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EU-MERCOSUR : The European Commission forces its way in

Today, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced at the Mercosur summit in Montevideo, the EU is concluding the trade agreement with the Mercosur countries (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, recently joined by Bolivia).

The Greens/EFA Group opposes this treaty, which does not respond to the current challenges facing the EU and the Mercosur countries. Following today's agreement, the treaty will have to be approved by the Council by a qualified majority of Member States and by the European Parliament. The involvement of the 27 national parliaments is also necessary, as this is a mixed agreement. However, a manoeuvre by the Commission to split the treaty in order to short-circuit ratification by the national parliaments of its trade section cannot be ruled out at this stage.

Saskia Bricmont MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Committee on International Trade responsible for the EU-Mercosur for the Greens-EFA group, comments:

'Ursula von der Leyen sealed the EU-Mercosur agreement with Argentina's far-right president, Javier Milei, in a move that met neither the needs of Europeans nor those of the citizens of the Mercosur countries. Once again, a minority of players from the agri-business, automotive and chemical industries will benefit from this power grab.

"Clearly, the concerns expressed by European farmers, job creation and the protection of social rights, health and forests in the Mercosur countries are not priorities for the President of the European Commission. She seems to be primarily interested in the potential outlets for industries that for a long time preferred to distribute dividends rather than invest in the ecological transition.

"The Greens/EFA Group will continue to fight this free trade agreement, which is incompatible with climate objectives, the Green Deal and a model of sustainable trade and development. The anti-social and climate change policies of Javier Milei, who, to top it all off, is convening a summit with the western far right, show that he will not be a trustworthy partner.

"This agreement will strengthen the agro-industrial model to the detriment of sustainable agriculture and the rights of the indigenous peoples of Mercosur. It will not even counter China's growing influence in the Mercosur countries, especially as some of them have forged alliances (Brazil via the BRICS) or are seeking to

negotiate partnerships with China. This would require a policy of massive investment in our partners, rather than increased sales of cars, chemicals and financial services. But the treaty is silent on this point. As for securing raw materials, the EU has had a strategic agreement with Argentina since 2023 and is considering another with Brazil, which makes the agreement pointless in this respect.

"We will continue to defend closer ties with these South American countries, alongside consumers, civil society and trade unions in Europe and Mercosur, who also oppose the narrow approach of the agreement'.

More:

*The Mercosur agreement, which has been negotiated for over two decades, was put on hold during Bolsonaro's presidency.

*A qualified majority at the Council requires at least 15 Member States, while a blocking minority requires the vote of 4 Member States representing at least 35% of the population of the European Union. Abstainers who express a 'polite no' complicate the formation of a qualified majority (in particular the demographic criterion).

*The EU-Mercosur agreement has been criticized by 400 European and Mercosur organisations, agricultural federations and unions, workers' unions, consumer associations, environmental NGOs, representatives of indigenous peoples.

*Alternative trade partnership : https://www.greens-efa.eu/fr/article/study/alternatives-for-a-fair-and-sustainable-partnership-between-the-eu-and-mercosur-scenarios-and-guidelines

*Briefing : https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/positionpaper/the-eu-mercosur-free-trade-agreement-still-unacceptable

*Greens-EFA Mercosur Campaign: https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/campaigns/mercosur

*Study : https://www.greens-efa.eu/fr/article/study/the-eu-mercosur-free-trade-agreement-its-impacts-on-agriculture

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