

Minutes of the 3rd Business Meeting of the ICOS Working Group on Toponymy New York, 1st May 2025

The ICOS Working Group on Toponymy met on May 1st, 2025, 13.15-14.30, during the 4th (new) UNGEGN Session in UN facilities nearby the UN Headquarter, New York, USA. The meeting had 8 participants: Andrea Bölcskei (Hungary), Oswald Chanda Penda (South Africa), Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea), Matjaž Geršič (Slovenia), Tiina Laansalu (Estonia), Kohei Watanabe (Japan), Maciej Zych (Poland), and Peter Jordan (Austria). The Working Group's Chair, Peter Jordan, chaired the meeting and led the WG members through the agenda. The meeting was only accessible for participants in the UNGEGN Session.

Provisional Agenda

- 1 Opening
- 2 Adoption of the Agenda
- 3 Aims of the WG
- 4 Membership
- 5 Activities organized or co-organized by the WG (August 2024 – end of 2025)
- 6 organized or co-organized by the WG
- 6 Proposals for activities
- 7 Other matters
- 8 Closure

ad 1) Opening, 2) Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair opened the meeting at 13.20 and welcomed the WG members. The meeting approved the draft agenda.

ad 3) Aims of the WG

The Chair referred briefly to the general aim of this WG to promote research on toponymy with a holistic approach, i.e. from the perspectives of all sciences engaged and relevant in onomastics. In detail the WG will aim at (1) proposing and organizing sessions on place names in the framework of relevant conferences and congresses; (2) organizing symposia on toponymy in cooperation with local host institutions; (3) developing, supporting and cooperating in toponymic research and book projects; (4) cultivating international cooperation with relevant global organizations like the International Cartographic Association (ICA) and the International Geographical Union (IGU) represented by the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy, as well as the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The WG has a registered membership, an elected chair and an elected vice-chair. Its members are to be members of ICOS or will gradually assume ICOS membership.

ad 4) Membership

The Chair presented the list of 62 WG members from 33 countries and all continents as of 1 May 2025 by continents and countries (in English alphabetical order). He welcomed Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea, UNGEGN Vice-Chair) and Awni Khasawneh (United Arab Emirates) as new members, who had applied for membership after the presentation of the ICOS report in the UNGEGN Session plenary. [After the business meeting also Oswald Chanda Penda (South Africa) registered as a member raising the number of WG members to 63 from 33 countries.] The Chair introduced also Chrismi-

Rinda Loth from the University of the Free State (South Africa) as the elected Vice-Chair.

ad 5) Activities organized or co-organized by the WG (August 2024 – end of 2025) organized or co-organized by the WG

August 2024 – 1 May 2025

The Chair hinted at the workshop “Minority place-name regulations in Europe” organized in the framework of the **28th ICOS Congress in Helsinki/Helsingfors, Finland**, 20 August 2024, 08.30-15.00, chaired by himself with the following papers presented:

Peter Jordan (Austria): Minority place-name standardization: A comparison of regulations and approaches in Europe

Peeter Päll & Tiina Laansalu (both Estonia): Minority place-name standardization in Estonia

Aindí Mac Giolla Chomghaill (Ireland): Place-name standardization in Ireland – when the minority forms the majority

Guy Puzey & Ruairidh Tarvet (both United Kingdom): To standardize or not to standardize: Minority (and majority) place names in the United Kingdom

Zsombor Bartos-Elekes (Romania): Minority place-name regulations in Romania

Joan Tort i Donada (Spain): The standardization of toponymy as a challenge: The experience of Catalonia and Spain (1899-2023)

Yaroslav Redkva & Michael Lukashchuk (both Ukraine): Standardization of toponyms of ethnic minorities in the legal basis of Ukraine (1989-2023)

Rita Baranauskiene & Ilona Mickienė (both Lithuania): Place names of the Lithuanian Tatars national minority

All workshop papers will be published in the ICOS Congress Proceedings with Peter Jordan as the section editor and Lasse Hämäläinen as editor-in-chief.

He further referred to the session “Bi- or multilingual place names as markers of national, regional and local space-related identity” in the framework of the **35th IGU Congress, Baile Athá Cliath/Dublin, Ireland**, 24-30 August 2024, on Thursday, 29 August 2024, 08.30-14.45, chaired by himself with the following papers presented:

Tadeusz Siwek (Czechia): German place names in contemporary Czechia

Anna Maria Pioletti & Marta Favro (both Italy): Toponymy and linguistic identity in the Aosta Valley: prospects for the creation of new cultural itineraries

Antonio Violante (Italy): Bosnia: The road to identity is paved with multiple toponymies

Hak-khiam Tiun (China-Taiwan): From invisible to visible: The status and corpus planning of Hakka place names in Taiwan

Kaisa Rautio Helander (Norway): Introduction of Sámi toponymy in linguistic landscapes in Norway: Challenging the history of monolingual namescapes

