

## **Summary of the 91<sup>st</sup> CSPD/BSR Meeting**

Koli, 14-15 March 2024

**Chairperson:** Ms. Anna-Leena Seppälä (FI)

*Participants: CSPD/BSR members:* Ms. Josiane Meier (DE), Mr. Jens Kurnol (DE), Mr. Tiit Oidjärv (EE), Ms. Tiina Tihlman (FI), Mr. Timo Turunen (FI), Ms. Algimante Treiniene (LT), Mr. Edvardas Minkevičius (LT), Ms. Anita Līvija Rozenvalde (LV), Ms. Patrycja Artymowska (PL), Ms. Kinga Stańczuk-Olejniki (PL), *invited guests:* Mr. Uģis Zanders (Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat), *VASAB Secretariat:* Ms. Alda Nikodemusa, Ms. Egija Stapkēviča, Ms. Jana Patmalniece and Ms. Margarita Vološina.

### **1. Adoption of the report of 90<sup>th</sup> VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting**

*The Committee* adopted the Report of 90<sup>th</sup> CSPD/BSR online meeting on 24 November 2023 without changes.

### **2. Adoption of the summary of 90<sup>th</sup> VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting**

*The Committee* adopted the Summary of 90<sup>th</sup> CSPD/BSR online meeting on 24 November 2023 without changes.

### **3. Information on Open Troika meeting**

*The Committee* took note of the Report of the VASAB Open Troika online meeting on 22 February 2024.

### **4. Outcomes of VASAB Webinar on Spatial Resilience and Spatial Planning on 29 February 2024 and seminar on 13 March 2024 on impacts of Russia's war of aggression on regional development and planning – Eastern Finland case study**

#### **Outcomes of VASAB Webinar on Spatial Resilience and Spatial Planning on 29 February 2024**

The Committee was informed on the outcomes of VASAB Webinar on Spatial Resilience and Spatial Planning on 29 February 2024 and also was informed that all presentations from the webinar will be sent to the Committee members.

*The Committee* took note of information on the outcomes of VASAB webinar on spatial resilience and spatial planning on 29 February 2024.

#### **Outcomes of seminar on 13 March 2024 on impacts of Russia's war of aggression on regional development and planning – Eastern Finland case study**

The Committee was informed on the outcomes of seminar 'Challenges of changing circumstances in Eastern Finland for regional development and spatial planning' on 13 March 2024 in Koli, Finland and also was informed that Eastern Finland still has refugee problem, as well as new logistic ways should be found to the North, West and South.

*The Committee* took note of information on the outcomes of seminar ‘Challenges of changing circumstances in Eastern Finland for regional development and spatial planning’ on 13 March 2024 in Koli, Finland.

## **5. News and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues**

**Poland:** news in spatial planning:

- At national level elaboration of National Development Concept 2050 is ongoing and this document is a new formula for strategic document because it integrated social, economic and spatial dimension of the development. Work on National Development Concept 2050 is very complicated, and a map is prepared on territorial resilience and territorial vulnerability in 4 dimensions. Map is combining 7 indicators on social issues, economic, spatial and environmental. Results of maps are very interesting; they are summing up the new reality. Public consultation process will start soon.
- The work has been started also on medium-term strategy in which there will be part called - model of spatial functional structure. It will be spatial part of the strategy. This model will be kind of shortened version of national spatial development concept. It will contain graphics part and also description of main challenges in spatial policy, also mapping conflicts and indicating areas of strategic interventions (big development areas, areas left behind etc). We are currently working on how to indicate these areas, how are they connected to functional areas. Also taking into account transition to new economy based on renewable energy.

