

# *MERCOSUR Proposal to European Union Expected by End of April*

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Buenos Aires, April 16 (RHC) – In Buenos Aires on Tuesday, Argentine cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich confirmed 'significant advances' in the elaboration of MERCOSUR's joint proposal to exchange dialogue with the European Union on a much delayed wide ranging cooperation and trade agreement.

Meanwhile from Brazil, it was reported that a technical meeting to address the issue is scheduled to take place on April 29th in Montevideo.

However, Capitanich pointed out that any regional agreement with the EU bloc will be done “defending Argentine industry, production and commerce”.

During his daily press conference, Capitanich referred to the meeting of MERCOSUR partners -- Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay -- held last week in Montevideo and underlined the role played by Brazil, since “its participation in the joint proposal exceeds 70%.”

Venezuela, MERCOSUR's fifth full member is absent from the talks since it still has to adapt to the group's rules and regulations.

MERCOSUR and the EU have been discussing an ambitious trade and cooperation agreement since 1999, which was stalled for several times over several years, until it was finally agreed to retake talks in 2010, when Spain occupied the EU presidency.

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