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EU Wine Exports Gain Mercosur Access

The trade pact begins provisional application, promising to phase out tariffs that have long constrained sales in South America.

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European wine exporters are set to gain new access to Mercosur markets on Friday as the European Union’s partnership agreement with the South American bloc enters provisional application, a move industry officials say will gradually remove tariffs that have long limited sales in the region.

The European Committee of Wine Companies, known by its French acronym CEEV, said Thursday in Brussels that the agreement would open “new and long-awaited opportunities” for wine producers across Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The group said EU wines currently face tariffs of up to 35% in Argentina and 18% in Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, costs it said amounted to more than €43 million in 2024.

Marzia Varvaglione, president of CEEV, called the shift “a historic day for European wine,” saying the deal moves “from ambition to reality” after more than 25 years of negotiations. She said that in a period of rising trade tensions and pressure to find new consumers, diversification had become essential for the sector.

The provisional application begins while ratification continues. The European Parliament has referred the agreement to the Court of Justice of the European Union for an opinion on whether it is compatible with the EU treaties. CEEV said it hoped that process would be completed quickly and positively so the pact could move toward full ratification and complete entry into force.

The wine industry sees Mercosur as a modest but growing market. EU wine exports to the bloc reached €238 million in 2024, according to CEEV, equal to 1.3% of total EU wine exports. Those sales have doubled over the past decade, but industry officials say tariff and non-tariff barriers have kept the region below its potential.

Brazil is by far the largest destination for EU wine in Mercosur. CEEV said exports there totaled €205 million in 2024, supported by a market of more than 200 million consumers and a growing middle class. Across Mercosur, the bloc counts about 270 million consumers.

Under the agreement, tariffs will be phased out over time. CEEV said that would give European producers a more predictable market and reduce a competitive disadvantage they have faced against suppliers from countries with existing trade advantages.

The deal also includes protections for 145 EU wine geographical indications in Mercosur markets. Those protections are meant to safeguard names tied to specific regions and production methods, such as Champagne, Port, Prosecco and Jerez.

CEEV said import procedures would be simplified and major non-tariff barriers would be reduced, including differences in oenological practices and certification requirements. The group said those changes should help smaller producers as well as larger exporters by lowering administrative hurdles and making market access more consistent.

Ignacio Sánchez Recarte, CEEV’s secretary general, said European wine companies would now be able to compete “on equal terms” in Mercosur markets after years of disadvantage. He thanked the European Commission for its work on the agreement and described it as an example of a forward-looking European trade strategy.

The agreement is one of the largest trade deals ever concluded by the European Union and has been under discussion for more than two decades. Its provisional application comes at a time when European exporters are seeking alternatives to markets affected by slower demand growth, higher tariffs and geopolitical uncertainty.

CEEV represents wine companies across the European Union and says its members account for more than 90% of EU wine exports. The organization said most of those companies are small and medium-size businesses that depend on export markets to sustain growth.