



COMMISSION ON STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
OUTSIDE THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND



# **Geographical names standardization in Poland: role of national name boards**

**Maciej Zych**



# Standardization

As an idea, the issue of official geographical names usage (including names of localities and physiographical objects) is placed in the centre of contemporary administrative activities.

Consistent use of accurate, standardized place names is an essential element of effective communication worldwide and supports socio-economic development, nature protection and national infrastructure.

In Poland this subject is considered as a very important one. The initiatives undertaken by two state commissions on standardizing geographical names prove it.



# Legal basis for standardizing geographical names

## Official names:

- names of voivodships (1st level administrative units) → act of Parliament
- names of counties (2nd level administrative units), communes (3rd level administrative units) and national parks → regulation of the Council of the Ministers
- **names of localities (settlements) and physiographic objects → regulation of the Minister of the Interior and Administration after obtaining the opinion from the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects**
- names of auxiliary units of a commune (rural administrative units, housing estates, districts), street and square names → resolution of a commune council



# Legal basis for standardizing geographical names

## Official names (cont.):

- names of nature reserves → regulation of the regional director of the environmental protection
- names of landscape parks → regulation of a voivode
- names of Natura 2000 areas → regulation of the Minister of the Environment
- names of the protected landscape areas, natural monuments and other protected areas → regulation of a voivode or the resolution of a commune council



# Legal basis for standardizing geographical names

## Standardized names:

- names of physiographic objects (in the case when an object does not have an official name) → resolution of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects
- additional names of localities and physiographic objects in the languages of the minorities → decision of the Minister of the Interior and Administration after obtaining the opinion from the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects
- additional names of streets, squares, etc. in the languages of the minorities → resolution of the commune council after obtaining a consent from the Minister of the Interior and Administration
- names of other objects such as railway stations, airports and harbors → established by their proprietors
- Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland (exonyms) → resolution of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland



# Types of geographical names

- Official name – name established in a formal procedure by an official authority (government, local government) and published in official gazette
- Standardized name – name sanctioned by a name board as a preferred name, but not formally established by an official authority
- Unstandardized name – other names



# Legislation concerning geographical names

**Act of 29 August 2003 on official names of localities and physiographic objects** (replaced the *Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 24 October 1934 on establishing names of localities and on numbering of properties*).

This act defined:

- objects for which official names are established → **localities, parts of localities, physiographic objects**
- principles and the mode of establishing, changing and abolishing names of localities and their parts, and official names of physiographic objects
- principles of the activity of the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects
- the way of establishing and proclaiming official lists of the names of localities and their parts and names of physiographic objects
- principles of publishing national gazetteer



# Legislation concerning geographical names

The other acts, that are relevant for establishing geographical names:

- Act of 24 July 1998 on the implementation of a three-level territorial division of the country → official names of voivodships
- Act of 5 June 1990 on the county self-government → official names of counties
- Act of 8 March 1990 on the commune self-government → official names of communes, auxiliary units of a commune, streets, squares, etc.
- Act of 16 April 2004 on environment protection → official names of national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, protected landscape areas, Natura 2000 areas, and other protected areas
- Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language → additional names of localities and physiographic objects, streets, squares etc. in minority languages
- Act of 17 May 1989 “Geodesy and cartography law” → Polish names of geographical objects outside Poland



# Geographical names bodies

Two advisory commissions engaged in the standardization of geographical names:

- **Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects**, affiliated to the Minister of the Interior and Administration, establishes names used within Poland's boundaries (names of localities and physiographic objects)
- **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland**, affiliated to the Surveyor General of Poland, responsible for standardizing Polish geographical names of the world



# History of the names standardization in Poland

- 1918 – independent Poland was restored
- 1934 – the first name legislation and the first name commission
- 1945 – Poland in new boundaries, Polish names for western and northern areas
- 1951 – Commission on Geographical Names of the World was created
- 1967 – Poland joined the UNGEGN
- 1980 – the first official list of all localities in Poland
- 1994 – the National Register of Geographical Names was created
- 2003 – Act on official names of localities and physiographical objects
- 2005 – Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages

# Names standardization 1918 – 1939

Poland 1918–1939





# Names standardization 1918 – 1939

Topo map 1:100 000, 1921  
(adaptation of German map)



Topo map 1:100 000, 1938



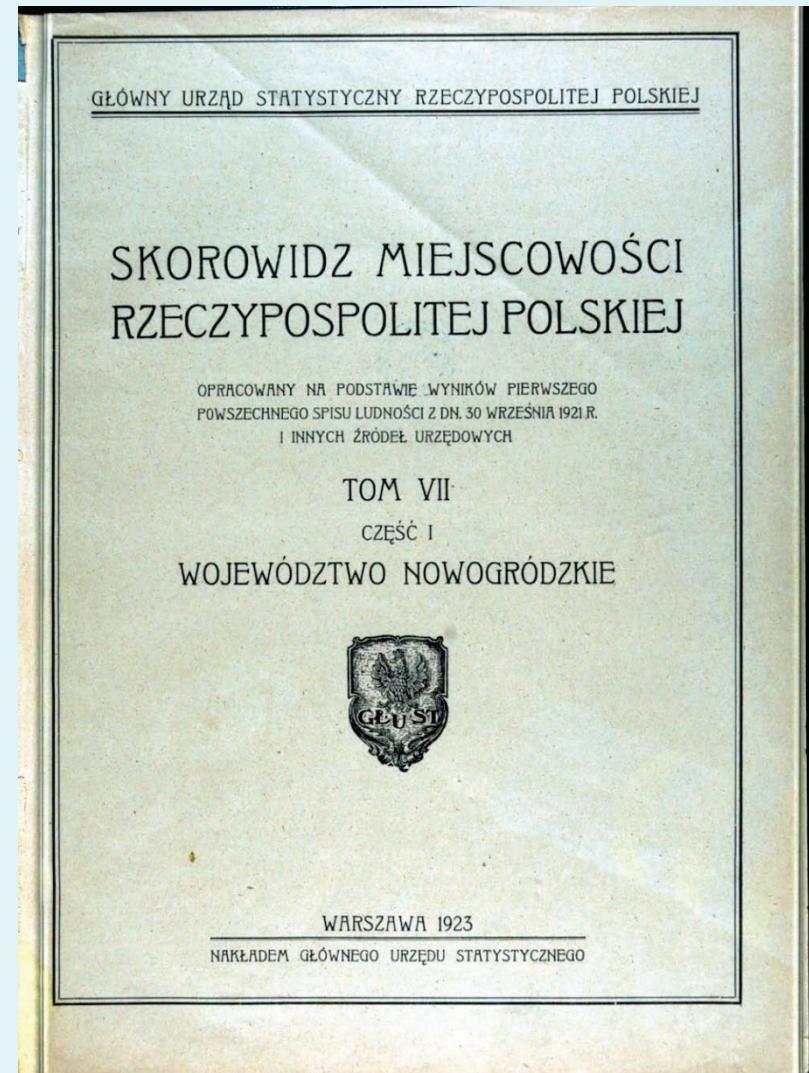


# Central Statistical Office

*Index of localities of Republic  
of Poland, according to the  
first national census of 30th  
September 1921 and other  
official sources*