**Lithuania:** news in spatial planning:

- Lithuania has a Comprehensive Plan up to 2030 and its implementation programme. This programme sets basis for multilevel governance, as it defines the roles of the state, municipalities, and other institutions in the implementation of Plan’s solutions. There is a concept of this Plan until 2050. To monitor the implementation of the Plan is transferred to Urban Development Department of Building Sector Development Agency. The task of this Department is to coordinate the implementation of spatial planning documents, assist municipalities to elaborate the solutions of the Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of the Lithuania in their municipal level spatial planning documents, and to analyse further changes that are needed.
- Currently debates have been initiated in the Parliament whether the Concept of the Comprehensive Plan 2050 reflects current challenges, such as geopolitical developments.
- In the end of 2023, Parliament adopted the State Progress Strategy Lithuania 2050 and now the discussions are ongoing how these both documents fit together and whether they should be adopted.
- The Sustainable Cities Guidelines that are a toolkit to identify the level of sustainability in Lithuanian cities are approved by the Minister. To achieve this objective, a sustainability planning tool ‘Sustainable Cities Compass’ has been developed and approved. It allows to assess the territorial challenges of urban development and benchmark sustainability between cities.
- Reform of Land Management: As of 1 February 2024, by the Law on Land the state land of cities and towns located in the territory of the municipality have been transferred to the municipality for management in trust.
- A package of legislative amendments has been prepared and will enter in force on 1 May 2024 and 1 November 2024. These amendments aim to make more efficient spatial planning and construction processes. Changes in Laws on Construction, Territorial Planning, Architecture, Architects Chamber and some others have been made to speed up the process in issuing building permits, to revise responsibilities of actors involved in construction and spatial planning, to give more powers to municipalities’ chief architects in taking decisions on spatial planning of their territories and design of buildings.

**Germany:** news in spatial planning:

- The **Wind Area Requirements Act** (Windenergieflächenbedarfsgesetz - WindBG) is a federal law that took effect in February 2023. It aims to rapidly accelerate the expansion of wind energy in Germany by making the necessary space for wind power plants available. To this end, it aims to simplify planning processes and sets binding land-use targets for the federal states: Each state must designate ca. 2% of its area for wind power by 2032 (interim target: ca. 1,4% by 2027). How they reach this target is up to the federal states, but consequences are foreseen if prohibitive minimum-distance regulations are set. These measures support the goal of 80% of the electricity used in Germany in 2030 should come from renewable sources. [Link \(en\)](#)
- The **Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI)** was established in November 2023 by Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. It aims to coordinate sectoral interests across borders in order to support maritime spatial planning in integrating the many uses that are foreseen for the North Sea basin and to address the existing ecological challenges. There are 6 work tracks (Governance; Nature Restoration; Multi-Use; Knowledge Sharing; Cumulative Impacts; Long-Term Perspective of Fisheries). The work-track on Multi-Use is chaired by BMWWSB and BSH (Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency). A ministerial summit is planned for November 2024. [Link \(en\)](#)
- **RegioStrat** is a new subsidy scheme of the Federal Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial development. It targets regional planning authorities and supports them in developing strategic regional development concepts that have a horizon of 10-15 years. The first tender was recently published. Selected projects must be completed by October 2026. [Link \(de\)](#)
- **Circular Rural Regions** is a new pilot action of the Territorial Agenda 2030, initiated by BMWWSB and BBSR. It explores regional approaches to the circular economy using German and European model regions and supports the development and implementation of strategic circular economy concepts in rural areas. The pilot action is based on a research project we conducted between 2021 and 2023. It identified success factors for circular rural development in Germany and Europe. Among the questions we want to answer are:
  - What mechanisms and processes are necessary to consolidate existing circular economy initiatives from various sectors towards sustainable regional development?
  - How can regional strategies and action plans for circular economy be designed to complement existing regional development strategies?
  - How can regional stakeholders be involved in the process and be engaged in the long term?
  - What organisational and financing forms enable the long-term implementation of systemic circular economy approaches in rural regions? [Link \(en\)](#)
- A new **German-Polish Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning** (Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung – MORO) has just begun, initiated by BMWWSB and BBSR. Its main aim is to identify synergies between spatial planning and water management in the area surrounding the rivers Odra/Oder and Nysa/Neiße. To this end, a study will be conducted that sheds light on overarching questions at the intersection of spatial planning and water management at federal and state level as well as from a cross-border perspective. In addition, regional demonstration projects will be supported in which various approaches can be tested. The project contributes to the implementation of the common vision for the German-Polish border area (Vision 2030). [Link \(pl/de\)](#)

**Latvia:** news in spatial planning:

- In February 2024 the informative report “On the spatial distribution and quality mapping results for protected biotopes and the future actions needed for the achievement of favourable protected biotope status in balance with development interests” was submitted

for public consultation. The public debate is ongoing and will require a new iteration of the report.

