

COMMITTEE ON SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Summary of the 93rd CSPD/BSR Meeting

Tallinn, 12-13 December 2024

Chairperson: Mr. Tiit Oidjärv (EE)

Participants: CSPD/BSR members: Mr. Jens Kurnol (DE), Ms. Helen Madison (EE), Mr. Timo Turunen (FI), Mr. Edvardas Minkevičius (LT), Ms. Kristīne Kedo (LV), Ms. Kinga Stańczuk-Olejniak (PL), *invited guests:* Mr. Uģis Zanders (Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat), Ms. Ira Sibeliuss (UBC SCC), Ms. Mirjam Kivinuk (Foreign Expert, Estonia), Mr. Eedi Sepp (Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture, Estonia), Ms. Kateryna Baulina (NGO Analytical Center “Reformator”, Ukraine), Mr. Witold Kielich (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Region, Poland), Mr. Thorsten Kohlish (Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform), *VASAB Secretariat:* Ms. Alda Nikodemusa, Ms. Egija Stapkēviča, Ms. Jana Patmalniece, Ms. Margarita Vološina and Ms. Tīna Šipkēviča.

1. Adoption of the report of 92nd VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting

The Committee adopted the Report of 92nd CSPD/BSR meeting held on 11 June 2024 online without changes.

2. Adoption of the summary of 92nd VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting

The Committee adopted the Summary of 92nd CSPD/BSR meeting held on 11 June 2024 online without changes.

3. Information on Open Troika meeting

The Committee took note of the Report of the VASAB Open Troika online meeting on 2 November 2023.

4. News and major challenges regarding national spatial planning issues

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.
- The Sustainable Cities Guidelines have been prepared and approved by the Minister. The main goal of the Guidelines for the Development of Sustainable Cities is to identify the level of sustainability in Lithuanian cities and to encourage municipalities and other entities and individuals to organise the planning processes, projects, and discussions necessary for the territories in order to increase the level of urban sustainability, based on the CPRL compact city principles aligned with the principles of sustainable development. English version of 'Guidelines for the Development of Sustainable Cities' can be found here: <https://am.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys-1/architektura-ir-inovacijos/tvariu-miestu-gaires/>. In order to achieve objective of the guidelines, 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. A compass map for

sustainable cities (heat map) can be found here:
<https://am.lrv.lt/media/viesa/saugykla/2024/3/wnZXBEoM5V8.pdf>.

- Under the Ministry of Environment, a Construction and development agency has been established which is responsible for consulting municipalities on development and implementation of municipal level planning documents.

Poland presented information on National Development Concept 2050:

- The role of the National Development Concept and its content: 1) Foundations for country development in rapidly changing circumstances; 2) Pilot of foresight at national level; 3) Starting point for development policy in mid-term perspective; 4) Laboratory of cooperation and engagement together with regional governments, scientists, and NGO's.
- There are 4 development scenarios for Poland: 1) Poland in the world committed to further globalization (openness of international society, modest technology development); 2) Poland in the world of intensive use of technology and slow atomisation of society (high automation and technology); 3) Poland in the world of broken supply chains and shortages (lack of global cooperation); 4) Poland in the world of drastic technological, economic and social divergence.
- Identified challenges: 1) A modern economy that respects the natural environment and climate; 2) A resilient state with a strong position in Europe and worldwide; 3) Social transformation that favours all social groups; 4) Sustainable space that takes into account human and environmental needs. 7 key conclusions - strategic choices for development policy.
- New package of national strategic documents: National Development Concept 2050 (long term, visionary, umbrella document); Mid-term Development Strategy 2035 (main strategic document, model of functional-spatial structure, findings and recommendations for shaping and conducting spatial policy, OSI – Strategic Intervention Areas – and planned measure); National regional development strategy; Other national strategies, programmes and policies; Development strategies of voivodeships (together with model of functional-spatial structure).