1923-26

16 volumes





# First law: Regulation of the President

According to the *Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 24 October 1934 on establishing names of localities and numbering of real estates:*

- principles of establishing official names of inhabited localities were regulated
- Commission on Establishing Names of Localities was created at the Minister of Internal Affairs



# Commission on Establishing Names of Localities

Commission worked till 1939. In this period Commission standardized:

- names of 603 cities and towns (1937)
- names of localities of Wileński Voivodship (list of localities was published in 1938)
- names of localities of Kieleckie Voivodship (names were collected, but all material were lost during World War Two)



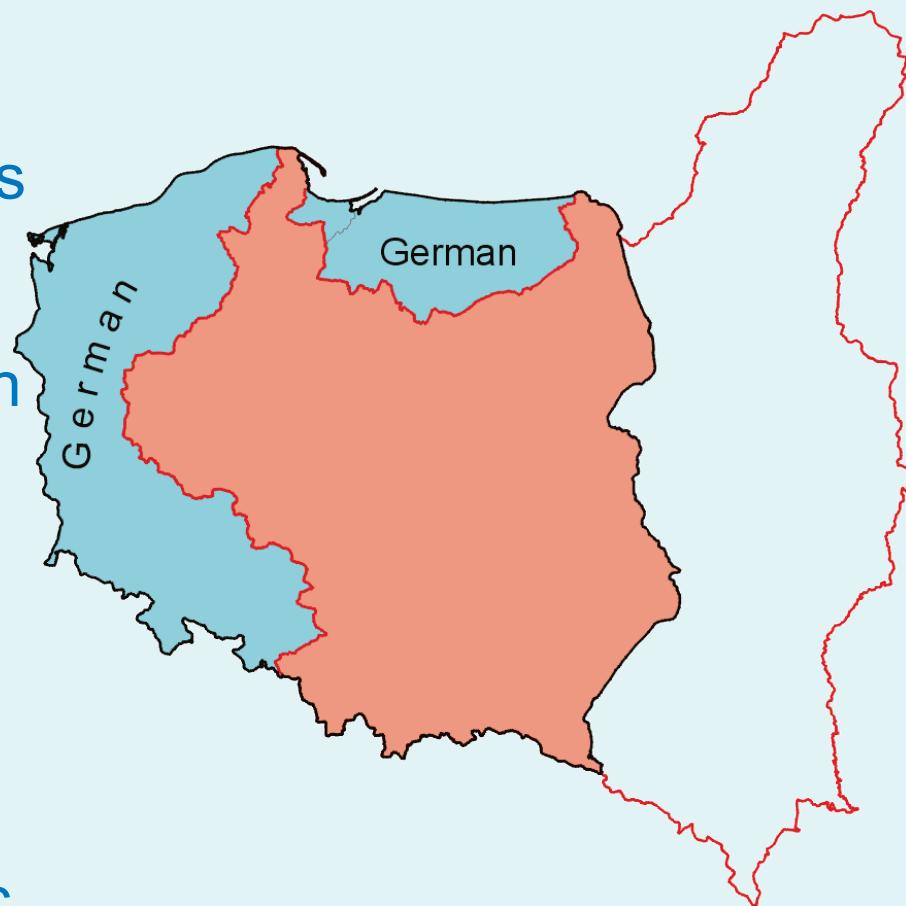


# Commission on Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects

- 1945: reactivation of the Commission
- 1946: organization of the first session
- 1946-58: Polonization of names on the Regained Territories
- 1948: according to the new law, name of Commission was changed from „Commission on Establishing Names of Localities” to „Commission on Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects” (since this date also names of uninhabited localities and physiographic objects are standardized)

## Establishing names on the Regained Territories:

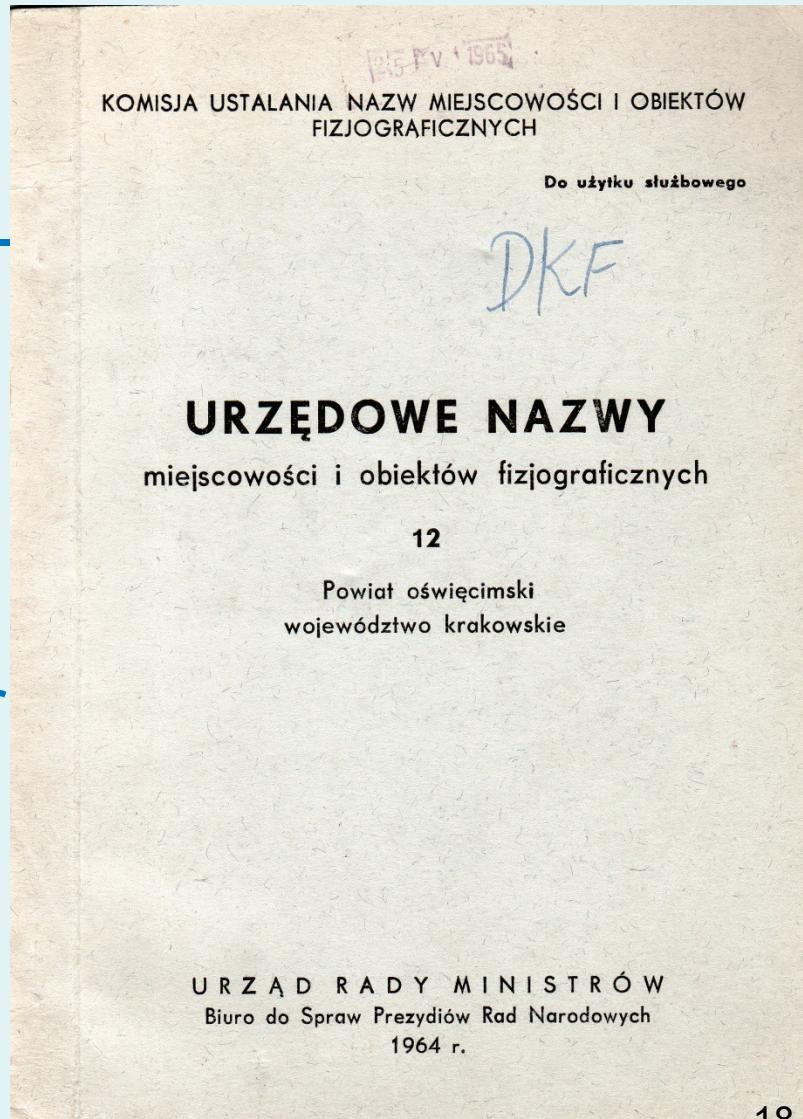
- Names standardized by the Commission were published, as Ordinance of Minister of Public Administration (since 1950 as Ordinance of Prime Minister), in *Official Gazette of Poland*.
- The first Ordinance was published on 7 May 1946 and listed 222 names of towns, the last one in 27 September 1958
- 32,000 names of localities and 13,000 names of physiographic objects





# Publications

From 1964 to 1974 Commission on Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographical Objects and Office of the Council of Ministers published *Official names of localities and physiographical objects* in 197 volumes – each volume contained names of localities and physiographical objects of one county (second order administrative unit). In 1975, after administrative reform and liquidation of counties, standardizing works were abandoned.





