



**European Committee
of the Regions**

SPEECH FOR PRESIDENT APOSTOLOS TZITZIKOSTAS

COP15 TO COP26: RAISING AMBITION, STRONGER GOVERNANCE FOR OUR BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021 3PM

Dear Commissioner, Dear Vice-President, Ladies and gentlemen,

We gather today to discuss the most pressing issues of our time: the climate and biodiversity emergencies.

Right now, leaders are at the Convention on Biological Diversity - the COP15 - where we hope they will agree the 2030 biodiversity targets.

And this week, our Committee gave its formal backing to the Edinburgh Declaration that I have the honour of signing today.

I would like to thank Vice-President Arne and ICLEI, for continuing to work so closely with us, and representing sub-national governments in the UN's international talks.

Protecting biodiversity is a matter of protecting our health, our economies and our climate.

The Edinburgh Declaration is clear: "Subnational governments, cities and local authorities play key roles in conserving, restoring, and reducing threats to biodiversity"

We will make a similar call for the COP26 Declaration in Glasgow.

Local and regional governments deliver 70% of climate change reduction measures, and up to 90% of climate adaptation action.

The sub-national level of government must – finally – be given a formal seat in the UN's climate talk negotiations.

I call on Executive Vice-President Timmermans, as the EU's negotiator, to ensure the regional and local dimension is included in the COP26 conclusions.

To ignore the fundamental role and contribution of the world's local and regional governments will hold back our ability to deliver the climate action we need, and we will continue to fail our young people and our planet.



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Dear Commissioner,

Our Committee and the European Commission continues to work together, in areas such as the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Green City Accord.

This why our Committee has also launched its campaign – *Green Deal: Going Local* – which sets 10 actions for local leaders to deliver, one of which is its "Tree for Life" initiative.

I am pleased that today, we agree to further cooperate in this area, contributing to your proposal for 3 billion tree pledge by 2030.

I call on all our members and every local leader to join us.

This is our commitment, because we need action now, for a safer, more resilient, and greener future for our children, who are asking us to secure a future for *their* planet.

Commissioner, the floor is yours.

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY