

VASAB 2010

Dear Sir or madame,

Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VASAB 2010) is an intergovernmental (ministerial level) programme dealing with spatial planning and development in the Baltic Sea Region.

Currently we are in the process of discussing VASAB COMMON STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY AND PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY, which should be ready for distribution next week. Therefore we are not in the position to give you now any firm and official comments concerning TEN-transport-revision. I hope that sending you our document next week will not be too late.

However, after consultation with some VASAB members I think we can share with you some general ideas which have emerged during the VASAB discussions.

1. Missing links between TEN-T, TINA and Helsinki corridors have to be carefully identified in the Commission's revision of the Guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). When evaluating, planning and implementing Pan-Baltic intermodal transport systems, spatial planning issues, such as balanced regional structure, should be taken into account in the TEN-T revision. The effects of infrastructure improvement on regional development should be taken effectively into account.
2. Because of their effects on spatial development, intermodal transport chains increase the need for a better integration of transport planning and spatial planning. This can be achieved e.g. by using methods of territorial impact assessments, extend strategic environmental assessments, informal negotiations with business sector, and better integration of sectoral actors to the strategic spatial planning process.
3. International cooperation in spatial planning is a strategic instrument to foster cohesion, integration, competitiveness and sustainability around the Baltic Sea. More active cooperation among transnational organizations is needed, for example in the form of elaborating transnational spatial planning recommendations. These recommendations could be based on best practice examples of environmentally sustainable transport (EST) and the experiences gained so far in the framework of INTERREG IIC and IIIB.
4. The Van Miert Group proposal that the Baltic Sea would be a pilot region in implementing the Motorways of the Sea concept is very welcome.
5. In line with the proposal of the Van Miert Group under chapter 6.6.4. "Adapt the assessment methods" some VASAB member countries are ready to offer their support to develop common methods for territorial impact assessments of large scale infrastructure projects (implementation phase) and also programmes and policies (programming phase). Their experience has proved that the assessment

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of spatial aspects at an early stage can greatly contribute to an efficient
planning
and programming phase.

I will send you VASAB more concrete comments till 19.09.03

Best regards,

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