

both for English-speaking countries and for other countries which use the Latin alphabet but which are not necessarily familiar with the English alphabetic traditions. It would seem very desirable, therefore, for any conference called to discuss transliteration for use in a particular field to take full account of the agreed transliteration systems already developed internationally by ISO.

This does not rule out the possibility that a national transliteration or transcription system may be used in a country internally and may exist side by side with the international transliteration system. For international

purposes, however, an international system is obviously preferable.

The organisation would welcome the opportunity for further improving the facilities for the preparation of internationally acceptable transliteration systems. For instance, a specialized institution in this field which is not already collaborating with ISO could easily be integrated in this work under mutually satisfactory arrangements. The organization possesses the necessary apparatus for international effort in preparing transliteration systems and its services are at the disposal of the Conference.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN BULGARIA

Paper presented by Bulgaria¹

In the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the theoretical and practical problems of transcription and orthography of geographical names have been tackled chiefly by two centres: the Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and the Central Administration of Geodesy and Cartography.

In the Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Academy of Sciences, thorough studies on Bulgaria's toponymy have been carried on for a number of years. Theoretical questions regarding the transcription of foreign geographical names have also been treated.

At the Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography, work has been conducted for many years on the toponymy of Bulgaria with a view to issuing accurate maps of the country and transcribing a large number of geographical names of other countries. Work on the transcription of foreign geographical names has been performed mainly for the needs of small-scale cartography, which uses the greatest number of transcribed geographical names.

By decision of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names was set up in 1964 under the Chief Administration of Geodesy and Cartography. It operates as an extra-departmental body and its decisions are binding on institutions and organizations. This is proof that the transcription of foreign geographical names for immediate practical purposes is viewed with great favour by the highest government authorities and the broadest cultural circles in our country.

The council attains its goals through its highly representative composition. It includes representatives of a number of academic institutions dealing with the Bulgarian language, Bulgarian history and Balkan studies, the Geographical Institute, the Sofia University, a number of ministries, Bulgarian cartographic organizations etc. It is established practice to bring in specialists in the different languages to comment on the council's papers.

The object of the Council of Orthography and Transcription of Geographical Names is the standardization of orthography and the transcription of geographical names with a view to establishing their correct transcription and use in cartographic works, the Press, radio etc.

The council publishes lists of transcribed geographical names of foreign countries, specifying the transcription of the different geographical names in Bulgarian territory and their spelling on maps. The lists of transcribed

geographical names and the instructions issued by the council serve as bases for unifying the transcription and orthography of geographical names by all official bodies in Bulgaria.

Because the requirements of cartography for transcribed geographical names are the greatest, they determine the total number of transcribed geographical names. Thus, while meeting the requirements of cartography, we also meet all other needs (of the Press, radio, publishing houses etc.). The volume of work is also determined by a second, regional feature, which takes into consideration the substantially higher demands for the transcription of names in neighbouring countries with which, naturally, our cultural, economic and political contacts are considerably greater. For Bulgaria itself, the council has agreed to work on as many geographical names as are needed for the making of maps on a scale of 1:5,000; for the countries of the Balkan peninsula, on a scale of 1:500,000; for the European countries on a scale of 1:1,000,000; and for all other countries on a scale of 1:2,500,000.

In the transcription of geographical names, the council seeks to achieve an accurate phonetic rendering of foreign names with the means and possibilities of the Bulgarian language, while observing the basic rules of Bulgarian orthography and literary pronunciation. Moreover, we think that the endeavour to render the phonetics of the official language, spoken by the bulk of the population of the country concerned, is a correct principle, corresponding to the need for cultural exchanges between nations.

The establishment of an exact transcription of geographical names is impossible without steady and productive contact between nations, which can be expressed as follows:

Supply of original material for the toponymy of the countries;

Consistent exchange of experience (scientific symposiums, publications, studies etc.);

Reciprocal revision of the transcription of geographical names; and

Organization of a periodical publication to throw light on the theoretical problems connected with the transcription of geographical names.

In this respect we fully support the view of the Group of Experts² that regional conferences should be organized for exchanges of experience.

We think that a special examination of the problems of standardizing the transcription of geographical names is also necessary for purposes of cartography, which is the

¹ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.79.

² See annex, p. 151.

most important mass popularizer of geographical names. A number of questions arise in this connexion, involving linguists, geographers and cartographers. A very positive example in this respect is the production of an international map of the world on a scale of 1:2,500,000 through the joint efforts of the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

Information about the work done in our country would be incomplete if we did not mention its volume and scope. In the last two and a half years, the council has examined and approved eleven lists of transcribed geographical names of Europe and America. In the course of this

work, the council has laid down a number of principles regarding the organizational methods of its work (preliminary revision and discussion of the lists to be approved etc.), as well as principles governing the transcription of geographical names (how to deal with traditional names, geographical nomenclature, the rendering of the peculiarities of different languages in the Bulgarian orthographic system etc.).

There is no doubt that the initiative of the United Nations in helping and harmonizing the work of national councils of orthography and transcription of geographical names can have a most beneficial effect on our work; we therefore lend it our whole-hearted support.