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Agenda Item	3 - Input of the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG to the VASAB Ministerial Conference
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Background

The VASAB Ministerial Conference will take place on 26 September 2014 in Tallinn, Estonia. VASAB CSPD/BSR agreed on 11 April 2014 on the text of the draft VASAB Tallinn Declaration as found attached to this document. It has initiated national consultations organized via VASAB focal points and consultations with pan-Baltic organizations about the main themes and proposals to the text of the draft VASAB Tallinn Declaration. The deadline for comments is on 11 June 2014.

The VASAB CSPD/BSR further agreed that comments by the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG can be provided at HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG 9-2014. These comments will be reviewed by the VASAB Open Troika meeting on 18 June 2014 and the text corrected – at the VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting on 25-26 June 2014 in Helsinki, Finland.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to

- consider the draft VASAB Tallinn Declaration,
- provide comments,
- agree on the proposed wording.



2

Tallinn Declaration

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4 Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB) is an intergovernmental co-operation of ministers
5 responsible for spatial planning and development of Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia,
6 Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden. VASAB is part of the network of the Council of
7 the Baltic Sea States.

8 VASAB prepares policy options for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region and provides a forum for
9 exchange of know-how on spatial planning and development between the Baltic Sea countries. VASAB
10 recommends transnational policy measures, promotes methodology development and co-operation projects,
11 co-operates with other pan-Baltic initiatives and promotes a dialogue with sector institutions. For fulfilling
12 those tasks, VASAB takes into account also strategies and policies, adopted on European, European Union, pan-
13 Baltic and national levels and provides inputs to that.

14 (1) The Ministers, having met on the 8th Conference and the 20th anniversary of first VASAB common
 15 strategic document – Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010, agreed on December 7th
 16 and 8th 1994, also known as the Tallinn Document – upon the invitation of Estonia in Tallinn on
 17 September 26th, 2014 to follow the implementation progress of previous decisions and to
 18 contemplate on new planning and development challenges the Baltic Sea Region is facing, have
 19 adopted the following Declaration.

20 **The Ministers,**

21 (2) **Recognising** the importance of the integrated and balanced territorial development of the Baltic
 22 Sea Region,

23 (3) **Emphasising** the leading role of VASAB in spatial planning and development co-operation in the
 24 Baltic Sea Region, both land and sea,

25 (4) **Underlining** the long tradition and importance of currently 22 years of close and exemplary
 26 intergovernmental co-operation, between all 11 countries on equal terms, which has led to the
 27 formulation of visions, strategies, joint actions and projects, raised awareness about spatial
 28 planning and development and influenced the designing of policies, planning processes and
 29 legislation at different levels,

30 (5) **Acknowledging** the importance of the goals set out in the Council of the Baltic Sea States Vilnius
 31 Declaration on a vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020, adopted at the 8th Baltic Sea States
 32 Summit on June 1st and 2nd 2010, and the necessity for the actions to achieve those goals,

33 (6) **Expressing satisfaction** with the work done between ministerial conferences by the Committee
 34 on Spatial Planning and Development in the Baltic Sea Region (the Committee) in implementing
 35 Vilnius Declaration, adopted by ministers in 2009, and the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the
 36 Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region till 2030 (VASAB LTP),

37 (7) **Stressing** the relevance especially of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
 38 (EUSBSR) and of the ‘Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal
 39 District of Russia until 2020’ as important foci for VASAB co-operation, and pointing out the
 40 possibilities for VASAB to initiate joint actions and projects, which contribute to implementing
 41 both strategies,

42 (8) **Emphasising** that VASAB, acting as a Leader for Horizontal Action Spatial Planning of EUSBSR has
 43 obtained new possibilities to promote maritime and land-based spatial planning, important for
 44 the Baltic Sea Region,

45 (9) **Welcoming** the progress in introduction of maritime spatial planning by the Member States, the
 46 Strategy of the Development of Maritime Activity of the Russian Federation till 2030, as well as
 47 the recently adopted¹ European Union Framework Directive for Maritime Spatial Planning,

48 (10) **Welcoming with satisfaction** the well-established co-operation between VASAB and Baltic
 49 Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) on introduction of the coherent maritime

¹ The Directive is expected to be finally adopted in May 2014

50 spatial planning in the Baltic Sea, the jointly developed Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning
 51 Roadmap 2013-2020 and other results of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning
 52 Working Group, which was formed after the 7th VASAB Ministerial Conference in 2009,

53 **(11) Recognising achievements** of the Member States and the Committee in implementing the VASAB
 54 LTP and tackling the important challenges pointed out in Vilnius Declaration such as promoting
 55 accessibility and connectivity in the Region, urban networking and urban-rural cooperation,
 56 developing territorial monitoring system for the Region, initiating joint actions and transnational
 57 co-operation projects, which contribute to solving of respective territorial development issues in
 58 the Baltic Sea Region,

