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## **List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts**

At the beginning of 2013, the “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 13 December 2012 on the List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts” [“Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 13 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie wykazu urzędowych nazw miejscowości i ich części”] was published in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, the second official list of names of all localities situated within the Polish territory in the country’s history was published.

### **1. History**

Collection and standardization of geographical names have a long tradition in Poland. The process was initiated on a larger scale in the 18<sup>th</sup> century together with the development of maps and gazetteers covering the entire or nearly the entire Polish territory. “Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries” [“Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich”] is of great importance for this process. This monumental work consisting of 15 volumes, published in 1880-1902, contained names of localities, rivers, mountains, lakes, and other geographic features.

When Poland regained independence in 1918, it became necessary to standardize the geographical names of areas which throughout over a hundred years had been partitioned by Prussia, Austria-Hungary and Russia. At first, no official body responsible for geographical name standardization existed, but names were established for the purposes of publication of topographic maps and national censuses. The first topographic maps started to be issued in 1919 by the Geographic-Military Institute (known as the Military Institute of Geography since 1921). At the beginning, they copied maps of the partitioning countries where they introduced Polish place names.

Works on standardization considerably gained pace in 1921, as the first national census was conducted. As part of the census, also information on names of localities was collected, which resulted in the publication of “Index of the Localities of the Republic of Poland Prepared Based on the Results of the First National Census of 30th September 1921 and Other Official Sources” [ “Skorowidz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej opracowany na podstawie wyników pierwszego powszechnego spisu ludności z dn. 30 września 1921 r. i innych źródeł urzędowych”] by the Central Statistical Office in the years 1923 to 1926 in 14 volumes (initially, 16 volumes were planned, however, those concerning Vilnius area and Śląskie Voivodship [Silesia] ultimately remained unpublished). The names included in this publication may be considered standardized, but not official (officially adopted as a result of an established procedure).

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<sup>1</sup> “List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts” is available on the website of the Government Legislation Centre: <http://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/du/2013/200/1>, as well as on the website of the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland: [http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/official\\_names.php](http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/official_names.php).

Bodies officially responsible for approving names of localities were not created in Poland until 1934. Autonomous Śląskie Voivodship was the exception, as the local authorities were in charge of establishing the administrative division and geographical names. As early as in 1922, in this voivodship 700 official names of cities, towns, villages and manor areas – all independent localities within the voivodship – were established (“List of Counties, Their Urban and Rural Communes, Manor Areas and Cities not Belonging to Counties [“Spis powiatów, należących do nich gmin miejskich i wiejskich, obszarów dworskich oraz miast wyjętych z powiatów”], Journal of Silesian Laws of 1922 no. 13, item 43).

The “Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 24th October 1934 on Establishing the Names of Localities and Real Estate Numbering” [“Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 24 października 1934 r. o ustaleniu nazw miejscowości i o numeracji nieruchomości”], having the power of an act, ultimately regulated the issues of establishing official names of localities. Pursuant to its provisions, the Commission on Establishing Names of Localities was created at the Minister of Internal Affairs. The Commission was active until 1939, and during this period established the official names of: cities and towns of Poland (the list published in 1937 as the “Ordinance of the Minister of the Interior of 28th February 1937 on Establishing Official Names of Cities and Towns” [“Zarządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 28 lutego 1937 r. o ustaleniu urzędowych nazw miast”], Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland of 1937 no. 69, item 104), localities of Wileńskie [Vilnius] Voivodship (“List of Localities of the Republic of Poland. Volume I. Wileńskie Voivodship” [“Wykaz miejscowości Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Tom I. Województwo wileńskie”], published in 1938 as the “Ordinance of the Minister of the Interior of 28th April 1938 on Establishing Official Names of Inhabited Localities on the Area of Wileńskie Voivodship” [“Zarządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 28 kwietnia 1938 r. o ustaleniu urzędowych nazw miejscowości zamieszkałych na obszarze województwa wileńskiego”]), the localities of Kieleckie Voivodship (the list remained unpublished and was lost during World War II).

