



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

141ST PLENARY SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

**DEBATE ON STEPPING UP CLIMATE AMBITION DURING THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

**WITH THE GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, NATURE CONSERVATION
AND NUCLEAR SAFETY**

8 DECEMBER, 4.15 P.M. – 5.15 P.M.

Dear Minister

On behalf of our Committee, let me thank you for joining us.

Germany took over the EU Presidency as the pandemic spread throughout Europe.

Since then, we have seen member states coming to each other's side during this moment in our history that has affected our lives, our economies, our health, and our people. The EU budget and recovery plans also show the same spirit of European solidarity.

Nevertheless, I am thankful the pandemic has not taken our eyes away from the looming climate emergency. I have no doubt that you share the same goal as local and regional governments: to leave a truly sustainable future for our children.

Local and regional leaders understand that making our homes energy efficient, recycling our waste, or making our transport cleaner, makes environmental and economic sense.

Our Committee believes in a just and green European recovery for every region, city and village.

This is why in October, we agreed a cooperation with the European Commission, to empower, engage and deliver, the European Green Deal locally in our communities. Let us work together, with Germany's regional governments, to make this happen.

Together, we now need to show our solidarity in our investment, our resources and our ambition.

We call on the EU member states to agree at least a 55% carbon emissions reduction by 2030. This is not only feasible, but necessary.

It will give purpose and direction in our objectives at local, regional, national and European level. It will demonstrate that the EU is serious in becoming climate neutral by 2050.

We also need to end all public subsidies for fossil fuels. We need to support instead, green technologies.

Through expanding tools such as the Just Transition Mechanism, we need to support every region reliant on fossil industries, to make the rapid transition to more sustainable economies, protecting jobs and creating new opportunities. We need to ensure every coal region is supported in leaving fossil fuels behind.

I know that your own home region has successfully moved away from coal, It is an inspiration, showing what can be achieved with the right investment and political leadership.

Minister, let me propose to you that we hold a conference with our EU institutional partners together before the COP in Scotland. To discuss how far we have come, and how far we need to go.

I would suggest that together, with the trio of EU Presidency's and the European Commission, we also assess the feasibility of measuring local and regional determined contributions. So we ensure the invaluable contribution in cutting climate emissions by our regions and cities is measured and valued, raising our climate ambition at Member State and EU level.

Dear Minister, the floor is yours.