59 **(12) Highlighting** the need to continue the implementation of VASAB LTP, tackling also the new
 60 challenges,

61 **Ministers would like to point out the following main challenges for spatial** 62 **planning and development co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region:**

63 **Territorial development**

64 **(13)** It is crucial to ensure global competitiveness and attractiveness of the Baltic Sea Region. The
 65 following global, European and macro-regional tendencies need to be tackled by co-ordinated
 66 policy response: adverse territorial consequences of population change e.g. ageing and
 67 migration; continued growth of metropolitan areas and urban sprawl, resulting in the increasing
 68 commuting; new configuration of trade routes; growing pressure on sea resources and increasing
 69 sea use conflicts; climate change affecting the living conditions and environment.

70 **(14)** Over the last decade there have been changes in the trends influencing territorial and regional
 71 development in the Baltic Sea Region. The former economic divide in the Region has transformed
 72 into a more complex one, where social differences play a more important role. The capitals and
 73 other large urban regions in the eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region are catching up with other
 74 regions in the western part in terms of economic wealth. Urban-rural polarisation has increased
 75 in many of the Baltic Sea Region countries.

76 **(15)** Place-based and integrated territorial development approaches contribute to effectiveness and
 77 efficiency of development policies by identifying properly territorial resources and stimulating
 78 internal development potential, as well as adjusting the different policies to local conditions.
 79 That requires enhancing the dialogue and co-operation between authorities at different policy
 80 areas and administrative levels, participation of stakeholders and local communities.

81 **(16)** There is still a continued need for closer co-operation in the issues of EUSBSR and the 'Strategy of
 82 social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020', to
 83 more fully exploit the development potential embedded in both strategies.

84 **Maritime spatial planning coherent with land-based planning**

85 **(17)** The Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2013-2020 directs all Baltic Sea Region
 86 countries to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans by 2020 in a coherent way across the
 87 borders, including exclusive economic zones.

88 (18) Interactions between marine and terrestrial space demand coherent interlinking of maritime
 89 spatial planning with land based spatial planning. The aim of maritime spatial planning is to lay
 90 down the basis for sustainable maritime development and to facilitate blue growth, reconciling
 91 the needs of different human activities with safeguarding the environment.

92 (19) An improvement of the foundations and tools for maritime spatial planning is needed. The legal
 93 basis and institutional setup have to be developed taking into account common Baltic Sea
 94 approach.

95 **Urban networking and urban-rural co-operation in functional regions**

96 (20) A new approach to regional development is needed that recognises both the importance of big
 97 urban regions as drivers of growth and innovation, as well as the potential of other types of
 98 regions. An advanced urban-rural partnership is of additional value to both types of territories.

99 (21) In most of the countries there is a growing development gap between metropolitan and other
 100 regions. Smaller urban areas and rural areas are to provide significant contribution to aggregate
 101 growth by developing appropriate strategies.

102 (22) Many regions face the challenge of planning under the conditions of declining population, while
 103 at the same time trying to promote better living conditions and quality of life. Flexible solutions
 104 are needed to promote development alternatives.

105 **Territorial integration of the Baltic Sea Region, connectivity and accessibility**

106 (23) The Baltic Sea Region poses specific challenges regarding physical accessibility: there are long
 107 distances, a great extent of the sea areas, the combined use of all different transport modes
 108 needs special attention, and there are significant differences in population density, which lead to
 109 maintenance of infrastructure regardless of its low efficiency. Connectivity and accessibility in
 110 Baltic Sea Region, links between the Region and Europe's core areas, also between the Region
 111 and other neighbouring regions, are amongst the key development issues in the Baltic Sea
 112 Region.

113 (24) There are important links missing or inadequately developed, especially in North-South direction.
 114 Wider transnational co-operation is needed to overcome these missing links and bottlenecks.
 115 Another key challenge for the countries is to interconnect in the best way Trans-European,
 116 national and regional intermodal transport networks.

117 **Sustainable production and use of energy**

118 (25) Energy efficiency and access to energy is of high importance for all societies. In the Baltic Sea
 119 Region the important energy challenges are: interconnection of national energy networks,
 120 developing sustainable and green energy, achieving proper balance between centralised and
 121 decentralised energy production and increased energy efficiency and energy saving, which need
 122 to be promoted through appropriate planning solutions.

123 (26) Energy production, distribution and consumption have considerable territorial implications on
 124 land and sea areas, which often go beyond national borders. Spatial planning can contribute to
 125 the use of varied renewable energy sources and promoting more environmentally sound
 126 solutions. One of growing interests in the years to come will be the building of offshore wind

127 farms. When developing energy solutions, public awareness and participation should be ensured
128 from an early phase and throughout the planning process.

