



## Croatian Exonyms in World Atlases Published from the 1970s to the Present

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### Abstract

According to an internationally adopted definition, an exonym (adapted geographical name) is a geographical name used in a specific language for a geographical feature situated outside the area where that language is spoken and differing in its form from the name used in an official or well-established language of that area where the geographical feature is located. Since they have become part of the vocabulary of a language community that eventually adapts and accepts them in their language system, they are important elements on topographic and thematic maps produced by that community. Therefore, they are essential elements on maps in general world atlases, especially school atlases, though they may appear to a much lesser extent than original names (endonyms). Although there is a long tradition of using exonyms in Croatian, an analysis of how they appear in Croatian world atlases published in the last forty years reveals some specific issues which are explained in detail in this presentation. For example, it has been noticed that the way they are written, used and treated in relation to original names is unsystematic, inconsistent and often very vague. Another issue is their status in multilingual areas. There is also confusion about current, historical or outdated exonyms. As a result, there is a reluctance to use adapted geographical names, and many difficulties arise regarding how to write and use them, problems which cartographers, geographers, linguists, historians, journalists, students, translators and others have to deal with on a daily basis. At the international level, these problems are addressed and discussed by the Working Group on Exonyms, which has operated within the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) since 2002. At the national level, an extensive database of exonyms has been compiled, along with selected attributes and verifications recorded in twenty relevant sources. It is a part of a project conducted at the Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography since 2013. Nevertheless, an interdisciplinary professional commission should perform the standardization of geographical names, thus resolving how endonyms and exonyms are written, used and treated. There is no such commission in Croatia at present, so any initiative to establish it should be strongly supported.

Keywords: geographical names, exonyms, world atlases, Working Group on Exonyms, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, standardization of geographical names