The Open Gazetteer of EuroGeographics and Exonyms

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Abstract:

EuroGeographics is providing open geographical data and maps for Europe derived from open data provided by National Mapping and Cadastre Agencies (NMCAs). This service includes an open gazetteer based on the geographical names of Euro Regional Map (ERM) and Euro Boundary Map (EBM). Therefore, the Gazetteer comprises official geographical names (endonyms) of 38 European countries and their depending territories.

As the competence of the NMCAs is limited to their national territory and to nationally recognized languages, certain types of toponyms cannot be found in the Open Gazetteer.

- Names for geographical features in one of the national languages of participating countries but lying beyond the territory of competence of the respective NMCA. (e.g., Vīne [Latvian], Viena [Spanish et al.] for Wien [German])

- Toponyms (endonyms and exonyms) in endonymic languages but not officially recognized in a respective country (e.g., Perpinyà [Catalan] for Perpignan [French])

The Open Gazetteer comprises a supplementary programme called Exonyms Management. Objective of this programme is to extend the Open Gazetteer with toponyms not found in the national gazetteers. These are exonyms and other name variants in national and minority languages of the participating countries throughout Europe. The data recording is done step by step for each language. The Exonyms Management comprises by April 2022 exonyms and other variant names in 44 languages and four different scripts mainly settlements, administrative units, and hydrographic features.

The range of exonyms entered in the gazetteer is depending on reliable sources available. The indication of the status (official, standardized, historical, other) of each name follows the INSPIRE directive and is an essential part of the dataset. It allows a user a conscious decision on the appropriate name form in a publication.

The Open Gazetteer is a pan-European project which keeps international standards. Its Exonyms Management follows the recommendations of the resolutions on exonyms and on Romanization of the United Nations Group on Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) and the European INSPIRE directive on Geographical Names.

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