Dear participants,
Dear distinguished speakers,
Dear political coordinators and Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Regions' ENVE Commission,

I would like to welcome you to this high-level roundtable on "Future implementation in the light of the 7th Environment Action Programme", co-organised by the Committee of the Regions and DG Environment of the European Commission.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to moderate this roundtable, with such distinguished speakers, and at such an appropriate moment.

In her welcome speech of the conference, Paula Baker referred to two major events that happened last week: One was the European Commission’s proposal for a 7th Environment Action Programme, the other was the Committee of the Regions' Opinion on "Towards a 7th EAP: Better implementation of environment law". I had the honour of being the rapporteur on this Opinion.

Today's discussion is very timely because it is the first high-level gathering of EU institutions since the adoption last week of the 7th EAP, which looks at the implementation topics of the EAP. And, since it is the local and regional authorities that mostly implement the environment law, I believe that the Committee of the Regions is the perfect platform to hold such an event.

I would now like to welcome the speakers to our roundtable with an introductory note:

Dear Commissioner Janez POTOČNIK, it is a pleasure having you with us today as key-note speaker. We are curious to hear from you about the EAP priorities on better implementation and how you see the future involvement of cities and regions in this context.
Let us also welcome **Mercedes BRESSO**, Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions. During her mandate as President of the Committee of the Regions, up until August of this year, Mercedes Bresso has strongly been in support of the advancement of the EU's sustainable development agenda. She will present the Committee of the Regions' key recommendations on better implementation under the 7th EAP.

Let me now turn to the representatives of the "co-legislators on the EAP" who are joining us today:

Please welcome Erminia **MAZZONI**, Chair of the European Parliament's Petitions Committee. We recognise the extensive experience that your Committee has gained on issues of implementation of EU environment law. We look forward to hearing your conclusions on this topic for the 7th EAP.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to **Jo Leinen**. He was the rapporteur on the European Parliament's resolution in May of this year, which outlined the expectations for the 7th EAP. He is also a former Member of the Committee of the Regions! Jo Leinen, we remember very well the 3 "I"s of the Parliament's resolution, because one of them stood for "Implementation". We are curious to hear your first analysis on how far your expectations have been met.

Finally, I am happy to introduce **Paul LEMASS**, Environment Counsellor from the Irish Permanent Presentation to the EU. The Committee of the Regions hopes that the Irish Presidency of the EU will bring support to the negotiations in the Council on our call for a strong implementation strand of the 7th EAP. We hope to gain some insight and direction from you on this issue.

I would now like to give the floor to the speakers.

**Dear speakers,**

**Dear participants,**

I would like to thank you for your very interesting speeches and for the fruitful debate we all had.

The Committee of the Regions will try to make sure that the 7th Environment Action Programme, as to be now discussed by the Parliament and the Council, will intensify the dialogue with local and regional governments, on how all governance levels can work better together to enhance implementation of EU law on the ground.

I also would like to invite all participants of the conference to join us for a networking cocktail in the foyer.

Thank you.