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Minister Champagne announces positive conclusions of exploratory talks with Mercosur

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Canada is committed to a progressive and diversified trade agenda that puts the interests of middle-class Canadians front and centre. More trade means growth, and growth means more jobs, which is why the government continues to explore new opportunities to negotiate free trade agreements with fast-growing global markets.

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade, is pleased to announce the positive conclusion of the exploratory discussions on a comprehensive free trade agreement with Mercosur trade bloc, which consists of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

This outcome builds on the Canada–Mercosur joint statement, which confirmed the intent to deepen the trade relationship, issued on the margins of the World Trade Organization meetings held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in October 2017.

As the world’s fourth-largest trading bloc and with a population of 260 million and a combined GDP of over \$3 trillion, Mercosur offers Canadian companies opportunities to access these large fast-growing markets with the potential to increase well-paying, middle-class jobs at home. From auto parts to chemicals to lumber to seafood, this important market is ripe for Canadian products and for the workers who produce them. A comprehensive free trade agreement with Mercosur also has the potential to reduce tariffs on many of Mercosur’s exports to Canada—benefiting Canadian customers looking for more choices at more affordable prices, such as apparel or furniture.

Should Canada and Mercosur launch comprehensive negotiations, the Government of Canada will remain committed to a progressive trade agenda, one that creates more opportunities for everyone, including women and Indigenous peoples.

Quotes

“Canada recognizes the enormous opportunities Mercosur represents to diversify markets, create more jobs at home and pave the way for Canadians to compete and win across the Americas.”

- *François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of International Trade*

Quick facts

- The South American trade bloc Mercosur is a customs union established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991.
- In 2016, the four members of Mercosur had a combined GDP of \$3.2 trillion and a population of 260 million people.
- Mercosur accounts for more than two thirds of the total economic activity in South America.
- In 2016, bilateral merchandise trade between Canada and Mercosur reached a value of \$8.9 billion.