

ON Naming Geographical features

Chapter I - General Provisions

**Article 1 - Purpose of the Law**

The purpose of this Law is the legal regulation of relations arising from the naming of geographical features located in the territory of Georgia and the standardisation, use, registration, record-keeping and protection of names of geographical features.

**Article 2 - Legal regulation of the naming of geographical features**

1. The legal regulation of the naming of geographical features shall be carried out in accordance with the Constitution of Georgia, the Organic Law of Georgia - the Local Self-government Code, this Law and other normative acts.

2. Natural or man-made geo-information units, administrative units of Tbilisi, historically formed districts, planning areas, certain zones, micro districts and any other territorial units; mountains, hills, ravines, rivers, lakes, springs; squares, avenues; highways, streets, lanes, dead ends, drives, embankments, esplanades, boulevards, alleys; public gardens, gardens, parks, forest parks, forests, urban cemeteries, pantheons, buildings and structures; and transport facilities located within the established administrative boundaries of the capital of Georgia, shall be named by a representative body of the local self-government of Tbilisi, in accordance with this Law and other normative acts.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

*Law of Georgia No 1965 of 5 February 2014 – website, 19.2.2014*

**Article 3 - Definition of terms**

The terms used in this Law have the following meanings:

- a) geographical features - natural formations of the Earth: continents, oceans, seas, islands, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, glaciers and others, as well as man-made administrative-territorial units and their centres, cities, small towns, communities, villages, streets, squares, parks and other similar objects;
- b) establishment of names of geographical features - identifying existing geographical names, naming geographical features having no names, and renaming named geographical features;
- c) standardisation of names of geographical features - selecting widespread geographical names, determining procedures for their use, and adjusting geographical names according to national traditions.

**Chapter II - Standardisation of Names of Geographical Features**

**Article 4 - Competence of the executive authority of Georgia to establish, standardise, use, register, keep records of and protect geographical names**

The competence of the executive authority of Georgia is to:

- a) determine and implement a state policy in the field of the establishment, standardisation, use, registration, record-keeping and protection of geographical names;
- b) name geographical features in accordance with procedures established by the legislation of Georgia;
- c) determine uniform requirements, norms and procedures in the field of names of geographical features, and compile a State Catalogue of Names of Geographical Features;
- d) develop and approve state programmes in the area of the establishment, standardisation, use, registration, record-keeping and protection of names of geographical features;
- e) set up a government commission acting in the field of names of geographical features ('the Government Commission') in order to establish, standardise, use, register, keep records of and protect names of geographical features.

**Article 5 - Uniform requirements, norms and procedures in the field of names of geographical features**

1. Uniform requirements, norms and procedures in the field of names of geographical features are determined by this Law and other normative acts.



2. Draft normative acts establishing uniform requirements, norms and procedures in the field of names of geographical features shall be prepared by the Government Commission and submitted for approval to the Government of Georgia or the relevant state body, except as provided for by the legislation of Georgia.

3. The Government Commission shall, once a year, submit information on the fulfilment of the provisions of this Law to the Parliament of Georgia.

4. The normative acts applicable in the field of names of geographical features shall be binding upon state institutions, local self-government bodies, natural persons and legal entities under public and private law.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

*Law of Georgia No 1333 of 25 September 2013 – website, 8.10.2013*

*Law of Georgia No 1965 of 5 February 2014 – website, 19.2.2014*

#### **Article 6 - Establishing names of geographical features**

1. Official cartographic and reference publications, dictionaries of names of geographical features, generalia and written historical and other sources shall be used in order to identify, keep records of and standardise the existing names of geographical features.

2. If the sources listed in paragraph 1 of this article do not provide necessary information, names of geographical features shall be identified and established based on surveys of local populations, local historians and experts in various fields.

3. The procedure for establishing the existing names of geographical features and for their transliteration shall be determined by the Government Commission, except as provided for by the legislation of Georgia.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

#### **Article 7 - Standardising and using names of geographical features**

1. Names of geographical features in the territory of Georgia shall be standardised in the Georgian language, and in Abkhazia also in the Abkhazian language.

2. Standardised names of geographical features in the Georgian language, and in Abkhazia also in the Abkhazian language, shall be published in dictionaries and reference books of names of geographical features.

3. Only standardised names of geographical features shall be used in cartographic materials and other documents published in the Georgian and the Abkhazian languages.

4. The names of geographical features, which are in use both in Georgia and abroad, shall be in the Georgian language and, if necessary, in foreign languages in Georgian cartographic materials and other documents, and the spelling of the names of these features in a foreign language shall be based on international standards of transliteration.

5. The provisions of paragraph 4 of this article shall not apply to macro toponyms whose spelling in a foreign language is traditionally different from their Georgian forms. In such cases, when writing names in a foreign language, traditional (foreign) forms shall be used, rather than transliterated forms.

6. The standardised names of geographical features shall be written on road and other signs in the territory of Georgia in the Georgian language, and in the territory of Abkhazia also in the Abkhazian language. If necessary, the names of geographical features shall be written in a foreign language by means of transliteration.

7. The procedure for the standardisation of names of geographical features is determined by the legislation of Georgia.

#### **Article 8 - Names of geographical features**

1. Names shall be given to:

- a) newly created administrative-territorial units and populated areas;
- b) newly formed geographical features or geographical features having no name.

2. Names to be given shall correspond to the most notable physical, geographical, historical and cultural or household characteristics of the region, and shall be compatible with the toponymic structure of the region. Names may consist of one or more words.

3. Geographical features may be given the names of their discoverers, founders or persons directly participating in their exploration and development.

4. Geographical features shall be assigned the names of prominent state or public figures in accordance with procedures established by the legislation of Georgia.

5. The same name may not be given to several similar geographical features in the region.



## **Article 9 - Restoring the names of or renaming geographical features**

1. The restoration of the names of or the renaming of geographical features is appropriate where:
  - a) in the region there are several geographical features with the same name, which creates certain difficulties in the carrying out of various activities;
  - b) the name generally known in the past has been forgotten or lost over the course of time;
  - c) the name was distorted due to historical events and other circumstances;
  - d) an abbreviation, a number or a word order indicating the name no longer corresponds to reality.
2. In other special cases, the appropriateness of restoring the name of or renaming geographical features is determined under the legislation of Georgia.

## **Article 10 – Procedure for naming geographical features**

1. The executive authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as non-governmental organisations and natural and legal entities, shall submit proposals for naming geographical features to the Government Commission. The procedure for and the sequence of considering the proposals and materials submitted with them shall be determined by normative acts applicable in the field of the naming of geographical features.
2. The Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara and their capitals, as well as their other territorial units, self-governing units and their administrative centres, shall be named based on the opinion of the Government Commission, on the recommendation of the Government of Georgia and by a resolution of the Parliament of Georgia, and other cities, populated areas and geographical features located on the state border, except for the geographical features referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this article, shall be named based on the opinion of the Government Commission, by an ordinance of the Government of Georgia.
3. The Government Commission shall additionally agree the names of geographical features referred to in paragraph 2 of this article, which are located in the territories of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara and other territorial units, with the executive authorities of respective administrative-territorial units, and if agreement cannot be reached, the decision shall be made in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article.
4. Geographical features having no names, including small towns, communities and villages, which are located in the cities and other populated areas of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara, shall be named by local self-government bodies in accordance with the legislation of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara and with the consent of the Government Commission.
5. Decisions on naming geographical features located in the cities and other populated areas of Georgia shall be made by a legal act of a representative body of local self-government and with the consent of the Government Commission, and in Tbilisi by a legal act of the representative body of the local self-government of Tbilisi.
6. State bodies/bodies of the Autonomous Republics and local self-government bodies shall, in accordance with their competence, within 10 days after making a decision on naming a geographical feature (a self-governing unit, a settlement, an administrative unit of a self-governing city, a historically formed district, a micro district, other territorial unit, a square, an avenue, a highway, a street, a lane, a dead end, a drive, an embankment, an esplanade, a boulevard, an alley), send information thereof to the Central Election Commission and the legal entity under public law called the Public Service Development Agency operating within the governance of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

