



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

143RD PLENARY SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

DEBATE ON THE RENOVATION WAVE IN REGIONS, CITIES & VILLAGES

WITH KADRI SIMSON, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR ENERGY

18 MARCH 16:15PM

Dear Commissioner,

Your presence today comes as we continue to struggle to protect lives and our economies.

Our plans to safely open up our economies and begin recovery is not an excuse to ignore the impending climate emergency.

No ifs, no buts, we must deliver climate neutrality, and this will only be achieved with and in our local communities.

Some of our regions and cities will achieve this well before 2050 without EU support others need real help. Without a doubt all governments and businesses will have to transition towards new processes and enhance their skills to measure up to this challenge.

We need a clear roadmap that delivers a green recovery for every region, city and village. This is why the renovation wave – making our buildings energy efficient – is welcome, timely and urgent.

Three quarters of Europe's housing stock needs to be renovated to become energy efficient and circular. Our buildings are responsible for one-third of greenhouse gas emissions.

Making our buildings energy efficient means saving money, reducing emissions and tackling energy poverty - which affects 34 million people in Europe. It is an opportunity to reshape our villages, towns and cities to make them resilient and future proof.

We need to ensure local and regional government are aware and have access to the unprecedented EU budget and recovery and resilience funds available.

We all need to take responsibility and leadership in this difficult times.

This is why, for example, in January this year my own region – central region of Macedonia - launched a programme to refurbish more than 2000 homes using EU funds.



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Commissioner, today I am delighted to launch our cooperation between the European Commission and our Committee in order to support the renovation wave in all our territories.

Together, with the leadership of Mayor Espadas and through the work of our Green Deal Going Local Working Group, we will help empower and mobilise local and regional authorities to take leadership and access funds to make our homes greener and more sustainable.

The urgency and importance of our work together cannot be understated.

We need to ensure all our regions recover, if Europe is to recover.

We can only build greener together.

Commissioner, the floor is yours.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY