



European Committee
of the Regions

SPEECH BY 1ST VICE PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

PLENARY SESSION

DEBATE ON HARNESSING TALENT IN EUROPE'S REGIONS

WITH VP SUICA

15 MARCH 2023

Dear Vice President Suica,

The European year 2023 is dedicated to the development of skills,
and rightfully so.

The Committee of the Regions fully supports it as our objective is to **strengthen territorial resilience** in order to allow citizens **to choose where to live and work,** despite the economic, social or territorial handicaps their own regions may suffer from.

But this exercise cannot be ended in one year, in particular when the reasons for their handicaps are natural or endemic.

This is particularly true, for instance,
For the over 17 million Europeans
living in islands,
or the quarter of the EU population
living in rural areas.

They all struggle to compete
under the same rules within the single market,
which **should be a level play field**;
unfortunately, for many, this is not the case.

The **Talent Booster Mechanism**
is **therefore welcome**

as it can contribute to tackle
a number of issues they need to face, such as
the brain drain, or the demographic transition.

What we need is to help young people who want
to live and work in their own regions.

And how can we do that?

By offering them a way to **maximize their own talents**.

This is urgent now, also because

There are insufficient skilled workers
to offset the impact of the demographic transition.

I would like to make a call to all our colleagues,
in particular, those coming from regions
affected by green and digital transitions

to **put forward their candidatures** to test the new Mechanism in its pilot phase, this year. Your active role will encourage skilled people from your regions **to choose to remain.**

Dear Vice President,

We need to increase both **the demand for talent,** by encouraging more dynamic and diverse economic opportunities, **and the talent supply,** via tailored training schemes mirroring the local labor needs.

We also need to **promote life outside densely populated cities,** for instance, by **boosting remote working,** which means 4G and 5G connections in rural areas.

From the CoR we will continue helping you in monitoring the green and digital reforms implementation, and in enhancing the skills anticipation: this can be done by developing **territorial indicators.**

Indeed, we believe that a '**territorial proofing**' could help you for better capturing:

- the reasons for the shrinking labor force,
- why some regions suffer from a low share of higher education,
- the motivations behind the departure of young people,

which are the main issues at the very core of your initiative.

And we will do this,
with a view
**to leave no one,
and no place behind.**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY