

TO: BGN Foreign Names Committee
FROM: L. Dillon, Department of State Member
SUBJECT: **Vatican City and Holy See**
DATE: October 3, 2007

Summary: this paper recommends a change in the designation of the GNDB entry for the State of the Vatican City, and the addition of a note clarifying the relationship of the Vatican City to the Holy See.

The GNDB has the following entry under the country code "Vatican City (VT)", with the designation of PCLI (independent political entity):

Vatican City, State of the [Conventional] **Città del Vaticano**, Stato della [BGN Standard]

The Department of State, however, has the following entry in its *Independent States in the World* list:

Short-form name	Long-form name	FIPS Code	Capital
Holy See	Holy See	VT	Vatican City

This contradiction exists because the two entities are different things: the Holy See is not a geographical entity, and according to the Department of State, the Vatican City is not an independent state. The Holy See is a government - a sovereign political state - with which most countries in the world conduct diplomatic relations, while the Vatican City is the sovereign territorial base from which the Holy See is headquartered and from where it exercises its worldwide ecclesiastical functions.

After consultation with its Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the Department of State makes the following recommendations to the FNC:

1. The entry for the State of the Vatican City should remain in the GNDB as it is, but the designation should be changed from PCLI (independent political entity) to PCL (political entity [undifferentiated]).
2. If possible, the following note should be added to the entry mentioned above in the GNDB: "The Vatican City is the sovereign territorial base for the Holy See, an independent state with which the United States Government conducts diplomatic relations."