

European Chambers: let's gear up EU-Mercosur negotiations!

On the eve of the second round of negotiations between the EU and the Mercosur region, European Chambers from both sides of the Atlantic urge EU leaders to gear up negotiations to reach an ambitious agreement and secure the European Union's position as Mercosur's main trading partner.

"If we fail to reach an agreement, China will surpass the EU and tail behind the United States as Latin America's main export market by the next decade," said Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES. *"We are aware that the agriculture chapter is a stumbling block, but we also know that there is always room to find creative mechanisms to prevent harm to vulnerable sectors – as the safeguard clause of the recent EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement has proven."*

EUROCHAMBRES and its Mercosur counterparts – EUROCAMARAS Brazil and EUROCAMARA Uruguay – urge negotiators put together their best efforts to iron out their divergences; and also recall the importance of foreseeing specific instruments that will ensure and support European SMEs' access to that region. The current resilience of Latin America to the crisis provides an important opportunity for EU businesses.

The EU is currently Mercosur's largest trading partner, representing 20.7% of Mercosur trade. Europe is also the largest investor in the region, with a total EUR 165 billion investment – more than EU investments in China, India and Russia together. A region-to-region trade agreement with Mercosur would imply a free-trade zone representing around 750 million people with annual commerce worth nearly EUR 100 billion.

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.

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EUROCAMARA Uruguay is formed by the Chambers of Commerce of Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

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