The period after World War II brought a necessity of further works on standardization of names, and on vast areas of the so-called Recovered Territories, Polish geographical names had to be created and established. These works were undertaken by the Commission on Establishing Names of Localities, reactivated in 1945. In 1948, the scope of establishing official names was extended to include also names of uninhabited localities and names of physiographic objects, and the Commission changed its name to the Commission on Establishing the Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects (known as the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects since 2003). At first, all the works were focused on establishing the names in the areas newly incorporated into Poland, and those established were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Poland as regulations (orders in the early period) of the Minister of Public Administration or both the Minister of Public Administration and the Minister of Recovered Territories. As a result, nearly 32,000 names of localities were established. In the subsequent years, names from the remaining parts of the country were standardized – by 1974, 197 volumes of “Official Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects” [“Urzędowe nazwy miejscowości i obiektów fizjograficznych”] were published, providing names from the areas of particular counties (i.e. second order administrative units) for about the half territory of Poland (in 1975, after administrative reform and liquidation of counties, standardizing works were abandoned).

In 1980-82, “List of Official Names of Localities in Poland” [“Wykaz urzędowych nazw miejscowości w Polsce”] was published pursuant to the “Order no. 15 of the Minister of Administration, Land Management and Environment of 10th July 1980 on Establishing the List of Localities within the People’s Republic of Poland” [“Zarządzenie Nr 15 Ministra

Administracji, Gospodarki Terenowej i Ochrony Środowiska z dnia 10 lipca 1980 roku w sprawie ustalenia wykazu miejscowości w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej”] (Official Journal of the Minister of Administration, Land Management and Environment no. 4, item 9). This 3-volume gazetteer includes approximately 111,000 names of localities and their parts. It remained the one and only official list of localities covering the area of the entire country until 2013. Apart from the name of a locality, it also provided: the ending of its genitive singular, its administrative affiliation (commune, voivodship), postal affiliation and the nearest rail station / rail stop.

## 2. Legal basis for establishing names of localities

Official names of localities, as well as those of physiographic objects, are established based on the “Act of 19th August 2003 on Official Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects” [“Ustawa z dnia 29 sierpnia 2003 r. o urzędowych nazwach miejscowości i obiektów fizjograficznych”], effective as of 7th October 2003 (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 166, item 1612). The act sets out, among others, the rules and procedure of establishing, changing and abolishing official names of localities and their parts. It also specifies the types of localities, and the procedure for publishing lists of official names of localities and their parts.

Polish official names of localities and their parts may be established, changed or abolished upon request of:

1. a commune council,
2. the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects,
3. the minister competent for public administration (currently the Minister of Administration and Digitization).

Practically, names are established upon request of commune councils only. Any establishing, abolishing or change of a name of locality comes into effect as of 1st January, pursuant to a regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization published in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland.

Where the names of localities or their parts are established, abolished or changed<sup>2</sup> upon request of commune (city) councils, the legislation procedure is the following:

- the commune council adopts a resolution on establishing, changing or abolishing an official name;
- the commune council announces and conducts consultations with the inhabitants of the locality (or its part) concerned;
- the commune council prepares a motion regarding the name, including information on the consultations with inhabitants, an opinion of the county head (starosta), a topographic map with the locality (or its part) limits concerned, information about the financial costs of the proposed change (e.g. costs of document or signboard replacement etc.). The motion is subsequently passed to the voivode for review (the voivode’s opinion is not binding), who passes it to the Minister of Administration and Digitization by March 31st of the year before the changes are planned to come into effect;
- the Minister consults their advisory body, the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects. The Commission examines the completeness and correctness of the motion from the linguistic, historical and administrative points of view, and then issues an opinion through a resolution (the Commission’s opinion is not formally binding, as the ultimate decision is made by the Minister);

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to the Act, a change of the mere type of locality, for example from “hamlet” to “village”, is also understood as a change of the name.

- the Minister decides whether to accept or reject the motion, which may also be returned for supplementation;
- the change is published in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland.

If the change, abolishing or establishing of a name is requested by the Minister, then the Minister shall apply to the concerned commune council, county starosta, voivode and the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects for their opinions to this respect, the commune council being obliged to conduct consultations with the inhabitants prior to issuing an opinion. All these opinions are of a consultative nature, while the ultimate decision is made by the Minister. If the change of a name is requested by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects, then the Commission shall communicate the motion to the Minister, who subsequently requests the concerned commune council, county starosta and voivode their opinions to this respect, the commune council being obliged to conduct consultations with the inhabitants prior to issuing an opinion. Once these opinions are obtained, the Minister makes a decision as regards the Commission's motion.

### **3. Preparative works on the List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts**

The preparative works on current "List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts" were based on "List of Official Names of Localities in Poland" published in 1980-82 along with all its amendments introduced after its publication via regulations (orders) of the minister competent for public administration announced in the Journals of Laws of the Republic of Poland and Official Gazettes of Poland. The last ones to be considered were the changes coming into effect as of 1st January 2012 pursuant to the "Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 27th December 2011 on establishing, change and abolishing of the official names of certain localities and establishing of the names of certain physiographic objects ["Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 27 grudnia 2011 r. w sprawie ustalenia, zmiany i zniesienia urzędowych nazw niektórych miejscowości oraz ustalenia nazw niektórych obiektów fizjograficznych"] (Journal of Laws no. 291, item 1711) as well as the "Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 26 July 2011 on establishing the limits of certain communes, towns and cities, and changes of the offices of certain communes ["Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 26 lipca 2011 r. w sprawie ustalenia granic niektórych gmin i miast oraz zmiany siedzib władz niektórych gmin"] (Journal of Laws No. 158 item 937).

The minister competent for public administration sent out information on the commencement of works on the new list of official names of localities and their parts along with a request to systematize locality names within communes. Consequently, following the applicable procedure, motions from commune councils were sent to the minister, requesting abolishing, change or establishing of names of localities or their parts. The motions were reviewed by the Commission on Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects which held 2-day meetings dedicated to this issue approximately four times a year. Changes from the current year were announced as regulations on establishing, changing and abolishing of certain locality names and establishing of the names of certain physiographic objects.

The list prepared for the entire country was subject to a procedure applicable to any other legal act – from its public announcement, through internal consultations within the Ministry, inter-Ministry consultations, review by the Government Legislation Centre, to publication in the Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland.

#### 4. Contents of the List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts

The list has been arranged as a table with eight columns. The first one provides the official name of a locality or a part thereof. All names in the list have been put in alphabetical order; in case of homonym names, priority was established pursuant to the alphabetical order of the voivodships they belong to (or, if this resulted inconclusive, the alphabetical order of the respective counties and communes). Where identical names of localities occurred within a single commune, they were arranged according to the alphabetical order of the locality type. Where identical names of parts of villages occurred within a single commune, they were put in the alphabetical order of the names of localities they form part of. The same principles applied to colonies and hamlets.

In the second column, the official type of the locality is provided. In the list, 23 types of localities are distinguished (6 of them are independent localities):

- **city/town [miasto]**,
- part of a city/town [część miasta],
- **village [wieś]**,
- part of a village [część wsi],
- **housing estate [osiedle]**,
- housing estate of a village [osiedle wsi],
- **colony [kolonia]**,
- part of a colony [część kolonii],
- colony of a village [kolonia wsi],
- colony of a colony [kolonia kolonii],
- colony of a settlement [kolonia osady],
- **settlement [osada]**,
- part of a settlement [część osady],
- settlement of a village [osada wsi],
- settlement of a colony [osada kolonii],
- settlement of a settlement [osada osady],
- **hamlet [przysiółek]**,
- hamlet of a village [przysiółek wsi],
- hamlet of a colony [przysiółek kolonii],
- hamlet of a settlement [przysiółek osady],
- forest settlement [osada leśna],
- forest settlement of a village [osada leśna wsi],
- tourist refuge [schronisko turystyczne].

The third, fourth and fifth columns provide the administrative affiliation of the locality to a commune, county and voivodship. A seven-digit identifier of locality from the National Official Register of the Territorial Division of the Country (TERYT) is provided in the sixth column.

The seventh column provides the genitive ending for names of all localities, while the last one features a derived adjective, however, only for cities, towns and villages.

The rules for determining genitive case endings, adjectives and any other notes regarding the names included in the list have been set out in the explanatory memorandum to the regulation prepared by the Ministry of Administration and Digitization and elaborated by expert linguists.

