



23rd Meeting of the Baltic Division of
the UNGEGN

(Vilnius, 2–3 October 2024)

Information regarding the standardization of geographical names in Lithuania

Aistė Pangonytė

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language

According to the Law on the State Language (1995), the place names in official usage shall be written in the official language of Lithuania on standardized forms.

There have been no changes in the Law on the State Language (1995).

The **State Commission of the Lithuanian Language** is responsible for the standardization of the official language (Lithuanian), including the standardization of geographical names.

The Commission has a **Sub-Commission on Onomastics** (one of ten sub-commissions).

The Commission of Language as a consultative body

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language mostly acts as a consultative body:

- gives answers to institutions and citizens;
- evaluates proposals, drafts, and complaints;
- gives conclusions to the authorities approving the official names of settlements, streets, lakes, streams, ponds, parks, etc.;
- answers inquiries about foreign place names, such as transcription, grammaticalization, and exonyms.

In 2023, the Commission answered about 100 questions on toponyms; in 2024, it dealt with about 60 issues.



“gives conclusions to the authorities approving the official names of **lakes, streams, ponds**”

The Commission gives conclusions to the **Environmental Protection Agency** (*Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra*). The Regulations of the Cadaster of Rivers and Lakes (approved by the Government) read:

Before entering or changing the name of a river or a lake in the cadastral database the cadastral manager (Environmental Protection Agency) applies to the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language for a conclusion on the name of this cadastral object. Upon receiving a request from the Cadaster administrator to provide a conclusion on the name of a cadastral object, the Commission submits it within 10 workdays.

The Commission gave conclusions on the names of these cadastral objects:

3 in 2023:

lake – Bildžių ežeras > **Balžis**

pond – Kybartėlių tvenkinys > **Liolingos tvenkinys** (: the River *Liolinga*)

lake/pond (quarry lake) – **Šašėnų karjero ežeras**

9 in 2024:

rivers: Želva > **Žėpla**, River M-2 > **Marčiupis** (?), River A-1 > **Žardė** (?)

lakes: **Taramykštis** and **Taramėlė** (located close to a bigger Lake *Taramas*)

lake/pond (quarry lakes): **Kirinis** (: *kiras* – bird black-headed gull *Larus ridibundus*),

Gudlaukio tvenkinys (: village *Gudlaukis*)

swamps: **Bubnelio I bala**, **Bubnelio II bala** (: surname *Bubnelis*)



A new generic term for cadastral objects

The discussion about the specific cadastral object term – **a quarry lake**;
equivalents of this term in other languages:

- *Steinbruchsee,*
- *кар'єрне озеро,*
- *карьерное озеро,*
- *каменоломско езеро*

The result of the discussion is **karjero ežeras** but it was started from one particular name *Šašėnų karjeras* (Šašėnai quarry). Experts in language, geography and hydrography agreed that a *quarry* and a *quarry lake* (not *pond*) are different things.



“gives conclusions to the authorities approving the official names of **settlements**, and streets”

The Commission gives conclusions to the municipalities (*savivaldybės*) approving the official names of settlements.

32.4. The executive body of the municipality submits the conclusion of the State Lithuanian Language Commission to the Ministry of the Interior, which provides approval for the new name of the residential area or the changing name of the residential area (indicating the stress of the name and its stressed forms with the nominative and genitive inflections).

(Rules for handling boundaries and names of territories of administrative units and residential areas approved by Resolution No. 651 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2023 version)

Settlement names

The Commission gave conclusions about these settlement names (2023–2024):

- names of settlements:

Mičiūnai / Miciūnai

Nedėr**dar**žis > Nedėl**ber**žis

Plav**i**škės / Plad**i**škės

Rūg**a**liai / Rūg**u**liai

Sim**a**nčiai / Sim**u**nčiai

- type of settlements

(*kaimas* 'village' > *miestelis* 'small town'):

Aviliai II > Aviliai

Ažuolytė > Ažuolytė I, Ažuolytė II

Slabadėlė > Slabadėlė I, Slabadėlė II

Šveicarija

Upninkai

Užusaliai

A generic term 'railway station'

The issue of the generic term *geležinkelio stotis* – 'a railway station'.

There are four types of settlements in Lithuania:

- *miestas* 'a city',
- *miestelis* 'a town',
- *kaimas* 'a village',
- *viensėdis* 'a homestead'

Therefore, municipalities need to change the type of settlements with an old type generic term *geležinkelio stotis* 'a railway station'. In some cases that could be done quite easily: the term "a railway station" is usually replaced by "a village" or "a town".

A problem can arise if two identical names appear in the same area. According to government rules, this cannot be the case:

“The name of the place of residence is unique within the area served by the ward” (Clause 231).

There are a few simple ways to change the name, e. g.:

adding a description 'new' or 'old' or a number (Roman numerals I, II, III).

In 2024, two name changes for ‘a railway station’ have been examined.

The Commission gave a positive conclusion to this amendment:

Raguvėlės *geležinkelio stotis* (**Raguvėlė**) > Naujosios Raguvėlės *kaimas* (Naujoji Raguvėlė **'New** Raguvėlė').

