

EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement

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EU and Mercosur complete technical negotiations on Partnership Agreement

[EU-Mercosur: Text of the agreement](#)

Update

The EU and Mercosur have completed technical negotiations on a new Partnership Agreement, including a revision of import tariffs for agricultural trade. (Mercosur comprises Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.) However, technical negotiations are just the first step. Once completed, the text has to be approved on the European side by the Council of the EU (Member States) and the European Parliament, and by Mercosur countries. Concerns already expressed by some Member States and stakeholders suggest that there is no guarantee there will be sufficient political support to approve and ratify the Agreement.

This report focuses on aspects of the deal – import tariffs, food safety measures, sustainable development – that would have the most impact on exports of agri-food products to the EU.

Impacted products

All products

Impact on EU import tariffs

Although a political agreement has been reached between the EU and Mercosur, a number of significant steps need to be taken before new trading conditions apply. The agreed text needs to be checked by lawyers, translated into different languages, and checked by both sides (a process that takes around 6 months). The text needs the approval of the Council of the EU (Member States) and European Parliament (also a 6-month process), and the approval of Mercosur. However, a number of Member States and stakeholders (including European producers) have expressed significant hostility towards the Agreement ([Heller 2024](#); [Corlin 2024](#); [Geoffroy and Durand 2024](#)). Support from EU Member States and Mercosur States is therefore not guaranteed.

General tariff reductions

The results of negotiations on import duties are listed in a “Tariff Elimination Schedule”. For most products exported from Mercosur countries to the EU, import duties will be removed gradually over an agreed time period, with the length of that period (5, 8, 9, 11, 16 years) varying according to the product. The time period starts once the Agreement has entered into force.

The list of products and categories (listed in column “28 June 2019”) can be found in the [Appendix to the Tariff Elimination Schedule \(Annex 2-A\)](#) [download].

An explanation of the schedule for tariff reductions in each category can be found in Table 1 below.

Tariff rate quotas

For the following products, today’s import tariffs will not be reduced, but quotas are created ([Appendix to Annex 2-A](#)):

- fresh and frozen beef (BF1 and BF2) with specific quotas for high-quality fresh, chilled, and frozen beef
- fresh and frozen pig meat (PK)
- poultry preparations and bone-in poultry meat (PY 1 and PY 2)
- milk powders (MP)
- cheese (CE)
- infant formula (IF)
- maize/sorghum (ME)
- rice (RE)
- sugar for refining (SR) and other sugars (OS)
- eggs (EG1) and egg albumins (EG2)
- honey (HY)
- rum (RM)
- sweetcorn (SC)
- maize/manioc starch and derivatives (SH1/SH2)
- ethanol (EL)
- garlic (GC).

The details of these quotas are set out in section B of [Annex 2-A](#).

Specific tariff reductions

Some products today have “mixed duties”: an *ad valorem* (percentage of value of product) duty, and a fixed euro/weight duty. For some products, including cucumbers, artichokes, and courgettes, the *ad valorem* component of the duties will be removed. These are marked (0/EP, 7/EP, 10/EP). A specific duty of €75 per tonne is set for fresh bananas (BA) on the Agreement entering into force. Specific duty reductions are also foreseen for yoghurts (FP 50%) and butter (FP 30%), cereal germ, and rolled flakes (50%). Further details for these tariffs can be found in section A of [Annex 2-A](#).

Sensitive products

Certain products are designated as “sensitive products” and import duties will not be reduced on these, including certain customs categories related to lamb/sheep, milk/cream and whey, wheat, fish, and sugar. These are marked ‘E’ in the tariff schedule.

Impact on food safety and plant health measures

The Agreement includes a chapter on [Sanitary and phytosanitary measures](#) affecting agri-food trade. The Agreement intends to improve the exchange of information between the EU and Mercosur, with an obligation to systematically update information on changing import requirements, and to respond to specific requests for information within 15 days (Art. 11). It also creates a subcommittee (Art. 18) that will meet at least once a year to discuss any problems related to regulations. The Agreement foresees particular support for Paraguay in relation to providing technical assistance and allowing potentially longer periods for the country to adjust to new measures (Art. 19).

