The EU-Mercosur trade agreement: Fuelling conflict and human rights violations

The European Union (EU) and the Mercosur countries (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay) concluded a <u>trade agreement</u> back in 2019 to exchange more products and services. The process of ratification is due to start soon.

A deal that puts agribusiness against indigenous communities



The EU-Mercosur trade deal is bound to increase <u>deforestation</u> and land <u>grabs</u>, by increasing exports of soy, beef and bioethanol. Indigenous people, who live in the forests, will risk their lives to retain their land, homes and livelihoods against the interests of big agribusiness. Yet, the deal does not include enforceable standards on indigenous peoples' rights.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has reversed the legal processes that protected indigenous communities' right to land, especially the right to demarcation, which helped to recognise and protect indigenous land holdings. This has led to a situation where indigenous land permissions can be reviewed and revoked at any time.

The rights of indigenous people are also being violated in Paraguay where cattle farmers are expanding into indigenous lands, posing an immediate threat to their <u>livelihoods</u>.



Lastly, the EU-Mercosur trade deal will increase pesticide use in the Mercosur region. This will have a direct impact on the health of the indigenous people living in those areas, such as the Mapuche communities in Argentina.

Despite this horrific situation, the EU-Mercosur trade deal exclusively refers to a watered-down version of the UN protections for indigenous people.

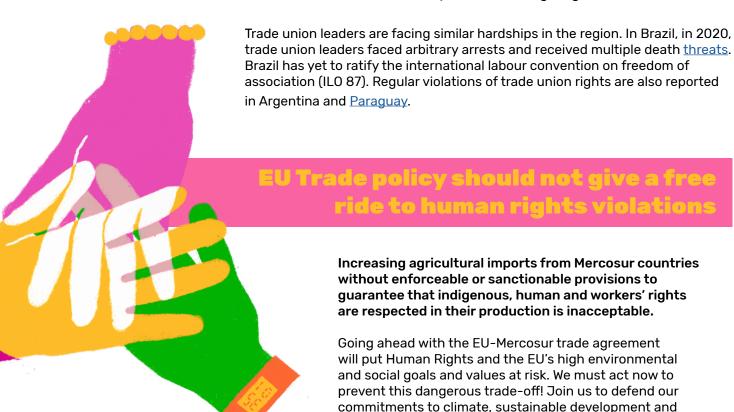
"This agreement insufficiently protects the rights of indigenous people, farmers, and consumers, whose health and lives are at risk. It is unacceptable that trade interests prevail over human rights. As long as no sufficient provisions on human rights, and no sanctions in case of non-compliance are foreseen, we will continue to oppose the EU-Mercosur trade agreement."

MEP Yannick Jadot

A trade deal that will not benefit workers

Labour rights are not always guaranteed in the Mercosur region. In Brazil, since 1995, 55,000 Brazilian workers have been rescued by government inspectors from "situations similar to modern slavery", the majority of them found in the cattle industry.

There are reports of forced labour and poor working conditions in the beef sector in the country, with workers on farms supplying world's biggest meat firms allegedly paid poverty wages and housed in shacks with no toilets or running water. The EU-Mercosur deal will boost beef exports, yet does not have enforceable or sanctionable rules to ensure those are produced through high labour standards.



Find out more about how the EU-Mercosur trade agreement impacts

<u>Deforestation | Animal Welfare | Biodiversity | Climate and land use | Food safety | </u> Pesticides and GMOs | Public Procurement

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human rights.