Latvia: news in spatial planning:

- Latvian government overall priority is lessening the administrative burden everywhere, especially in building and planning procedures. Therefore, a Working Group for the Improvement of the Spatial Planning System was established at the end of 2023 and work has finished 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. Every legislation regarding local planning has been changed this year, mostly regarding terms and processes to make development processes/projects faster. The review also includes 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).
- Currently there is Latvia 2030, a Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 for the whole government. Also, Spatial Development Perspective is a part of this document. Overall responsibility of elaboration of this document goes to State Chancellery. They have already contracted experts from University of Latvia to prepare feasibility study to check preconditions and to look into 2050 and predict priorities by 2050. Feasibility study should be prepared by autumn 2025 when midterm planning document - National Development Plan - will be reformed. Then discussions will take place on both: midterm existing national development plan and future priorities for Latvia 2050. In 2026 work in several groups according to priorities will start institutionally and then overall document will be prepared, including Spatial Development Perspective. As the base for Spatial Development Perspective will be used the existing document. Document should be adopted by 2028.

- In 2023 was prepared first interim assessment for maritime spatial plan and in 2024 was prepared second interim assessment for coastal plan, including linkages with maritime spatial planning. Latvian Coastal plan focuses more on public infrastructure and tourism and recreation.

Finland: news in spatial planning:

- Reform of Land Use Act is very relevant, but no major changes are coming. A working group set up by the Ministry of the Environment made a proposal for a new Land Use Act in October 2024. The intention is that the government would decide on the new law in 2025 and it would come into force in 2026. According to the draft law, the land use planning system would remain largely unchanged. It would still include national land use guidelines, regional plans, and local master and detailed plans. The law proposes changes to streamline planning and updates to the objectives and content requirements of plans to meet the challenges of changes in the operational environment.
- Currency of The National Land Use Guidelines. “The Ministry of the Environment must assess the currency of the government decision of National Land Use Guidelines (=VAT) as necessary. Based on the assessments, the Ministry must, where necessary, see to a review of the decision and its submission for consideration by the Government”. The current government decision is from 2017. The guidelines are more general than before and there are fewer of them. According to a survey on effectiveness conducted in 2023, these guidelines have been reasonably well achieved. VAT 2017 has significantly/somewhat influenced 83% (43/40). Regional planning 100%, state including ELYs 90%, municipalities 70%. VATs have had the most impact in the early stages of planning, in goal setting and in official negotiations. Least impact in decision-making. There have been no major problems related to the application of VATs 65%/there have been issues 35%. Reasons include the general nature of the goals, coordination issues, lack of awareness.
- National guidelines in future. Guidelines have had a significant impact according to the inquiry for stakeholders, but the importance of national issues increases all the time. Operational environment changes rapidly and brings new needs/challenges, therefore guidelines need to be updated. In addition to climate change and biodiversity loss, three themes emerge: security, energy infrastructure and green transition, demographic changes, and internationalization, i.e., increasing regional differentiation. New guidelines should focus on the most important national issues, power and responsibility should be given to municipalities, guidelines should be more concrete, more prioritized, targeted and coordination is needed, more systematic and continuous monitoring of national needs and the up-to-dateness of guidelines in close cooperation with other ministries, guidelines should be in tune with current and future trend.
- Development Perspectives for land use in Finland as a “new part” of national planning. Tool for monitoring, forecasting and sustainability assessment of land use. Creates preconditions for responding to and adapting to changes in the land use. Helps different actors in society to make their activities more sustainable. Forum (situation room!) for phenomenon-based, strategic and cross-administrative joint development. Information and inspiration source that can be used in updating of National Land Use Guidelines, in land use planning, political decision-making and public debate etc.
- One-Stop Environmental Permits: A Smoother Path to Green Transition. The goal of the Ministry of the Environment’s “one-stop shop” legislative project is to streamline the permit procedures for projects affecting the environment. The project aims to prepare regulations that allow a new permit, guidance, and supervisory authority to handle permit applications based on different laws together. This means that, for example, the processing of environmental permits, water permits, and land extraction permits could be combined, speeding up and improving the efficiency of the permit processes.
- Eastern and Northern Finland's New Direction: Programmes After Border Closures. The Northern and Eastern Finland programmes are under preparation aiming to fully utilize the

potential of these regions, focusing on economic growth, regional vitality, investment acceleration, skills development, and workforce availability. The programs also aim to enhance Finland's security of supply and self-sufficiency in the changed security policy situation, and to strengthen security in Nordic, EU, and NATO cooperation, considering new geopolitical realities and routes to the West.