For genitive forms of one-word names, if the full name is composed of two or more syllables in its genitive form, the inflectional ending is preceded by the preceding consonant or group of consonants and by a hyphen (with no space), for example *Biała* – *Białej* (the word stem is *bial-*, and the ending is *-ej*), so the genitive form is provided in the list in the following

way: *-lej*, *Wólka – Wólki: -ki*, *Spaliska – Spalisk: -lisk*. Where alternations (quantitative or qualitative) affecting the word stem appear, such an alternation has been clearly marked, for example: *Ujków – Ujkowa: -kowa*, *Ostrów – Ostrowa: -rowa*. Where the genitive form is monosyllabic, the full name form is provided, for example *Stoje – Słoi: Słoi*, and if a double consonant appears in the genitive form, it is also marked, for example *Kamienna – Kamiennej: -nnej*.

For genitives of composed names with no hyphen, the rules are similar to the ones for simple names, and the following pattern applies: -ending of the first component (space) -ending of the second component, for example *Sojczyń Borowy: -na -wego*, *Sorocza Nózka: -czej -ki*. For composed names spelt with a hyphen, the following pattern applies: -ending of the first component according to general rules (with no space) + - (hyphen) + full genitive form of the second component, for example *Stawiereje-Michałowięta: -rej-Michałowięta*, *Stokowo-Bućki: -wa-Bućków*.

The list includes 103,225 names, those of villages and parts of villages being the most numerous (see table 1). The number of independent localities (i.e cities and towns, villages, colonies, hamlets, housing estates and settlements) amounts to 51,454, which corresponds to a half of the total number of names (49.8%).

Type of locality	Number
city/town	908
part of a city/town	6,708
village	43,051
part of a village	36,349
housing estate	3
housing estate of a village	5
colony	2,220
part of a colony	202
colony of a village	979
colony of a colony	11
colony of a settlement	6
settlement	5,136
part of a settlement	10
settlement of a village	524
settlement of a colony	1
settlement of a settlement	2
hamlet	136
hamlet of a village	4,641
hamlet of a colony	41
hamlet of a settlement	55
forest settlement	1,988
forest settlement of a village	227
tourist refuge	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103,225</b>

Table 1. Number of named localities according to their particular types

The highest number of named localities has been observed in Małopolskie Voivodship (14,967), 86.8% of which are names of parts of localities. The smallest number of localities

has been recorded in Lubuskie Voivodship (1,672) where 77.3% of all names are names of independent localities (see table 2). The highest number of names of independent localities has been recorded in Mazowieckie Voivodship (8,278), which corresponds to 62.9% of all names, and the highest proportion of independent localities has been recorded in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodship – 81.1%. The lowest number of names of independent localities has been recorded in Opolskie Voivodship (1,180), which corresponds to 60.0% of all names, and the lowest proportion of independent localities has been recorded in Małopolskie Voivodship – 13.2%.

Voivodship	Number	
	total	of which independent localities
Dolnośląskie	3,580	2,593
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	5,778	3,443
Lubelskie	7,950	3,991
Lubuskie	1,672	1,292
Łódzkie	8,350	4,969
Małopolskie	14,969	1,983
Mazowieckie	13,152	8,278
Opolskie	1,967	1,180
Podkarpackie	7,768	1,692
Podlaskie	5,144	3,654
Pomorskie	4,223	2,759
Śląskie	5,117	1,249
Świętokrzyskie	7,273	2,448
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	4,711	3,743
Wielkopolskie	7,902	5,205
Zachodniopomorskie	3,669	2,975

Table 2. Number of named localities by voivodships

The average number of residents in one named locality in Poland is 373 (749 if only independent localities are taken into account). On average, localities from Śląskie Voivodship are most populous with an average number of 902 inhabitants, while the ones from Świętokrzyskie Voivodship are the least populous ones with an average number of 175 inhabitants. If only independent localities are taken into account, the ones from Śląskie Voivodship are most populous with an average number of 3,696 inhabitants, while the ones from Podlaskie Voivodship are the least populous ones with an average number of 328 inhabitants.

## 5. Further works

Geographical names form a living part of the language, thus despite the publication of official lists, they constantly evolve, for example due to certain hamlets being abandoned by their residents, creation of new parts of localities etc. Furthermore, the type of a locality may change as a result of amendments to the administrative division introduced through a regulation of the Council of Ministers. Such changes usually are a consequence of extension of city/town limits when rural localities (villages, parts of villages, settlements etc.) become part of cities/towns (for example in 1 January 2015 the rural commune Zielona Góra was incorporated into the city of Zielona Góra and 24 independent villages were changed into

“parts of city”). Amendments to the list of official names of localities and their parts are introduced in pursuance of regulations of the Minister of Administration and Digitization on establishing, changing and abolishing of official names of localities announced in the Journals of Laws of the Republic of Poland. Moreover, regulations of the Council of Ministers on boundaries change might bring changes of a type of locality.

