



Dear VASAB friends,

Hope you are enjoying the festivity vibe in the air! This time of the year we are usually looking back on what has been done so far and setting the goals for the upcoming year.

2023 has been a special year for VASAB – ministers responsible for spatial planning and development met this year in a beautiful city of Wismar in Germany to discuss the complex challenges related to the geopolitical and energy policy changes in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. **Ministers adopted Wismar Declaration, endorsed the new VASAB Vision 2040 and shared joint commitment to implement it.**

Implementation will be the key word for 2024, as VASAB Committee has started an active work on identifying tasks, project needs and potential activities that could help to achieve vibrant, resilient, well-connected Baltic Sea Region in 2040.

Find out more about key achievements of VASAB in 2023 and look what is planned for the 2024 in this newsletter.

**We wish you Wonderful Holidays and a Happy New Year!**



## Finnish Chairmanship in VASAB



### **The VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (VASAB CSPD/BSR) is chaired by Finland from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024**

Ms. Anna-Leena Seppälä from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment will chair the VASAB CSPD/BSR meetings.

**Finnish Chairmanship of the VASAB CSPD/BSR** will continue VASAB efforts on putting the recently endorsed VASAB Vision 2040 into the practice. During the Finnish Chairmanship the guidance and concrete steps for VASAB and other stakeholders implementing the VASAB Vision 2040 will be discussed. Particularly further linkages with other Policy areas within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and further promotion of VASAB Vision at relevant networks and events will be considered. Additionally possibilities in testing cooperation mechanism for land-based spatial planners – so called ‘VASAB Planners Forum’ will be explored.

**Thematic focus of the VASAB Finnish Chairmanship** will be spatial resilience and what role the spatial planning has in it. Particularly, a webinar on spatial resilience and spatial planning will be organised on 29 February 2024 where experts from the Baltic Sea Region countries will be invited to share their experience.

Finland has taken over the Chairmanship from Germany. The next chairing country after Finland will be Estonia from 2024-2025.





# SAVE THE DATE!

## VASAB Webinar on Spatial Resilience and Spatial Planning

### 29 February 2024



In the last couple of years unpredictable events – COVID pandemic, war against Ukraine, energy crisis – have brought many challenges and consequences to the Baltic Sea Region, its regions and cities, while impacts of climate change have also become more visible. These events made even the most extreme regional development scenarios seem overly optimistic. Coping with these challenges along with adaptation to new EU policies require immediate and flexible approach, and information exchange. Spatial planning has been identified as a valuable mechanism through which an adaptation to various foreseeable as well as unpredictable needs and future scenarios can be facilitated.

Therefore VASAB Finnish Chairmanship would like to invite you to **join the webinar** and **discuss how spatial planning can foster the spatial resilience** of the countries around the Baltic Sea and better prepare themselves for future challenges.

Registration is open until 26 February 2024.

[Registration and more information about the webinar is here](#)



Interested in preparation of a project application addressing spatial planning? Looking for like-minded peers to join the forces and work together? Having ideas on how to tackle territorial

challenges?

Project developers, spatial planning enthusiasts and EUSBSR policy area coordinators are welcome to join the **VASAB webinar on project idea development** on **19<sup>th</sup> January 2024, at 9:00 CET / 10:00 EET**. Main goal of the webinar is to promote development of project ideas addressing various territorial challenges and where the spatial planning can play a key role.

Registration is open until 16 January 2024.

[Registration and more information about the webinar is here](#)



**eMSP NBSR Final Conference**  
**31 January - 1 February 2024 in Gdansk, Poland**

Story of 2,5 years in joint work between maritime spatial planners, researchers, managing authorities and policymakers from the North Sea and the Baltic Sea regions will be told at the final event. Furthermore, findings and recommendations to be reviled in 5 emerging topics [Ocean governance, Ecosystem-based approach, Sustainable blue economy, Monitoring and evaluation, Data sharing], 2 cross-cutting themes [Climate Change and European Green Deal] and 1 shared and uniting Community of Practice approach.

Join final conference, explore and discuss outcomes and insights not the least on innovative Blue Economy and Maritime Spatial Planning solutions emerged in work across the borders.

Registration is open until 9 January 2024.

[See the programme, more information and all updates here](#)





## 14<sup>th</sup> EUSBSR Annual Forum 'Safe and Sustainable Baltic Sea Region for Future Generations' took place on 4-5 October 2023 in Riga, Latvia

EUSBSR Annual Forum brought hundreds of experts and policy-makers to Riga to celebrate and reinforce multilevel cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. We as co-organisers of this event, would like to thank everyone who participated in the event!

To look back how the event was, please read an article [here](#).

Presentations from the workshops on 4 October are [here](#).

Presentations from the sessions on 5 October are [here](#).

Presentations from the pitch stage on 5 October are [here](#).

[See pictures here](#)

## Upcoming Events

19 January 2024, online

**VASAB Webinar on Project Idea Generation**

[Read more >>>](#)

31 January - 1 February 2024 in Gdansk, Poland

**Final Conference of the eMSP NBSR project**

[Read more >>>](#)

19-21 March 2024 in Gothenburg, Sweden

**Informal Consultation Session of Joint  
HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning  
Working Group**

25-26 April 2024 in Tallinn, Estonia

**2nd Mission Arena**

[Read more >>>](#)

29 February 2024, online

**VASAB Webinar on Spatial Resilience and  
Spatial Planning**

[Read more >>>](#)

30-31 May 2024 in Svendborg, Denmark

**European Maritime Day**

[Read more >>>](#)

13-15 March 2024 in Koli, Finland

**VASAB CSPD/BSR Meeting**

## Follow our activities:



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