Germany: news in spatial planning:

- In the beginning of 2023, the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMUV) and BMWSB began their work on key points of a 'Natural Area Law': On the one hand, this should have promoted the designation of nature conservation areas and, in particular, the upgrading of existing areas to a higher protection status. On the other hand, these areas should have been networked with each other to form a cross-border biotope network, among other things with the support of spatial planning, via connecting elements and areas. However, since the BMUV and BMWSB were unable to agree on some key points of the Nature Area Law in a timely manner, the process never progressed beyond the initial key points stage. With the end of the coalition government in November 2024, the work on both the Natural Area Law and a federal spatial development plan has been discontinued. In the future, it is possible that the project or elements of it could be revived when the EU Nature Restoration Law, which has been in force since the end of last year, is implemented.
- Land planners and regional planners are still working on the Wind Area Requirements Act which is a federal law that took effect in February 2023 and aims to rapidly accelerate the expansion of wind energy in Germany by making the necessary space for wind power plants available. Each state must designate ca. 2% of its area for wind power by 2032.
- The Federal Cabinet has adopted a draft law to strengthen the resilience of critical infrastructure, the so-called KRITIS Umbrella Act but the Act has been put on hold. With this law, the Federal Government is improving physical protection of critical infrastructure and therefore of supply security in Germany and Europe. Regulations and structures that apply nationwide and across all sectors are introduced for the first time to boost resilience, and they apply in addition to the rules regarding cyber-security of critical infrastructure. Water, electricity, food, public transport and many other essential goods and services are supplied through critical infrastructure (KRITIS) in Germany. It forms the basis of a functional society, which is why it is all the more important to protect such critical infrastructure. Key points of the law are: 1) Nationwide identification of critical infrastructure; 2) Introduction of disruption monitoring; 3) Preparation of risk analyses of operators by the state; 4) Minimum requirements for resilience measures to be taken by operators. The draft law provides for the implementation of a project listed in the coalition agreement and of the EU Directive on the resilience of critical entities.
- German - Polish border area/action area has applied for TSI (Technical Support Instrument) - the EU programme that provides tailor-made technical expertise to EU Member States to design and implement reforms. Focus will be on energy and climate change. Decision is effective as of January 2025.

Estonia: news in spatial planning:

- Current government priority is to get industry and green industry in Estonia as quickly as possible. Pressure on spatial planning. Economy is becoming the priority on top of other issues.
- In the last 2 years, planning in Estonia has been made easier and quicker, but there are still further legal changes coming in planning. And for instance, like in Latvia Estonia is also skipping dispute settlements. Another one planning instrument which might be skipped - considering different alternative locations for construction in a public process.
- Estonia is currently renewing National Spatial Plan as the current plan is from 2013. The new National Spatial Plan 'Estonia 2050' will be a long-term spatial development plan of Estonia. Plan is developed for the entire territory of Estonia, excluding the marine area, which has its development directions determined in Estonian Maritime Spatial Plan

(approved 2022). The goal of the Plan is to define the spatial development principles and directions for the whole mainland. In the plan settlement development scenarios are developed.

- From January 2025 there will be a new Land and Spatial Board which will be doing policy implementation, also in spatial planning issues.
- Quite soon work will start on building a new national level digital system for all planning proceedings in Estonia, also local level.
- In the legislation, which is going to Parliament soon, is that regional plans used to be owned by county governments, currently are owned by the ministry, and they used to apply for comprehensive planning but not for the owners of land, they didn't contain conditions that apply for owners of land. That might change.
- New regional development agreements have been prepared which will focused on economy and jobs. These agreements will contribute to multi-level collaboration between state and local municipalities. Universities and companies will be involved in this process. Agreements might be approved in January 2025.

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

5. 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 it to Secretariat for publishing on VASAB website.

6. Overview of whole-of-government spatial resilience topics in the BSR

The Committee took note of the information about analytical background paper 'VASAB Vision 2040 and spatial resilience. How is the whole-of-government all-of-hazards logic represented in the long-term spatial strategy?' and agreed to share further input to analytical background paper until 8 January 2025.

7. Presentation by Ukraine

The Committee took note of the information about Ukrainian experience and lessons in planning attractive cities for living.

8. Interreg Europe Policy Learning Initiative 'Regio-Silience'

The Committee took note of the information about Interreg Europe Policy Learning Initiative 'Regio-Silience' which is tackling the regional development challenges caused by Russia's war on Ukraine by moderated policy learning approach with the regions/countries most affected.

