



FROM TALLINN TO VILNIUS



Sirpa Pietikäinen,
Minister of the Environment of Finland, 1991-1995

“The new political situation in Northern Central Europe has activated the discussion on new directions for co-operation between the states and cities bordering the Baltic basin. The primary reasons are economic- new markets are opening up. Along with this development a new regional structure of the Baltic basin is emerging. New connections between cities and regions will be established across the national borders. Cities and towns will adopt new roles in the framework of the international division of labour. Under these circumstances the need of international cooperation in the field of regional planning is evident.”

/Speech at Ministerial Conference, August 20-21, 1992, Karlskrona, Sweden/

“The VASAB 2010 process served as an eye-opener for Europe. It demonstrated transnational political interest in shaping common territorial strategies for a macro- region- the Baltic Sea Region. It also demonstrated the high spirit of transnational cooperation between stakeholders representing different sectors, regions and cities, enforcing the competitive potential of the region. This drive stimulated the decision at European level to enlarge the EC INTERREG Programme with a new strand for transnational cooperation, leading to pan-European coverage of transnational areas of cooperation. Focusing on the territory as a unit of analyses and policy making, it promoted an integrated approach dealing with cities, infrastructure and open spaces. It took the first steps showing Europe that place-based policy matters and that development potential of regions, cities and larger territories are becoming increasingly dependent on a larger territorial and often global context.”



Peter Mehlbye,
Director of the ESPON Coordination Unit
Danish official in the VASAB process 1992-1997

VASAB COOPERATION

Political changes at the beginning of 1990's stimulated the need for long term vision and transnational spatial planning of the Baltic Sea Region. By the kick-off support of the Swedish minister for Physical Planning Ms Görel Thurdin the first regional Ministerial Conference took place on August 20-21, 1992, in Karlskrona, Sweden with the participation of almost all countries and regions around the Baltic Sea. The ministers agreed to start a joint strategic planning process and to draft the first spatial development concept for the Baltic Sea Region.

Strategic Baltic Planning will provide knowledge for planning at local, regional and national level in the different countries as well as for business strategies and for analysis of how national sectoral decisions impact on the land use in the Baltic Sea Region. The future Baltic Sea Region could be regarded as an economical and cultural group of countries, cities and districts that strengthen welfare development through the Baltic Sea by means of a rich network of institutions, organizations and people at all levels of society.

*The Baltic Institute
August 5, 1992, Karlskrona*

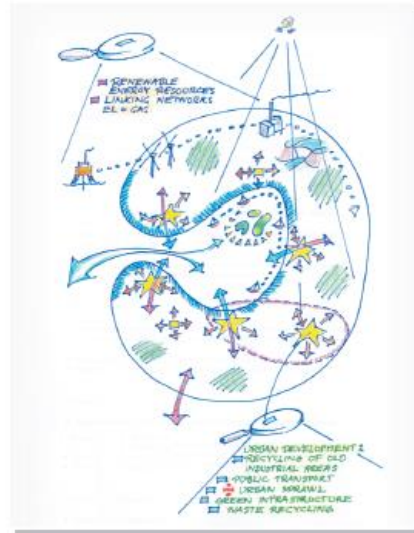
The initiative became institutionalised at the Tallinn Ministerial Conference in December 1994 with the adoption of the "Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010" (VASAB 2010) report. This document became the first transnational vision for spatial development worldwide therefore setting the new trend in common understanding and joint actions.

VASAB 2010 Report described common principles and spatial structures of the Region through the three elements: systems of cities and urban settlements, the interlining infrastructure networks and selected types of land uses in non-urban areas.



Gdansk,
Sixth Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development 2005

In October 1996 the Stockholm Ministerial Conference supported practical steps in implementing VASAB 2010 Report by adopting policy document "From Vision to Action" containing the most important common projects and actions. It also endorsed „Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the Baltic Sea Region” in order to support sustainable development of coastal areas. As tasked by Ministerial Conference, VASAB played an active role in developing Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, in particular by thorough contribution to the Baltic 21 in 1998 "Spatial Planning for Sustainable Development in the BSR" that underlined crucial importance of spatial planning to the weaving of sector policies into sustainable policies for territorial settings.

