



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

DEBATE ON THE CONFERENCE FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2021 9AM

Dear Vice President Šuica, Dear Dubravka,

It is my honour to welcome you to our plenary.

First of all, I want to thank you for your exceptional work as Co-Chair of the Conference on the Future of Europe and for your support to the European Committee of the Regions.

With each and every action that you undertake, you are clearly proving that you are our best friend in Brussels.

I want to reassure you once again, that all 18 plus 12 members of the regional and local delegation to the Conference, coming both from our House and other regions and cities all across Europe, will work hard for its success.

And allow me to underline the fact that similarly, and in addition to the elected members of the National and European Parliaments, our members, representing 1 million regional and local leaders in 300 regions and 90,000 municipalities, by the nature of their elective mandates, also represent citizens in a politically accountable manner.

Therefore, the basis of our legitimacy to directly engage with the main European institutions throughout the works of the Conference, is more in line with the actual powers of our members on the ground, rather than the treaty based limitations of our institution.

As a former Mayor and a former MEP, I am sure that you understand our political line.

I am also sure that you know, that we will work tirelessly, putting the people and their real needs first, as they put their trust in us, through their vote, to make their lives better.

For that to happen, we need to make sure that the Conference will go beyond Brussels, Strasbourg and the Capitals.

And this is our strong commitment and determination:

To listen to the people in the places they live in, and bring their voices back to Brussels.



**European Committee
of the Regions**

And as an example, I want to share with you the enthusiasm and engagement of the young elected leader from Marano Lagunare, who called for permanent local dialogues with citizens, during our recent event organized in the regional parliament of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

In this context, I would like to reaffirm our readiness to develop a Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors that goes beyond our CoR members in order to reinforce citizens' engagement via the one million local and regional leaders.

Let me thank you again for the support you have shown to this project via the open letter signed on the 9 May in Strasbourg.

And as agreed with you, Vice-President, we wish to seek synergies with the BELE project proposed by the European Parliament for a greater impact throughout the Union.

I trust that your team in the Commission and our CoR team will work closely together for its successful implementation.

And at the same time we will work on promoting our democratic values via education so that we can explain to the young people, and to our children why the European Union should exist today and in the future.

This is what we believe: Our Common House needs to be further consolidated by reinforcing the trust of our people in a values based democracy that delivers results, promotes fundamental rights and respects the rule of law.

Dear Vice President Šuica the floor is yours.