- Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea – is an intergovernmental co-operation of the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development of 11 countries of the Baltic Sea Region: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden. VASAB is part of the network of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The highest decision-making body of VASAB is the Ministerial Conference.

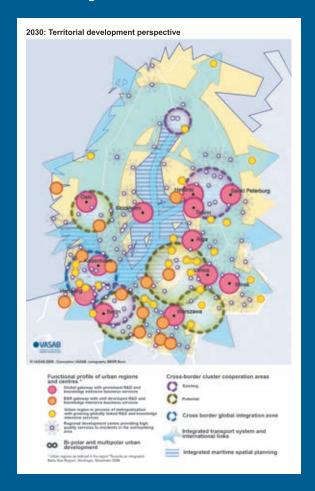
The VASAB 2010 Report, adopted by the VASAB ministers in Tallinn in 1994, contained the first commonly agreed transnational vision of the Baltic Sea Region which played a significant role for the spatial development of the whole Region.

Mission

VASAB prepares policy options for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region and provides a forum for exchange of know-how on spatial planning and development between the Baltic Sea countries. VASAB recommends transnational policy measures, promotes methodology development and co-operation projects, co-operates with other pan-Baltic initiatives, and promotes a dialogue with sector institutions.

The VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP), prepared for the period till 2030, was presented at the 7th VASAB Ministers Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania in October 2009. It presumes the territorial cohesion perspective of the Region in 2030: the Region is a well-integrated and coherent macro-region; it has overcome the socio-economic development divides between its individual parts and has turned the global challenges into assets; it is regarded a model for successful implementation of the territorial cohesion policy and effective cooperation between the European Union countries and the neighbouring countries for the development of a transnational area; the Baltic Sea is acknowledged as a common asset and a development recourse of all the countries, and the maritime spatial planning principles alleviate the potential sea use conflicts for the present and future generations.

Since 1994 the ministers are supported by the Committee on Spatial Planning and Development in the Baltic Sea Region (CSPD/BSR), composed of representatives of the respective ministries and regional authorities of Russia and Germany. Since 2007 VASAB secretariat is located in Riga, Latvia.



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VASAB OVER the YEARS

VASAB ACHIEVMENTS AND MAIN EVENTS

The 1st Ministerial Conference, Karlskrona, Sweden - A starting point for drafting the first spatial development concept for the Region, a Group of Focal Points set up, secretariat function provided by the Baltic Institute of Karlskrona

Görel Thurdin, Sweden, 1992: "We should be able to show the world the fabulous potential the Baltic Sea space represents."

The 2nd Ministerial Conference for Spatial Planning and Development, Gdansk, Poland - Interim Report "Towards a Framework for Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea Area"

Jan Kuligowski, Poland: "The Second Ministerial Conference in Gdańsk, which assessed results of the Group work, gave its blessing and guidelines for the final stretch. It is funny, but the strongest impression from that Conference, was my fascination by the performance of two ladies, who were Ministers from Sweden and Finland. I was impressed by their intellectual skills, competence in the subject of the conference, clear prioritisation, and eventually by their social, rhetorical and language skills. We had very few politicians of that calibre, not speaking about ladies-politicians, and I was honestly jealous and kept asking my Nordic friends: How do you manage to grow such stars?

The 3rd Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Tallinn, Estonia - Report "Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010. Towards a Framework for Spatial Development in the BSR", the Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea Region appointed and common interim secretariat established in Sweden

Secretariat transferred to Gdansk

The 4th Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Stockholm, Sweden - Report "From Vision to Action", support for launching regional Agenda 21, Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the Baltic Sea Region

Wilfried Görmar, Germany: "The most significant memory is the huge number of dedicated people with so different professional backgrounds, life stories and personalities met during my VASAB work both inside the VASAB Committee and outside it, as well in the framework of activities linked to VASAB issues. I also remember many controversial discussions, but always with the objective to find the most appropriate approaches, strategies and even wording. If it comes to suitable approaches – one sentence has probably determined our discussions more than any other: VASAB should always try to find the "right flight altitude", which means that VASAB should not work in a too detailed, too local, too specific way, at the same it should avoid a too broad, too global or too general approach. I started my VASAB work in 1996 in Jurmala, Latvia as a member of a Working group with the aim to elaborate "Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the BSR". The recommendations as such were adopted at the VASAB Ministerial Conference in 1996. It was an exciting joint work of officials and scientists of different countries around the Baltic Sea and it is interesting to see what has been developed on the basis of that work. To some extent it paved the way or was a first step towards maritime spatial planning, which is on today's agenda.

Baltic 21 activities commenced

Ulla Koski, Finland: "My first memories about VASAB are from the late 90's. My first impression was that it was something really new and unique. There had been a lot of organizations cooperating in different sectors in the Baltic Sea Region, but there was no cooperation on spatial issues, and VASAB was a pioneer in that field. VASAB has created a new kind of comprehensive understanding of the long-term future of the Baltic Sea Region. The first Vision paper in 1994 was some kind of revolution in this area, because at that time there were no comprehensive vision papers of this region. Still, in my opinion, the most important role of VASAB in the future is to increase the understanding of the importance of comprehensive planning."

