



FRENTE BRASILEIRA
CONTRA OS ACORDOS
MERCOSUL-UE
E MERCOSUL-EFTA

Civil society representatives affirm the importance of including the Mercosur-European Union Agreement in the agenda for the 2022 elections, which includes, in Brazil, the renewal of the Presidency of the Republic, the National Congress and state legislatures, as well as governors at the subnational level.

OPEN LETTER TO THE CANDIDATES TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE

In Brazil, the new generation of "free" trade agreements are still on the agenda of the Congress and have the potential to enter the agenda in order to be ratified. If this happens, current candidates to the National Legislature and to the Presidency of the Republic will be called to manifest themselves in favor or against the proposals of new trade agreements. In particular, in the case of the agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, currently under discussion, it will be up to the elected representatives to reject or reopen negotiations. Considering the acute transformation of contemporary international politics, we want, with this letter, to bring to your attention the impacts of trade agreements on the deepening of the neoliberal model:

The war in Ukraine has been seen by many as a breaking point in the hitherto prevailing globalization scenario. The hypothesis put forward by analysts states that the conflict may come to reconfigure the dynamics of international politics observed in the last quarter century. In the past, trade opening and financial deregulation at a global level figured as two pillars for the construction of economic supremacy of the hegemonic countries in the international system, especially the USA. Today, again, trade and finance are strategic both for changes in the way capitalism works and for the perception of opportunities for capital accumulation.

Trade and finance have been used by the Brazilian government and its supporters as a means to justify a subordinate insertion of the country in the global economy. The strategy of participating in global value chains as a supplier of raw materials and minerals has led to increased mining exploration and the expansion of agribusiness monocultures for export. The advance of the monoculture frontier increases the demand for indiscriminate importation of pesticides and other contaminants, diminishes biodiversity and the health of the Brazilian people. By favoring the extractivist model, the government encourages the dismantling of national industry, undermining policies to promote income and decent work. While restricting funding to public policies essential to the protection of human rights, it promotes national and international



private investment. There is, therefore, a clear option for the market to the detriment of society, leading to an economic dynamic that concentrates gains and socializes losses.

This is the case of the bills on the agenda that, in resonance with the expectations of the new trade agreements, are aimed at making environmental licensing more flexible, legalizing different forms of deforestation and land grabbing, economic exploitation of indigenous lands, privatizing essential public services (such as transportation, sanitation, health, and education) and the management of natural parks to transnational companies, as well as opening up the government procurement sector. It is known from the words of former Environment Minister Ricardo Salles that the exceptionality of the pandemic situation contributed to the government's "passing the buck" on environmental governance and social policies. More than that, at the moment of social isolation, the legislative instances were, in practice, closed to social participation, and the budgetary policy was conducted without any transparency, making it impossible to control public spending. The existence of the so-called "secret budget" is a scandal, with which we cannot agree.

Aligned with the dismantling process that has been happening under the leadership of the federal government, perpetuating and deepening the agenda of violation and setbacks in rights is what is at stake in the chapters of the trade agreements with Europe. The agreement accentuates the reprimarization of the Brazilian economy and updates the colonial devices that maintain the country's dependence on Europe, in addition to encouraging racist violence against indigenous peoples, black, peasant and traditional communities. This is because the environmental damage associated with the expansion of deforestation and agribusiness falls disproportionately on black and indigenous peoples (and, in particular, on women).

With such concerns, we call, together with more than 200 organizations and social movements gathered in the Brazilian Front against the Agreements European Union-Mercosur and EFTA-Mercosur (European Free Trade Area, composed of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway), the opening of a pre-electoral dialogue with progressive candidates to the Legislative and Executive branches. Our goal is to contribute to the formulation of party platforms that should position themselves on these agreements. It is worth remembering that, in the Brazilian case, the process of ratification of international agreements must go through discussion in the National Congress during its ratification phase, although foreign policy is the prerogative of the Presidency of the Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is our understanding that the penetration of the international agenda into the field of domestic policy, and particularly its effect on rights, demands an increasing participation of the representatives of the people in



**FRENTE BRASILEIRA
CONTRA OS ACORDOS
MERCOSUL-UE
E MERCOSUL-EFTA**

international agendas. As a public policy, the trade agenda should also be subject to debate with the population and to transparency rules, so that the corporate power is not the only one to pronounce itself on relevant themes.