# Publications

*List of official names of localities in Poland*  
published by Ministry of Administration, Local Economy and Environmental Protection and Central Statistical Office. The gazetteer contained about 111 000 names.





# Act of 2003

On 23 August 2003 the Polish Parliament passed an *Act on official names of localities and physiographical objects*. The act became valid on 7 October 2003 and replaced the *Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 24 October 1934 on establishing names of localities and numbering of real estates*

According this new Act, name of Commission was changed from „Commission on Establishing Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects” to „Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects”.



# Commission on Names...

**The Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects** is formed as a consultative organ for establishing, changing and abolishing official names of localities or their parts and physiographic objects

- the Commission acts at the Minister of the Interior and Administration
- administrative service of the works of the Commission is provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration
- costs of the Commission's activity are covered from the part of the national budget held by the Minister of the Interior and Administration



# Commission on Names...

Costs of the Commission's activity include:

- administrative service of the works of the Commission
- organization of Commission meetings
- remuneration of the members of the Commission for participation in meetings
- travel expenses including costs of accommodation for Commission's members from outside of Warsaw
- expenses of preparing lists of official names
- expenses of additional works



# Commission on Names...

The Commission is responsible for:

- giving opinions on motions on establishing, changing or abolishing official names
- giving opinions on drafts of lists of official names
- submitting motions on establishing, changing or abolishing official names of uninhabited localities and their parts
- giving opinions on other issues concerning execution of the Act on official names of localities and physiographical objects
- giving opinions on motions on establishing additional names of localities and physiographical objects in minority languages (since 2005)



# Members of the Commission

There are 13 members of the Commision:

- Chairman: a linguist proposed by the President of the Polish Academy of Science
- Secretary: a representative of the Minister of the Interior and Administration
- 6 Members who are scientists from the domains of: linguistics, history, geography and cartography. One of these members is appointed as a deputy of the chairperson
- 4 members who are representatives of:
  - the Minister of National Defense
  - the Minister of Culture and National Heritage
  - the Surveyor General of Poland
  - the President of Statistics Poland
- 1 member who is a secretary of the Joint Commission of the Government and the National and Ethnic Minorities



# Members of the Commission

Members of the 4th term of the Commission (2017-2020):

- **Chairman:** Prof. Urszula Bijak (**linguist**, Institute for the Polish Language of the Polish Academy of Science)
- **Vice-chairman:** Prof. Ewa Wolnicz-Pawlowska (**linguist**, Faculty of Applied Linguistic of the University of Warsaw)
- Magdalena Graf, D.Sc. (**linguist**, Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)
- Tomasz Korpysz, D.Sc. (**linguist**, Faculty of Humanistic Sciences of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw),
- Prof. Zenon Kozięł (**cartographer**, Faculty of Earth Sciences of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń)
- Prof. Marek Słoń (**historian**, Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Science)
- Prof. Marcin Solarz (**geographer**, Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies of the University of Warsaw)



# Members of the Commission

Members of the 4th term of the Commission (2017-2020):

- **Secretary:** Marzena Radziszewska (Ministry of the Interior and Administration)
- Lt Col Robert Grodziński (Ministry of National Defense)
- Mirosław Trojacki (National Heritage Board of Poland, as a representative of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage)
- Justyna Kacprzak (Head Office Geodesy and Cartography, as a representative of the Surveyor General of Poland)
- Ireneusz Budzyński (Statistics Poland)
- Teresa Karczmarek (secretary of the Joint Commission of the Government and the National and Ethnic Minorities, Ministry of the Interior and Administration)



# Official names

An official name is established for:

- localities or their parts – in the first and the second case of declension, and for cities and villages – also in adjective form created from the established name;
- physiographic objects – in the first and the second case of declension
- when establishing official names also a type of a given locality or physiographic object are established.

Entities carrying out public tasks in the territory of the Republic of Poland shall use official names established in accordance with this act, taking into consideration appropriate cases of declensions.



# Official names

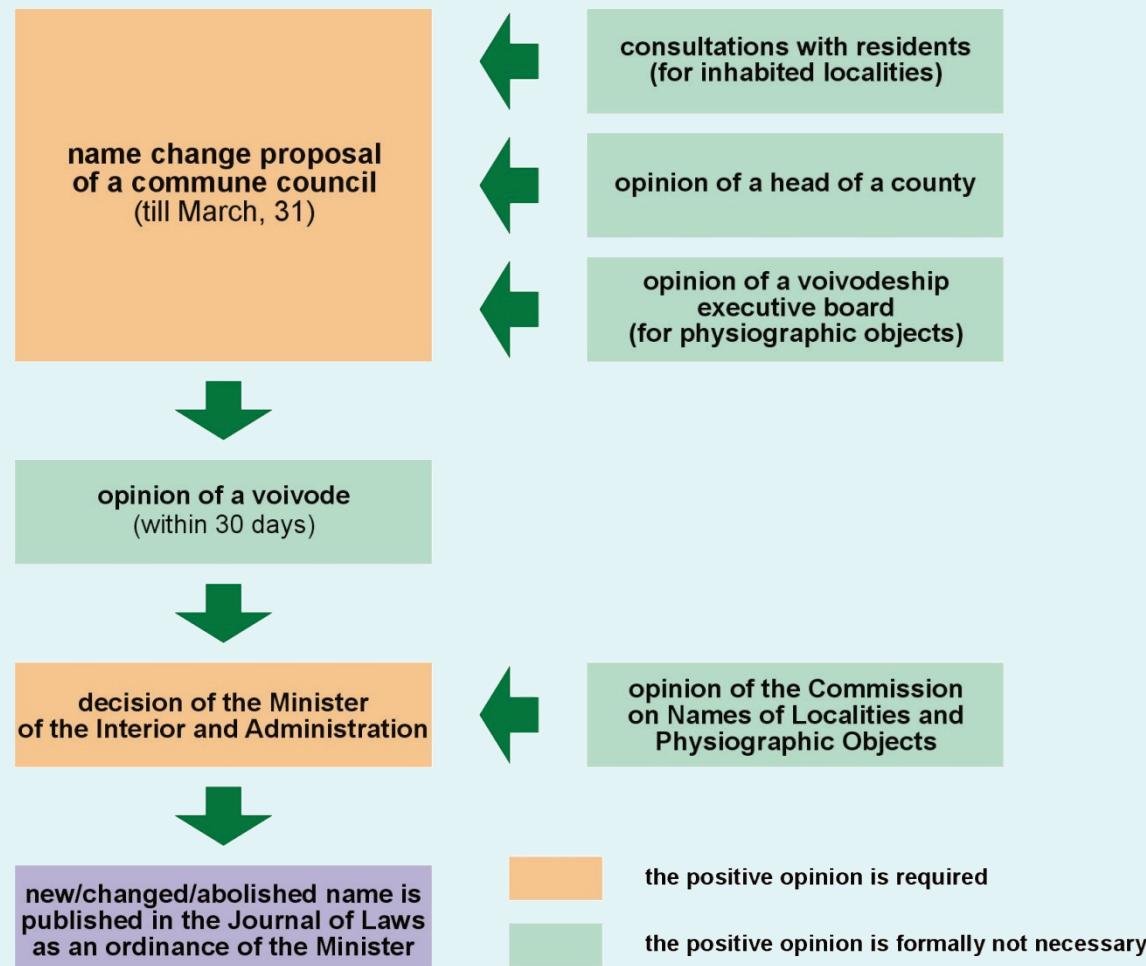
Polish official names of localities and physiographical objects are established, amended or eliminated according to proposal either of:

- a commune council, or
- the Minister of the Interior and Administration, or
- the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects.

Decision about establishing, amending or eliminating names of localities and physiographical objects comes into force by the ordinance of the Minister of the Interior and Administration. The decision, published in the *Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland*, comes into force on the 1st of January of the following year.

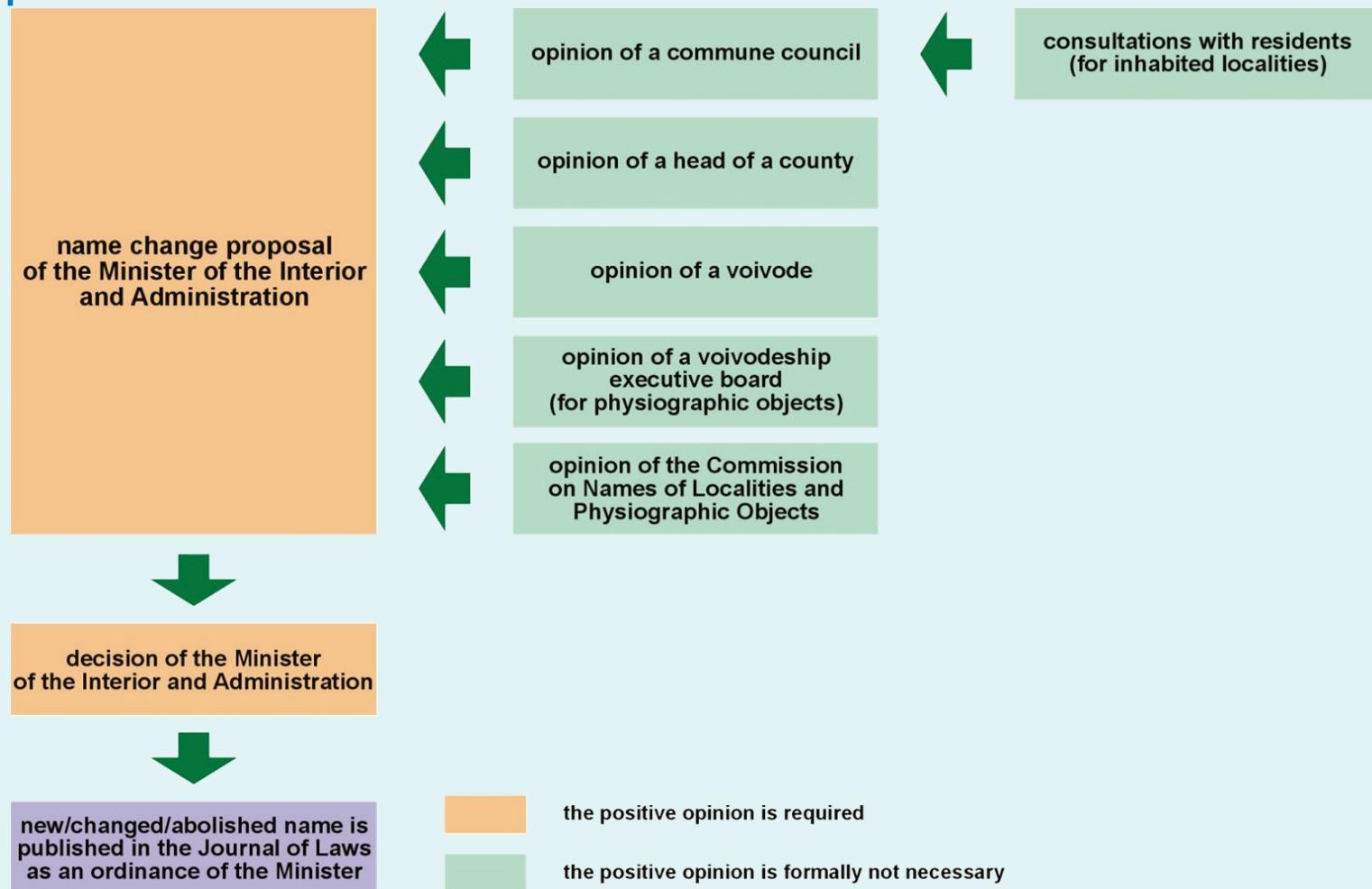
# Official names

Scheme on setting geographical names, according to a proposal of a commune council



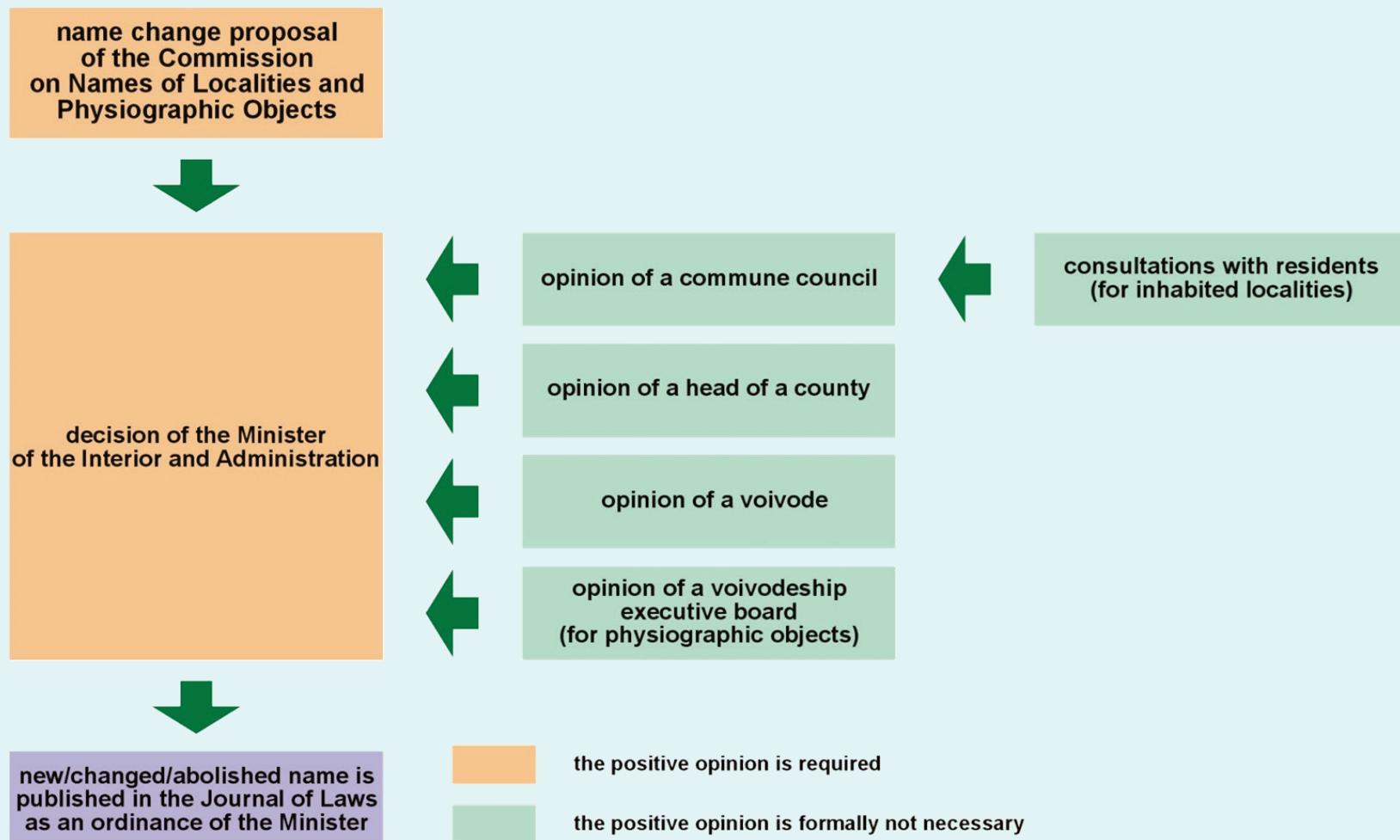
# Official names

Scheme on setting geographical names, according to a proposal of the Minister of the Interior and Administration



# Official names

Scheme on setting geographical names, according to a proposal of the Commission





# List of official names of localities

*Regulation of the Minister of Administration  
and Digitization of 13 December 2012 on  
the List of Official Names of Localities and  
Their Parts*

Journal of Laws of 13 February 2013, item 200

Nazwa miejscowości	Rodzaj	Gmina	Powiat	Województwo	Identyfikator miejscowości z krajuowego rejestru urzędowego podziału terytorialnego kraju TERYT <sup>1)</sup>	Dopełniacz	Przymiotnik
Abisyma	część wsi Turzyn	Keynia	nakielski	kujawsko-pomorskie	1029454	-ni	
Abryzma	część wsi Dolsk	Drzyzg	swecki	kujawsko-pomorskie	1030606	-ni	
Abryzma	kolonia wsi Dobroń	Lesna Podlaska	bialski	lubelskie	0014380	-ni	
Abryzma	część kolonii Dąbrowa	Hrubieszów	hrubieszowski	lubelskie	0889166	-ni	
Abryzma	część wsi Wiele	Karsin	kocierski	pomorskie	0162790	-ni	
Abryzma	osada	Karsin	kocierski	pomorskie	0162398	-ni	
Abryzma	część wsi Tymawa	Gniew	łęczewski	pomorskie	1037608	-ni	
Abryzma	część miasta Starachowice	Starachowice	starachowicki	świętokrzyskie	0947946	-ni	
Abramów	część wsi Drawsko	Drawsko	czarnkowsko-trzcianecki	wielkopolskie	1005952	-ni	
Abramów Górska	część wsi Górk	Karsin	kocierski	pomorskie	0162518	-ni-kiej	
Abramów	część wsi Tydów	Czerniaków	podkarpacki	lubelskie	0537214	-na	
Abramowice	część wsi Bajnowo	Wysoki	bieckie	podkarpackie	0043802	-ków	
Abramowice	część miasta Lublin	Lublin	lubelskie	lubelskie	0954716	-wic	
Abramowice	przysiółek wsi Lublin	Jodłownik	limanowski	małopolskie	0430700	-wic	
Abramowice Kościelne	wieś	Głusiek	lubelski	lubelskie	0954722	-wieś -mich	abramowicki
Abramowice Prywatne	wieś	Głusk	lubelski	lubelskie	0380988	-wieś -mich	abramowicki
Abramów	wieś	Goraj	bilgorajski	lubelskie	0887629	-mowa	abramowski
Abramów	wieś	Abramów	lubartowski	lubelskie	0378052	-mowa	abramowski
Abramów	część wsi Bychawka Druga	Bychawa	lubelski	lubelskie	1020890	-mowa	
Abramówka	część wsi Wólka	Cycówka	łęczyński	lubelskie	0102255	-ki	
Abramówka	część wsi Ciszycza Góra	Tarłów	opatowski	świętokrzyskie	0808110	-ki	
Abramów-Kolonia	część wsi Abramów	Goraj	bilgorajski	lubelskie	0887635	-mowa-Kolonia	
Abramy	wieś	Kaluszyń	mimki	mazowieckie	0673733	-mów	abramski
Achrymowce	wieś	Kuźnica	sokołki	podkarpackie	0033092	-wiec	achrymowiecki
Adamów	część wsi Bożkowice	Książ Wielka	miechowski	małopolskie	0246340	-my	

Dziennik Ustaw

- 2 -

Załącznik do rozporządzenia Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 13 grudnia 2012 r. (poz. 200)

Poz. 200



**DZIENNIK USTAW**  
**RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ POLSKIEJ**

Warszawa, dnia 13 lutego 2013 r.

Poz. 200

**ROZPORZĄDZENIE  
MINISTRA ADMINISTRACJI I CYFRYZACJI<sup>1)</sup>**

z dnia 13 grudnia 2012 r.

w sprawie wykazu urzędowych nazw miejscowości i ich części

Na podstawie art. 9 ust. 1 ustawy z dnia 29 sierpnia 2003 r. o urzędowych nazwach miejscowości i obiektów fizycznych (Dz. U. Nr 166, poz. 1612 oraz z 2005 r. Nr 17, poz. 141) zarządza się, co następuje:

§ 1. Ustala się wykaz urzędowych nazw miejscowości i ich części, który stanowi załącznik do rozporządzenia.

§ 2. Rozporządzenie wchodzi w życie po upływie 14 dni od dnia ogłoszenia.

Minister Administracji i Cyfryzacji: wz. W. Karpieński

<sup>1)</sup> Minister Administracji i Cyfryzacji kieruje działem administracji rządowej – administracja publiczna, na podstawie § 1 ust. 2 pkt 1 rozporządzenia Prezesa Rady Ministrów z dnia 18 listopada 2011 r. w sprawie szczegółowego zakresu działania Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji (Dz. U. Nr 248, poz. 1479).



