

# *Uruguay will negotiate with third countries outside MERCOSUR*

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**Uruguay insisted that the meeting did not approve the reduction of the common external tariff, despite its proposals. | Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay**

Montevideo, July 8 (RHC)-- The Uruguayan Foreign Ministry informed this Wednesday in the framework of the LVIII Ordinary Meeting of the Common Market Council (CMC) of MERCOSUR - States Parties and Bolivia, that the country will begin talks with third parties to negotiate trade agreements without being approved by the regional entity.

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the nation's speech focused on "defending the modernization of the bloc, through a substantive, agile, dynamic, flexible and permanent agenda of external negotiations."

Uruguay insisted that at the meeting, the reduction of the common external tariff was not approved, in spite of its proposals presented. In turn, the Argentinean Foreign Ministry specified that they have had exhaustive conversations and discussions on said regulation.

"Argentina in its capacity as pro tempore presidency worked with dialogue and proposals with the partners and I believe it has made great efforts to reach the necessary agreements and consensus so that this tool continues to be available to sustain, promote and strengthen our productive structures", the Argentine Foreign Ministry specified.

The talks on the flexibilization of the economic bloc have had precedents. On June 11, Argentina's Secretary of Economic Relations, Jorge Neme, stated that MERCOSUR's external agenda should be based on article one of the Treaty of Asunción, which states that negotiations with third countries and regional blocs are carried out jointly.

"As a bloc we have another word and another weight in the international context when initiating negotiations with the rest of the regional blocs and third countries", insisted the Argentine politician.

Argentina's Pro Tempore Presidency will culminate this Thursday when, at the Summit of Heads of State of MERCOSUR and Associated Countries, the country makes the handover to Brazil.

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