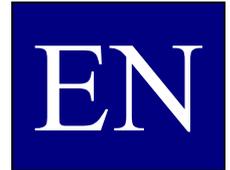




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Luxembourg, 26 May 2005
9426/05 (Presse 127)

**EU-Mercosur Ministerial meeting
(Luxembourg, 26 May 2005)**

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. Mercosur and the European Union met in Luxembourg on 26 May 2005, under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Mr Jean Asselborn, President of the EU Council. The Mercosur delegation was led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, Leila Rachid de Cowles, in her capacity as Mercosur *pro tempore* President. The European Commission was represented by Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations. Bulgaria and Romania, acceding States to the EU, attended the meeting as active observers.

P R E S S

2. The Ministers of Mercosur and of the European Union reiterated their commitment to a successful conclusion of the Bi-regional Negotiations with a view to establishing an Interregional Association Agreement to cover political, economic, trade and co-operation matters as recalled at the Summit of Guadalajara in 2004. Ministers stressed the strategic political, economic, and trade importance of the agreement. In this context they recalled the commitments contained in the Lisbon Declaration of 20 October 2004, to pursue the negotiations and convene to this aim a Negotiators Meeting at Ministerial level, prepared at technical level. They emphasised that the aim of establishing such a unique partnership enjoys wide support among their respective societies which perceive the agreement as the opportunity for over 700 million inhabitants to progress on issues of common interest such as trade, research, social cohesion, promotion of sustainable development, democracy and human rights.
3. Ministers underlined the fact that political dialogue between the two regions was promoted and strengthened through their adherence to the principles of representative democracy, political pluralism and the respect of Human Rights. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen democratic institutions and foster the process of modernisation in their societies taking into account the importance of sustainable development, poverty eradication, justice and social equity.
4. In conformity with the 1995 Declaration on Political Dialogue and in accordance with the May 2002 Madrid Joint Communiqué, Ministers decided to strengthen and deepen the political dialogue through closer consultation on bi-regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. To this end, Ministers called for the organisation of a Senior Officials Meeting in the coming months.
5. Ministers reaffirmed their resolve to play a major role within the United Nations in general and in preparations for the United Nations Summit in September 2005 in particular. Ministers were determined that this process should result in the devising of common responses to the main development, security and human rights problems.

They reiterated their commitments to actively cooperate to combat threats to peace and security, including international terrorism.

6. Ministers exchanged information on the latest developments in their respective integration processes. They reaffirmed their strong belief that open regional integration played an important role in promoting economic growth, trade liberalisation, economic and social development, as well as in facing the primary challenge of reducing poverty and inequality and the construction of a more inclusive and just society, all of which were essential to the consolidation of democracy.

EU Ministers affirmed that the Union was now looking forward to welcoming Bulgaria, and Romania the two acceding European States as new members. They stressed that this achievement, after the enlargement of May 2004, was testament to the common determination of the peoples of Europe to come together in a Union that had become the driving force for peace, democracy, stability and prosperity in the European continent. As fully-fledged members of a Union based on solidarity, these States will play a full role in shaping the further development of the European integration.

Mercosur Ministers informed their EU counterparts about the latest steps to strengthen the Mercosur integration process in the political, social and economic dimensions. They referred to their decisions aiming, inter-alia, at further institutionalisation and political cooperation. Furthermore they underlined the elimination of asymmetries, improvement of macro-economic co-ordination as well as market integration and the development of the external negotiations. They reaffirmed the strong commitment of their countries to Mercosur as the cornerstone for the economic and social development of their societies as well as a fundamental tool to strengthen democracy and political stability in the region.

7. Ministers reiterated the importance they attached to strengthening the multilateral trading system enshrined in the WTO, and reaffirmed their commitment to a timely and successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round. They emphasized the importance of the Development Agenda of this Round and the need to reach a balanced result.
