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Joint Press Release

With the elections under the table, the Mercosur deal is back on the menu – much to our discontent

With the European elections all wrapped up and under the table, it seems there is a renewed optimism for getting the deal with Mercosur back on the menu and over the line. We have talked about this deal so many times but with the next negotiation round a few days away our sectors feel the pressure, once again, to voice their strong opposition to this deal.

Since the EU and Mercosur states reached a political agreement in 2019 on a comprehensive trade agreement, our organisations have strongly opposed it due to the adverse effects it would have on our producers, but also on the environment. This agreement in principle takes no account of the changes and initiatives that have stemmed from the EU Green Deal or of the changing landscape in which farming operates nowadays, following the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

It seems that for geopolitical reasons and to the interest of some industries, the Commission is ready to turn a blind eye on the impact it would have on some of the most sensitive sectors of EU agriculture, especially when following great concerns and protests by our farmers, it is discussing the future of our sector, deemed as strategic.

Despite some access granted to EU products, such as wine, dairy, olive oil, some fruits, vegetables and GI's, the Mercosur agreement remains unbalanced in its agricultural chapter, especially affecting the already fragile agricultural sectors such as beef, poultry, rice, sugar, and ethanol.

Even with an additional instrument on sustainability, the extent of which it remains unclear, it is clear that Mercosur countries are not in a position to adopt the same on-farm production standards that the EU aims at and imposes on its own farmers. Our organisations cannot accept, under any circumstances, that European standards be weakened or that any European producer is penalised in the market for following these standards. Hence, we cannot but reiterate our resounding NO to such a deal.

This also adds to the concerns about the cumulative and difficult to quantify impacts of all the agreements already signed by the EU and even more so when considering those in the pipeline, including the possible EU enlargement to the East.

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On behalf of the following associations:

AVEC – Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU countries

CEFS – European Association of Sugar Manufacturers

CIBE – International Confederation of European Beet Growers

COPA-COGECA - The united voice of farmers and their cooperatives in the European Union

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