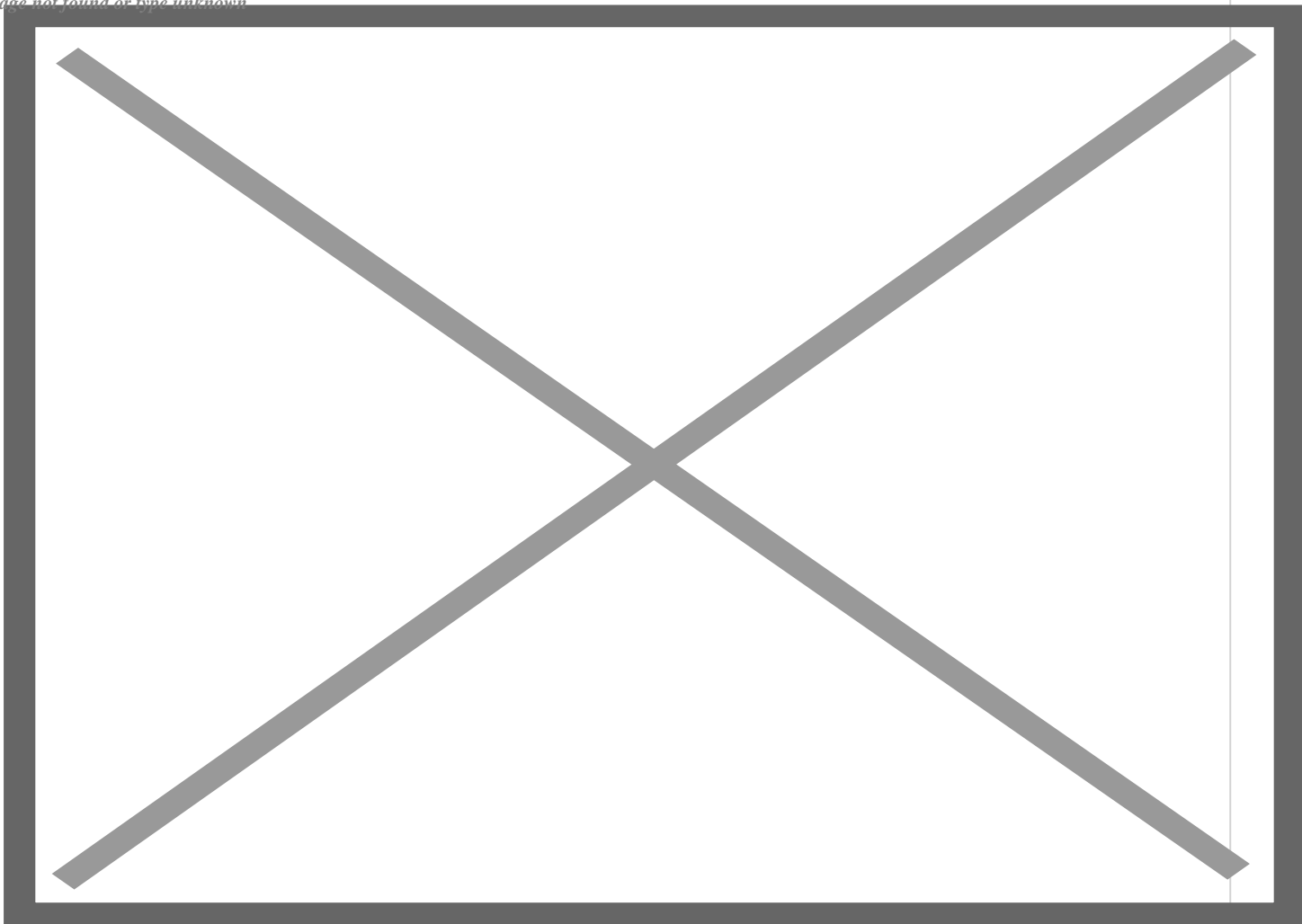


Brazil and Argentina reject European impositions on MERCOSUR

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The Brazilian president said he was "committed to concluding negotiations with the EU", but pointed out that the agreement "must be balanced". | Photo: Presidency Brazil?

Puerto Iguazú, July 4 (RHC)-- The president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva rejected on Tuesday that the Europeans put what he called a "sword in the head" of MERCOSUR, regarding the negotiations underway between the two blocs. His Argentinean counterpart, Alberto Fernández, made the same statement.

The Brazilian president refers to the agreement between Mercosur and the European Union, widely discussed since 1999, and which was signed in 2019, during the administration of former president Jair Bolsonaro. He also pleaded before his Mercosur partners for a "quick" and "forceful" response to the "distrust" and the "threats" of sanctions from the European Union (EU), in order to unblock the trade agreement.

According to the Brazilian president, "strategic partners do not negotiate with distrust and threats of sanctions", Brazil assumes this Tuesday the Presidency of the South American bloc (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) until next December.

However, the Brazilian president said he was "committed to the conclusion of the negotiations with the EU", but pointed out that the agreement "must be balanced" and include measures that favor the industrialization of the South American bloc, among other mechanisms.

He concluded by saying: "We are not interested in agreements that condemn us to eternal exporters of raw materials" and again criticized the EU's environmental annex to the general agreement reached in 2019 and called it "unacceptable."

"It is an agreement of partners, it is an agreement of strategic partners. So, no strategic partner puts a sword on the head of the other. Let's sit down, settle our differences and listen to what is good for Latin Americans, what is good for MERCOSUR and what is good for Brazil," said Lula.

For his part, the president of Argentina, Alberto Fernández, said that he is betting on achieving a "balanced" result in the trade negotiations between MERCOSUR and the European Union (EU), while again questioning the package of chapters agreed in 2019 and pointing to the protectionism of the Europeans.

Fernandez, like Lula insisted that "on more than one occasion we have questioned the agreement as it was signed in mid-2019. These are doubts and objections that we have been raising, both within our bloc and with our counterparts. We have a critical view of what was agreed then."

"The presentation of new demands in environmental matters by the EU and after practically four years, during which the negotiating process was virtually halted due to internal political differences in Europe, presents us with a partial vision of sustainable development," said the Argentinean president.

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