

EN

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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
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EU citizens are protected by some of the strictest food safety rules. All food needs to meet sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, such as bans of hormones and antimicrobials for growth promotion. Pesticide residues that create an unacceptable risk for consumers are not allowed. Rigorous border controls and audits ensure compliance with EU rules, requiring corrective action if issues arise, potentially suspending entry into the EU. On 9 December 2025, the Commission announced plans to increase audits by 50% over two years and establish a task force to enhance import controls¹. The Commission aims to align production standards of imports, especially for pesticides and animal welfare.

Concerning labour and environmental conditions, the agreement includes the latest trade and sustainable development standards². It includes commitments to combat illegal logging, tackle deforestation and promote sustainable supply chains. It addresses labour standards, with both parties committing to respect, promote and effectively implement International Labour Organization core labour standards. It provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation, and the binding commitments can be enforced through a specific dispute settlement procedure.

The Commission notes that on 9 January 2026, the Council decided to have the EU-Mercosur agreements³⁴ signed and provisionally applied. It also takes note of the European Parliament's Resolution requesting the opinion of the European Court of Justice on the compatibility of the EU-Mercosur agreements with the EU Treaties. The Commission is committed to sincere cooperation among EU institutions, including regarding their role in the conclusion process.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2979.

² Circabc (<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/09242a36-a438-40fd-a7af-fe32e36cbd0e/library/afa4395e-9d62-4958-8074-76c43f64e2b4/details?download=true>).

³ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8371-2023-DCL-1/en/pdf>.

⁴ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12417-2025-REV-1/en/pdf>.