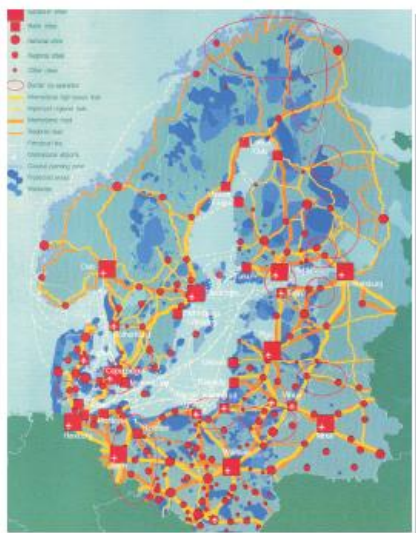


VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme was adopted by Wismar Ministerial Conference in September 2001 supplying a common platform which guided the spatial planning and development community for the next years. VASAB 2010 Plus Report reflected experience made during the first eight years of cooperation. VASAB 2010 Plus Report selected six key themes requiring joint actions. Ministers suggested creation of a common tool for funding transnational spatial development projects on the basis of EU INTERREG, Phare and Tacis programs.

The Gdansk Ministerial Conference in September 2005 acknowledged new challenges that followed the EU enlargement as well as new approach to spatial planning and development in Russia. Recommendations of the Policy Document "Connecting Potentials" prepared for the Conference were intended to help to react to these changes and prepare for future challenges. Following the encouragement of the CBSS ministers instructed the CSD/BSR to prepare long term perspective for the spatial development of the Baltic Sea Region under active participation of the regional authorities and in a dialog with relevant pan-Baltic organizations.

15 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AFTER TALLINN

Defined common vision and principles for sustainable spatial development in the Baltic Sea Region. VASAB was the first in the Region to highlight transnational spatial planning as cross-sector integrating tool. The *VASAB 2010 Report* (1994) contains a common vision and recommendations for future transnational actions and demonstrates possible ways how to make the principles of sustainable development operational. Specific attention was paid to the South-East parts of the BSR where transition and EU accession has led to particular challenges for sustainable development.



Inspired transnational spatial planning policy documents within the framework of CEMAT and EU. The VASAB initiative has inspired the “Baltic Sea Region Initiative” of the European Commission. Having been the first transnational document of that kind, the *VASAB 2010 Report* (1994) has influenced other transnational spatial planning documents, like framework towards greater spatial integration “Vision Planet”. This applies in particular to the “European Spatial Development Perspective” (1999), and to the “Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent” (2000) prepared in the framework of CEMAT. Transnational spatial development perspectives and programmes developed for other European regions under INTERREG II C were drawn on VASAB examples.

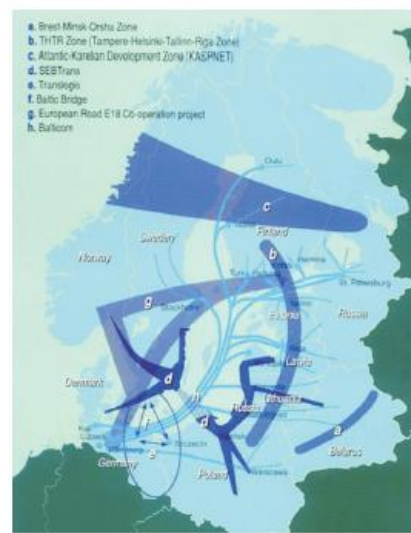
Provided forum for discussions on the spatial policy issues within the Baltic Sea Region. Joint work on VASAB reports, projects and conferences have contributed to a common understanding of spatial planning principles and inspired for spatial planning and development responsible bodies within participating countries, regions and different sectors.

Improved basic knowledge on spatial development processes and challenges in the Baltic Sea Region. Based on the analysis of spatial structures, development assets, potentials and integrative trends a better understanding of spatial processes in the BSR is achieved.

Initiated integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and maritime spatial planning process in the Baltic Sea Region. The Stockholm Ministerial Conference in 1996 introduced “Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the BSR”. As the next step BALTCOAST project developed balancing mechanisms between different demands in land and water areas and produced “Recommendation on the role of spatial planning in ICZM and sea use planning”. The Wismar Declaration in 2001 emphasized enhancing of integrated development of coastal zones and islands, as well as spatial planning extension to off-shore side. PLANCOAST project linked ICZM and maritime planning with the processes of statutory spatial planning in selected number of pilot projects on the Baltic, Black Sea and Adriatic areas and developed a handbook on integrated maritime spatial planning. Maritime spatial planning was further promoted during the preparation of a Long Term Perspective.