# List of official names of localities

Nazwa miejscowości	Rodzaj	Gmina	Powiat	Województwo	Identyfikator miejscowości z krajowego rejestru urzędowego podziału terytorialnego kraju TERYT	Dopełniacz	Przymiotnik
Abisynia	część wsi Turzyn	Kcynia	nakielski	kujawsko-pomorskie	1029454	-nii	
Abisynia	część wsi Dólsk	Drzycim	świecki	kujawsko-pomorskie	1030606	-nii	
Abisynia	kolonia wsi Droblin	Leńska Podlaska	bialski	lubelskie	0014580	-nii	
Abisynia	część kolonii Dąbrowa	Hrubieszów	hrubieszowski	lubelskie	0889166	-nii	
Abisynia	część wsi Wiele	Karsin	kościierski	pomorskie	0162790	-nii	
Abisynia	osada	Karsin	kościierski	pomorskie	0162398	-nii	
Abisynia	część wsi Tymawa	Gniew	tczewski	pomorskie	1037608	-nii	
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Abisynia	część wsi Drawsko	Drawsko	czarnkowsko-trzcianecki	wielkopolskie	1005962	-nii	
Abisynia Górska	część wsi Górkí	Karsin	kościierski	pomorskie	0162518	-nii -kiej	
Abram	część wsi Tychów	Czarnocin	piotrkowski	lódzkie	0537214	-ma	
Abramiki	część wsi Bujnowo	Wyszki	bielski	podlaskie	0043802	-ków	
Abramowice	część miasta Lublin	Lublin	lubelskie	lubelskie	0954716	-wic	
Abramowice	przysiółek wsi Szczyrzyc	Jodłownik	limanowski	małopolskie	0430700	-wic	
Abramowice Kościelne	wieś	Glusk	lubelski	lubelskie	0954722	-wic -nych	abramowicki
Abramowice Prywatne	wieś	Glusk	lubelski	lubelskie	0380988	-wic -nych	abramowicki
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Abramy	wieś	Kałuszyn	miński	mazowieckie	0673733	-mów	abramski
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Adama	część wsi Boczkowice	Książ Wielki	miechowski	małopolskie	0246340	-my	



# Act on minorities

In 2005 the Polish Parliament passed the *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages*.

## National minorities:

- Belorussian
- Czech
- Lithuanian
- German
- Armenian
- Russian
- Slovak
- Ukrainian
- Jewish

## Ethnic minorities:

- Karait
- Lemko (Rusyn)
- Roma
- Tartar

## Regional language

- Kashubian



# Minority place-names

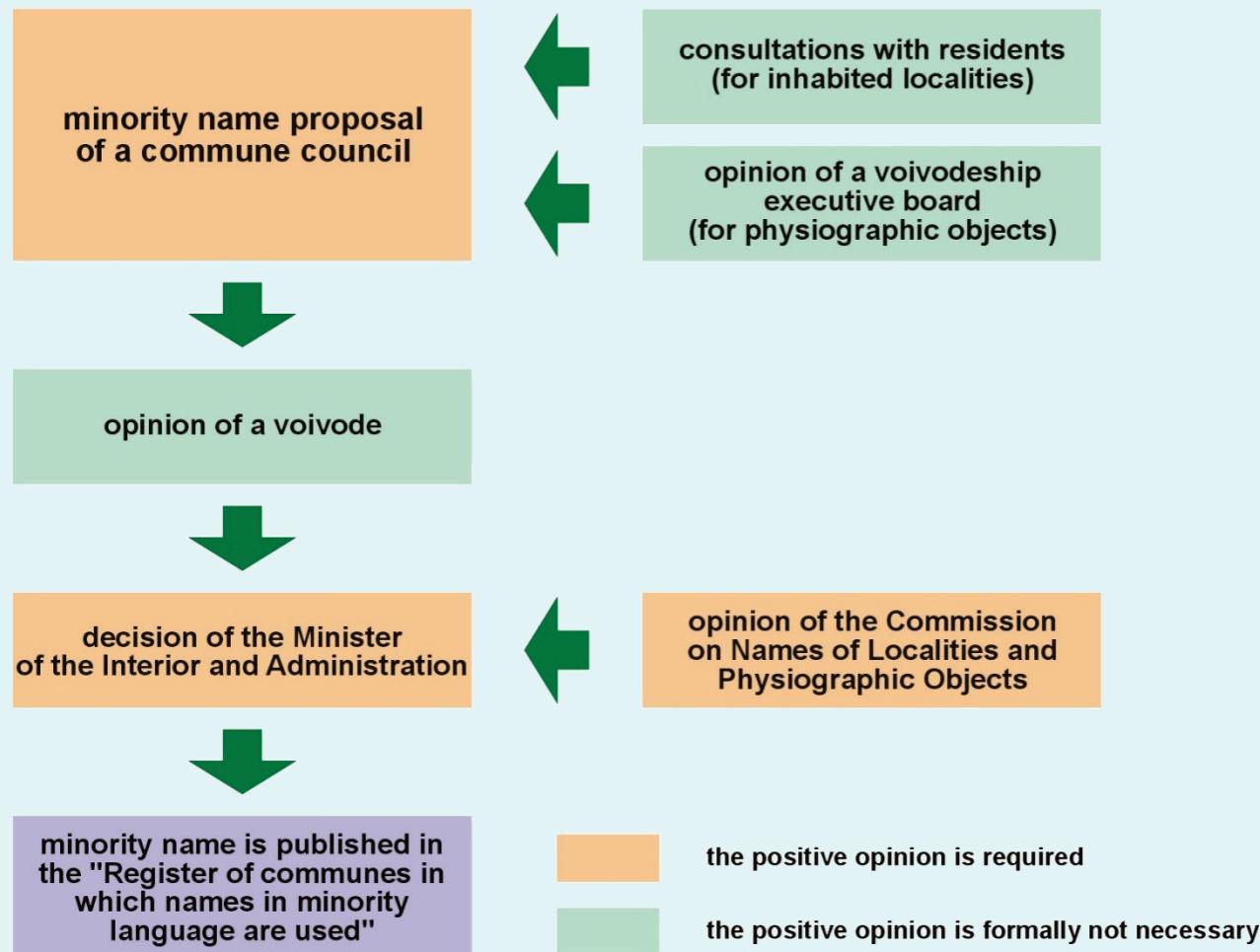
The Act lays down that traditional names in a minority language for localities, physiographic objects and streets may be used as “additional names” alongside geographic names established in the Polish language.

Names of localities and physiographic objects in minority languages may be introduced throughout a whole commune, or its part.

Names in minority languages may not be used independently and must also appear following the official name in Polish. Contradictory to names in Polish, names in minority languages are not official names but only “additional names” (“auxiliary names”).