9. Potential amendments to VASAB Vision 2040

The Committee agreed that Estonian Chairmanship finalises analytical background paper 'VASAB Vision 2040 and spatial resilience. How is the whole-of-government all-of-hazards logic represented in the long-term spatial strategy?' and afterwards a decision will be made on how to proceed further with potential amendments to VASAB Vision 2040 (currently leaning to an appendix).

10. VASAB Work Plan 2025-2026

The Committee took note of the information on draft VASAB Work Plan 2025-2026 and agreed to divide Work Plan in three sections: continuous activities/regular meetings, priorities set by a chairmanship, projects VASAB is involved in.

The Committee agreed to send feedback on draft VASAB Work Plan 2025-2026 to VASAB Secretariat until 31 January 2025.

11. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

An overview of Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ activities

The Committee was informed about the latest developments and activities within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’.

Extension of EUSBSR PA ‘Spatial Planning’ technical assistance project ‘PASPS’

The Committee was informed that EUSBSR Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ coordinators assistance project ‘PASPS’ has been extended for 2 more years (2025-2026) in November 2024 when Monitoring Committee of the Interreg BSR Programme approved the extension of the project, including additional funding. Both Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ Steering Groups (VASAB CSPD and HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG) supported the extension.

The Committee took note of the information on extension of EUSBSR Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ coordinators assistance project ‘PASPS’ by 2 years from January 2025 until December 2026 with an aim to coordinate Policy Area ‘Spatial planning’ and to support project idea generation and development.

Update of EUSBSR Action Plan and PA Spatial Planning activities

The Committee was informed about the update of EUSBSR Action Plan and noted that VASAB Secretariat together with HELCOM are drafting new actions and indicators which are described in the document ‘First draft of Policy Area descriptions for EUSBSR Action Plan Update’. A decision will be needed from the Committee to approve new actions and indicators for EUSBSR Action Plan.

The Committee took note of the information about the update of EUSBSR Action Plan and the document ‘First draft of Policy Area descriptions for EUSBSR Action Plan Update’ which should be filled in by VASAB and HELCOM as Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’ co-coordinators.

The Committee agreed to send suggestions and comments on document ‘First draft of Policy Area descriptions for EUSBSR Action Plan Update’ until 15 January 2025.

Data expert subgroup on 10 September 2024 online

The Committee was informed about the outcomes of 5th informal consultation session of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group online meeting which was held on 10 September 2024. Developments of regional MSP data structure were discussed, such as recommendations for harmonizing MSP input data from the Baltic Sea2Land project and ReMAP project tools.

The Committee took note of the information about the outcomes of 5th informal consultation session of the BSR MSP Data Expert Sub-group online meeting held on 10 September 2024.

Planners’ Forum on 17 October 2024 online

The Committee was informed that the 5th MSP Planners’ Forum took place online on 17 October 2024. Main topic of the Forum was cumulative impacts in maritime spatial planning and three presentations were given on this topic. Participants of the Forum shared latest MSP developments in BSR countries, national MSP status, pressing issues and national approaches on cumulative impacts.

The Committee took note of the information about outcomes of 5th MSP Planners' Forum within 'PASPS' project held online on 17 October 2024 and hosted by VASAB Secretariat.

South Baltic Programme Annual event, 24-25 September, Stralsund, Germany

The Committee was informed that VASAB Secretariat participated at South Baltic Programme Annual event on 24-25 September 2024 in Stralsund, Germany. The event was focusing on Evolving Priorities: Navigating Challenges and Trends in the Interreg South Baltic Programme. Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' was represented by VASAB Secretariat Deputy Head Ms. Egija Stapkēviča who provided a keynote speech sharing VASAB knowledge on the Baltic Sea Region changes, trends, challenges and VASAB Vision 2040.

The Committee took note of the information about VASAB's participation at Interreg South Baltic Programme Annual event which was held on 24-25 September 2024 in Stralsund, Germany.

EUSBSR Annual Forum, 29-31 October 2024 in Visby, Sweden

The Committee took note of the information about EUSBSR Annual Forum (including Stakeholder Engagement Day and Roundtable Discussions) which was held on 29-31 October 2024 in Visby, Sweden and VASAB's active participation: 1) with a seminar 'Designing Liveable Cities: Practical Approaches and Regional Perspectives' together with Interreg BSR project "Liveability" and UBC Planning Cities Commission, 2) with a Networking Village stand as a stage to showcase the SUMP for BSR, Baltic Sea2Land, and We Make Transition! projects, as well as the Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' and the VASAB Vision 2040, 3) by actively participating in many important conversations and discussions, particularly on stakeholder engagement.

EUSBSR PA 'Spatial Planning' Work Plan 2025-2026

The Committee was informed that while preparing the extension for EUSBSR Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' coordinators assistance project 'PASPS', there was a requirement to prepare a EUSBSR Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' Work Plan for years 2025-2026. A draft of this Work Plan was approved by the Committee at the last Committee meeting on 11 June 2024. At this meeting, the Committee is invited to approve the final version of the Work Plan 2025-2026 which was sent before the meeting.

The Committee approved EUSBSR Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' Work Plan 2025-2026.

CSPD/BSR feedback on PA 'Spatial Planning' work in 2024

The Committee as the Steering Group of the Policy Area 'Spatial Planning' on land-based planning approved feedback of PA 'Spatial Planning' coordinator's work in 2024.

12. PA 'Spatial Planning' relevant project SUMP for BSR

The Committee took note of the information about Policy area 'Spatial Planning' relevant project 'SUMP for BSR' (Enhancing effective sustainable urban mobility planning for supporting active mobility in BSR cities).

13. Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)

Informal consultation session of Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meeting, 18-20 September 2024 in Riga, Latvia

The Committee was informed about the main outcomes of informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group Meeting which was held on 18-20 September 2024 in Riga, Latvia:

- Coordination of the EUSBSR Policy Area ‘Spatial Planning’, MSP related projects and initiatives;
- Progress of EBA (Ecosystem-based approach) Guideline revision;
- Interim assessment on Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 implementation;
- HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Work Plan 2025-2027;
- Next informal consultation session of Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group meeting will be held on 7-9 April 2025 in Rostock (Germany).

The Committee took note of the information about the outcomes of informal consultation session of the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group held on 18-20 September 2024 in Riga, Latvia.

HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG Work Plan 2025-2027

The Committee was informed that HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG has prepared Work Plan for year 2025-2027 which is the implementation plan of the Regional MSP Roadmap 2021-2030 and is based on the Roadmap objectives. The Committee is invited to approve the Work Plan.

The Committee approved HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group’s Work plan for 2025-2027.

MSP week in Marseille, 21-24 October 2024

The Committee was informed about VASAB Secretariat participation at MSP week in Marseille from 21-24 October 2024. VASAB participated at Stakeholder Conference ‘A Decade of European Maritime Spatial Planning’ which celebrated 10 years of MSP Directive. VASAB as observer also participated at 27th meeting of EU Member States Expert Group on MSP and MSP Green project final conference ‘Planning our European Seas: Regions and Countries for a Marine Green Deal’. MSP Green project has prepared 60 recommendations on how to strengthen the integration of European Green Deal maritime components into MSP. Recommendations are available here: https://mspgreen.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Reccomendations_green-2rev.pdf.

The Committee took note of the information about the MSP week held in Marseilles on 21-24 October 2024 (27th meeting of EU Member States Expert Group on MSP, Stakeholder Conference ‘A Decade of European Maritime Spatial Planning’, MSP Green project final conference ‘Planning our European Seas: Regions and Countries for a Marine Green Deal’).

Progress of Baltic Sea2Land project

The Committee was informed about VASAB’s tasks in the project ‘Baltic Sea2Land’ and progress:

- VASAB is in the process of updating VASAB Coastal Planning and Development Recommendations for BSR. Final version of updated Coastal Recommendations should be ready by the end of 2025;
- Survey has been carried out from June until November 2024 on VASAB Coastal Planning and Development Recommendations for BSR (of 1996 and present needs);
- 1st webinar with around 50 stakeholders from all BSR countries was organised on 20 November 2024. 2nd webinar with stakeholders is planned in spring 2025. Webinars tackle coastal planning and management issues, help to exchange knowledge and good practice, discuss needs and gaps in land-sea interactions;
- Organisation of the 5th Baltic MSP Forum in Riga 2025 has started. The 5th Baltic MSP Forum will take place on 11-12 November 2025 in Riga, Latvia. The Committee was introduced with 11 themes currently proposed for parallel sessions;

- VASAB also contributes to Report on Multi-level Dialogue and Land-sea Interactions and coastal Governance.

The Committee took note of the information about the progress of project ‘Baltic Sea2Land’ and update of VASAB Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the Baltic Sea Region, as well as upcoming 5th Baltic MSP Forum to be held on 11-12 November 2025.

The Committee agreed to have a discussion on 1st draft of updated VASAB Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the Baltic Sea Region at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee agreed to send suggestions for contributions to the 5th Baltic MSP Forum sessions (e.g., Safe and Secure Coast / Defense and Civilian and Climate Change in Coastal Municipalities) to VASAB Secretariat until 31 January 2025.

Progress of eMSP NBSR project

The Committee was reminded that project ‘eMSP NBSR - Emerging ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning topics in North and Baltic Seas Regions’ has ended on 30 June 2024 and final results of the project are available here: www.emspproject.eu/results and project podcast series are available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4oc0-9wErk&list=PLJ_SMXI-ifK6YEs7cIiaD-tQmhLOcLNdo&t=3s.

The Committee took note of the information about the results of project ‘eMSP NBSR’ (Emerging Ecosystem-based Maritime Spatial Planning Topics in North and Baltic Sea Regions).

NESBp project

The Committee was informed that new project ‘NESBp’ (Northern European Sea Basins project) has started on 15 November 2024 which is led by Netherlands Enterprise Agency. The project is financed by European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. Project duration is 30 months and there are 20 project partners from 6 countries and 4 of those partners are transnational organisations/networks. Project has six work packages: project coordination, ocean governance, energy transition and biodiversity in MSP, multi-use in practice: from mariparks to basic-scale multi-use, knowledge transfer & sharing, project communication. VASAB Secretariat will co-lead work package 2 ‘Ocean governance’ with Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (the Netherlands). Main objective of this work package is to strengthen multi-level governance in the Greater North-Sea and Baltic Sea regions. VASAB Secretariat will also lead work package 6 ‘Project communication’.

The Committee took note of the information about new project ‘NESBp’ which started on 15 November 2024 and in which VASAB Secretariat will be responsible for Work Package ‘Ocean Governance’ and Work Package ‘Communication’.

14. Planners’ Forum (land-based planning)

The Committee was informed that on 1st October 2024 a new project ‘Land-based Planners’ Forum’ has started. Project is granted by Swedish Institute. VASAB initiated this cooperation project with Nordregio, Stockholm University, Estonian Association of Spatial Planners and German network called ARL (Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association). The main aim of the project is to make a concept on land-based spatial planners forum, create a platform for mutual learning, exchange of best practices. Planned activities during the project: 1) Stakeholder mapping & prepared stakeholder survey to understand collaboration needs (early spring 2025); 2) Comparison of country planning systems & organised webinars series (early & late 2025), 3) Conference in Tallinn – a wider event to develop a BSR cooperation proposal

(early 2026). On 2nd December project kick-off online meeting was organised in which VASAB Chairman Mr. Tiit Oidjärv gave an opening speech. VASAB Secretariat would like Committee members to be engaged throughout this project as activities are very important for VASAB work.

The Committee took note of the information about new project 'Land-based Planners' Forum' which started on 1 October 2024, project's kick off meeting held on 2 December 2024 and overall planned activities of the project, including foreseen input and involvement of the Committee.

15. Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Platform Project

The Committee was informed that Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2021-2027 Programme launched the call for Project platforms under priorities: 1 Innovative societies, 2 Water-smart societies, and 3 Climate-neutral societies with a deadline for submitting applications - 9 December 2024. VASAB is involved as a project partner in one project application (PlaNet) and as an associated partner in three project applications (SEABAS, Future Cities Platform, BSR Urban Mobility). VASAB's involvement in these 4 project applications have been supported by the Committee via written procedure.

