Negotiations on an Interregional Association Agreement with Mercosur and the new bilateral strategic partnership with Brazil

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The House held a debate, following on the Council and the Commission statements, on the negotiations on an Interregional Association Agreement with Mercosur and the new bilateral strategic partnership with Brazil.

Several MEPs put questions to the Commission on the negotiations on an Interregional Association Agreement with Mercosur and the new bilateral strategic partnership with Brazil. Mercosur is a Regional Trade Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, founded in 1991. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru currently have associate member status. Venezuela signed a membership agreement on 17 June 2006, but before becoming a full member, its entry has to be ratified by the Paraguayan and the Brazilian parliaments. During the EU-Brazil Summit of 4 July 2007, the EU and Brazil pointed out that ‘they attach high importance to strengthening EU - Mercosur relations and are committed to concluding the EU - Mercosur Association Agreement'. The European Parliament reaffirmed the need for the EU to conclude, as soon as possible, a full, ambitious and balanced Association Agreement with Mercosur, based on three pillars: a political and institutional chapter reinforcing democratic dialogue and political cooperation, a cooperation chapter promoting sustainable economic and social development, and a trade chapter. Nevertheless, the Commission has released its Communication of 30 May 2007 on a bilateral strategic partnership with Brazil, which sends contradictory signals to the regional priorities set above.

In view of the above, the MEPs asked: Could the Commission set out the latest developments in the Mercosur negotiations? Could the Commission explain how the bilateral strategic partnership with Brazil presented in its Communication of 30 May 2007 could be pursued without undermining the bi-regional approach that should be the cornerstone of our relations with Latin America in general and, in particular, with Mercosur? Could the Commission state that this new partnership will not harm the regional balance and will not be to the detriment of the EU trade and economic relationship with other Latin American partners?

The debate was not followed by the adoption of a resolution.