



European Committee
of the Regions

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REGION
NORRBOTTEN



KIRUNA KOMMUN

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DECLARATION OF THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ON

Achieving a green, just and fair transition with and in all European regions

The Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions

- recognises **the undeniable impact of the climate crisis**, which is a major threat for everyone but especially for more remote regions such as the Arctic, with severe consequences for their socio-economic development and biodiversity;
- acknowledges therefore, that **the green and digital transitions, which will be necessary to meet the European Union's ambition of climate neutrality by 2050, both create opportunities for sustainable prosperity and pose a number of significant challenges for all regions of Europe, particularly those with geographic and demographic handicaps, such as sparsely populated areas, islands and outermost regions;**
- underlines the specific issues endured by those regions, such as limitations when it comes to access to public and private services, capacity to attract investments for quality jobs and professional development opportunities, access to education, and energy infrastructure and the need to boost transport accessibility, secure supply routes and answer to the demographic challenges;
- stresses however **the important benefits that the green and digital transitions offer, notably in terms of health, learning, economic development, resilience to crisis and quality of life**, while contributing to the implementation of the EU Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- emphasises therefore, particularly given the ongoing European Year of Skills and the newly proposed Talent Booster Mechanism, **the crucial importance of promoting the upskilling and reskilling of workers and preparing them for new jobs or new working methods** in existing occupations, taking advantage of the creation of quality jobs in the green and digital economy;
- underlines the fundamental role of cohesion policy as the main EU investment policy to support **place-based development across all territories of Europe, and its key role in overcoming severe structural challenges by unlocking each territories unique potential and guaranteeing that no region or person is left behind;**
- encourages the public authorities to implement policies and roll out investment with a particular focus on the multicultural richness, natural resources, landscapes and biodiversity in their regions;
- invites all regions **in Europe to join the Cohesion Alliance and show how their specific geographic situation can become a model for the green and digital transitions**, showcasing the benefits of the use of Structural Funds and the Just Transition Fund for the daily lives of people in remote areas;
- **commits to working more closely with local and indigenous people and associations of local and regional authorities in remote regions of Europe**, such as the Arctic Mayors' Forum or the Northern Sparsely Populated Area Network;
- therefore calls upon the **European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union to take account of the specific situation of remote areas and areas with geographic and demographic handicaps** during the mid-term review of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and with a view to the debate on the European Union's future budget cycle.