No decision has been taken on the name change of Panemunėlio *geležinkelio stotis* (**Panemunėlis**) in the territory of Rokiškis District Municipality. It should be a village but Panemunėlis Village already exists in that area. A survey of the local population is being organised and the name options include the following options:

- Panemunėlis I
Panemunėlio I *kaimas*
- **Naujasis** Panemunėlis
Naujojo Panemunėlio *kaimas*
- Panemunėlio **Geležinkelio Stotis**
Panemunėlio Geležinkelio Stoties *kaimas*
- Panemunėlio **Geležinkelis**
Panemunėlio Geležinkelio *kaimas*
- Panemunėlio **Stotis**
Panemunėlio Stoties *kaimas*



Description of the procedure for assigning, changing and recording names of **streets**, buildings, structures, and other objects

(approved by the order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania)

Clause 13: "Streets are named following the recommendations of the State Lithuanian Language Commission on the composition and spelling of street names."

In 2023, 12 municipalities (out of 60) submitted questions on street names.

A total of 73 street names were linguistically assessed in 2023.

Approximately 30 street names have been evaluated this year.



Description of the procedure for assigning, changing, and recording names of **streets**, buildings, structures, and other objects

(approved by the order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania)

The criteria for naming streets, buildings, etc. (Clause 3):

1. have to be linguistically correct;
2. must not disturb public safety or public order, not incite national, racial, religious or social hatred, violence or discrimination;
3. names that are formed with **toponyms**:
 - 3.1. to be in an official and normative form (extinct toponyms need to be only in normative forms);
 - 3.2. to be chosen by giving priority to the names of the local endangered or extinct toponyms;
4. place names with personal names have to be chosen when evaluating the outstanding public service of those people for the history, science, art, culture, politics and other fields of the public life of the state of Lithuania;
5. names related to historical, cultural events (dates), and places need to be significant for the State of Lithuania.

De-sovietization of street names

On 1 May 2023, the Law on the Prohibition of the Promotion of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes and their Ideologies entered into force.

At the same time, the ban on the promotion of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and their ideologies in public places also entered into force.

The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre (LGGRTC) and municipal authorities carry out relevant assessments.

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language is not involved in this aspect of evaluation, it advises only on linguistic aspects of new names at the request of municipalities.

De-sovietization of street names

According to the Address Register (Zenonas Lapėnas' data),
51 changes (in 23 municipalities) have been made:
not counting duplicate names, only unique ones - 12,
not counting **personal names**, only **appellative** - 4:

Kolūkiečių gatvė (1) : 'kolkhozniki'

Komunarų gatvė (1) : 'komunari'

Pionierių gatvė (1) : 'pioneers'

Tarybų gatvė (1) : 'soviets'

J. Gagarino gatvė (3)

J. Šimkaus gatvė (1)

L. Giros gatvė (10)

P. Cvirkos gatvė (19)

S. Nėries gatvė (5)

V. Montvilos gatvė (5)

T. Tilvyčio gatvė (1)


Some of these names are still remain in other localities: *Kolūkiečių g.* – 2, *Tarybų g.* – 6;

J. Gagarino g. 2, *J. Šimkaus g.* – 8, *L. Giros g.* – 10, *P. Cvirkos g.* – 26, *S. Nėries g.* – 56, *V. Montvilos g.* – 3.

The Institute of the Lithuanian Language

Dictionary of Lithuanian Toponyms. The 5th volume (K) is being edited.

Geoinformational Database of Lithuanian Toponyms (LVvGDB) is integrated into the **Lithuanian Language Resource Information System** <https://ekalba.lt> ('e-language')