*Law of Georgia No 1333 of 25 September 2013 – website, 8.10.2013*

*Law of Georgia No 1965 of 5 February 2014 – website, 19.2.2014*

*Law of Georgia No 2096 of 7 March 2014 – website, 14.3.2014*

## **Article 11 - Registration and keeping records of the names of geographical features. State Catalogue of Geographical Names**

1. Existing and newly assigned names of geographical features shall be subject to registration and record-keeping.
2. The Government Commission shall register and keep records of the names of geographical features, except as provided for by the legislation of Georgia.
3. Reference books and dictionaries of names of geographical features shall be published based on a decision of the Government Commission, except as provided for by the legislation of Georgia.
4. The Regulation on the Registration and Record-keeping of Names of Geographical Features and on the Creation and Maintenance of a State Catalogue of Names of Geographical Features shall be approved by the Government of Georgia.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

*Law of Georgia No 1333 of 25 September 2013 – website, 8.10.2013*



## **Article 12 - Protection of names of geographical features and responsibility for violations of this Law**

1. The violation of the provisions of this Law shall entail responsibility in accordance with the legislation of Georgia.
2. The names of geographical features are protected by the State. Replacing one name with another or distorting it shall be impermissible.
3. The Government Commission shall control the naming of geographical features, and the protection and proper use of names of geographical features, in the territory of Georgia.

## **Article 13 - Financing works related to the naming of geographical features**

1. Works related to the naming of geographical features and the preparation and the publication of dictionaries and reference books of names of geographical features shall be financed from the State Budget of Georgia.
2. Works related to the naming of geographical features, carried out on the recommendation of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara and local self-government bodies, shall be financed from respective budgets.
3. If the Government Commission submits a proposal for naming a geographical feature to the executive authorities of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara, works related to the naming of geographical features shall be financed from the State Budget of Georgia.

*Law of Georgia No 1560 of 31 July 2009 - LHG I, No 24, 13.8.2009, Art. 140*

## **Chapter III - Transitional and Final Provisions**

### **Article 14 - Normative acts to be adopted in connection with the entry into force of this Law**

1. Edict No 321 of the President of Georgia of 14 May 1999 on the Approval of the 'Regulation on the Procedure for Solving the Issues of Administrative Arrangement of Georgia' and on the Setting up by the Regional Policy and Management Service of the President of Georgia of a Commission on the Issues of Naming and Renaming the Administrative Units of Georgia shall be brought into conformity with this Law within six months after the entry of this Law into force.
2. The names of geographical features that have been assigned to them in violation of the requirements of existing normative acts shall be annulled upon the entry of this Law into force.
3. The Edict of the President of Georgia on the Setting up of a Government Commission for the Purpose of the Standardisation, Use, Registration and Protection of Names of Geographical Features, which shall be developed by the State Department of Geodesy and Cartography of Georgia, shall be adopted within six months after the entry of this Law into force.
4. The following shall be adopted within one year after the entry of this Law into force:
  - a) the Edict of the President of Georgia on the Approval of the Regulation on the Naming of and the Standardisation of the Names of Capitals and Centres of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and Ajara and Other Territorial Units, the Cities, Districts and Other Populated Areas of Georgia, and Geographical Features Located on the State Border;
  - b) the Edict of the President of Georgia on the Approval of the Regulation on the Registration and Record-keeping of Names of Geographical Features and on the Creation and Maintenance of a State Catalogue of Names of Geographical Features.
5. The drafts of edicts of the President of Georgia referred to in paragraph 4(a) and (b) of this article shall be prepared by the Government Commission together with the relevant institutions of the executive authority.

### **Article 15 - Entry into force of the Law**

This Law shall enter into force upon its promulgation.

**President of Georgia**

**Eduard Shevardnadze**

**Tbilisi**

**29 September 2000**

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