The following regulations have been announced so far:

– “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 20 December 2012 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Establishing Names of Certain Physiographic Objects” [“Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 20 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie ustalenia, zmiany i zniesienia urzędowych nazw niektórych miejscowości oraz ustalenia nazw niektórych obiektów fizjograficznych”] (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 1515), pursuant to which 14 new locality names have been established, 68 names have been changed (including 33 changes of the name, 6 changes of the name and type of locality, and 29 changes of the type of locality only), and 67 names have been abolished;

– “Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 30 July 2013 on Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, and Change the Seat of the Commune Authority” [“Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 30 lipca 2013 r. w sprawie ustalenia granic niektórych gmin i miast, nadania niektórym miejscowościom statusu miasta oraz zmiany siedziby władz gminy”] (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 869), pursuant to which, as a result of granting localities the status of town and enlargement of boundaries of towns, 12 localities changed its type (5 for “town”, and 7 for “part of town”);

– “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 13 December 2013 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Establishing the Name of a Physiographic Object” [“Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 13 grudnia 2013 r. w sprawie ustalenia, zmiany i zniesienia urzędowych nazw niektórych miejscowości oraz ustalenia nazwy obiektu fizjograficznego”] (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 1629), pursuant to which 13 new locality names have been established, 57 names have been changed (including 21 changes of the name, 7 changes of the name and type of locality, and 29 changes of the type of locality only), and 44 names have been abolished;

– “Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 29 July 2014 on the Merger of Communes, Establishing the Boundaries of Certain Communes and Towns, Grant the Status of Town for Certain Localities, and Change the Seat of the Commune Authority” [“Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 29 lipca 2014 r. w sprawie połączenia gmin, ustalenia granic niektórych gmin i miast, nadania niektórym miejscowościom statusu miasta oraz zmiany siedziby władz gminy”] (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1023), pursuant to which, as a result of granting localities the status of town and enlargement of boundaries of towns, 26 localities changed its type (2 for “town”, and 24 for “part of town”);

– “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 4 December 2014 on Establishing, Changing and Abolishing Official Names of Certain Localities and Establishing Names of a Physiographic Objects” [“Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 4 grudnia 2014 r. w sprawie ustalenia, zmiany i zniesienia urzędowych nazw niektórych miejscowości oraz ustalenia nazw obiektów fizjograficznych”] (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1832), pursuant to which 5 new locality names have been established, 39 names have been changed (including 14 changes of the name, 4 changes of the name and type of locality, and 21 changes of the type of locality only), and 59 names have been abolished.

Altogether, after the publication of the “List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts”, 32 new locality names have been established, 164 names have been changed



(including 68 changes of the name, 17 changes of the name and type of locality, and 117 changes of the type of locality only), and 170 names have been abolished.

Pursuant to the provisions of the “Act on Official Names of Localities and Physiographic Objects”, the minister competent for public administration shall publish, by way of an announcement, valid registers of official names of localities or their parts.

Pursuant to the Act, the “List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts” provides the situation of localities within the administrative division only (commune, county, voivodship). Furthermore, pursuant to the “Regulation of the Minister of Administration and Digitization of 14 February 2012 on the National Register of Geographical Names” [“Rozporządzenie Ministra Administracji i Cyfryzacji z dnia 14 lutego 2012 r. w sprawie państwowego rejestru nazw geograficznych”] (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 309), the Surveyor General of Poland shall maintain the database of the National Register of Geographical Names (PRNG). The PRNG database gathers the official names introduced pursuant to the applicable legal acts on establishing, changing or abolishing of the official names of localities and physiographic objects. Each name in the register must be accompanied by the geographical coordinates of a given feature. Therefore, since 1994 when the register was launched, the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography has been independently obtaining the coordinates for localities and their parts whose names are included in the register. Hence, geographical coordinates can be found in the PRNG register for all localities mentioned in the “List of Official Names of Localities and Their Parts”.