Strengthened spatial planning at the national and regional level (with an emphasis on new EU countries). Joint transnational concepts prepared in the framework of VASAB and endorsed by Ministerial Conferences served as a reference for national spatial plans in the BSR. In addition, planning courses and the secondment of planners from transition countries to sister institutions in western countries was supported. Created Compendium of spatial planning system and legislation in the Baltic Sea Region delivered information on valid laws and regulations in the VASAB countries and provided access to the best practices and ideas.

Generated transnational cooperation projects. Concrete projects demonstrate the benefits from transnational cooperation in spatial planning and possibility to identify how to implement spatial development concepts, involving actors from local, regional and national levels.



Contributed to the INTERREG IIC and INTERREG IIIB operational programmes for the Baltic Sea Region and to overcoming incompatibilities among the INTERREG, Phare and Tacis programmes. The *VASAB 2010 Report*

contributed to the formulation of the INTERREG IIC Operational Programme. VASAB promoted INTERREG IIC among local and regional authorities, by organizing two kick-off conferences in Rostock and Karlskrona in 1997 and raising a considerable number of project proposals and assistance in searching of project partners, evaluation and approval as well as by supporting the implementation of key projects. The participation of partners from transitional countries in the projects was crucial but complicated. VASAB highlighted incompatibilities among INTERREG, Phare and Tacis programmes and worked towards integration of different EU support programmes to make room for really joint projects with all countries on equal footing.

Supported partnership between EU and non-EU countries. Co-operation in the framework of VASAB helped to identify areas of joint interest, and to initiate corresponding action. It maintains a dialogue on spatial development perspectives for the whole Baltic Sea Region, with a focus on reducing disparities, and removing barriers to transnational development. VASAB has become instrumental to bind EU territories together with non-EU BSR countries. It has facilitated action in transition

countries complementary to cooperation projects within the EU. Non-EU countries of the BSR were invited to the decision making structures on almost equal basis.



Salsjöbaden, members of CSD/BSR 1996



Istanbul, HABITAT World Conference 1996



Gdansk, Sixth Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development 2005

ORGANIZATION

VASAB - Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010 - is a co-operation of ministers responsible for spatial planning and development of 11 countries of the Baltic Sea Region, including Belarus. The highest decision making body of VASAB is the Ministerial Conference.

During the periods between the ministerial conferences VASAB is steered by the Committee on Spatial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (CSD/BSR) composed of representatives of respective BSR ministries and regional authorities of Russia and Germany. VASAB chairmanship is one year long and is based on the CBSS chairmanship rotation principle. The first CSD/BSR met in 1995 in Warsaw.

CSD/BSR is supported by an interim Secretariat with permanent staff. It was initially located at Karlskrona, Sweden, from 1994 to 2007 - in Gdansk, Poland and since January 2007 - in Riga, Latvia.

VASAB FP AND CSD CHAIRMANSHIP

1. Mr Jan Kuligowski (PL): December 1992- February 1994
2. Ms Sirka Hautojärvi (FI): February 1994- December 1994
3. Mr Jacek Szlachta (PL): January 1995- June 1995
4. Mr Bo Kjellen (SE): July 1995- June 1996
5. Ms Dzintra Upmace (LV): July 1996- June 1997
6. Mr Niels Østergård (DK): July 1997- June 1998
7. Mr Aleksandras Gordevičius (LT): July 1998- June 1999
8. Mr Terje Lind (NO): July 1999- June 2000
9. Mr Bernhard Heinrichs (DE): July 2000- October 2001
10. Mr Sergey Narishkin (RU): November 2001- June 2002
11. Ms Ulla Koski (FI): July 2002- June 2003
12. Mr Allan Gromov (EE): July 2003- June 2004
13. Mr Zbigniew Rykowski (PL): July 2004-December 2005
14. Mr Olle Lundgren (SE): January 2006-June 2007
15. Mr Edgars Zalāns / Mr Gunārs Anšiš (LV): July 2007- June 2008
16. Mr Peter Pouplier (DK): July 2008- June 2009
17. Mr Aleksandras Gordevičius (LT): July 2009-

REFLECTIONS 2009



“ VASAB 2010 was the first governmental initiative on cooperation with Russia, the Baltic States, the Nordic countries and the Member states of the EU (EG) after the fall of the wall. A bond of solidarity strengthening the Regions of Europe and assisting the move of the centre of Europe eastwards. The visionary work in combination with common established planning instruments resulted for the first time in a common cross-border and integrated transnational spatial development perspective. VASAB has been a forerunner in strengthening regional cooperation in the BSR and providing a model for other macro regions neighbouring a common sea. ”

