



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

DEBATE ON THE PRIORITIES OF THE SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021 10AM

Prime Minister Jansa,

I am honoured to welcome you to the plenary of the European Committee of the Regions.

First of all, I want to thank you for our fruitful cooperation with the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, and the excellent organization of the External Bureau and the High Level Forum on regional recovery in Lipica and of course for the warm welcome during my recent visit to Ljubljana.

I am very confident that the European Committee of the Regions can count on the commitment and the exceptional work of our Slovenian members and that we will continue our close cooperation with the Slovenian Presidency of the EU.

Prime Minister Jansa,

Under your guidance, Slovenia took over the EU Presidency just as Europe begins to cautiously open its internal borders.

For instance, we welcome the strong support announced yesterday by the Slovenian Council Presidency and the EU Health Ministers to build the European Health Union.

However, let me be clear: conceiving a Health Union only between Brussels and the 27 Capitals will never work, and we will never support it.

Because regional and local authorities hold legal responsibilities on health in all the EU's 27 member states.

Now, we must continue to work together, so that Europe delivers a just, green and fair recovery for every region and city, with our shared principles, and in particular the fundamental value of cohesion, guiding our efforts.

This will require not only investment, but unprecedented cooperation and solidarity between all levels of government: EU, national, regional and local.

Therefore, we ask the Slovenian Presidency to support our efforts, to avoid spatially-blind recovery plans that ignore regional and local authorities, because our role in the planning and the implementation of the resilience and recovery plans, is indispensable.



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And the same applies to the Green Deal since we deliver 70% of climate-change reduction measures and up to 90% of adaptation measures.

Therefore, our call to the Slovenian Presidency and the European Commission's delegation to the COP26 is to include in the Glasgow Declaration a clear reference to the key role of regional and local authorities in fighting climate change.

Prime Minister Jansa,

In our 2021 Regional and Local Barometer we presented yesterday, 65% of leaders from regions, cities and villages feel they do not have enough influence in the EU.

And 86% think that strengthening subnational government in EU decision making would improve EU democracy.

And this is how we see the European House of Democracy:

The EU being the protective roof, the Member States the strong walls, and the Regions and Cities, the solid foundations.

Therefore, my call to the Slovenian Presidency today, is to join forces with the European Committee of the Regions, to strengthen our values-based democracy, and build a resilient future Europe, that is closer to its people.