



CONGRATULATION ON 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HELSINKI CONVENTION AND HELCOM
ON BEHALF OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION SPATIAL PLANNING INITIATIVE - VISION AND
STRATEGIES AROUND THE BALTIC SEA (VASAB)
BY MRS. ALDA NIKODEMUSA, HEAD of VASAB SECRETARIAT

Ministers, High-level Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of VASAB, which is more than 30 years lasting cooperation of ministers responsible for spatial planning and development of the Baltic Sea Region countries and its community, I have a pleasure to greet the HELCOM in relation to the half-century anniversary of the Helsinki Convention.

We all are aware how fragile is the Baltic Sea due to the natural circumstances and because of the growing pressure of human activities at the sea as well as on the land.

To ensure safeguarding of biodiversity and achieve good environmental status of the sea, HELCOM plays remarkable role and makes enormous efforts. VASAB contribution to reach that goal is by enhancing the coordinated maritime spatial planning across the entire region and balancing interests of various sectors and stakeholders.

I would like to use today's celebration occasion to emphasize the close cooperation of HELCOM and VASAB which is continuing effectively since 2010. The HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group was established to ensure cooperation among the Baltic Sea Region countries for coherent maritime spatial planning processes in the Baltic Sea. Our cooperation has been noted at the European scale and even beyond. The Baltic Sea Region is recognised as a frontrunner in maritime spatial planning, and other sea basins, like the North Sea, are eager to learn from our collaboration and experience.

We do implement the common and specific policy frameworks of both organisations, for example – Baltic Sea Action Plan, Regional Maritime Spatial Planning Roadmap 2021-2030 and the last year endorsed 'VASAB Vision for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region in 2040'.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize that together VASAB and HELCOM contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region by executing the coordination of the Policy area 'Spatial Planning'.

And finally, big thanks go to the HELCOM Secretariat for a good and smooth cooperation with us - VASAB Secretariat - to make the Baltic Sea Region sustainable and resilient.

Thank you.