land Service](#) (e-mail: Janis.Karro@vzd.gov.lv)

Agris Timuška - Deputy Director of the [State Language Centre](#) (e-mail: info@vvc.gov.lv)

Jānis Turlajs - *Jāņa sēta Map Publishers* (e-mail: kartes@kartes.lv)