Görel Thurdin,

President of the Swedish National Committee for UNESCO
President of the Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Society in the Västernorrland Region
Minister for Physical Planning of Sweden 1991-1994



“ For the Republic of Belarus VASAB is a pattern of best practice of international cooperation and integration of professional ideas for spatial development around the Baltic Sea. Common priorities and goals of VASAB addressed to implementation of development programmes around the Baltic Region are remaining vital during last fifteen years. The ideas of VASAB have found their reflection in National Plan of Spatial Development of Belarus until 2015, in the national programs for development of infrastructure, renewal of small-sized towns and rural settlements, conservation of historical and cultural heritage, protection of natural reserves on the territory of Belarus considering it like a part of Europe. ”

Anatoly Nichkasov,

Deputy Minister of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus
Belarusian official in the VASAB process 1992-1996



“ Work on VASAB Tallinn report was so successful largely thanks to Sirkka Hautojärvi who was Chairperson of the Group of the Focal Points a year before the Tallinn conference. Thanks to her equanimous and decent facilitation this group became so creative and enthusiastic and the result so well balanced. Another aspect that influenced this process was that three countries (Denmark, Sweden and Finland) had just finished their National Spatial Development documents and had experience what should be the content and how to build up the process of the preparation of so comprehensive spatial development document. Participation at the preparation of VASAB Tallinn report was for me my second university my spatial planning university. Great thanks to all Focal Point Group members, who were teachers and pupils of this university at the same time. ”

Jüri Lass,

Head of Spatial Planning Department of
Estonian Ministry of Environment/Interior until September 2008
Estonian official in the VASAB process 1992-2004, Chairman of VASAB CSD 2003-2004



“ The VASAB experience has served several purposes, political and technical ones. It aimed at contributing to sustainable and balanced development and a common identity of the Baltic Sea Region. When it started shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain it mixed highly developed areas of Europe with those which were among the poorest but then grew at very high rate. In this context the VASAB process can be regarded as a success story in East-West-Cooperation. VASAB has been a useful forum for creating a common understanding of the needs and ways of spatial planning and development. It started with an overall vision (Tallinn 1994) followed by action programmes (Wismar 2001 and Gdansk 2005) as well as “flag projects” implemented under INTERREG programmes. For the EU the Baltic Sea cooperation in general and the VASAB experience in particular served as a reference for shaping the transnational strand of INTERREG programmes. ”

Bernhard Heinrichs,

Vice-president of the German Academy for Spatial Research and Planning German MV official in the VASAB process 1993- 2008,
Chairman of VASAB CSD on behalf of the German Federal Ministry BMVBW 2000-2001



“ The VASAB work has from the very beginning been a challenge of transnational cooperation in a time of transition among our countries and a springboard for a professional career in spatial planning in a Baltic and European context. The cultural elements of the Baltic cooperation have been evident and a strong driving force in developing a mutual understanding of the role of planning for sustainability, friendship and solidarity. ”

Bo Lövendahl,

Head of VASAB Secretariat 1993-1995

VASAB CSD/BSR CONTACTS



BY: Ministry of Architecture and Construction

Visit: www.mas.by



DK: Ministry of the Environment
Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning

Visit: www.blst.dk



EE: Ministry of the Interior

Visit: www.siseministeerium.ee



FI: Ministry of the Environment

Visit: www.ymparisto.fi



DE: Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs

Visit: www.bmvbs.de

Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning

Visit: www.bbr.bund.de

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Ministry for Transport, Building and Regional Development

Visit: www.regierung-mv.de

Schleswig-Holstein: Ministry of the Interior

Visit: www.schleswig-holstein.de



LV: Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government

Visit: www.rapl.m.gov.lv



LT: Ministry of the Environment

Visit: www.am.lt



NO: Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Visit: www.regjeringen.no



PL: Ministry of Regional Development

Visit: www.mrr.gov.pl



RU: Ministry of Regional Development

Visit: www.minregion.ru

Kaliningrad Oblast: Ministry of Economy, Kaliningrad Oblast Government

Visit: www.gov.kaliningrad.ru

Pskov Oblast: Commission for Property Relations, Pskov Oblast Administration

Visit: www.pskov.ru

Saint Petersburg: St. Petersburg City Administration

Visit: www.gov.spb.ru



SE: Ministry of the Environment

Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications

Visit: www.sweden.gov.se

VASAB Secretariat
Elizabetes Str. 19, Riga, LV- 1010 , Latvia
Telephone.: + 371 67350630
Fax.: + 371 67350626
E-mail address: info@vasab.org