



Dear Apostolos Tzitzikostas
President of European Committee of Regions

València, 1 April 2020

Don't be indifferent.

These three words summarize our way of being in the world. A way of being part of a community and wanting to look beyond each other.

Don't be indifferent to the death of our elders, to the suffering of the sick, to the pain of family members, to the risk assumed by health professionals, to the effort of people who keep active basic services in these hard times. Not to be indifferent to the troubles of suddenly dismissed workers, to the losses faced by so many self-employed, professional and business workers.

Not being indifferent is what makes us different.

And those three words summarize the essence of the European project.

Given the seriousness of the health, social and economic emergency of the current Covid-19 pandemic crisis, I want to thank you for your committed official statement of March 20th. I share with you that the European regions urgently need help "Not only to protect lives, but for also subsequent reconstruction." I subscribe to your sentence and applaud your firm and determined stance.

Now, more than ever, it's necessary to claim the responsibility that we have the 329 regions and local authorities that make up the European Committee of the Regions on the well-being of European citizens. We are on the front line of this health emergency, and we will also be in the subsequent stage of socioeconomic reconstruction.



I would therefore like to convey to you, on behalf of the Valencian Community I represent and the five million inhabitants that make it up, the need for all European regions to jointly press for the European Union to become fully involved in this health, economic and social crisis with an ambitious and extraordinary European stimulus plan capable of raising the losers that this crisis will cause.

In short: we need a European "Marshall Plan". A "Marshall Plan" that allows us to face, with the required solidarity and solvency, the greatest emergency that the continent has lived since the II World War.

The US Secretary of State George Marshall delivered, on June 5th, 1947, the speech that laid the foundations of the so-called Marshall Plan. In it, he called Europeans to reach an understanding for European reconstruction. His aim was "to restore the confidence of the people of Europe in the economic future of their own countries and of Europe in general" through "a cure, rather than a mere palliative." That speech ended with a perfectly valid reflection for today: "The whole world of the future depends on a correct judgment. It depends, to a large extent, that we realize what the crucial elements are: What are the people's reactions? What are the justifications for these reactions? What are the sufferings? What's needed? What can be done better? What's to be done?"

I am convinced that those questions, asked in 1947, are correct for the present moment.

We will need a cure, not palliatives. And we will need the European Union to demonstrate unity of action. Let it work together, to mobilize all the resources and instruments to ensure social and territorial cohesion. You as a Greek citizen, and I as a Spanish citizen, know that neither the orthodox restriction that followed the 2008 crisis, nor a timorous position and lack of decision, would be valid answers this time.

It's urgent that our peoples see a Europe truly linked to people's feelings. To their sufferings, to their needs. The time has come for the European Union to answer an existential question: Are we a club with 27 markets or a large family of 446 million people experiencing their worst moment in 75 years? The future of the Union will depend on Europe's response. And the fate of millions of Europeans.

In face to this, there is only one valid position: not be indifferent.

Those three words should suffice for Europe to implement a community "Marshall Plan" for the reconstruction of all the regions concerned. A plan that ensures the stability and prosperity of its citizens.



I therefore propose that the European Committee of Regions lead and encourage all European regions that make up the Union to demonstrate and to explain to the institutions shaping the European Union - especially at the Council, Parliament, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee, the Central Bank and the Bank. Investment -, our determined Europeanism and to support a European "Marshall Plan" that will help refloat the most damaged economies by the consequences of Covid-19 and, in this way, we ensure the survival of the European Union itself.

Reiterating again my thanks for your positioning and with the confidence that we will succeed as the history of our old continent teaches us, I affectionately bid farewell to you, dear Apostolos.

Yours sincerely,

Ximo Puig