

# ISO

Revisée

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

## ISO RECOMMENDATION R 9

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM  
FOR THE TRANSLITERATION OF CYRILLIC CHARACTERS

1<sup>st</sup> EDITION  
October 1955

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## BRIEF HISTORY

Recommendation ISO/R 9 "International System for the Transliteration of Cyrillic Characters" was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46—Documentation, the Secretariat of which is held by the Nederlands Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur (N.I.D.E.R.) on behalf of the Hoofdcmissie voor de Normalisatie in Nederland (H.C.N.N.).

The Technical Committee began the study of this question in 1947 by resuming the work of the former International Federation of the National Standardizing Associations (ISA). A draft proposal drawn up by the ISA in 1939 was discussed at the first meeting of ISO/TC 46 held at the Hague in June, 1948. A second proposal submitted by the United Kingdom Member Body was examined at the second plenary meeting (Ascona, April 1950), and adopted by the Technical Committee as a Draft ISO Recommendation.

This Draft ISO Recommendation was submitted to all the ISO Member Bodies in February, 1951; it did not, however, meet with the approval of the majority of Member Bodies.

A proposal for a second Draft ISO Recommendation was discussed at the fourth plenary meeting of ISO/TC 46 (Copenhagen, 1952) and adopted by the Technical Committee.

This second Draft Recommendation was circulated to all the ISO Member Bodies in March, 1953, and was approved by the following 20 out of 34 Member Bodies:

Austria	Israel	Portugal
Chile	Italy	United Kingdom
Denmark	Mexico	Spain
France	Netherlands	Sweden
Germany	New Zealand	Switzerland
Hungary	Pakistan	Yugoslavia
Ireland	Poland	

Taking into consideration the observations submitted by various Member Bodies, the Secretariat made a few modifications to the text of the Draft.

At its fifth plenary meeting (Brussels, June 1954), the Technical Committee decided to complete the Draft by adding an "Introductory note on the general principles of transliteration" (see page 4 of the Recommendation).

The revised text, completed by the introductory note, was examined by the ISO Council at its meeting held in Geneva in September, 1954. The Council decided to accept this text as an ISO RECOMMENDATION, subject to the addition of a note concerning the utilization of characters No. 5, 14, and 41 (Resolution No. 12, Council 1954). The detailed explanations asked for by the ISO Council are given in notes 1 and 3 at the bottom of page 6, and in note 5 at the bottom of page 7.

**INTRODUCTORY NOTE**  
**ON THE**  
**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF transliteration**

The principles outlined below have served as a guide to Technical Committee ISO/TC 46 in the preparation of this Recommendation.

Transliteration is the operation of representing the characters or signs of any one alphabet by those of any other, but this note refers only to transliteration of non-Latin alphabets into the Latin alphabet.<sup>1)</sup> The sole purpose of transliteration, used chiefly for bibliographical and library work, is to enable texts in non-Latin alphabets to be reproduced by typewriters or other devices possessing only Latin characters, possibly with just the barely essential supplementary signs (diacriticals, etc.) added.

It is a question of representing characters or signs, not sounds—and this is what distinguishes transliteration from transcription—a matter of representing characters as they are written, rather than according to their phonetic or etymological values.

Transliteration can, and should, be automatic, so that it can be done by anyone able to identify the language of the original; and it should be possible for anyone with an adequate knowledge of this language to re-establish the text in its original characters.

There must be no ambiguity: a given character or sign should always be transliterated consistently and, in principle, a single character in one alphabet should always correspond to a single character in the other(s). The use of two letters for a single character is acceptable only when the Latin alphabet offers no other reasonable possibility (e.g. Cyrillic И and Greek Ψ), and then it should be a two-letter combination ruling out any ambiguous interpretation.

Diacriticals are added when necessary, but signs not available on (for instance) Latin-alphabet typewriter keyboards are used as little as possible.

<sup>1)</sup> Also termed "Roman alphabet".

## INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSLITERATION OF CYRILLIC CHARACTERS

1. The table appearing on pages 6 and 7 of the present Recommendation is the standard international system for the transliteration of Cyrillic characters.
2. Items transliterated according to this system are to be indicated by the letters ISO between square brackets:

[ISO]

3. If so desired, the standard international system for the transliteration of Cyrillic characters may be supplemented by a recognized national system of transliteration, based on the characteristics of the non-Slav language concerned.
4. A Cyrillic character which does not occur in the alphabet of any given Slavonic language, and for which there is no transliteration in the appropriate column of the table on pages 6 and 7, may be transliterated by the transliteration given for that character in any other column.
5. **Macedonian**, recently constituted as a literary language, is written in Cyrillic script and transliterated in the same way as Serbian. It has, in addition, the two characters К' and Г' transliterated k' or k' and g' or g.
6. The diacriticals to be used, especially in printed documents, are those given in the table on pages 6 and 7. For typescripts (and documents reproduced from typescripts) these may be replaced conventionally by other signs according to the following principles:

A **double sign** by a different **double sign**:

∨ by ^ or " or " (No. 10, 34, 35, 36, 37)

" by " (No. 8, 15)

A **single sign** by a different **single sign**:

by ' (No. 29)

by ' (No. 5, 42).

## 7. TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

Cyrillic Character		Transliteration from:					Examples and Remarks
		Bulgarian	Russian	Ukrainian	White Russian	Serbian	
1	А, а	a	a	a	a	a	Адрес = Adres
2	Б, б	b	b	b	b	b	Баба = Baba
3	В, в	v	v	v	v	v	Вы = Vy
4	Г, г	g	g	g	g	g	Глава = Glava Голова = Golova
5	Ґ, ґ			ḡ <sup>1)</sup>	ḡ <sup>1)</sup>		Ґреци = Ġreci
6	Д, д	d	d	d	d	d	Да = Da
7	Ђ, ђ					đ	Croat <i>dj</i> and <i>gj</i> changed to <i>đ</i> in alphabetized headings.
8 <sup>2)</sup>	Е, е (ѐ)	e	e (ѐ)	e	e (ѐ)	e	Ещё = Eščë
9	Є, є			je			Твое = Tvoje
10	Ж, ж	ž	ž	ž	ž	ž	Журнал = Žurnal
11	З, з	z	z	z	z	z	Звезда = Zvezda
12	С, с						(Used only in Macedonian).
13	И, и	i	i	y	i		Или = Ili
14	І, і	i	i <sup>3)</sup>	i	i	i	Білий = Bilyj
15	Ї, ї			ji			Їада = Jizda
16	Ј, ј					j	Јован = Jovan
17	Й, й	j	j	j	j		-ый, -ий, -ой = -yj, -ij, -oj
18	К, к	k	k	k	k	k	Как = Kak
19	Л, л	l	l	l	l	l	Любить = Ljubit'
20	Љ, љ					lj	Љубав = Ljubav
21	М, м	m	m	m	m	m	Муж = Muž
22	Н, н	n	n	n	n	n	Нижний = Nižnij

<sup>1)</sup> Character No. 5 is no longer utilized in Ukrainian or in White Russian.

<sup>2)</sup> Cyrillic *ѐ* to be transliterated by *ë* only when the diacritical appears in the original.

<sup>3)</sup> Character No. 14 is no longer utilized in Russian.