

# ISO

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

## ISO RECOMMENDATION R 843

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSLITERATION  
OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS

1st EDITION (corrected)

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## BRIEF HISTORY

The ISO Recommendation R 843, *International system for the transliteration of Greek characters into Latin characters*, was drawn up by the Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Documentation*, the Secretariat of which is held by the Deutscher Normenausschuss (DNA).

Work on this question by the Technical Committee began in 1952 and led, in 1964, to the adoption of a Draft ISO Recommendation.

The first Draft ISO Recommendation (No. 315) was circulated, in October 1959, to all the ISO Member Bodies for enquiry. As the results of this consultation were not considered satisfactory, the Technical Committee successively put forward a second and a third Draft ISO Recommendation, which were circulated in December 1960 and on 20th March 1964 respectively.

The third Draft ISO Recommendation was approved, subject to a few modifications of an editorial nature, by the following Member Bodies :

Argentina	Hungary	Romania
Brazil	India	Spain
Canada	Israel	Sweden
Chile	Italy	Switzerland
Colombia	Netherlands	U.A.R.
Czechoslovakia	New Zealand	United Kingdom
France	Poland	U.S.A.
Greece	Portugal	

Four Member Bodies opposed the approval of the Draft :

Belgium	Germany
Denmark	Japan

The third Draft ISO Recommendation was then submitted by correspondence to the ISO Council which decided, in October 1968, to accept it as an ISO RECOMMENDATION.

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## INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSLITERATION OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE CONVERSION OF ONE WRITTEN LANGUAGE INTO ANOTHER

One important function of conversion of one written language in the characters of another, particularly in bibliographic, documentation and library work, is to facilitate classifying, in alphabetical order, documents or cards in languages using differing alphabets. Conversion permits also the reproduction of texts written in various alphabets by readily available mechanical devices, such as the typewriter.

The methods of conversion most commonly used are the following:

*Transcription.* The operation of representing the elements of a language, either sounds or signs, however they may be written originally, in any other written system of letters or sound signs.

*Transliteration.* The operation of representing the characters (letters or signs) of one alphabet by those of another, in principle letter by letter. This method of conversion is applied specifically when representing one purely literal alphabet such as Cyrillic by another literal alphabet, such as Roman.

These methods are applicable to conversion from any alphabet to another, resulting in Romanization, Arabization, Cyrillization, etc.

Romanization, for example, is a form of conversion in which letters of the Roman alphabet are made to represent languages using other characteristics or signs.

In conversion, it is important to avoid ambiguity and at the same time to maintain the utmost simplicity and the most direct relationship of each letter or sign to its counterpart.

In transliteration, letter for letter equivalence is ideal, but absolute consistency of application may not be possible. In some cases, diacritical marks or letter groups may be used, but they should be kept to a minimum. In designing any system of transliteration, a particular effort should be made to achieve direct reversibility insofar as this is possible, to facilitate reconstitution of the text in its original form should this be necessary.

Eventual acceptance by a substantial number of users should be kept constantly in mind while developing such a system.

Further, if there is in existence a widely accepted system of conversion, it should be used as the basis for establishing an international Recommendation, unless some other better system appears likely to gain general acceptance.

**TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION  
OF GREEK CHARACTERS INTO LATIN CHARACTERS**

No.	Greek to Latin		No.	Greek to Latin			
1	Α	α	A, a	13	Ν	ν	N, n
2	Β	β	B, b	14	Ξ	ξ	X, x
3	Γ	γ	G, g	15	Ο	ο	O, o
4	Δ	δ	D, d	16	Π	π	P, p
5	Ε	ε	E, e	17	Ρ	ρ	R, r
6	Ζ	ζ	Z, z	18	Σ	σ (final)	S, s
7	Η	η	Ē, ē	19	Τ	τ	T, t
8*	Θ	θ	Th, th	20	Υ	υ	U, u
9	Ι	ι	I, i	21	Φ	φ	F, f
10	Κ	κ	K, k	22	Χ	χ	H, h
11	Λ	λ	L, l	23*	Ψ	ψ	Ps, ps
12	Μ	μ	M, m	24	Ω	ω	Ō, ō

\* The exceptional combinations τχ and πσ should be separated in transliteration by a dot, thus t.h and p.s.