Lietuvos vietovardžių geoinformacinė duomenų bazėBendroji informacijaStruktūraIš

E. KALBA > E. kartotekos ir duomenų bazės > Duomenų bazės > Lietuvos vietovardžių geoinformacinė duomenų bazė

AÂ B C Č D EĖ Ė F G H I J̄ Y J K L M N O P R S Š T U Ų Ū V Z Ž

Paieška

  **Ieškoti**

Paieškos rezultatai: 1–50 iš 28164

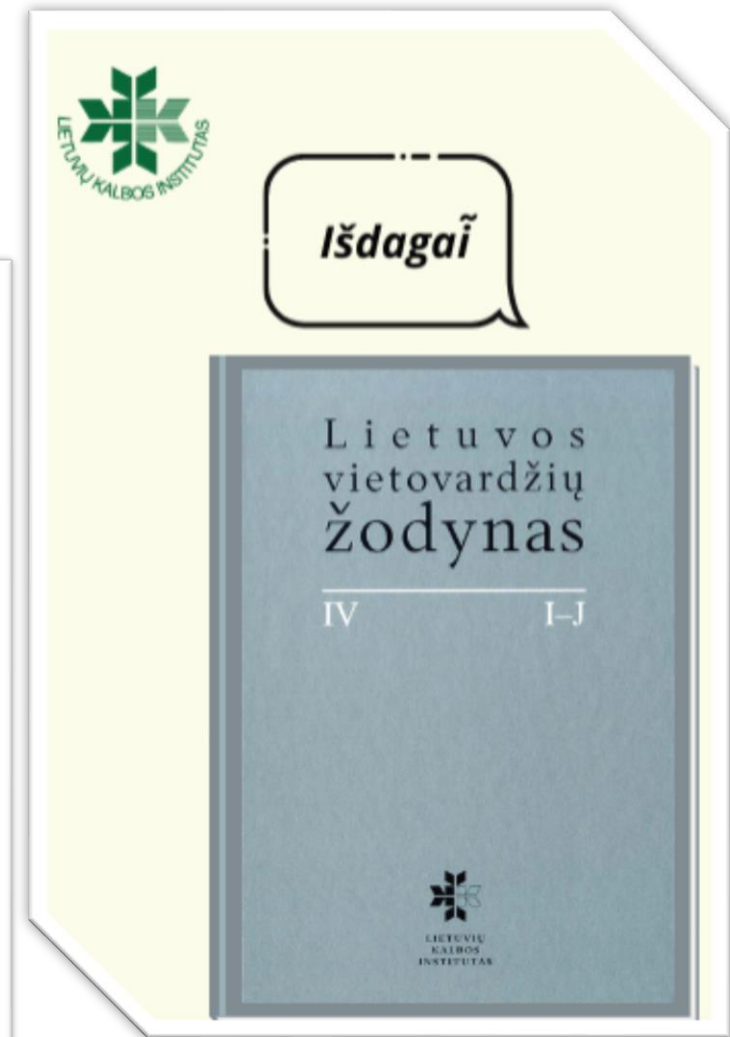
Abarauskai

Abazinė

Abejučiai

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The most beautiful toponyms in Kėdainiai district

In Kėdainiai district, a competition for the most beautiful toponym has been organized every year since 2019*: a member of the Language Society presents a list of names with descriptions and the local's vote. People have already chosen the most beautiful names of settlements, rivers, lakes and forests.

In 2023, **the most interesting hill name (oronym)** was chosen. Rytas Tamašauskas selected the names of the hills for voting and prepared the descriptions.

(* 2019 was declared the Year of Toponyms in Lithuania.)

The most interesting hill names in Kėdainiai district (after the vote):

- *Gaidžio Skiauterė* (: 'a cockscomb')
- *Zubriukas* (: 'a young buffalo')
- *Žibartas* (: the name of a great warrior)

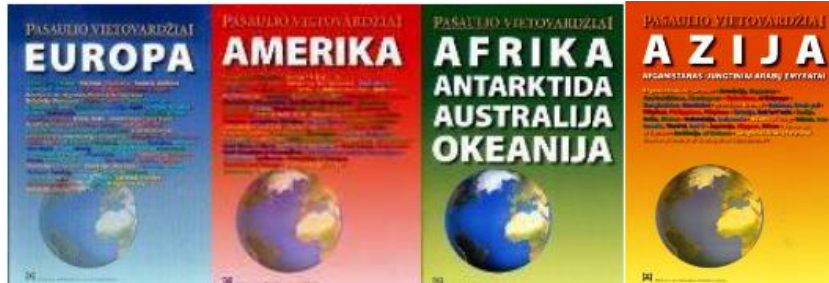
Foreign place names

The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language has given the answers about place names of various countries

- transcription,
- grammaticalization,
- pronunciation,
- exonyms.

Dictionary of World Place Names (1–5 vol., 2006–2014) is digitalized (with about 180 000 toponyms): <http://pasaulio-vardai.vlkk.lt> or <https://vietovardziai.melc.lt>

pasaulio-vardai.vlkk.lt



[Pagrindinis](#) [Šalys](#) [Europa](#) [Amerika](#) [Azija](#) [Afrika](#) [Australija](#) [Okeanija](#) [Antarktida](#) [Transkripcija](#) [Informacija](#)

Sulietuvinta forma



Bet kur



[Ieškoti](#)

[Detalioji paieška +](#)



Populiariausi vietovardžiai

Pekinas 384
Geltonoji upė 256
Sankt Peterburgas 240
Charkovas 228
Pėduva 213
Fudžio kalnas 183
Hò Ćì Mìnis 164
Keturių Kantonų ežeras 147
Tedžonas 134



vietovardziai.melc.lt

Pasaulio vietovardžių žodynas

Valstybė



Geografinis objektas



Įveskite vietovardį



Country Names

Changes in the **List of Country Names** (2023):

the official name of *Iceland*: Islándijos Respùblika > **Islándija**;

the official name of *Nepal*: Nepālo Federācinē Demokrātinē Respùblika > **Nepālas**.

Discussions about the names of these countries:

Niger: the official name is Nìgerio Respùblika, the short name is **Nìgeris**;

Kingdom of the Netherlands: the official name is Nýderlandų Karalỹstė, the short name is **Nýderlandai**, traditional variant is *Olándija*.

Ačiū
Thank you!



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