Project "USUN - Urban Systems and Urban Networking in the BSR'

Project "MATROS - Maritime Transportation System in the Baltic Sea Region from a Spatial Development Perspective"

The 5th Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development in Wismar, Germany - Action Programme for Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea Region "VASAB 2010 Plus"

Project "BaltCoast - Recommendations on the role of spatial planning in Integrated Coastal Zone Management"

Project "COMMIN" - Promoting Spatial Development by Creating Common



2005

Project "BALANCE" - Baltic Sea Management - Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Ecosystem through Spatial Planning

The 6th Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Gdansk, Poland - Policy Document "Connecting Potentials"

2008

Project "PlanCoast"

VASAB Annual Conference "Future of our Baltic Europe territory", Warsaw, Poland

06 2007

Secretariat transferred to Riga Project "East West

Window'

VASAB Annual Conference "Baltic Sea Region Spatial Development Policies in European Context: Avenues to the Long

Bernhard Heinrichs, Germany: "During my involvement in VASAB work from 1993 till 2008 the emphasis of VASAB changed significantly from the more conceptual work of VASAB 2010 to influencing the process of the EU INTERREG programme and supporting specific flagship projects. But one

activity has been on-going: the exchange of spatial planning experience among the members of the VASAB CSPD. I gained a lot from this exchange." VASAB High Level Expert and Stakeholder Workshop on Maritime Spatial Planning Challenges in the Baltic Sea, Vilnius, Lithuania The 7th Conference of BSR Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Vilnius, Lithuania - VASAB Long-Term Perspective for

Kaunas, Lithuania

Project "BaltSeaPlan" Project "New Bridges"

VASAB Expert and Stakeholder Meeting on Demographic Trends and Labor Market Development,

VASAB Expert Workshop on Urban-Rural Partnerships in the Baltic Sea Region, Minsk, Belarus

Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region

The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group established

Baltic Sea Broad-Scale MSP principles adopted VASAB granted the status of the CBSS intergovernmental network



Jacek Zaucha, Poland: "The main motivation of the Scandinavian countries starting VASAB was to bring back they way of thinking to the former Soviet Union part of Europe. It was a Swedish initiative, especially by Görel Thurdin, and I must say – it was a long-term thinking. For me the real achievement of VASAB during these years is Maritime Spatial Planning, because we made a plan and we also implemented it. It was one of the issues that we put from conceptual phase into reality. In my opinion that is an unbelievable achievement. My great hope is that VASAB will continue. I do not believe that in the future the role of the VASAB is still in the better visions. I think that in the future VASAB can advance clear examples, where something real can be achieved, like MPS."

VASAB Annual Conference: Integrated Approach to Spatial Development of Europe - Meaning of Territorial Cohesion, Warsaw, Poland

2012

Project "PartiSEApate" - Multi-level Governance in MSP throughout the Baltic Sea Region

ESPON project "BSR-TeMo" - Territorial Monitoring for the Baltic Sea Region

Project EUSBSR TA-HAL - Technical Assistance to the EUSBSR Horizontal Action "Spatial Planning"

2013

Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Forum - PartiSEApate conference, Riga, Latvia

Kristine Rasina, Latvia: "VASAB is really an important bridge for getting people from all around the Baltic Sea region together. VASAB has very important role in coordinating MSP in the Baltic Sea Region, and now MSP is the most important thing for us. VASAB is not just a cooperation; it is the friendship between the countries around the Baltic Sea Region."

The 8th VASAB Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region, Tallinn, Estonia

Sirpa Pietikäinen, Finland: "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." (1992) I believe this quote is still valid, actually more valid than ever. The development of this regional structure has been slower than I had anticipated at the time. Successes of the division of labour are only gradually becoming visible. Improving connectivity in the region has often been faced by the lack of resources in too weak supranational structures. The development of the EU programs such as the TEN-T, the Energy Roadmap and the Rail Baltica are good examples of projects that should be pushed much more forcefully on the European Agenda."

VASAB CHAIRMANSHIPS

02.1992-02.1994 Mr Jan Kuligowski (PL)

02.1994-12.1994 Ms Sirka Hautojärvi (FI)

01.1995-06.1995 Mr Jacek Szlachta (PL) 07.1995–06.1996 **Mr Bo Kjellen** (SE)

07.1996-06.1997 **Ms Dzintra Upmace** (LV)

07.1997-06.1998 **Mr Niels Østergård** (DK)

07.1998–06.1999 Mr Aleksandras Gordevičius (LT)

07.1999–06.2000 **Mr Terje Lind** (NO)

07.2000–10.2001 Mr Bernhard Heinrichs (DE) 11.2001–06.2002 Mr Sergey Narishkin (RU)

07.2002-06.2003 **Ms Ulla Koski** (FI)

07.2003-06.2004 Mr Allan Gromov (EE)

07.2004–12.2005 **Mr Zbigniew Rykowski** (PL)

01.2006-06.2007 Mr Olle Lundgren (SE)

07.2007-06.2008 Mr Edgars Zalāns/Mr Gunārs Ansiņš (LV)

07.2008-06.2009 Mr Peter Pouplier (DK)

07.2009–06.2010 Mr Aleksandras Gordevičius (LT)

07.2010–06.2011 **Mr Arve Skjerpen** (NO) 07.2011-06.2012 Mr Wilfried Görmar (DE)

07.2012-06.2013 **Ms Elena Chuguyevskaya** (RU)

07.2013-06.2014 Ms Ulla Koski (FI)

07.2014-

Ms Martina Proosa (EE)