

Third round of Negotiations in Brasilia (nov 2000)

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The third meeting of the EU-Mercosur Birregional Negotiations Committee took place in Brasilia during 7-10 November 2000 and was opened by the Brazilian Minister for External Relations, Ambassador Luiz Felipe Lampreia and the European Commissioner for External Relations, Christopher Patten. Both underlined the strong commitment and priority given to the EU-Mercosur association negotiations by the two Parties. The third round included negotiations on the future political dialogue, trade and co-operation, with a view to establishing an Interregional Association between the two regions.

These negotiations were launched by the Heads of State and Government of Mercosur and the European Union, during their meeting in Rio de Janeiro in June 1999, where the Parties decided to build a deeper and fuller partnership between the two regions.

During the past week the two sides examined a variety of issues and important teams of experts participated in the negotiations, which were led by Ambassador Jose Alfredo Graça Lima for Mercosur and the Director-General for External Relations, Guy Legras, for the European Union.

Significant progress was made on the future political dialogue, where for the very first time the Parties exchanged extensive text proposals and were able to agree on many elements for a draft joint text in this area.

In the field of trade issues, negotiators accomplished a substantial exchange of information and decided to start the process of preparing draft negotiating texts in various trade areas to be developed in the following rounds of negotiations.

The Parties engaged in a fertile exchange of views in various parallel sessions of the technical groups during the four days of the meeting on a variety of issues of mutual interest to both parties, such as agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary rules, industry, services, trade defence instruments and government procurement.

On Economic Co-operation texts were approved on this occasion. The Parties decided to continue to examine, during the next rounds of negotiations, the means of up-grading the quality of their co-operation programmes, within the context of the future Association between the two regions.

The Parties concluded that significant progress had been made in many areas during this round, leading to important new steps in the negotiating process and underlined their deep commitment to continuing and intensifying the negotiating process in order to push forward the establishment of the future Interregional Association.

The fourth round of negotiations will be held in Brussels during March 2001.