- The methodology for determining the Baltic Sea coastal protection zone in Latvia is dependent on the abovementioned informative report – no further decisions regarding it can be made until the approval of the informative report.
- A Working Group for the Improvement of the Spatial Planning System was established at the end of 2023 and work has now started to review the spatial planning regulation framework with the aim to identify changes needed for relief of administrative burdens while maintaining citizen engagement and public interest. The review will also include the exploration of new thematic perspectives in Latvian spatial planning. At the top of the priority list is to address the urgent regulatory bottlenecks already identified by municipalities, additionally – incorporation of Nature Based Solutions in regulation including in spatial calculations (e.g. building density, proportion of green territory).
- Work on the interim assessment of the “National Long-term Thematic Plan for Baltic Sea Coastal Infrastructure Development” began in December and will continue until the end of 2024. The main focus until now has been on engagement of stakeholders, gathering their insights on the persisting issues, new developments since the adoption of the Thematic Plan in 2016 has already allowed to draw new connections with the Maritime Spatial Plan of Latvia and to generate new collaborative implementation activities. This work is supported by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027 project ‘Baltic Sea2Land’.

**Estonia:** news in spatial planning:

- On the national level, preparations of the Climate Act are ongoing to frame the green transition in various sectors. Spatial planning can contribute to the sustainability of several areas, such as energy production and transmission, mobility, housing and preservation and restoration of national areas. Requirements may result in specific expectations for the use of territories, such as land take regulations or provision of land for renewables – if so, these will have to be addressed both on the national and local levels. In spatial planning policy, updates to the Spatial Planning Act are being prepared. Digitalisation of existing planning documents is in progress across the country, digital services are being developed to support more efficient and more effective planning processes. The ministry is preparing tools and training sessions to support high quality, resilient and sustainable spatial decisions in all planning levels. Preparations are being made to initiate the work of ministries’ sub-agency dealing with land issues, certain functions of national spatial planning, and digitalisation in 2025.

**Sweden:** news in spatial planning:

- In Sweden we have developed a support system/a bonus for municipalities to adopt plans that enable new housing in single-family houses and to adopt plans that enable conversion of non-housing buildings into apartments. Objective: to increase the amount of planned land for these kinds of development. For single-family housing: in total 60 million SEK for 2024 and (announced) 75 million SEK for each year 2025-2026. In total 20 million SEK (1.78 million EUR) for 2024 and (announced) 25 million SEK (2.2 million EUR) for each year 2025-2026 will be allocated to this scheme. The bonus can be applied from the National Board of Housing and Planning starting from April 2024.

**Finland:** news in spatial planning:

- Last summer Finland got a new government and a new government programme.
- The renewal of the Land Use Act has been ongoing from 2018 as each government have own targets. Current government programme mentions other things which should be achieved with the Land Use Act. There is a target to simplify land use and building regulations. We are not renewing our planning system as a whole but there is a need to enlighten effect of regional plans, to make them less detailed. There is a need to include

process for partnership planning and emphasis for renewable energy. Instead of green transition it is now called clean transition. Government wants to increase wind power on land and in the sea but there is currently an issue with social acceptance. There is a pressure huge solar energy parks, how they are dealt with in land use planning.

- There is a work ongoing with 7 biggest city regions on agreements on land use, housing and transport. There are a lot of questions on how to make investments in traffic and transport.
- National Development Perspective for land-use in Finland is a part of national planning and is an informative and supportive document. Perspective is a tool for monitoring, forecasting and assessing sustainability on land-use. It helps different actors in society to make their activities more sustainable. At the same time, it is a national situation room for joint development and can be used for updating national land-use guidelines, political decision making, public debate etc.
- As Finland's government wants to increase wind energy, the Ministry of Environment has received funding for projects to develop offshore wind farms in maritime spatial planning. One project is using modelling to find suitable areas for wind energy.
- Finland's maritime spatial plan is not legally binding and now the Ministry of Employment and the Economy are in charge for energy issues, and these are appointed territories for economic zone for wind energy developers. Now there are discussions how to make maritime spatial plan into account and these areas.

