

Mme Ursula von der Leyen  
Présidente de la Commission européenne  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 17 November 2024

**Subject : EU-Mercosur trade agreement**

Dear President von der Leyen,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament and Members of national parliaments, write to urge you to **put an end to the negotiations of the EU-Mercosur trade agreement**. Under negotiation since 1999, this agreement will **eliminate over 90% of tariffs to stimulate trade flows between the European Union and Mercosur countries** (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia). With over 800 million people living in the two regions, it is by far the largest deal to date in terms of the population impacted. It will also be **unprecedented in terms of the damage it will cause to local economies, agriculture, nature and public health**.

**Farmers will bear a heavy burden** as they will be exposed to increased unfair competition from Mercosur's giant industrial farms. As per the last known version of the text, Mercosur will for instance be able to export to the EU **additional quotas of 99,000 tonnes of beef, 180,000 tonnes of poultry, 25,000 tonnes of pork; 35,000 tonnes of cheese, 190,000 tonnes of sugar and 45,000 tonnes of honey per year**. These new imports at reduced prices will come on top of quotas agreed upon in other trade agreements, exerting additional pressure on European farmers, many of whom already struggle to make ends meet.

This **unfair competition** is intensified by the **regulatory gap between the two regions, as Mercosur producers do not have to comply with the EU standards on pesticides use, GMOs, animal welfare and meat processing**. For instance, close to a third of pesticides used in Brazil are forbidden in the EU for sanitary or environmental reasons. So far, the Commission has dismissed concerns over potential **sanitary risks** by asserting that all products entering the territory of the UE must comply with EU norms. Nonetheless, the agreement will actually entail **weakened and less frequent border controls**, which makes it de facto impossible to back such statements. Besides, **the very logic of importing an ever growing share of our food from the other end of the world makes no sense**. Not only does this disrupt small-scale farming on both sides of the Atlantic, but it also **makes the EU more dependent on globalized supply chains to cater for the basic needs of its population**. It is clear that the EU should be prioritizing the relocalization of its agriculture and food

production instead.

Furthermore, **the deal is fundamentally at odds with all the EU's commitments on climate, biodiversity, and environmental protection.** According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), agriculture is responsible for 22% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. **The deal will precisely incentivize highly GHG-emitting agricultural productions like livestock farming, and will expand monocultures that play a major role in deforestation** such as sugarcane and ethanol, for which the EU will import an additional 650 000 tonnes a year. **At the time of writing, the Amazon region is facing the largest fires in decades.** Since the beginning of the year, a forest the size of Belarus has already been turned into ashes. The science is clear that these fires are exacerbated by intense deforestation and land-use change, mainly caused by the agri-industry. Despite this, the Commission has decided to postpone the implementation of the EU deforestation regulation by one year. Additionally, the GHG emissions derived from international transportation by cargo-ships, aircrafts, and trucks will inherently rise as a result of the increased trade flows.

Finally, **the signing of the EU-Mercosur agreement is a major blow to democracy.** The Commission and Member-States had deemed it impossible to sign the deal as long as former far-right and climate denier Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was in office. However, they are now prepared to endorse the same deal under Argentinian President Xavier Milei, whose track record on democracy, human rights and environmental protection since his election is equally problematic. Furthermore, **there has been a persistent democratic deficit throughout the negotiations, the content of which has largely been kept hidden from citizens, civil society organizations and Members of the European Parliament.** To date, no complete, up-to-date text of the agreement has been made public, and the previous versions were only available years ago after they were leaked by NGOs. As elected representatives, we cannot accept the erosion of our role in democratic scrutiny or the exclusion of the public from such an impactful decision. It is also widely known that **the Commission is considering splitting the trade part of the agreement from the political part in order to change the ratification process and bypass ratification by national parliaments.** This blatantly poor democratic process is all the more shocking given the far-reaching social and ecological consequences of the agreement.

**The EU-Mercosur deal is a disaster from a social, ecological, sanitary and democratic perspective.** It is still time for the EU Commission to acknowledge it and seek other forms of trade cooperation with Mercosur countries. **We therefore call on you to abandon the conclusion of this agreement without further delay.**

Respectfully,

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