

Conference in the European Parliament

EU pesticides exports and indigenous peoples' rights, how the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement is set up to put profit before people and planet”

Date: 8 November

Time: 14:00 - 16:00

European Parliament, Room ASP5E1 or online

Translation: PT-FR-EN

To register: <https://forms.gle/SEbZZcF6iXYQM4oN6>

Brazil is the world's largest buyer of highly hazardous pesticides – those containing active ingredients with extremely acute toxicity that severely impact human health and nature. Since 2019, almost 500 new pesticides have been approved each year by the Bolsonaro government. UN experts have warned that the level of pesticide use in Brazil contravenes human rights, mainly those of Indigenous peoples, whose rights are being violated by agricultural expansion and the deliberate spraying of toxic pesticides over their lands and homes. Brazil is also one of the main export destinations for agrochemicals that are banned in the EU. The practice of exporting EU-banned pesticides was called out as a human rights abuse by United Nations rapporteurs and human rights officials in July 2020.

The EU-Mercosur deal, if ratified, will increase the export of dangerous pesticides from the EU to Mercosur countries, including pesticides banned in the EU due to the risk they pose to human health and the environment. The deal would also boost exports of crops and crop-based products, including soy, sugarcane, and sugarcane-derived ethanol, which depend heavily on pesticides, and of meat products like poultry, which depend on soy-based animal feed – driving further pesticide use. These agricultural products are inextricably linked to deforestation and biodiversity destruction, and to the violation of Indigenous rights.

Many of Europe's pesticide corporations are major exporters of these highly hazardous, banned pesticides – including German giants Bayer and BASF. Such companies capitalise on weaker regulations and generous tax exemptions in Brazil. Trade in chemicals between the EU and Mercosur is currently worth €6,3bn annually. The European chemicals industry strongly supports the ratification of the EU-Mercosur agreement.

The EU's Farm-to-Fork Strategy aims to dramatically reduce pesticide use in the EU. The trade promoted by the EU-Mercosur deal is fundamentally at odds with this strategy and with other EU green goals. The European Commission committed in October 2020 to “lead by example, and, in line with international commitments, to ensure that hazardous chemicals banned in the European Union are not produced for export.” Two years on, the planned export ban is not in the European's Commission work programme.

Profit or people and planet?

This conference invites key speakers from Brazil's social movements and indigenous rights movements to express their concerns around the far-reaching impacts of the EU-Mercosur trade deal in their territories. They will share vital knowledge and insights on Brazil's pesticide policies, problems, and the power of agribusinesses – beneficiaries of this destructive deal, which blatantly disregards human and environmental rights.

Programme

14:00 : Introduction by Michèle Rivasi, MEP focal point on indigenous rights in the DEVE committee (10')

"Indigenous people fight agribusiness land grabs " (10')

Kretã Kaingang, Coordinator of Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB)

"The EU pesticide lobby's influence" (5')

Audrey Changoe, Friends of the Earth Europe

"Massive use of pesticides and impacts on agroecology practices" (10')

Graciela Almeida, representative of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST), and an agroecological producer from a community affected by heavy pesticide contamination.

"Indigenous peoples affected by pesticides" (10')

Emiliano Maldonado, human rights lawyer supporting communities to litigate against pesticide abuse.

"Use of pesticides in Brazil and health impacts" (10')

Larissa Bombardi, Researcher at the Department of Geography, University of São Paulo

"Why the EU-Mercosur trade deal must be stopped (10')

Luana Hanauer, Representatives from the **Coalition against the EU-Mercosur trade deal**

15:00: Overview of the European Commission

"Actions that can be considered by the EU to ensure that banned pesticides in the EU are not produced for export?" (10')

Juergen Helbig, Senior Expert – Chemicals, DG Envi, European Commission

"The current form of the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement and the possible next steps"

John Bazill, Policy Officer, DG Trade, European Commission

15:20: Q&A with participants in the room

15:40: Conclusions by MEPs

Marie Arena (S&D), Saskia Bricmont (Greens/EFA) and Claude Gruffat (Greens/EFA)