

STATE_NGO_Speaking notes

Die Rede vor dem UN-Ausschuss:

Esteemed members of the committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak here about our concerns on the EU-Mercosur. My name is Ludwig Essig. Ever since I was 14 years old, I have stood up for a fairer and more environmentally friendly global trade policy. This is the first time I submit a parallel report to the UN. But in facing the serious challenges we are confronted with and the risk of escalation through the EU-Mercosur agreement, I saw it as a necessity to do so.

All the while, urgent social and ecological crises are escalating rapidly. It is reasonable to expect that trade agreements aim at the fulfillment of these goals, but there can be no automatism in such matters. A socially just foreign trade, industrial and raw materials policy that is capable of meeting the challenges of our time which respects the limits of what this planet can sustain will only be possible with agreements that are negotiated democratically, inclusively and transparently.

The more than 20 years of ongoing negotiations on an association agreement between the EU and the Mercosur states have failed to take account of these values. Instead of an agreement that fosters value creation in Latin America and supports climate-friendly manufacturing and agriculture while preventing trade in harmful products, we are faced with an outdated, neo-colonial and toxic trade deal that must never be allowed to enter into force.

The trade in pesticides is perhaps one of the most revealing examples of the hypocrisy and double standards of the EU trade policy. By pushing for ratification of the EU-Mercosur trade deal, the European Commission is sabotaging its own targets for reducing pesticide use. Brazil already counts among the world's three largest consumers of pesticides. There are thousands of cases of pesticide poisoning every year.

Currently, pesticide exports from the EU to the Mercosur region are subject to tariffs of up to 14 percent. The trade deal would eradicate tariffs on more than 90 percent of EU chemical exports, including pesticides. At duty-free prices, the pesticide industry would be able to count on far higher sales volumes.

If this wasn't generous enough, import controls would be reduced and exporters would be allowed to self-certify that they operate in compliance with EU directives on pesticide residues.

According to the mentioned violations of the EU-Mercosur agreement against social human rights in the report, we demand an immediate stop of the agreement.

The EU Commission's attempt to split the agreement in two parts is a democratic scandal because it separates the human rights parts from the economic parts of the agreement. And it excludes the parliaments from ratification.

Instead of ineffective additional declarations, the EU-Mercosur agreement should finally be shelved. A Joint Instrument cannot turn an outdated and climate-damaging agreement into a modern instrument of trade policy.

The people of both of our continents deserve more than exploitation, deforestation, poisoned land and rising traffic emissions. We have no time to lose - a reset of our relations with Brazil as well as all of Latin America is urgently needed.

Thank you!