

# MERCOSUR - EUROPEAN UNION

## BI-REGIONAL NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

23-27 June 2003

Asunción - Paraguay

### FINAL CONCLUSIONS

From 23 to 27 of June 2003, negotiators from Mercosur and the European Union met in Asunción for the tenth round of negotiations on the Interregional Association Agreement.

Mr. Rigoberto Gauto, Vice Minister of Economical Relations and Integration of Paraguay, on behalf of the *pro tempore* Presidency of Mercosur, and Mr. Karl Falkenberg, Director for Free Trade Agreements of the Directorate-General for Trade of the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, jointly opened the meeting. They underlined their commitment to a rapid progress in these negotiations and registered the recent exchange of Investment and Services initial offers as well as their requests for improvement of the tariff offers. The EU welcomed the positive results of the recent Mercosur Summit held in Asunción on June, 18<sup>th</sup> and encouraged Mercosur to deepen its integration.

Following the opening, the Parties met at the level of Technical Groups to work intensively on the agenda set out in the Rio work-programme. This agenda included the following subjects:

- ? Goods: tariffs, customs, technical barriers to trade, rules of origin, trade defense, wine and spirits and sanitary and phytosanitary measures;
- ? Investment;
- ? Services;
- ? Intellectual Property Rights
- ? Dispute Settlement
- ? Competition
- ? Government Procurement

Both sides formulated questions aimed at clarifying the request for improvement of the tariff offers. Substantive discussions resulted in further progress of negotiating texts.

The EU side was not in a position to discuss Government Procurement in the absence of a Mercosur offer. Mercosur, on the other hand, indicated its preparedness to discuss methods and modalities even in the absence of the respective offers.

The Sub-Group of Cooperation exchanged points of view on various topics, especially on cooperation for development, pending on discussion toward the Association Agreement.

The Action Plan on Business Facilitation (which includes dialogue on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, standards, technical regulations, conformity assessment procedures, e-commerce and customs) was also thoroughly discussed. In addition both sides exchange views on sustainable development.

According to the agreed Rio work-programme both Parties will establish the date for the next Trade Negotiators Meeting at Ministerial level which will be held in the second semester of 2003 (Europe).