

Uruguay Seeking MERCOSUR Action Plan to Eliminate Trade Restrictions in South America



Brasilia, July 18 (MERCOPRESS-RHC)-- Uruguay is attending the 48th Mercosur Summit in Brasilia hoping the Common Market of the South grouping will implement deep changes, particularly regarding free movement of goods, services and production factors in South America.

"Hopefully, the implementation of this plan we have in mind to end restrictions should take place during the six months of Paraguay as head of Mercosur," said Uruguay's Foreign Minister, Rodolfo Nin Novoa, as the summit opened on Friday.

The foreign minister added: "Our maximum aspiration is for the summit to agree on making Mercosur more transparent, on admitting our shortcomings and the commitment to overcome them. We believe a six-month period should be enough for results to become effective." Otherwise "we must admit that Mercosur has become a failure, it does not work as it should, which is a free trade block", he said.

Article 1 of the Mercosur 1991 founding charter is not being complied with, he said, because there is no free circulation of goods, services and production factors, which is to be achieved through the elimination of Customs duties and non-tariff restrictions to movement of goods and any other equivalent measure.

"This has never happened," insisted the Uruguayan Minister.

"Hopefully the implementation of this plan we have in mind to end restrictions should take place during the six months of Paraguay as head of Mercosur. Paraguay is scheduled to take Mercosur chair on Friday; this is our maximum aspiration," which Uruguay hopes to continue in the following six months when it then holds the chair during the first half of next year.

Nin Novoa said Uruguay will insist that Mercosur members must agree to faithfully comply with Article 1 of the Mercosur charter since "we must eliminate all those obstacles to trade".

Nin Nova said that other issues which interest Uruguay are the special regimes, capital goods, agriculture supplies and temporary admission licensing.

Efforts to reach a trade agreement with the European Union is another of Uruguay's objectives, so that "we can have our technical and political teams sort out the proposals to exchange with the EU".

Nino Novoa revealed that "Mercosur is waiting for news from the EU on the proposals and dates, since they also have their problems, but after the summit I plan to meet with them and comment on our advances".

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