



Dear VASAB friends,

2025 has proven to be an intensive and productive year for VASAB, marked by significant events and contributions across various initiatives.

Key highlights included the successful **5th Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Forum** held in Riga. In addition to this event, VASAB made extensive contributions to ongoing projects, including **Baltic Sea2Land**, the **Land-based Planners' Forum**, **NESBp**, and the new project platform **Baltic PlaNet**.

As a co-coordinator of the **Policy Area Spatial Planning** within the **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region**, VASAB played a pivotal role in organizing a parallel session at the **EUSBSR Annual Forum** in Sopot, Poland.

A particularly significant milestone was the adoption of the **VASAB Ministerial Tallinn Declaration on Spatial Resilience** in June 2025, reaffirming the shared commitment to enhance resilience in spatial planning across the Baltic Sea Region.

VASAB Secretariat is poised for a dynamic 2026, building on the foundations laid in 2025 while navigating the evolving landscape of spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region.

**Wishing you a calm winter season and happy New Year!**

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## VASAB 2026 Outlook

Looking ahead to 2026, VASAB will continue to align its efforts with contemporary challenges facing the Baltic Sea Region. VASAB Secretariat has identified several key focus areas for the upcoming year:

- **Ongoing implementation of [VASAB Vision 2040](#)**
- **Strengthening spatial resilience in the Baltic Sea Region**
- **Fostering a comprehensive and professional network of spatial planners across the Baltic Sea Region**
- **Promoting collaboration and results of VASAB's work**
- **Organising Young Planners' Summer School**

We are looking for new co-operations and project initiatives, and if you feel that we could work together, we warmly invite you to contact us!

[Read more](#)

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## **Thank you for joining the 5th Baltic MSP Forum “Navigate Planning Through Changes!”**

**The Forum took place on 11–12 November 2025 in Riga, Latvia. This Forum was organized together with the Baltic Sea2Land project, serving as its final conference, and broadening the scope to strengthen linkages between maritime spatial planning (MSP) and coastal zone planning.**

The Forum gathered 169 participants from 14 different countries representing a diverse and truly international community of maritime spatial planning and coastal planning professionals. The Forum featured insights from 59 speakers, who contributed to discussions across plenary sessions, keynote speeches and 9 parallel sessions, offering a wide range of perspectives and expertise.

**A comprehensive “bank of knowledge” from the 5th Baltic MSP Forum is now available.**

All session video recordings and presentations are published to support continued learning, ensure access to the discussions held at the Forum, and provide insight into current achievements and topics shaping maritime and coastal planning in the Baltic Sea Region.

- **Summary report** of the event is [here](#)
- **Session recordings** are available in the [YouTube playlist](#)
- **Presentations** and other visual materials from the event are [here](#)
- **Visual illustration** created by cartoonist Gatis Šļūka [here](#)

- A recap video “A Journey Through the Baltic MSP Forums”:



VIDEO: A Journey Through the Baltic MSP Forum

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## Launching New Land-based Planners' Forum to Strengthen Exchange and Cooperation Across the Baltic Sea Region

The Land-based Planners' Forum will be launched as a new platform for cooperation among spatial planners across the Baltic Sea Region. The Forum is being created as an informal and inclusive network where planners from local, regional, and national levels can meet, exchange experiences, and learn from one another. Its main goal is to support better coordination, stronger



**professional skills, and more coherent and sustainable development across both urban and rural areas.**

Expected participants from seven countries: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany and Sweden. If you would like to contribute, please inform the VASAB Secretariat by 8 January 2026 at [egija.stapkevica@vasab.org](mailto:egija.stapkevica@vasab.org) and [margarita.volosina@vasab.org](mailto:margarita.volosina@vasab.org).

The launch of the Land-based Planners' Forum takes place within the framework of an international cooperation project coordinated by VASAB Secretariat together with its partners. As part of this work, two insightful reports have been prepared to support the start of the Forum and future cooperation:

- **“A Brief Comparison of Seven Spatial Planning Systems in the Baltic Sea Region”** provides a clear overview of how spatial planning is organised in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, and Sweden.
- **“Feasibility Study: Land-based Planners' Forum in the Baltic Sea Region”** explores the possible content of future Forums and how the Forum could operate in the long term.

**More information**



### **Project Platform Baltic PlaNet Takes Off**

**The Interreg BSR project platform Baltic PlaNet officially launched with its inception meeting on 1-2 October 2025 in Paldiski, Estonia. Bringing together**

**partners from across the Baltic Sea Region, the event marked the beginning of an ambitious journey to strengthen climate resilience in coastal municipalities through innovative spatial planning approaches.**

Baltic PlaNet consolidates outcomes from 12 EU funded projects to addresses a pressing challenge: helping Baltic Sea coastal municipalities adapt their spatial planning to increasingly frequent extreme weather events and climate change impacts. Through three interconnected work packages, the project platform will further develop the Sea2Land Navigator platform, support municipalities in creating climate adaptation pathways, and build capacity across all governance levels.

VASAB leads the project's Work Package 3 "Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building," which:

- Maps stakeholders and develops strategy to foster active engagement and sustained collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups in the BSR;
- Provides stakeholders with the tools and knowledge necessary for effective climate adaptation and resilience planning;
- Intensifies dialogue and networking for climate resilience and improved governance in the region.

#### **More about Baltic PlaNet**



#### **Insights from the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2025**

**In the last week of October 2025 EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) held its Annual Forum in Sopot, Poland. Under the slogan "Securing the Future:**

**Stronger Together – Building Stability in Times of Uncertainty” the Annual Forum 2025 addressed a question: What actions are needed to build stability and a prosperous future for us all and the generations to come, across geopolitical, economic, social, and environmental dimensions?**

During the Annual Forum 2025 Policy Area (PA) Spatial Planning together with PA Energy and PA Secure organized a session **“Towards a Climate-Resilient Baltic Sea Region”** that showcased collaborative climate change adaptation efforts in the Baltic Sea Region, highlighting tools and strategies for a climate-resilient macro-region. Featuring insights from the Baltic PlaNet project platform as well as Interreg BSR projects ClimaResponse and CommitClimate, the participants of the session were introduced to practical tools for local adaptation, such as digital platforms, real-life pilots, and CO<sub>2</sub> simulators.

[Read more](#)

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### **Upcoming events**

*11-12 February 2026, Tallinn, Estonia*

**Land-based Planners' Forum project final conference**

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*18-19 February 2026, Warsaw, Poland*

**97<sup>th</sup> VASAB CSPD/BSR meeting**

*2-6 March 2026, Brussels, Belgium*

**European Ocean Days**

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4 March 2026, Brussels, Belgium

**NESB project expert workshop on governance of MARIPARKS**

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30-31 March 2026, Gdansk, Poland

**NESB project synthesis workshop "Energy Transition and Biodiversity in MSP"**

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April 2026, week 17 (tbc), Tallinn, Estonia

**Informal consultation session of HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG**

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11-13 May 2026, Tallinn, Estonia

**EUSBSR Annual Forum**

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21-22 May 2026, Limassol, Cyprus

**European Maritime Day 2026**

[Read more>>>](#)

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2-4 June 2026 (tbc)

**NESB project partner meeting**

[www.NESBproject.eu](http://www.NESBproject.eu)

*NB! All event dates are subject to change.*

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