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MERCOSUR: ITALY'S MOMENT OF TRUTH

Mercosur has reached a decisive moment. What looks like a trade **debate** is now a **strategic choice for Europe**, geopolitically, economically, and politically. **Italy** can play a key role in moving the agreement forward.
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WHAT'S HAPPENING The EU–Mercosur agreement has reached a decisive moment. After more than 20 years of negotiations, the deal is finally ready to be signed. This week, political discussions in **Brussels** and **Cyprus** are meant to clear the way for the formal signature in Paraguay on June 12, where Mercosur currently holds the rotating presidency.

- **Italy** is now at the centre of the decision.

In late December, **Rome** joined **France** and **Poland** in **calling for a delay**. But Italy is not seeking to block the agreement. On the contrary, **under pressure from parts of the farming community**, the Italian government has played a constructive role by pushing for stronger safeguards for agriculture: faster intervention mechanisms, clearer safeguard clauses, greater attention to food safety and market stability, **and a broader discussion on CAP resources**.

- Those safeguards are now on the table.
- And so is public money, **taxpayers' money**.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT Mercosur is no longer just a trade file. **It is a geopolitical choice**.
Latin America is once again becoming a strategic battleground. **Venezuela** is a clear signal:

- The **US** projects its influence through pressure and force
- **China** expands by buying assets
- **Europe** has one credible tool: open, rules-based markets

Delaying Mercosur weakens Europe's presence in the region and signals hesitation at a time when credibility and unity matter most.

THE PARADOX Postponing the agreement in the name of "protecting agriculture" risks harming it.

- Without **competition**, innovation slows.
- Without **innovation**, **productivity** falls.
- And when productivity falls, **dependency** on **subsidies** becomes structural.

That is the real boomerang.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH **A vocal part of the farming community continues to oppose** the agreement, fearing imports and competition.

- Concerns are understandable. But **using Mercosur as a permanent bargaining chip is strategically short-sighted**.

The agreement is not uncontrolled liberalisation. It includes tariff-rate quotas for sensitive products, safeguard clauses, full compliance with EU sanitary standards, traceability rules, and strong protection for geographical

sanitary standards, traceability rules, and strong protection for geographical indications.
At this stage, blocking the deal is no longer about improving it. It is about stopping it.
And that would send the wrong message to global partners, to European citizens, and to the very sectors that claim to need protection.

WHY ITALY MATTERS NOW **Europe**, and **Italy** in particular, **is not self-sufficient. It depends on imported raw materials, feed and energy**.

- **Over 70%** of European agricultural products are processed.
- In Italy, that figure **exceeds 85%**.

Europe needs imports from Mercosur countries. Europe is not only a farming continent. It is, above all, **a continent of transformation**.

- Agriculture matters, but it increasingly depends on industry, processing, logistics, and innovation. **Weakening one part of the value chain inevitably weakens the whole system**.

Italian quality is not at risk. It is recognised, valued and chosen precisely because of **its identity, standards, and transformation industry**.
Quality production does not compete by closing markets.
It competes through identity, value chains, and innovation.

SIGN IT NOW **Europe**, and above all, **Italy**, now has the opportunity to turn legitimate requests into a political success and help Europe move forward.
Mercosur can start. And Italy can make it happen.