

Brazil: Biotech to Facilitate Mercosur/EU Relations

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The biotechnology project scheduled to be approved in March, 2005, by the countries of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) and the European Union (EU) should facilitate trade negotiations between the two sides.

The joint commitment will involve resources amounting to six million euros (7.5 million dollars) over a three-year period,

This will be made possible by research to eliminate problems that affect export products, such as the disease known as soybean rust, which attacks the grain, and vaccines to prevent hoof and mouth disease and mad cow disease.

This was the assessment made yesterday by the Brazilian Minister of Science and Technology, Eduardo Campos, at the 32nd Special Meeting on Science and Technology of the Mercosur, in the city of Recife, Northeastern Brazil.

Also present at the scientific encounter were government representatives from Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

According to the Minister, there are common interests among the South American countries, which are erecting the foundations for the continent's sovereign insertion in global questions.

Campos affirmed that one of the areas of integration is Science and Technology.

"In this sector, there are no conflicts; rather, there is complementarity, through the desire to share all research and teaching networks," he said.

According to the Minister, Brazil makes available to scientists and students in the Mercosur the Lattes Program, a real-time curricula vitae storage and search system that can provide technological support to companies, making them more competitive in the globalized market.

"The idea is to bring the worlds of those who produce knowledge and of those who produce goods and services into closer contact," he emphasized.

Another area of Mercosur cooperation discussed at the meeting was the program of incubators of small and medium-sized technology firms.

The program is designed to provide support, including special loans, to researchers who want to transform their inventions into profitable business enterprises.

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