CONCLUSIONS of the VASAB Directors-General

Adopted at the first VASAB Directors-General meeting, Gdańsk, 27 October 2026

The Directors-General responsible for spatial planning and territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region, meeting in Gdańsk on 27 October 2026,

Highlighting the continued value of VASAB as an intergovernmental platform for dialogue and coordination on spatial planning and territorial development in the Baltic Sea Region, and

recalling the VASAB Vision 2040 (2023) and the VASAB Ministerial Tallinn Declaration on Spatial Resilience (2025),

acknowledging the role of spatial planning and territorial development in contributing to territorial cohesion and spatial resilience across diverse territorial contexts in the Baltic Sea Region,

taking into account ongoing discussions on the future territorial development of the European Union, including territorial foresight work towards a shared territorial vision expected in 2029, while respecting the roles and mandates of programme authorities and Member States, building on existing cooperation structures and avoiding duplication,

are adopting the following conclusions:

1. VASAB as a platform for territorial cohesion

RECOGNISE VASAB's overall contribution to strengthening territorial cohesion, balanced territorial development and spatial resilience in the Baltic Sea Region;

ENCOURAGE VASAB, in its role as coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Policy Area Spatial Planning, to strengthen cooperation with other relevant Policy Area coordinators and EUSBSR structures in implementing the updated EUSBSR Action Plan and enhancing the territorial dimension of relevant cooperation and policy processes;

ENCOURAGE VASAB, where appropriate, to bring a territorial perspective to discussions on future Cohesion Policy and territorial cooperation frameworks beyond 2027, while respecting the roles and mandates of programme authorities and Member States;

UNDERLINE the role of spatial planning and place-based approach in supporting the coordination of policies affecting spatial development and **ENCOURAGE**, where appropriate, key sectoral actors and Baltic Sea Region cooperation structures to jointly address functional linkages, accessibility, climate change adaptation, demographic trends, critical infrastructure and the resilience of services across diverse territorial contexts;

WELCOME the fora of maritime and land-based spatial planners as complementary platforms hosted by VASAB and **ENCOURAGE** continued support for spatial planners across the Baltic Sea Region through professional exchange, capacity building and knowledge sharing on territorial dimensions across policy areas, including cooperation between the maritime and land-based spatial planning communities and further work on coastal and land-sea interactions;

UNDERLINE the importance of continued cooperation with HELCOM, in particular on maritime spatial planning and relevant marine environmental issues.

2. VASAB's role in strengthening spatial resilience in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond

INVITE VASAB, building on the VASAB Vision 2040 and the VASAB Ministerial Tallinn Declaration on Spatial Resilience, to further promote the understanding and strengthening of multi-dimensional spatial resilience through its activities and cooperation;

ENCOURAGE VASAB to continue evidence-based and practical work on strengthening spatial resilience in the Baltic Sea Regionby collecting and sharing knowledge, tools and practical examples, building on new evidence generated by international research institutions, including the ESPON Baltic ReSeaLand project;

UNDERLINE that this work should build on existing cooperation structures, avoid duplication and make effective use of the coordination potential of spatial planning across territorial scales, while addressing the key topics identified in the Tallinn Declaration, including the impacts of climate change, energy accessibility, food security, economic development, land use, community-level resilience, infrastructure integrity and resilience, dual-use infrastructure, and demographic change;

EMPHASISE the need to reflect diverse territorial contexts and differing resilience challenges in sectoral policies, including those of external border regions, across the Baltic Sea Region;

HIGHLIGHT the importance of functional and multimodal connectivity, including cross-border links, and access to services of general interest for strengthening multi-dimensional spatial resilience in the Baltic Sea Region;

ENCOURAGE VASAB, where appropriate and within its mandate, to contribute relevant territorial evidence to discussions on the EU Pact for External Border Regions and its implementation, in cooperation with relevant Baltic Sea Region cooperation structures, in particular the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

3. Macro-regional dimension in the future territorial development of the European Union

UNDERLINE the importance of reflecting the macro-regional dimension, in particular the experience of the Baltic Sea Region, in territorial foresight and intergovernmental cooperation on the future territorial development of the European Union, including in the preparation of a shared territorial vision expected in 2029 and in the work of the Territorial Futures Forum;

INVITE VASAB to contribute with the experience of the macroregional Baltic Sea Region cooperation to this European process, with due attention to functional regions, cross-border linkages and diverse territorial structures;

CALL FOR reflection on the added value of macro-regional cooperation for coordinating spatial policies and promoting place-based approaches across territorial scales, including in addressing the challenges faced by regions along the external borders of the European Union.

4. Meetings of VASAB Directors-General

WELCOME the possibility of convening meetings of VASAB Directors-General, as appropriate, to provide strategic exchange and support the work of the VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development of the Baltic Sea Region (CSPD/ BSR) complementing the VASAB ministerial meetings and the Committee's ongoing work and providing an opportunity for VASAB member countries to exchange views on the implementation of the VASAB Vision 2040 and the VASAB Ministerial Tallinn Declaration on Spatial Resilience.