



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**EU¹ - MERCOSUR MINISTERIAL MEETING
Vienna, Austria, 13 May 2006**

Joint Communiqué

On the occasion of the Fourth Summit between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Vienna, the EU, represented by the Austrian State Secretary Mr Hans Winkler representing the EU-Presidency, the Commissioner Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner representing the European Commission and the incoming Finnish Presidency, represented by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development and Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, Mrs. Paula Lehtomäki held a working session with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Mr. Jorge Taiana; Brazil, Mr. Celso Amorim; Paraguay, Mrs. Leila Rachid, and Uruguay, Mr. Reinaldo Gargano, representing the member countries of the Mercosur, and Mr Carlos Alvarez, President of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of Mercosur.

¹ The EU-side being represented at the troika-level

P R E S S

1. The EU and Mercosur discussed the situation in both regions. The Mercosur countries informed their EU counterparts of the most recent advances aimed at strengthening their process of regional integration which is considered the cornerstone of economic and social development for their population, as well as a fundamental instrument for the consolidation of democracy and political stability in the region. Various decisions aimed at the improvement of free circulation of goods and persons within Mercosur, as well as to the reinforcement of its institutional framework, were specifically emphasized.

The EU commented on the key developments in the EU, including the current debate on the future of Europe and the next round of EU enlargement. The EU also gave a summary of the present state of the Lisbon Strategy by emphasising its challenges and aims.

2. The Parties reaffirmed the strategic priority they attach to the conclusion of an ambitious and equitable inter-regional Association Agreement as an instrument to reinforce political, economic, trade and cooperation relations and to contribute to the reduction of existing socio-economic disparities. They took stock of the ongoing negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement, including their latest developments and expressed their hope that the negotiations would lead to a timely and successful conclusion of a balanced and comprehensive Association Agreement. The Parties supported the further advance of discussions with the aim of convening a new meeting of trade negotiators at Ministerial level. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of high-level contacts between senior business representatives of the two regions, encouraging them to continue to meet and enrich the overall inter-regional dialogue between the EU and Mercosur with their suggestions and constructive contributions.

3. The EU and Mercosur highlighted the importance of the political dimension of their partnership based on a common agenda which shall include, among other issues, their adherence to the principles of the respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They welcomed progress made in this area and they called for the deepening of the political dialogue, including through closer consultation at senior officials level on concrete matters and general issues of common interest.
4. They reiterated their full support for the multilateral trading system and endorse the commitment undertaken at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference for a successful conclusion in 2006 of the negotiations launched at Doha. They acknowledged that an ambitious and balanced outcome in all areas under negotiation is decisive for creating a safe, stable and equitable environment, which generates trade and investment opportunities for all WTO Members, especially developing countries, bearing in mind that contributions must be consistent with the principle of special and differential treatment and less than full reciprocity. Therefore, in the coming months, the members of the WTO need to address all issues and continue to negotiate within the framework of the Single Undertaking. They stressed the central importance of the development dimension in all aspects of the Doha Work Programme, as reiterated in the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. They will continue taking into account the special concerns of small, vulnerable economies and Least Developed Countries.

5. The Parties underlined the important role of the United Nations System. They welcomed the achievements of the United Nations Summit in September 2005 and reiterated their commitment to work together towards the full implementation of the reforms agreed at the Summit. In this respect, they welcomed the creation of the Peace Building Commission and the Human Rights Council. They also reaffirmed their commitment to further contribute to the ongoing UN reform process so as to make the Organization better equipped to deal with today's challenges. They reiterated their willingness to promote an effective multilateral system and strengthen UN peacekeeping capacities and to contribute resolutely through constructive engagement in common responses to the main challenges in the fields of social and economic development, security and human rights.

 6. Regarding co-operation assistance, the Parties acknowledged that the overall bi-regional co-operation is very positive. The Parties took note of the state of progress made in preparing the EU Regional Strategy Paper for the period 2007-2013, which will focus mostly on supporting Mercosur's efforts towards the completion of the common market as well as facilitating the implementation of the future Association Agreement.
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