*The Committee* took note of the information about news and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues.

### **Terrestrial spatial planning country fiches**

*The Committee* was reminded that all VASAB member countries should regularly update the Country fiche on terrestrial spatial planning and send to Secretariat to publish on VASAB website.

## **6. New projects applications**

### **Land-based spatial planners forum**

*The Committee* took note of the information on a new project application 'Land-based spatial planners forum' which was prepared by VASAB Secretariat in cooperation with the project partnership and submitted on 15 February 2024 by lead partner Nordregio to Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Neighbourhood Programme funding with an overall aim to establish 'Planners Forum' – a cooperation/support platform for land-based spatial planners of all governance levels to strengthen territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region.

### **eMSP GNSBI (the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative)**

*The Committee* took note of the information on a new project application 'Northern European Sea Basins project' which was submitted on 26 February 2024 by lead partner Netherlands Enterprise Agency to European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund call, and which is a continuation of the 'eMSP NBSR' project together with the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative.

## **7. Implementation Plan of VASAB Vision 2040**

*The Committee* discussed how to proceed with the development of the Implementation Plan of VASAB Vision 2040 and agreed that a short-term work plan/application plan proposal should be developed for 2 years (2025-2026) by VASAB Secretariat together with Mr. Tiit Oidjärv and Ms. Tiina Tihlman until the next Committee meeting. The Plan should go hand in hand with PA 'Spatial Planning' work plan which already includes huge part of activities which should be

included also in a work plan/application plan of the Vision. The Plan should start with ongoing/regular activities/outcomes, actions should be prioritised, as well as the Plan should include actions which are not currently covered in the Vision (security, defence, resilience).

## **8. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)**

### **PA ‘Spatial Planning’ activities, technical assistance project ‘PASPS’, update of EUSBSR Action Plan**

The Committee was informed about the latest developments and activities within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ and technical assistance project ‘PASPS’, as well as revision of EUSBSR Action Plan in 2024. Feedback from Policy area coordinators will be expected in late autumn 2024 and Baltic Sea Strategy Point will send a template how to fulfil this task. More clear indicators will have to be given for each Policy area and it will be a serious task to give indicators for spatial planning, especially land-based spatial planning. Climate issues should be added to every Policy area. It is expected to approve the Action Plan by the Commission by the beginning of year 2026.

The Committee was also informed that on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 VASAB Secretariat had an online meeting with project ‘SUMP for BSR’ partners who expressed willingness to present project results at the Committee meeting. Project helps smaller municipalities develop and apply sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) to encourage shift towards people’s active mobility and thus a healthier lifestyle while reducing traffic emissions at the same time.

*The Committee* took note of the information about EUSBSR Policy area ‘Spatial Planning’ news and activities, technical assistance project ‘PASPS’ and update of EUSBSR Action Plan.

### **EUSBSR Annual Forum, 30-31 October 2024 in Visby, Sweden**

The Committee was informed that the next EUSBSR Annual Forum will be held on 30-31 October 2024 in Visby, Sweden. VASAB Secretariat has been invited by UBC to join a workshop on liveable cities. An application for this workshop was submitted to organisers of Annual Forum and has been approved. Ms. Egija Stapkēviča will present VASAB Vision 2040.

*The Committee* took note of the information about EUSBSR Annual Forum which will be held on 30-31 October 2024 in Visby, Sweden and approved workshop on liveable cities which VASAB will organise together with UBC and present VASAB Vision 2040.

## **9. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) issues**

### **Informal consultation session of Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meeting 19-21 March 2024 in Gothenburg, Sweden**

*The Committee* took note of the information about the upcoming informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group to be held on 19-21 March 2024 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

### **Workshop on Baltic MSP Roadmap assessment on 26 February 2024 online**

The Committee was informed about the workshop on Baltic MSP Roadmap assessment which was held online on 26 February 2024 and reminded that Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap is valid until 2030 and there should be a midterm evaluation of implementation done. During this workshop it was discussed how better do the midterm evaluation.