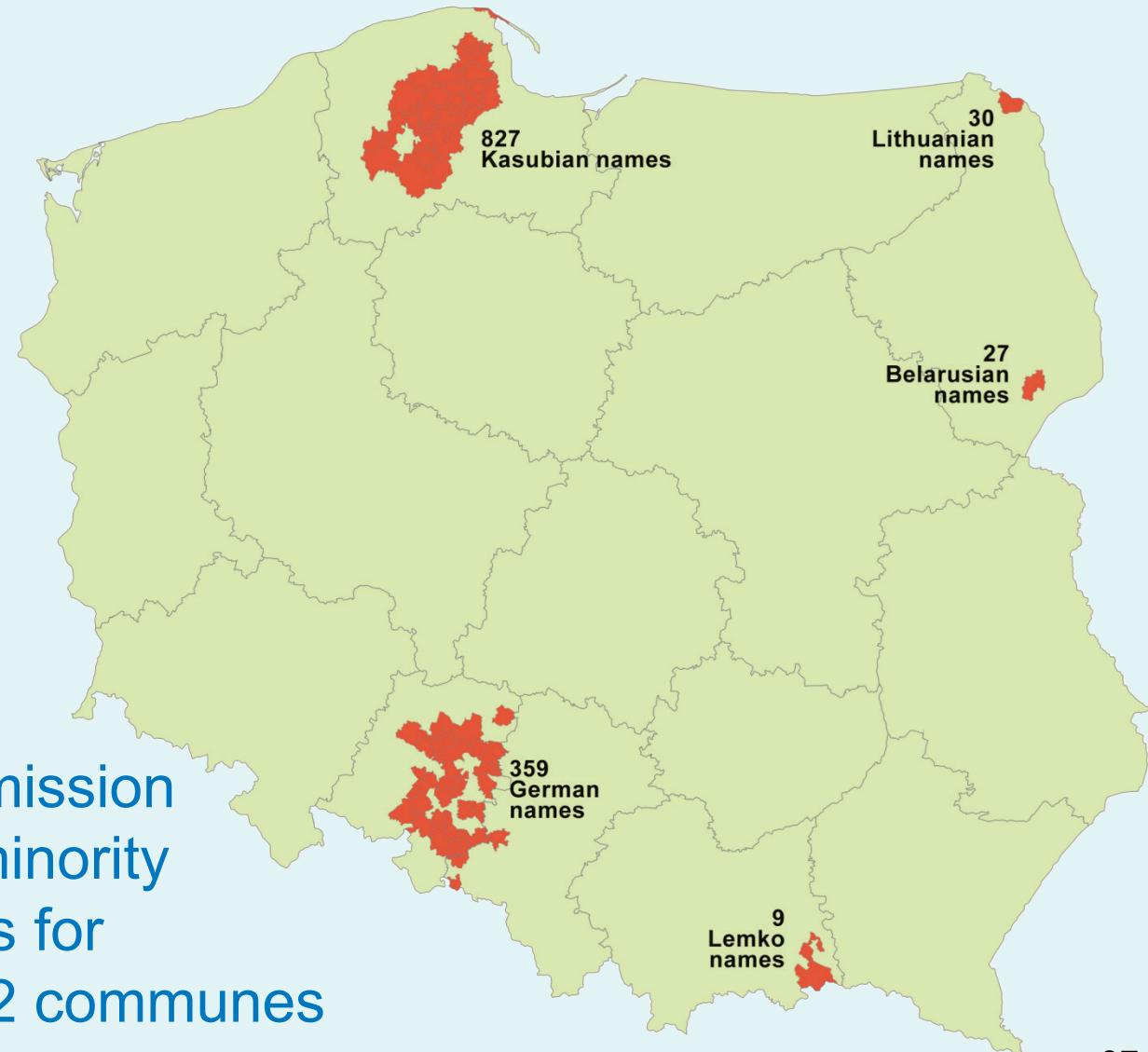
# Minority place-names

Scheme on setting minority names of localities and physiographic object





# Minority place-names



Since 2006 the Commission has approved 1262 minority names in 5 languages for localities located in 62 communes



# Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names

**Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland**, affiliated at the Surveyor General of Poland, is responsible for:

- standardization of Polish geographical names of objects situated outside Poland (Polish exonyms)
- elaboration of official lists of Polish exonyms
- establishing the principles of romanization from languages which use non-Roman writing systems
- cooperation with international organizations in terms of standardization of geographic names, as well as with names authorites from individual countries
- representing of Poland on international conferences concerning standardization of geographical names



# History of the Commission

In 1951 the **Commission on Geographical Names** was created at the Polish Geographical Society. It was the first Polish organization on standardization of geographical names of the World.

Members of the Commission were: geographers, linguist, historians and representatives of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of National Defense, Central Office of Geodesy and Cartography, State Cartographical Publishing House, National Scientific Publishers.



# History of the Commission

In 1953 the Commission was transferred to the Institute of Geography of the Polish Academy of Science. At the same time Commission's name was changed for the **Commission on Establishing Geographical Names**.

The Commission prepared 15 brochures, that contained 19 720 geographical names of the World (brochures were published between 1952 and 1956).

In 1959 the *Polish Geographical Names of the World* was issued – the publication with approximately 25,000 names, which were recognized by the Language Culture Commission of the Linguistics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences as the norm.



# History of the Commission

The worldwide campaign to standardize geographical names initiated by the United Nations Organization to which the first United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1967 in Geneva was devoted, resulted in an urgent need to create in Poland a body authorised to establish official Polish geographical names of the world.

The Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography was the initiator of the creation of such a commission.

Consequently, the Prime Minister appointed in 1973 the **Commission on Standardization of World Geographical Names** subordinated to the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology



# History of the Commission

In 1984 the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology changed commission's name to the **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside Poland**.

In 1988 the Commission became an organ of the Ministry of National Education.

Following the reorganisation of the state administration in 1997, the Commission was allocated to the Surveyor General of Poland within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

In 2001 commission's name was once more changed into current name: the **Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland**



# Composition of the Commission

The composition of the Commission is established by the regulation of the Surveyor General of Poland:

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Secretary – representative of the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography
- Members – scientists from the domains of: linguistics, history, geography and cartography, as well as representatives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces.



# Composition of the Commission

The current composition of the Commission:

- Chair: Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska (linguist: Slavic languages)
- Vice-Chairs: Andrzej Markowski (linguist: Polish language), Maciej Zych (geographer/cartographer)
- Secretary: Justyna Kacprzak (cartographer)
- Members: 3 geographers, 2 cartographers, 7 linguists (Slavic languages, East Asian languages, South Asian languages, Arabic language, Turkic languages), 1 representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Diplomatic Protocol ), 1 representative of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces (Geospatial Intelligence Directorate)

