



VASAB CONFERENCE

Competitiveness of Small & Medium-Sized Cities in the Baltic Sea Region

DRAFT AGENDA

4 June 2019

Venue: Radisson Blu Elizabete Hotel, Elizabetes iela 73, Riga, Latvia

Cities are economic drivers and social hubs, attempting to ensure good services and livable spaces for their citizens and attracting new inhabitants, businesses and other recourses. Demographic challenges, shrinking and urbanization of development areas – these are the main characteristics that small and medium-sized cities in the BSR are facing today. Their development and specialization strategies are crucial to adapt the global and local challenges and to capitalize their resources and assets to strengthen their attractiveness and competitiveness. Moreover, cities and towns have significant role and potential for balanced territorial development.

The Conference will look on the cities and towns from the perspective of their role, challenges, potentials and good practices to strengthen and contribute to the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region and thus providing substantial input to the joint competitiveness of Europe. It will discuss the opportunities and faced challenges of small and medium-sized cities and towns, their future prospects beyond 2020 in order to achieve greater coherence within the Baltic Sea Region and hence in the wider Europe.

The Conference is targeted to the politicians, policy advisers, experts, practitioners and other relevant audience engaged in fostering sustainable development of cities.

The Conference is organized by the Latvian VASAB chairmanship. **VASAB** (“Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea”) is intergovernmental multilateral co-operation of 10 countries of the Baltic Sea Region in spatial planning and development.

Conference moderator: **Laura Dimitrijeva**

9:00-9:30	<i>Registration & welcome coffee</i>
	Opening and welcome address
9:30-9:40	<i>Juris Pūce, Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia</i> <i>Gunārs Anšņš, VASAB CSPD/BSR Chairman</i> <i>Stefan Eriksson, Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia</i>
Part I	Setting scene
9:40-9:55	Europe in Global Perspective <i>Pawel Świeboda, Deputy Head of European Political Strategy Centre</i>
9:55-10:10	Promoting competitiveness of small and medium sized cities in the context of the future European territorial development perspective <i>Ilona Raugze, ESPON EGTC Director</i>
10:10-10:25	Challenges and Opportunities for the BSR in Global Perspective <i>Janne Antikainen, MDI Public Ltd.</i>
10:25-10:40	European Cluster Policy <i>Dr Anna Sobczak, DG Grow, Policy Officer for clusters and emerging industries</i>
10:40-10:50	Macro-regional strategies and promotion of transnational clusters: the role of local and regional governments <i>Dainis Turlais, Member of the European Committee of Regions</i>
10:50-11:10	<i>Coffee break</i>
Part II	Good practice in the BSR Cities & Towns
11:10-11:25	Tribe Tampere <i>Alexandra Santos, Business Development Lead</i>
11:25-11:40	Bjuv, Sweden <i>Josefine Wahlström, Bjuv Municipality</i>
11:40-11:55	People Meeting – a political festival <i>Gugga Zakariasdottir, Architect at Bornholm Region Municipality, Denmark</i>
Part III	Good practice in the BSR Cities & Towns
11:55-12:10	Kaunas, Lithuania <i>Andrius Veršinskas, 'Kaunas IN' Agency</i>
12:10-12:25	Tartu, Estonia <i>Raimond Tamm, Deputy Mayor of Tartu City Government</i>
12:25-12:40	Sigulda, Latvia <i>Laura Skrodele, Director of Sigulda Development Agency</i>
12:40-13:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
Part IV	Wrap-up discussion moderated by Raivis Bremšmits, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
13:00-13:45	<i>Tbc, DG REGIO</i> <i>Dr Anna Sobczak, DG Grow</i> <i>Ilona Raugze, ESPON EGTC Director</i> <i>Gunārs Anšņš, VASAB CSPD/BSR Chairman</i> <i>Māra Liepa-Zemeša, UBC Planning Cities Commission</i> <i>Lars Porsche, Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (Germany)</i> <i>Janne Antikainen, MDI Public Ltd.</i>
13:45-14:00	Concluding endnote by <i>Ingūna Urtāne, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia</i>
14:00-15:00	<i>Closing & Lunch</i>