

Ministerial Conference

Gdansk September 19, 2005.

I. Karelina presentation

Russia has been participating in work of VASAB activity for 10 years. For all these years it was presented by North-West regions- St.-Petersburg and Kaliningrad oblast. During this time Russian North-West regions took part in several projects initiated by VASAB, participated in discussion of important issues and papers on spatial development in the Baltic Sea region.

VASAB has supported and has made a flag-project frame for "umbrella" project - " East-West Forum " (among fine posters which can be seen here - there is a poster of this project). Due to the work of Committee VASAB, decisions of Conferences of Ministers responsible for spatial development, the Russian regions got an opportunity to participate in co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region on the new basis and with new understanding

Unfortunately, during all this time Russia lacked a ministry responsible for spatial development. Attention was mostly paid on political and economical reforms in the country. Finally, the situation has changed, spatial development became one of priorities for Russia .

A Ministry for regional development has been created. It's head- Vladimir Yakovlev , during several years has been a governor of St.-Petersburg. Among functions of the ministry are- spatial development, transnational the co-operation, including cross-border. Conception of Russian regions development strategy was prepared in summer 2005, now it is under detailed elaboration, development, concretizing through exact projects.

Starting from first months the Ministry has declared it's interest in VASAB's activities, The deputy director of Department of Regional Social and Economic Development and Territorial Planning Maxim Perov has taken part in VASAB Committee meeting, his colleague consultant Anzhelika Bobyleva participated in Committee meeting in Kaliningrad and had been involved into preparation of the Policy Document and the Declaration. Jury Perelygin, Department of Regional Social and Economic Development and Territorial Planning head, the well known expert in the field of spatial development, had been appointed by Minister Yakovlev as the Ministry representative on the conference in Gdansk

Unfortunately, at the last minute, working circumstances appeared, which did not allow them to arrive in Gdansk (the new Ministry has many new functions and while - insufficient quantity of employees). The department has authorized me to head the Russian delegation and to make a decision on signing final documents.

Undoubtedly the task to prepare a long-term perspective for spatial development of the Baltic Sea Region, formulated in the Declaration becomes one of the major aims of VASAB, and, is doubtless, also, that the mutual account of both EU documents, such as EU Territorial Cohesion Policy and Russian concept of regions development is necessary. VASAB Committee, its working groups should play the major role in achieving these goals.

We also support the joint decision to focus work of CSD VASAB on initiation and organization of exchange of knowledge and expertise on innovative spatial planning and development approaches, and to represent and discuss these in international forums.

I would like to thank secretariat of VASAB and the Polish hosts of the conference for it's amazing organization.