

Sixth meeting of the European Union - Mercosur biregional negotiations committee

29-31 October 2001
Brussels, Belgium

Final conclusions

Negotiators from Mercosur and the European Union met for the sixth time in the context of the EU-Mercosur Biregional Negotiations Committee from 29-31 October 2001 in Brussels, Belgium. This meeting formed the sixth round of negotiations, aiming at the conclusion of an Interregional Association Agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. The negotiators established the following set of conclusions.

1. General discussions

Mr. Guy Legras, Director-General for External Relations of the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, and the Uruguayan Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Guillermo Valles Galmes, on behalf of the Pro-Tempore Presidency of Mercosur, jointly opened the sixth meeting of the BNC with statements that strongly reflected both sides' deep commitment to the negotiating process and interest in making significant progress in the discussions during the present phase of the negotiations.

On Monday 29 October 2001 during a plenary session of the BNC, Mercosur presented to the EC a tariff offer and negotiating texts for goods, services and government procurement, in response to the EC proposals submitted at the V round of negotiations. The EC thanked Mercosur for its tariff offer as well as for the negotiating texts and expressed EC's great appreciation for this new step in the negotiating process. The EC underlined its political appreciation of the efforts undertaken by Mercosur to meet this objective which gives an additional impetus to the rhythm of the negotiating process.

Discussions also took place with respect to the Institutional Framework of the future agreement and the Parties also exchanged views on the widening and deepening of the future political dialogue. The Subgroup on Economic Co-operation also met during the sixth meeting of the BNC in Brussels and established a number of joint texts.

As for the trade groups, meetings took place on tariffs and non-tariffs, services and government procurement.

It was agreed that the seventh meeting of the BNC would take place towards March 2002. The exact dates of the next meeting and other arrangements will be agreed on through the regular diplomatic channels.

2. Negotiations on the future political dialogue

During this session of the BNC, the Parties discussed the draft text on the institutional framework of the future Agreement, on the basis of the joint text prepared and discussed during the previous rounds.

During their discussions, the Parties were able to reach an agreement on some of the pending issues contained in this draft joint text. Progress was made with respect to the Nature and Scope of the Agreement. Certain issues still remain open, in which the Parties made and will make further proposals to be discussed during the next meeting of the BNC. As was agreed in the Vth BNC, Mercosur presented a proposal regarding the purpose and objectives of the meeting of the Heads of State and Government.

On the basis of the conclusions of the first meeting of the BNC, and taking into account the recent EU-Mercosur High Level meeting that took place on 26 June 2001, both Parties exchanged views on widening and deepening the content of the future political dialogue.

3. Negotiations on co-operation

In the framework of activities developed during the fifth BNC in the field of co-operation, the Subgroup on Economic Co-operation met on Tuesday 30 October 2001.

In the Subgroup on Economic Co-operation the Parties agreed on joint draft texts in the fields of Scientific and Technological Co-operation, Energy, Transport, Telecommunications, Information Technology and Information Society. Further discussions will take place with respect to Agricultural and Rural Sector, Environmental Co-operation and Co-operation within the Association Relationship.

4. Negotiations on trade issues

As agreed beforehand, the meetings of the trade groups at this round of negotiations centered on tariffs&non-tariffs, services and government procurement. In these discussions, both sides started an initial and fruitful clarification of the respective tariff offers and the negotiating texts for goods, services and government procurement. Both sides concluded that further analysis and technical work was needed. It was agreed that steady progress was needed and that consequently work would continue through technical contacts in order to prepare the ground for focused discussions at the VII round.

As for the other areas, both sides took stock of the work and identified tasks to be pursued in view of the preparations of the VII round of negotiations.