



EU-MERCOSUR: Time to accelerate agroecology policies and cooperation on both sides of the Atlantic

On 9 January, the [Council of the EU adopted two decisions](#) authorising the signature of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement (EMPA) and the Interim Trade Agreement (ITA) between the EU and Mercosur. While these decisions advance the ratification process despite the wide citizens¹, young farmers² and peasants' protests³ on both sides of the Atlantic, the agreements still require the consent of the European Parliament, where elected Members retain the possibility to vote against them.

Agroecology Europe expresses full solidarity with the peasants, small-medium enterprises, and citizens that will bear the costs of this free trade agreement, highlighting how large commercial interests are favoured over small farmers regardless of the recent studies estimating the negative impacts on sustainable agriculture, food systems, environment and society (Ambroziak et al., 2025; Toulouse School of Economics, 2020; Transnational Institute, 2022).

Should the agreement be ratified by all institutions, one thing is clear: **countries and regions across the Atlantic urgently need to intensify policy, science, and cooperation efforts in agroecology as a strategic direction of agri-food systems**, not as a niche alternative. Agroecology offers a coherent framework to address fair trade, climate action, soil health, public health, animal welfare, safe labour conditions, resilient rural economies, and international solidarity in a systemic way.

By intensifying competition and reinforcing an export-oriented, input-dependent agricultural model, **this free trade agreement increases pressure on small and medium-scale farmers, rural communities, and ecosystems**, both in Europe and in MERCOSUR countries. Rather than providing real safeguards, the agreement risks weakening farm incomes, accelerating land concentration, and deepening environmental and social challenges in rural areas. Mixed and extensive livestock systems, territorially rooted cooperatives, and small-scale farmers investing in animal welfare, soil health, and biodiversity are among the most exposed.

Against this scenario, agroecology represents a shared pathway for both the EU and MERCOSUR countries to sustain their sustainable food systems. By supporting diversified farming systems, territorial food economies, and farmer-led innovation, agroecology can strengthen food sovereignty, create decent rural employment, and restore ecosystems on both sides of the Atlantic. It offers a pathway for international cooperation based on knowledge exchange, public research, and solidarity rather than competition and

¹ (L-Post, 2025; Milieu Defensie, 2019; PAN Europe, 2024; Slow Food, 2025)

² (CEJA - European council of young farmers, 2026)

³ (La Via Campesina, 2024, 2025)

further speculations, enabling regions to enhance resilience to climate change, market shocks, and geopolitical instability while respecting cultural and ecological diversity.

EU policy makers across the board shall treat the EU-MERCOSUR agreement as a turning point and to undertake a profound reorientation of agricultural, food, rural, and trade policies. This must include:

- *The promotion of structured cooperation between the European Union and the MERCOSUR countries in the field of agroecology*, including applied research, knowledge exchange, capacity building, and support for territorial and community-based processes;
- *A decisive shift of the CAP and the post-2028 EU budget towards agroecological transitions*;
- *A fair transition of [livestock systems through agroecology](#)*, starting soon from the upcoming [EU livestock strategy](#) that should aim towards resilience, extensification, one-health approach, animal welfare, biodiversity, and climate action.
- *Reform CMO trading rules and CAP crisis mechanisms* to ensure that support really reaches out to small-medium farmers, workers, and enterprises, thereby addressing structural inequities and systemic weaknesses;
- *Stronger public legislation and enforcement support* to phase out toxic pesticides, restore biodiversity, enhance animal welfare, and health, rather than a reliance on voluntary or private schemes;
- *Targeted public investments in small-medium farmers and cooperatives*, building their bargaining power and territorially embedded food systems.

The future of European agriculture and food cannot be secured through trade liberalisation alone. **Only by investing decisively in agroecology can the EU align trade, agriculture, and food policies with its social, environmental, and democratic commitments.**

Failing to invest in agroecology, however, would deepen existing vulnerabilities. Without a decisive shift in public policy and investment, the EU-MERCOSUR dynamic risks locking both regions into extractive agricultural models marked by soil degradation, biodiversity loss, social dumping, land grabbing, and growing farmer indebtedness.

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Agroecology Europe is a non-profit association that intends to place agroecology high on the European agenda of sustainable farming and food systems. It aims to analyse, design, develop, and promote the transition towards agroecological farming and food systems. Our goal is to support agroecological research, education, and training, share and disseminate agroecological knowledge, and promote agroecology in the farming and food sectors and in society.

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