



Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street Upper,
Dublin 2,

13 December 2024

Environmental Pillar letter regarding the EU Mercosur trade deal

Dear Taoiseach, Tániste and Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine,

We, the Environmental Pillar, are writing to you to express our deep concern regarding the political agreement that was reached on 6 December 2024 for a new trade deal between the European Union and four Mercosur countries – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

For more than 25 years the negotiations that culminated in this agreement have been going on behind closed doors without public participation or transparency. To date there has been a lack of openness in relation to the decision-making process and engagement with our elected representatives in the European Parliament's and with National governments. The lack of transparency and democratic accountability seriously undermines our trust in this trade deal. The process has already been criticised by the European Ombudsman and senior members of the European Parliaments Agri-Committee.

This lack of democratic oversight is particularly egregious given that the EU-Mercosur trade agreement has been opposed by civil society, farmers' groups, indigenous communities and politicians here and across Europe for over two decades. The EU and Mercosur free trade agreement would be a devastating blow to small farms across Europe, public health standards and international climate and biodiversity commitments. The EU cannot put the interests of multinational companies above the interests of our own communities, future generations and the planet.

Already agricultural intensification and deforestation, compounded by climate change is resulting in the loss and degradation of biomes such as the Cerrado and the Amazon rainforest that are critical to global biodiversity and the regulation of the global climate. In 2024 alone, South America experienced record-breaking wildfires and a historic drought. The EU-Mercosur trade deal is designed to ramp up trade in the very products that we know are driving the destruction of these biomes which are a critical element of the planet's life-support system

The agreement, which will involve importing vast amounts of beef into the EU market, will further undermine the profitability of small family farms across Ireland. We fear that these farms will be unable to compete with the economies of scale, the lower standards and the lower cost of production of imported South American beef. The socio-economic consequences of this could be catastrophic given that the majority of Irish farmers are engaged in some form of cattle enterprise and the sector is already in a financially vulnerable position due to poor profitability. Many extensive Irish suckler farmers help to

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The Environmental Pillar is comprised of national environmental NGOs, who work together to represent the views of the Irish environmental sector.



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support High Nature Value farming systems and their loss would also have a negative impact on Ireland's biodiversity.

The EU-Mercosur deal will drive habitat loss, exacerbate the climate and biodiversity crisis, while driving unfair competition, accelerating the collapse of many family farms across Ireland. This trade deal will soon come before the European Council where a blocking minority will be needed to prevent the European Council from reaching a qualified majority. We appeal to you to urgently take action to block the adoption of this deal by communicating Ireland's opposition to the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement to the European Commission and President Ursula von der Leyen.

Yours sincerely

Karen Ciesielski
Coordinator of the Environmental Pillar

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