*The Committee* took note of the information about the workshop on Baltic MSP Roadmap assessment held on 26 February 2024 online.

### **BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group online meeting on 27 February 2024**

The Committee was informed about the outcomes of 4<sup>th</sup> informal consultation session of BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group online meeting which was held on 27 February 2024: recent developments of national MSP data, development of regional MSP data structure, basemaps (input, output data and interface), progress and information from relevant projects, election of the chair of Data group.

*The Committee* took note of the information about the outcomes of 4<sup>th</sup> informal consultation session of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group online meeting held on 27 February 2024.

### **Planners` Forum on 18 April 2024 online**

The Committee was informed that the next 4<sup>th</sup> MSP Planners` Forum will take place online on 18 April 2024. Main topic of the Forum will be multi-use and co-existence in maritime spatial planning and six presentations will be given on this topic. Participants of the Forum will also share latest MSP developments in BSR countries, national MSP status, pressing issues and national approaches on multi-use and co-existence.

*The Committee* took note of the information about the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> MSP Planners` Forum within `PASPS` project to be held online on 18 April 2024 and hosted by VASAB Secretariat.

### **Progress of Baltic Sea2Land project**

The Committee was informed about the progress of project `BalticSea2Land` and reminded about VASAB`s tasks in the project:

- VASAB Secretariat will organise 2 thematic webinars (one in autumn 2024 and one in spring 2025). Webinars will tackle coastal planning and management issues exchanging of knowledge and good practice, discussing needs and gaps in LSI. Currently a date for first webinar should be agreed and agenda needs to be developed.
- VASAB Secretariat will also develop recommendations for coastal development and planning in the Baltic Sea Region. A survey derived from recommendations of 1996 (Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the Baltic Sea Region) will be developed and shared with the Committee and other stakeholders, for example, project partners, relevant networks.
- VASAB Secretariat in autumn 2025 is hosting and organising 5<sup>th</sup> Baltic MSP Forum which will also be final conference of the project. Project partners will agree on exact date in May when project partners meeting will be held in Hamburg.

*The Committee* took note of the information about the progress of project `Baltic Sea2Land`.

### **Progress of eMSP NBSR project, extension**

The Committee was informed about the progress of project `eMSP NBSR - Emerging ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning topics in North and Baltic Seas Regions`. Final Conference of the project was held in Gdansk on 31 January - 1 February 2024. More information about the Conference is in this link: [www.emspproject.eu/final-conference/](http://www.emspproject.eu/final-conference/). Final results of the project are available at this link: [www.emspproject.eu/results](http://www.emspproject.eu/results). The Committee was also informed that project `eMSP NBSR` has received extension until the end of June 2024 in order to disseminate the results of the project.

*The Committee* took note of the information about the progress of project ‘eMSP NBSR’ (Emerging Ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning Topics in North and Baltic Sea Regions), its final results and final conference which was held on 31 January - 1 February 2024 in Gdansk (Poland).

*The Committee* took note of the information that ‘eMSP NBSR’ project has received extension until 30 June 2024 with the main aim to disseminate the results of the project.

### **New application of eMSP project and VASAB Secretariat role**

*The Committee* took note of the information on VASAB Secretariat role in a new project application ‘Northern European Sea Basins project’ in which VASAB Secretariat will co-lead work package on Ocean governance and lead work package on Project communication.

### **10. VASAB Budget**

*The Committee* took note of the information about VASAB Income and Expenditure 2023 and preliminary VASAB Income and Expenditure 2024.

### **11. Changes in VASAB Secretariat**

*The Committee* appointed Ms. Egija Stapkēviča as Deputy Head of VASAB Secretariat.

### **12. VASAB Secretariat news**

*The Committee* took note of the information about operations of the VASAB Secretariat.

### **13. Towards Estonian VASAB chairmanship**

*The Committee* took note of the information about potential Estonian VASAB chairmanship priorities and plans.