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The EU's relations with Mercosur

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Seventh Meeting of the EU-Mercosur Bi-regional Negotiations Committee (BNC)

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 8-11 April 2002

Final Conclusions

Negotiators from Mercosur and the European Union met for the 7th. time in the context of the EU Mercosur Biregional Negotiations Committee from 8 to 11 April 2002 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The parties exchanged views on the preparation of the 2nd EU - Mercosur Summit (Madrid, 17 May 2002). Parties made significant progress in various aspects of the future Interregional Association agreement between the Mercosur and the European Union.

The negotiators arrived to the following conclusions.

1. GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

Ambassador Martín Redrado, National Coordinator of Argentina carrying out the Pro Tempore Presidency of Mercosur, and Mr Guy Legras, Director General of External Relations of the European Commission representing the European Union, opened the meeting. Their statements reflected the commitment of both parties to the negotiation process and their interest in making significant progress towards the preparation of the [Madrid Summit](#).

Ambassador Redrado referred to the latest progress aiming to strengthen Mercosur and to the results of the Mercosur Council special meeting on 18 February. At this event the Protocol of Olivos, establishing a Permanent Court for Dispute Settlement with seat in Asunción, was signed. He underlined the importance of external negotiations carried out by Mercosur and put particular emphasis on its negotiations with the European Union. Mr Legras thanked him for his observations and emphasised the EU's strong support for Mercosur's integration process. Both negotiators emphasised their strong interest in making substantial progress for the Madrid Summit, in the Political and Cooperation Chapters and measures for business facilitation.

Afterwards, the discussions moved on to the Institutional Framework of the future agreement and the Parties exchanged points of view on enlarging and deepening future Political Dialogue.

The Sub-group of Cooperation continued discussions on the definition of all issues related to different areas of cooperation.

During these negotiations discussion on business facilitation issues intensified. Results will be presented in the meeting of EU - Mercosur Heads of State and Government in Madrid. Discussions include measures for customs, standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and electronic commerce.

Also Mercosur raised the issue of increasing EIB financial resources in the Mercosur region for infrastructure projects.

The date of the next meeting of the Bi-regional Negotiation Committee and other aspects of organisation will be decided through the regular diplomatic channels.

2. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE POLITICAL DIALOGUE

During negotiations, Parties analyzed the draft text on Principles; Objectives, Nature and Scope of the Association; Political Dialogue and Institutional Framework. Parties examined the incorporation of the principle of "good governance" and the regularity and content of meetings of Heads of State and Government.

Regarding the mechanism on the political dialogue, parties discussed a new paragraph II.3.5 proposed by the European Union. It will now be submitted for consideration by respective Parties' authorities.

3. NEGOTIATIONS ON COOPERATION

Parties made significant progress on all subjects of the cooperation chapter. Following previous work by the Sub-groups on Social, Cultural, Technical and Financial Cooperation outstanding texts were agreed under Economic Cooperation chapter. These included agriculture, services, fishing, environment, consumer protection, tourism, public procurement, e-commerce and data protection and intellectual property.

4. BUSINESS FACILITATION

Parties analyzed a set of trade facilitation measures with a view to their adoption in Madrid, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Mercosur - EU Business Forum. These included customs, standards, regulations and conformity assessment, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and electronic commerce. Parties made significant progress on a package of measures, and expect to conclude this package soon.

5. MADRID SUMMIT

Parties exchanged views on the format of the EU - Mercosur Summit at Madrid. They agreed to continue efforts to make this a success. The Spanish Presidency provided information on the organisational aspects the meeting.

The European Union Delegation underlined the importance of the Draft Joint Communiqué for the Madrid Summit presented by Mercosur, and noted that it includes the central aspects of the relationship which should be included in the Communiqué. Suggestions were made on the content of the text.

Mercosur presented a new paragraph on the importance of negotiations aiming to reach bilateral agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary matters.

Parties agreed to pursue these negotiations in Brussels.

6. ANNEXES

Annex 6.1. Draft Joint text for the Institutional Framework and Political Dialogue

Annex 6.2. Draft Joint text and proposals on Co-operation