The possible reconstruction of the country after the 2022 elections and the formulation of new development strategies, combative in relation to the multiple crises experienced today (economic, health, care, and environmental), require this collective effort. This is the time to demand from parliamentarians, members of the Executive, candidates, parties, and policy makers their positions and conceptions about these issues. In the world we live in, it is no longer possible to separate international policy discussions from domestic interests and their impact on the daily lives of the population, indigenous peoples, traditional and peasant communities in their distinct territories and territorialities.

Therefore, it is necessary to democratize foreign policy and mobilize as many Brazilian civil society actors as possible to debate it. It was with this intention that the Brazilian Front against the European Union-Mercosur and EFTA-Mercosur Agreements was created in 2020 . And it is also with this purpose that we want, in 2022, to strengthen the dialogue with current and future parliamentary and executive candidates, denouncing the design of neocolonial international insertion proposed for Mercosur countries and presenting alternative proposals for integration among peoples, where trade relations respect human rights and the environment and are built to meet the needs of the people and not transnational capital.

Brasília, DF, March 24th, 2022



FRENTE BRASILEIRA
CONTRA OS ACORDOS
MERCOSUL-UE
E MERCOSUL-EFTA

PRESS RELEASE
INSTITUTE OF SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES - INESC

Trade Agreement between Mercosur and the European Union is on the agenda of the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies

Representing Brazilian civil society, Inesc points out the importance of including the Agreement on the agenda of the next electoral campaign.

The Brazilian Front Against the Mercosur-EU and Mercosur-EFTA Agreements has been alerting civil society about the potential impacts on Mercosur countries if these treaties are ratified and has defended the need for a broad democratic debate on the subject. Another important step in this direction was taken on March 29, when Inesc (Institute of Social and Economic Studies) represented Brazilian civil society at the Mercosur-EU thematic meeting of the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies.

The meeting was attended by Fernanda Melchiona, leader of the PSL party in the Chamber, Carlos Veras, minority leader, and Miguel Urbán Crespo, MEP from the Left Front in the European Parliament. "The opening of the legislature to the discussion of international issues is extremely important. Today, international politics increasingly focuses on decisions that affect the daily lives of people and communities. Miguel is a young leader who has been working for many years on the trade agenda involving the European Union and Mercosur. For us, from the Brazilian civil society, he is a strategic ally", explained Tatiana Oliveira, Inesc's political advisor.

On the occasion, two letters were delivered to those present. The first one, from the Brazilian Front Against the European Union-Mercosur and EFTA-Mercosur Agreements, is a document signed by more than 200 organizations, which calls on the candidates of the next electoral cycle to debate the foreign policy agenda in their campaigns.

In the open letter to the candidates for the National Congress and the Federal Executive, the organizations argue that: "as a public policy, the trade agenda should also be subject to debate with the population and to transparency rules, so that the corporate power is not the only one to pronounce on pertinent issues". For the signatory organizations: "this is the time to demand from parliamentarians, members of the Executive, candidates, parties and policy makers their positions and conceptions about these issues.



FRENTE BRASILEIRA
CONTRA OS ACORDOS
MERCOSUL-UE
E MERCOSUL-EFTA

The Letter from the Climate Observatory calls for improvements in the European Union's proposal to regulate the importation of deforestation from Brazilian agricultural commodities. The 34 organizations that signed the document welcomed the European Union's initiative, but point out that the proposal needs to move forward, including, for example, other products besides those foreseen and demanding the respect of human rights.

The Mercosur - EU Agreement

The new generation free trade agreement includes, besides customs rules, provisions on human rights, democracy, development, environment, cooperation, labor and employment, gender, etc. In a meeting in April, the Front met with Brazilian parliamentarians to present the main concerns of Brazilian civil society regarding the ratification of the treaties. On that occasion, it defended that the agreements present a neocolonial character, insofar as Mercosul basically sells primary products to the two European blocks, in exchange for opening their markets to manufactured goods, services and public purchases, besides guaranteeing intellectual property and investments to the Europeans.

To read the original, in Portuguese, please click [here](#).