



Brussels, 11 February 2021

Subject: Mercosur trade agreement - the need to reopen negotiations

Dear Prime Minister Costa,
Dear Minister of Foreign Affairs Santos Silva,

At the very beginning of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, and during his intervention in the European Parliament on 20 January, Prime Minister António Costa stressed the importance of making progress in the negotiations of new trade agreements around the world, especially the one with Mercosur. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Augusto Santos Silva, even stated that it is an “obligation of the EU27” to conclude the agreement this year.

However, a real obligation of the EU27 is to reach its climate objectives. Important concerns about the EU-Mercosur deal are coming not only from environmental organisations, indigenous peoples and experts, but also from many heads of state and parliaments. As it is, the deal will lead to significant increase in deforestation in the Mercosur region.

There is wide scientific and political consensus on the need to fully integrate environmental and social objectives at the core of the agreement and the European Parliament has stated that the deal cannot be ratified in its current form.

Indeed, we believe there is a need to reopen the negotiations as many aspects of the text lack clear and effective policies regarding environmental protection and sustainability assurances. Recently, Commission officials stated they were in talks with Mercosur countries, in particular the government of Brazil, to negotiate additional commitments on deforestation and climate. Additional commitments that are not enforceable and sanctionable, and that have no clear legal link to the main text, will not be sufficient to address the shortcomings of the agreement.

If the Presidency wants to be coherent with the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal, it cannot proceed with the ratification of this trade agreement, as it stands. We are not opposed to meaningful international trade. We are aware of geopolitical implications. Nevertheless, we also know that the planet cannot wait any longer and that it is certainly *time to deliver* on our environmental and climate objectives promises. We therefore call you not to haste a harmful deal during your Presidency but rather suspend it as long as it is necessary to find, if possible, a legal and meaningful solution to it.

Yours sincerely,

GUERREIRO Francisco



also on behalf of:

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