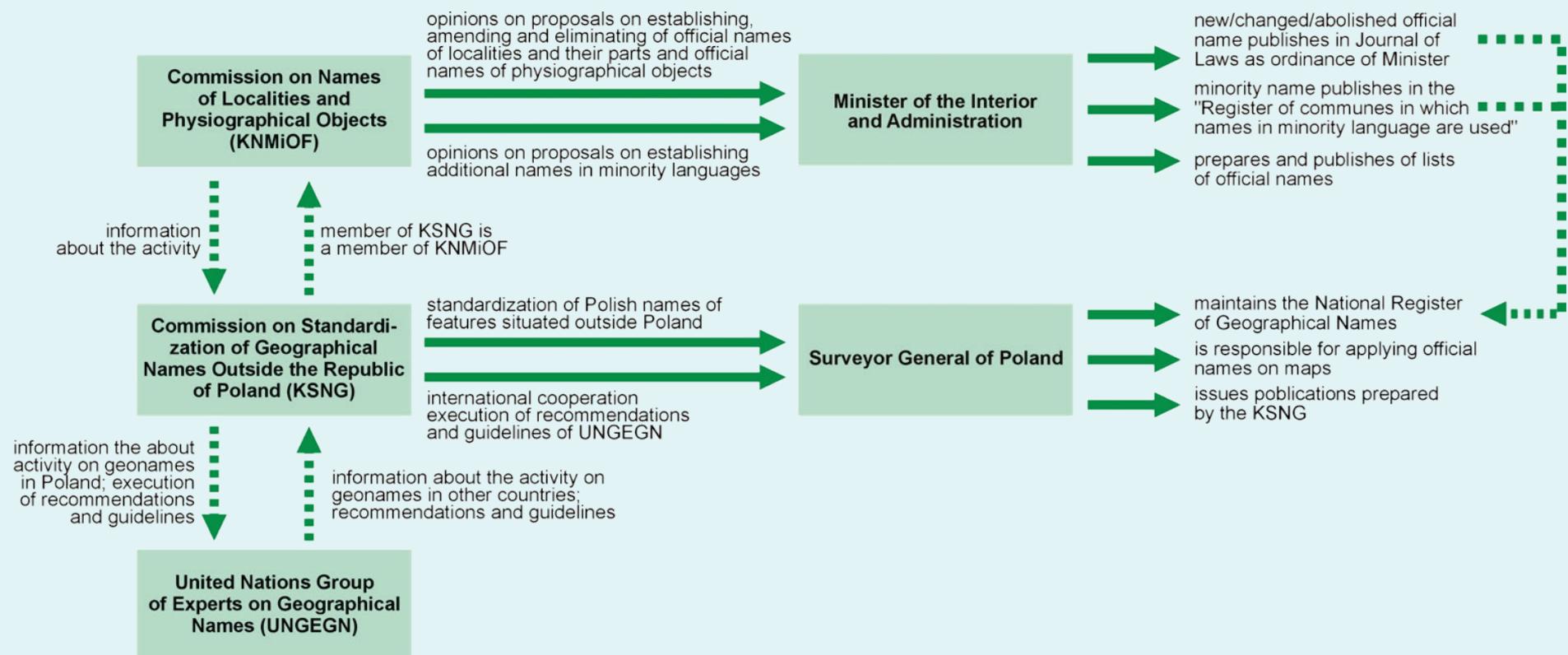


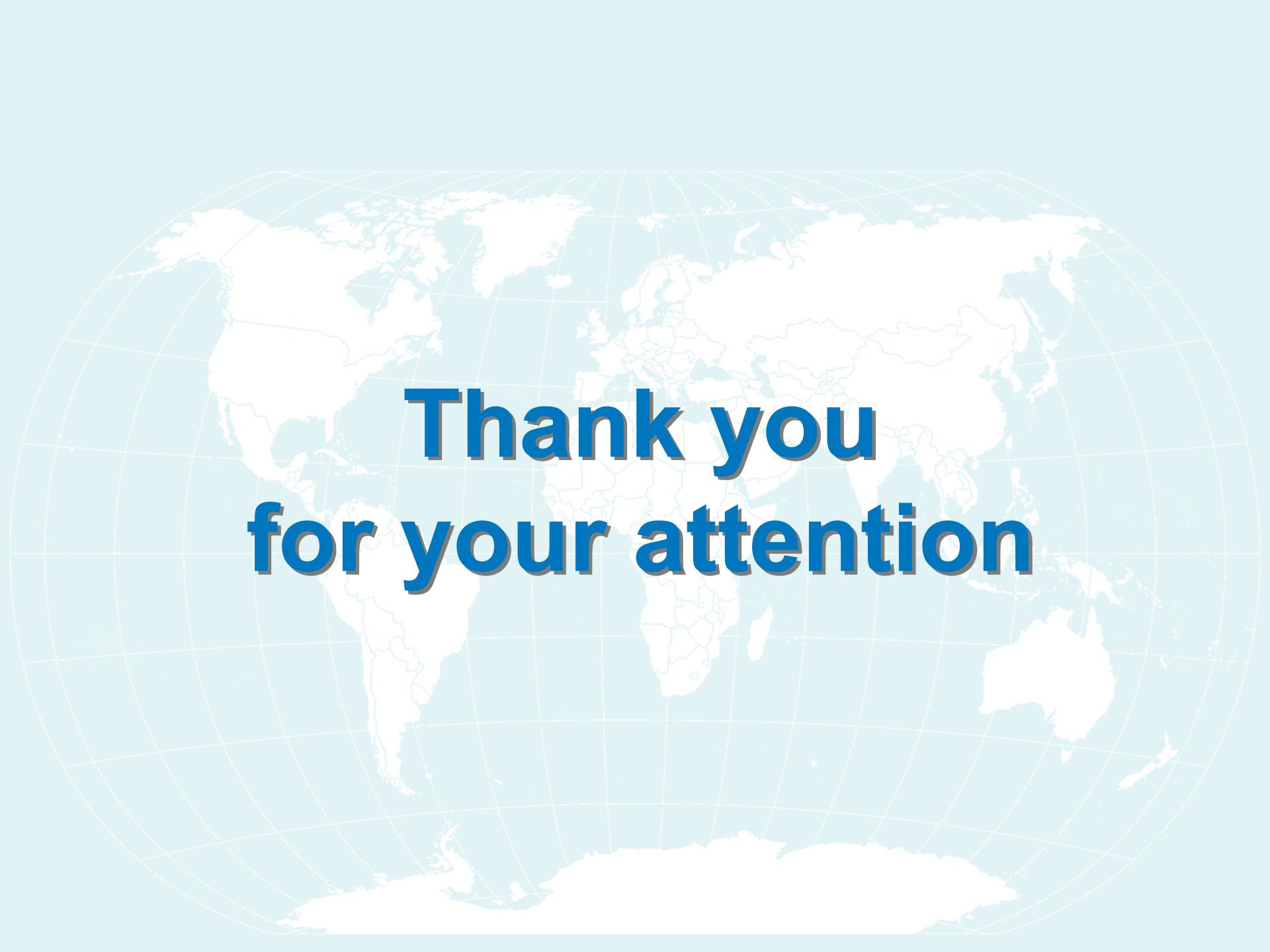
# Commission's publications

- Country names (1975-77, 1986, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019) + political map of the World (2003, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019)
- Polish exonyms (1994-96, 2013, 2019)
- *Geographical Names of the World* in 12 volumes (2004-2010)
- Toponymic guidelines (1993, 1999, 2002, 2010)
- Glossary of terminology used in the standardization of geographical names (1998, 2014)
- Romanization rules for 26 languages (+ for 11 languages romanization keys only)



# Scheme of cooperation on geographical names





**Thank you  
for your attention**