129 **Future tasks for VASAB**

130 **The Ministers,**

131 (27)Ask the present and coming chairmanships and Member States to implement this Declaration
132 and the VASAB LTP by allocating adequate resources and making use of existing structures, by
133 ensuring better visibility of the VASAB LTP, by taking the decisive responsibility for its execution,
134 by evaluating on a regular basis the implementation progress of the VASAB LTP, and – upon the
135 need – by deciding on new actions.

136 (28)Encourage the Member States to make use of and consider the VASAB strategic documents when
137 designing national policies, sectorial strategies and planning documents.

138 (29)Urge the Member States and the Committee to initiate and to support territorial development
139 projects, fully exploiting the potential of all relevant financing instruments, especially of the
140 trans-national Baltic Sea Region Programme.

141 (30)Instruct the Committee to observe the territorial development processes in the Baltic Sea Region,
142 using the monitoring system developed by ESPON BSR-TeMo Project and to report the findings to
143 the Ministers and to the relevant stakeholders.

144 (31)Call for closer co-operation between all of the Baltic Sea Region countries and instruct the
145 Member States and the Committee to carefully analyse correlations between the EUSBSR and
146 the 'Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia
147 until 2020' in specific thematic fields and to propose solutions how to synchronise actions and to
148 develop joint projects.

149 (32)Seek VASAB to continue co-operate closely with other relevant pan-Baltic organisations and
150 stakeholders.

151 (33)Encourage the Committee to continue introducing, promoting and following up maritime spatial
152 planning in Baltic Sea Region by using the potential of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial
153 Planning Working Group and enhance co-operation between Member States.

154 (34)Encourage the Member States to implement the Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning
155 Roadmap 2013-2020, agreeing that the ultimate goal is to draw up and to apply maritime spatial
156 plans throughout the Region by 2020.

157 (35)Call up the Committee to organise and animate a network of maritime spatial planning experts
158 and practitioners in order to accumulate and to share the experience to be used for planning,
159 also to initiate and arrange the Baltic Sea Region-wide events on maritime spatial planning, while
160 making use of the framework set by the European Union Framework Directive for Maritime
161 Spatial Planning in relation to the EU Member States.

162 (36)Encourage the Member States to closely co-operate in the planning, designing, building and
163 operating of intelligent multi-modal green transport corridors as the main connecting lines –

- 164 especially North-South corridors such as Rail Baltica Corridor, including fast railway connection,
165 on the eastern coast and Bothnian Corridor on the western coast of the Baltic Sea.
- 166 (37)Ask the Committee to observe intensively the regional effects of the European transport
167 infrastructure and to support actions and projects, using potential of Trans-European Transport
168 Networks (TEN-T) for regional development and improving its connectivity to regional transport
169 networks, in order to promote territorial cohesion.
- 170 (38)Instruct the Committee to co-operate closely with the Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation
171 (BASREC), in order to address important territorial challenges of sustainable production,
172 distribution and use of energy, and to develop joint solutions, especially those related to the
173 renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- 174 (39)Ask the Committee to contribute to better adaptation of strategies to different types of areas,
175 especially: for Baltic Sea Region metropolises and large cities, for small and medium-sized towns
176 and their functional areas, as well as for rural areas, with focus on supporting the development
177 of cross-border functional areas, enhancing the development role of the metropolises in their
178 wider vicinity, promoting urban-rural partnership, and promoting success stories of innovative
179 small and medium-sized towns, drawing on experience from case studies and on co-operation
180 with Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Co-operation (BSSSC) and Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC).
- 181 (40)Underline the need to apply place-based approaches to development policies at national,
182 regional and local level, and encourage the Committee to act as a platform for sharing
183 knowledge and best practices on such approach and on co-operation inside functional areas.
- 184 (41)Reconfirm the commitment to co-operate on the issues of spatial planning and development of
185 the Baltic Sea Region. To ensure smooth co-operation, the Ministers hereby agree to continue
186 co-operation in the form of ministerial conferences and meetings of senior officials (the
187 Committee), reinforce the previous commitment to continue the work of VASAB Secretariat, and
188 ask the Member States to provide the Committee and the Secretariat with resources needed to
189 implement the tasks highlighted in this Declaration, according to the rules used by the Council of
190 the Baltic Sea States and according to national annual budgetary decisions.
- 191 (42)Ask the Estonian chairmanship, in co-operation with the Committee and the Secretariat, to
192 distribute this Declaration to relevant national, Baltic, European and global actors.
- 193 (43)Decide that the next Ministerial Conference will focus on ...² and ask the chairmanship concerned
194 to prepare a progress report with the assistance of the Committee.

² This is to be decided later on this year.