



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

**PLENARY DEBATE ON THE EU GREEN DEAL: SUSTAINABLE SMART MOBILITY IN OUR REGIONS, CITIES
AND VILLAGES**

THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2020

10:30AM CET

Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for joining us today.

The EU's aim to cut 90% of transport emissions by 2050 is necessary if Europe is to become carbon-neutral.

It means providing zero-emission cars, busses and trains. It means more cycle lanes. It means offering the right environment to enable freight and ships to use alternative cleaner fuel, such as hydrogen.

It means providing affordable, accessible and sustainable local transport.

This needs substantial investment: a large share of Recovery and Resilience Facility investment, EU Structural Funds as well as funds from national, regional and local budgets, will be used to improve transport.

Commissioner,

The decarbonisation of our transport systems depends on meeting the specific needs of every region, city and village.

The needs of our metropolises differ from our rural areas, though we need to improve how they are connected: this will allow urban areas to avoid overpopulation and excessive pressure on public services, whilst making rural areas more attractive and connected.

Our rural communities with less financial capital need support, especially in upgrading their infrastructure to offer alternative green fuel.

Every level of government must work in partnership and, under the national recovery plans, we need a dedicated EU co-financing mechanism to support local and regional governments, as well as offering technical assistance when applying for grants.

We need a long-term EU financing mechanism for sustainable transport, and increased flexibility to support rail investments under the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.



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Many regions depend on the automotive industry: accelerating the green transition means supporting local and regional governments and SMEs with re-skilling.

We need a just transition, which is why we are forming a political alliance of automotive regions to support the transformation.

Let me be clear: this is to support and accelerate the green transition, not falter on our climate commitments. It will complement our Committee's Green Deal Going Local campaign, which aims to empower local and regional governments to decarbonise our economies.

And one of our other activities, is to encourage regions and cities to join the Clean Buses Deployment Platform, particularly smaller municipalities.

Commissioner,

We need to substantially improve alternative fuel infrastructure so consumers can easily change to e-mobility. It needs the EU, industry, national, regional and local governments to work together.

Time is running out to tackle climate change, and we need a technological revolution. This European transformation must be understood as an opportunity, not a burden, for governments, industry and people.

We can and must work together.

Commissioner, the floor is yours.