



**10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy of Baltic Sea Region
12-13th of June, 2019
Gdańsk, Poland**

SUMMARY REPORT

Seminar: *What will demographic changes bring to BSR accessibility?*

Time: *Thursday, June 13, 13:15-14:45*

HA Spatial Planning Coordinator VASAB (Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea) Secretariat with support from PA Transport Coordinator and BSR Access project platform initiated a workshop “What will demographic changes bring to BSR accessibility?” to foster discussion on accessibility challenges that the region might face in the future.

As available research and studies show that settlement structures across BSR are heterogeneous, growing and shrinking regions and cities can be observed. Although the trend is that cities grow and rural areas shrink, there are also variations in cities development as well. It is foreseen that the discrepancies in population density in BSR will remain or even increase. At the same time research suggests that investments in infrastructure will improve accessibility, but to enhance that development of secondary network is crucial to ensure availability of services and improve accessibility.

Nowadays car sharing shows gaps in public transportation. Smart mobility solutions have the potential to improve everyday commuting and consequently the attractiveness to live or work in certain area. Last and first mile solutions as well as flexibility of service providers and transport modes are of special importance to ensure smooth moving around.

MAMBA and MARA projects look into possibilities on how to ensure that the services are still available in the rural territories in the future as well as test new mobility concepts in rural areas. Urban areas on the other hand also need to have integrated mobility points that allows to switch transport modes very easily. That is what is investigated in cities.multimodal project. Meanwhile the Cities&Rail project researches how the mega infrastructure development will influence the city scape & functionality. And even investigating further - how can transport support creating inclusive & just cities and what are the possibilities to remove barriers created by rail gauges or motorways.

Experience of the projects set the scene for inspiring discussion as so many diverse partners got involved and shared their perceptions. Diverse stakeholders, such as architects or transport planners aiming for better quality of life, however having different methods.

An important task for the future improvements in accessibility is to work on “silo-breaking” meaning there is a need for cross-sectoral integration. The example of HA

Spatial Planning and PA Transport collaborating within EUSBSR implementation or working together on NSB CoRe project where transport and spatial planning was combined and various stakeholders were brought together are good examples to mentioned here. At the same time the ongoing BSR Access project platform aims to establish lasting mechanisms and move from separated projects to processes to ensure knowledge transition and capacity.

In the context of the upcoming EUSBSR update, workshop was used a fora to express the intent to specify the PA Transport by renaming it “Improved mobility for all” by that indicating the aim of the policy area. This would also emphasize transport as an essential element to achieve territorial cohesion.

BSR should aim for inclusive mobility, and in the future mobility should be considered as a service (MaaS), but it should also be kept in mind that the services might be moving to the people who need them instead of citizens moving in order to receive services. Also considering transport development - as important as the infrastructure, are also the services that are put on it.

Last, but not the least - transport development has impacts on the public space. For some while cars have been taking over the public spaces in city, but from now on it will be observable how smart mobility solutions find their standings in urban areas and possibilities to develop more car-free public spaces for human activities will occur. As concluded by Kaarin Taipale “If we destroy public spaces, we destroy democracy”.



Mr. Holger Jansen moderates the discussion on accessibility challenges.

Thanks to all participants for active contributions!