



THE EESC AND CLEAN TECHNOLOGIES

The clean technology sector, i.e. all technologies that reduce the environmental impact of production processes and energy consumption, is set to become one of the main drivers of global economic and industrial transformation. Although the European Union is home to various clean technology ecosystems and has solid expertise in research and development, the transition from innovation to commercial deployment remains problematic, especially when compared to global competitors such as China and the United States. In its recently adopted Opinion CCMI/241 on clean technologies, the EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) highlights how US and Chinese policies are jeopardising Europe's ability to increase investment and strengthen its clean technology industry, even in areas where the Old Continent is at the forefront. Furthermore, the fragmented policies and financing mechanisms under the European Green Deal only partially address the EU's ambitions in the production of clean technologies. The lack of coordination between European and national policies and funding hinders efficiency, just as current measures that can be classified as State aid excessively favour the wealthiest Member States. Distortions of competition at global level are also put-

ting the EU's clean technology industry under severe strain. However, if Europe adopts the right policies, it could turn the challenges in the energy and water sectors into opportunities to create jobs, develop new skills and stimulate business growth. Clean technology sectors are among those with the highest need for retraining. In this regard, Councillor Ulgiati believes that «we need to invest in strengthening clean technology skills, promote targeted training and carry out an EU-wide assessment of the skills gap in net-zero technologies in order to support the skills transition for all workers by developing road maps that are not only technological but also address the human and social dimensions».



EU: EUROPEAN WEEK OF REGIONS AND CITIES

The most important annual event, now in its 23rd edition, dedicated to cohesion policy and territorial development in the European Union, has just concluded in Brussels: the European Week of Regions and Cities, promoted by the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission. During the event, which brought together political representatives, officials, experts and academics from Regions and Cities across Europe, thus providing a platform of fundamental importance for communication and networking, various examples were presented of the key role played by local and regional levels in effective European governance, also in view of the fact that Regions and Cities participate in the implementation of most EU policies. The Week is not only an opportunity for political debate, but also a laboratory of concrete experiences, where Regions and Cities bring examples of good practice in key areas such as the environment, infrastructure, innovation and social inclusion. This year's three main themes are: 1) growth

and cohesion for the future: policies for balanced and inclusive development between Regions and Cities; 2) the right to remain: enhancing peripheral and rural areas to combat depopulation and reduce inequalities; 3) cities build tomorrow: urban innovation, green and digital transition, new forms of mobility and participation. The 2025 edition also featured a new hub designed as a space for networking and learning, with thematic areas exploring key challenges such as energy transition and sustainable urban development. From climate neutrality plans to circular economy projects and urban greening and biodiversity initiatives, the modern hub demonstrated how local innovation is creating healthier, cleaner and greener communities. The European Week was rounded off by the Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions, which unanimously rejected the proposal for the 2028-2034 EU budget presented in July by the European Commission, considering it dangerous for the future of cohesion policy.