



**VASAB Expert and Stakeholder Workshop
on Maritime Spatial Planning Challenges in the Baltic Sea,
Vilnius, 15 October 2009**

KEY MESSAGES TO HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL

The planning of the Baltic Sea space was considered by the Sixth Ministerial Conference of VASAB (Gdansk, September 2005) as one of the decisive factors shaping the future development of the Baltic Sea Region space till 2030. The importance of Maritime Spatial Planning as a key instrument for an Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU was highlighted by the European Commission in its “Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning Achieving Common Principles in the EU”¹. Development of Maritime Spatial Planning and of a common approach for cross-border cooperation is one of the horizontal actions proposed in recently adopted European Commission’s Communication on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region².

The Baltic Sea as our common resource shall become a scene of the integrative processes aimed at its more sustainable (more efficient, coherent, compact, etc.) use. The demand for sea space is rapidly growing. New possibilities are emerging while conflicts among different uses and environmental aspects are aggravating. All countries should be ready to mitigate the already existing and to avoid the potential future sea-use conflicts. Maritime Spatial Planning should deliver predictability and certainty for sea users.

A group of experts and stakeholders gathered for a Workshop on Maritime Spatial Planning Challenges in the Baltic Sea, agreed in principle with the main findings of the

¹ COM(2008) 791, 25 November 2008

² COM (2009) 248 final, SEC (2009) 712, 10 June 2009.

VASAB Working group on Maritime Spatial Planning, emphasizing the following key messages:

1. Maritime spatial planning should be based on a clear vision and transnationally agreed general goals.
2. The Baltic Sea Maritime spatial planning should be based on commonly agreed principles by EU and non-EU countries.
3. The planning of the sea space should be carried out in harmony with the planning of the adjoining terrestrial areas and *vice versa*.
4. Baltic Sea Region's countries should develop their spatial planning legislation to cover also the maritime space and include offshore areas into their national strategic spatial plans or guidelines.
5. The Baltic Sea space should be planned under the condition of cross-sectoral involvement of all stakeholders and dialogue with relevant political bodies in a transparent way.
6. Maritime spatial planning should be transnationally concertated. Cross-border spatial planning of some areas of the Baltic Sea is necessary.
7. Maritime spatial planning process should not be dominated by any specific sectorial interest.
8. Maritime spatial planning should be based on the ecosystem approach while utilizing precautionary principle in uncertainty cases.
9. Maritime spatial planning should be knowledge based and promote shared open-access information infrastructure.
10. The Baltic Sea Region has a potential to become a model region for sustainable development based on transnationally concertated maritime spatial planning.

To give a proper frame for maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region, workshop recommends the Governments of the Baltic Sea States to consider concluding an agreement on MSP in the Baltic Sea Region.