Norbert Pap, Marianna Ács, Péter Reményi & Máté Kitanics (all Hungary): Place names, identity, and national cohesion in a multicultural region – the case of the Mohács Plain (SW Hungary)

Peter Jordan (Austria): Dialect place names as markers of local and regional space-related identity. The example of Austria

Jonathan Cherry & Gerry O'Reilly (both Ireland): Place and street naming in Ireland: identity, conflict and resistance

Zénaïde Dervieux (France): Linguistic memory and geopolitical issues surrounding toponymic recompositions in the Hwange District

Rassem Mohi-Elden Khamaisi (Israel): Shaping the linguistic landscape and naming under national conflict; the case of Palestinian communities
 Wenchuan Huang (China-Taiwan): Memory and identification: Streetscape narrative in Taipei and Hong Kong
 Guilia Ferrante (Italy): Co-creating “plural” development in Italian inner areas. A geolinguistic action-research proposal

A selection of these papers will be published in a themed issue of the ICOS journal “Onoma” (Volume 61/2026) with Peter Jordan as the guest editor.

1 May – end of 2025

The **EuGeo Congress 2025 in Vienna [Wien]** on the theme “Geographies of a Changing Europe”, 8-11 September 2025, will see 9 September 2025, 9.00-10.30 and 11.00-12.30, the Session “Place names between cultural heritage and cultural change” submitted on behalf of the WG and chaired by Peter Jordan. For this session 16 abstracts were submitted, but according to general regulations a maximum of 8 could be accepted.

Papers to be presented are:

Katalin Reszegi (Hungary): Mounds and their names in the Hortobágy region
 Rhian Parry (United Kingdom): Interpreting a landscape through ancient, local micro-toponyms: The hinterland of the river Ogwen in Eryri, north Wales, from source to sea. Economic change and challenges
 Souad Bouhadjar (Algeria): Rethinking the city: Toponymy at the intersection of local identities and migratory dynamics
 Gabriel Moreno-Delgado (Spain): Cartographies of memory: street toponymy as a reflection of political regimes. Application to the case study of Elda (Spain)
 Branimir Vukosav (Croatia): The changing narratives and identities in urbanonyms of Zadar, Croatia
 Ivana Crljenko (Croatia): Building names motivated by commercial goals: A case study of Zagreb
 Florian Koch, Laurent Gautier, Matthieu Llorca (all France): Stadium names between cultural heritage and commercialization: A quantitative study of four European countries
 Donata Dorota Wysocka et al. (Poland): Specific dimension of functional integration - the naming of polycentric urban regions

Also the **32nd International Cartographic Conference (ICC), Vancouver, Canada**, “Mapping the future: innovation, inclusion, and sustainability”, 16-22 August 2025, will see toponymic paper presentations, but with conferences of the International Cartographic Association (ICA) no session proposals can be submitted (e.g. by our WG), just abstracts for individual papers. They are only then thematically aggregated to sessions. The call for papers has already been closed and also peer-reviewing is completed. Registration without paper presentation is still possible via <https://icc2025.com/>

The **Eigth International Symposium on Place Names (ISPN) 2025, Clarens, South Africa** “Harmonising toponymic heritage: balancing standardisation and local diversity”, 26-29 November 2025, is organized by the Department of South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the University of the Free State (RSA) in partnership with the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy as well as the ICOS Working Group on Toponymy.

The call for papers has already been closed and the peer-reviewing is going on. Registration without paper presentation is still possible via kongresETFB@ufs.ac.za

ad 6) Proposals for activities

The Chair mentions two proposals already submitted and discussed in earlier meetings: (1) Florian Koch (France) proposed a symposium on names of stadiums that are usually landmarks with frequently changing and commercial names. Maciej Zych adds that the commercial part of the name is frequently only additional and indeed very fluctuant, while the core of the name remains relatively stable. (2) Joan Tort i Donada (Spain) proposed a symposium on the impact of river flow changes, especially in deltas, on the namescape. He presented the delta of River Llobregat near Barcelona as an example. Another example for comparison would be the former branches of the Danube [Donau] near Vienna, which, before the Danube's regulation in the second half of the 19th century, frequently had changed their course and left their traces in the namescape up to the present day. Kohei Watanabe adds that also the plain of Tokyo saw similar developments. Both proposals have remained ideas so far and are not near to realization.

Kohei Watanabe then, supported by other participants, develops the idea of tracing names after natural disasters or indicating dangerous places, e.g. vulcanism. Peter Jordan extends this idea to the impact of climate change on the namescape, e.g. the retreat of alpine glaciers.

ad 7) Other matters

Sungjae Choo wonders, whether the ICOS WG on Toponymy had a specific task, e.g. compared to the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy. Peter Jordan hints at the WG's aim of approaching toponymy from a holistic perspective, i.e. from the perspectives of all onomastic sciences represented in ICOS, not the least linguistics, while the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy is a joint venture of geographers and cartographers.

ad 8) Closure

The Chair closed the meeting at 14.30 and thanked all participants for attending.

Peter Jordan, 12 May 2025