



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS
PLENARY DEBATE ON COHESION IMPLEMENTATION
27 JANUARY 2020
9AM CET

Dear Commissioner Ferreira, dear Vice-President Pavlova, dear colleagues,

It is a real pleasure to welcome you all to this important debate.

Once again, the health situation forces us to meet online.

Nonetheless, our willingness and capacity to cooperate not only are stronger than this pandemic, but have been even intensified by the awareness of the difficulties on the ground, in our regions and cities.

We share the huge responsibility of turning the financial resources made available by the EU budget into projects and actions that make our citizens feel more protected and better connected.

These investments are not simple figures on our dashboards. Every community must be able to benefit from and contribute to an EU wide mobilization aimed at securing an inclusive recovery, shared prosperity and sustainability.

By 2023, we must complete the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes and by the next few months we will need to launch the 2021-2027 investment plans.

We must succeed on these two fronts securing an efficient coordination with the Recovery and Resilience Facility, to which regions and cities are contributing in a decisive manner.

The European Committee of the Regions, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank are determined to face these challenges working side-by-side, stepping up efforts to support funds managers on the ground, monitor the situation and remove obstacles to an impactful implementation of investments.

Europe's regions, cities and villages have already started their transition to a greener and digitalised future.

The implementation and timely delivery of cohesion policy for the years 2021-2027, in the spirit of genuine partnership and in synergy with other instruments, will be decisive to ensure that such transitions will be inclusive, fair and successful.



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The Joint Action Plan we have just signed with Commissioner Ferreira – and I wish to warmly thank her for her commitment and closeness – goes exactly in this direction: strengthening cooperation to seize together the historic opportunity of a balanced recovery.

These same priorities are shaping our excellent cooperation with the EIB, aimed at facilitating the access to funding opportunities by regional and local authorities.

And I really thank Vice-President Pavlova for her participation today and for helping us to better understand the EIB approach to the new cohesion programming phase.

Finally, I wish to thank the representatives of the partner associations in the Cohesion Alliance. Our joint efforts contributed to secure a strong cohesion policy over the next decade.

We will keep working together to make sure that cohesion's values and multilevel governance remain the engine of all EU's development policies and that decision-makers at all levels are aware of cohesion policy's key role in tackling the future challenges of our Union.

This plenary debate opens - in the best possible way – our 2022 joint work on cohesion policy.

The Summit organised by the CoR and the French Presidency of the EU in Marseille, as well as the Cohesion Forum promoted by the European Commission, will provide two further outstanding opportunities to take stock of the implementation of this crucial policy on the ground as well as of its contribution to relaunching our Europe.

Dear Commissioner, dear Elisa, the floor is yours.