- 1) VASAB Secretariat was invited to become a partner of the Project platform 'Baltic Climate-Resilient Coastal Planning Network (Baltic PlaNet)'. The Baltic PlaNet project platform is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to enhancing the resilience of coastal communities in the Baltic Sea Region. By empowering municipalities to integrate climate change considerations into their spatial planning, the platform aims to safeguard both natural and urban environments. Main activities of VASAB Secretariat in the project will be: 1) To lead Work Package 3, focusing on knowledge sharing, networking, and capacity building to advance climate-resilient coastal planning in the Baltic Sea Region; 2) Identify and engage stakeholders, develop communication materials, and actively participate in outreach events to foster collaboration and knowledge transfer; 3) Synthesize and disseminate results from relevant EU-funded projects and outputs from other project activities, enriching the Knowledge Hub of the Sea2Land Navigator with tailored tools and resources; 4) Design and deliver several macro-regional seminars and workshops on climate change adaptation, mitigation, spatial planning tools, and fostering cross-sectoral and multi-level dialogue; 5) Produce podcast episodes to share insights on these themes; 6) By facilitating dialogue with policymakers and stakeholders, VASAB will provide actionable policy recommendations to improve governance and align climate adaptation efforts.
- 2) VASAB Secretariat was invited to become an associated partner of the project 'Strategic Ecosystem-Based Planning for the Sustainable Future of the Baltic Sea (SEABAS Project Platform)'. Project aim is to establish a Baltic Sea regional framework for integrating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) into Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), synthesizing prior outcomes to enhance the sustainable management of human activities at sea while promoting blue economy and biodiversity conservation. As an associated partner, VASAB would act as a multiplier of policy impact, promoting the integration of project outcomes into regional frameworks and policies. The Involvement of the VASAB would amplify the platform's contributions to the Vision 2040 and ensure the sustainability and dissemination of its results across the Baltic Sea region. VASAB's expertise in fostering regional dialogue and collaboration will help strengthen the project's stakeholder engagement and cross-sectoral integration efforts.
- 3) VASAB Secretariat was invited to become an associated partner of the project 'Future Cities Platform'. Project aim is to build the capacity of local public authorities, especially in small and medium-sized cities, to leverage the potential of culture-based, design-based and creative approaches for engaging citizens and building liveable, sustainable and resilient communities in cities – thus making the New European Bauhaus tangible in the Baltic Sea Region. Potential VASAB role as an Associated partner: VASAB could continue the

cooperation established with the Liveability project and UBC Planning Cities Commission on creating a network of liveable cities. A representative of VASAB is invited to join (1) the Advisory Group whose task and purpose is to make sure that the outputs of the project cater to the needs of the target groups which include urban planners in city administrations as well as decision makers on urban planning in local public authorities and (2) the jury that awards the “Liveable City” label. VASAB could also contribute to webinars and symposia organised by the platform and promote them in its own networks.

- 4) VASAB Secretariat was invited to become an associated partner of the project ‘BSR Urban Mobility’. Project aim is to support cities in implementing SUMP (sustainable urban mobility plans) as the cornerstone of local mobility policies and facilitate discussion on the revised TEN-T regulation that brings new obligations to the cities defined as urban nodes. The platform brings together different urban mobility projects, including the ongoing SUMP for BSR, that have developed tools, guidelines and knowledge that can help cities and regions to address these goals. As Associated partner the role of VASAB is to take part in an advisory group that brings in knowledge from its members areas of expertise, gives advice in planning and implementation of the project activities, and spreads the results within their own networks.

The Committee took note of the information about four platform project applications which have been submitted to Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme on 9 December 2024 and in which VASAB is involved as a project partner (1 project application) and as an associated partner (3 project applications). VASAB’s involvement in these 4 project applications have been supported by the Committee via written procedure.

16. VASAB Budget 2025

The Committee accepted the VASAB budget for 2025 as proposed by the Secretariat with 379 085 EUR in revenues, 185 000 EUR Secretariat office expenses, 12 000 EUR additional expenses to be decided by CSPD/BSR, as well as 62 500 EUR – PASPS project, 204 500 EUR – Baltic Sea2Land project, 40 534EUR – NESBp project, 6 690 EUR – SI Planner’s Forum project and project reserve – 70 000 EUR.

17. VASAB Secretariat news

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

The Committee took note of the information on how to stay active and support VASAB in social media, as well as how to stay informed and follow activities.

18. Next meeting

The Committee agreed to hold 94th CSPD/BSR meeting on 19-20 March 2025.