Sustainable development

One key criticism of the text previously agreed in 2019 was that it did not pay sufficient attention to environmental challenges. In response, a new [Annex](#) has been added to the chapter on [Trade and sustainable development](#). This Annex sets out more detailed commitments to international collaboration, in particular the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement (section A.2). It also emphasises additional areas of sustainable development, including the contribution of traditional indigenous knowledge to sustainable development (A.3 and A.4), and women’s economic empowerment (A.5). The revised text also introduces new provisions ([Paris Agreement as an essential element](#)) allowing either the EU or Mercosur to suspend the Agreement if the other party fails to respect democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, or breaches rules regarding commitments on the Paris Agreement and on weapons of mass destruction.

Timeline

If the Agreement receives the necessary support, it could enter into force in the second half of 2026.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

Negotiators of the Agreement argue that the deal offers major mutual benefits both in trade and in strengthening geopolitical, sustainability, and security cooperation. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described it as “a win-win agreement, which will bring meaningful benefits to consumers and businesses, on both sides” ([European Commission 2024](#)).

Background

EU negotiations with the Mercosur States (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) started in 2000. The trade deal was first completed in 2019. However, certain EU Member States and the European Parliament indicated that they would only approve the deal if stronger commitments were given by Mercosur countries in relation to stopping deforestation, protecting the climate, and protecting labour rights. The trade negotiations led to major concerns raised by farmers protesting in Brussels in 2024 ([Di Mambro 2024](#)).

Resources

Corlin, P. (2024) [Von der Leyen clinches EU-Mercosur trade deal, in face of French opposition](#). Euronews, 6 December.

Di Mambro, A. (2024) [Map: farmers protests lead to concessions almost everywhere](#). Euractiv, 4 March.

European Commission (2024) [EU and Mercosur reach political agreement on groundbreaking partnership](#). Press release, 6 December.

Geoffroy, R. and Durand, A.-A. (2024) [EU-Mercosur: Why the French have opposed this free trade agreement](#). Le Monde, 16 November.

Heller, F. (2024) [Spanish farmers sound the alarm over EU-Mercosur trade deal](#). Euractiv, 9 December.

European Commission: [EU-Mercosur agreement](#)

Sources


[EU-Mercosur: Text of the agreement](#)

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Table & Figures

| Table 1 Reduction in basic tariff rate by category (%) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----|------|------|------|------|
| Year* | Category† | | | | | |
| | 0 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 15 |
| 0 | 100 | 20 | 12.5 | 11.1 | 9.1 | 6.3 |
| 1 | | 40 | 25 | 22.2 | 18.2 | 12.5 |
| 2 | | 60 | 37.5 | 33.3 | 27.3 | 18.8 |
| 3 | | 80 | 50 | 44.4 | 36.4 | 25 |
| 4 | | 100 | 62.5 | 55.6 | 45.5 | 31.3 |
| 5 | | | 75 | 66.7 | 54.6 | 37.5 |
| 6 | | | 87.5 | 77.8 | 63.6 | 43.8 |
| 7 | | | 100 | 88.9 | 72.7 | 50 |
| 8 | | | | 100 | 81.8 | 56.3 |
| 9 | | | | | 90.9 | 62.5 |
| 10 | | | | | 100 | 68.8 |
| 11 | | | | | | 75 |
| 12 | | | | | | 81.3 |
| 13 | | | | | | 87.5 |
| 14 | | | | | | 93.8 |
| 15 | | | | | | 100 |

* Year after Agreement enters into force.
† Category headings indicate the period over which changes are introduced.


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Source: based on [Appendix to the Tariff Elimination Schedule \(Annex 2-A\)](#)

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