



**SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF BRAZIL**



**European Economic  
and Social Committee**

## **10th EU-BRAZIL CIVIL SOCIETY ROUND TABLE JOINT DECLARATION**

**Brussels, 25-26 February 2026**

### **Preamble**

In a context when global values such as democracy, multilateralism, human rights, sustainable development and the climate agenda are increasingly under pressure, organised civil society in Brazil and the European Union reaffirms its commitment to a strong, forward-looking Strategic Partnership between our regions.

We, representatives of Brazilian and European organised civil society, share the belief that dialogue and civic engagement are essential pillars of democratic resilience and international solidarity.

**The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU-Brazil Civil Society Round Table** took place in Brussels, bringing together the representatives of the EU institutions, Brazilian authorities, and members and advisers of the EESC and the CDESS. The delegations discussed:

- i.** democracy, human rights, global governance and the role of civil society amidst the shifting global order;
- ii.** trade and economy, including the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement;
- iii.** social and labour issues, with focus on social inclusion and the future of work;
- iv.** sustainability and climate action after COP30.

Participants adopted the following **Joint Declaration**:

### **1. Democracy, human rights, global governance and the role of civil society**

- 1.1 The parties recognise that democracy is the fundamental pillar of any political system grounded in rule of law, respect for human and labour rights, social participation and pluralism of ideas, and the guarantee of individual and collective freedoms. For democracy to remain vibrant and resilient, the mere existence of formal institutions is insufficient; the active engagement of civil society is indispensable. The social partners and civil society organisations, popular movements, responsible media, educational institutions, and informed citizens play a strategic role in

strengthening democracy by promoting qualified public debate, exercising oversight of public authorities, and defending values such as transparency, social justice, and inclusion.

- 1.2 In this context, tackling disinformation emerges as one of the major contemporary challenges facing democracies. The spread of misleading content, hate speech and manipulated narratives undermines trust in institutions, deepens social polarization and weakens collective decision-making processes. To respond to this scenario, it is essential to promote initiatives that expand diversity in the production and circulation of journalistic information, strengthening pluralism in the voices, perspectives and territories represented in the public sphere. Democratizing access to information and to the conditions of journalistic production contributes to better-informed societies that are more resilient to disinformation, provided this is accompanied by a sustained commitment to quality, ethics and professional rigor. In this sense, investing in media literacy, fostering critical thinking, supporting responsible journalism and strengthening fact-checking networks are essential measures to protect the integrity of public debate and to sustain open, trustworthy and inclusive information environments.

In this regard, initiatives that expand access to high-quality information, promote civic participation and strengthen public awareness are fundamental to the continuous improvement of democracy. The parties reiterate the importance of strengthening democracy and believe that such strengthening requires to overcome structural challenges such as social inequality, violence and income concentration. For this reason, it is essential to foster ongoing processes of reflection, engagement and collective action that reaffirm democracy's value and drive its renewal. Only through this continuous effort of improvement will it be possible to strengthen democracy as an effective instrument for addressing persistent injustices and for building fairer, more inclusive and more equitable societies.

- 1.3 Furthermore, the parties believe that another key element for ensuring a fully functioning democracy is directly related to citizen security, understood not merely as the absence of violence, but as the guarantee of rights, the protection of life, and the promotion of human dignity. Protected citizens are those who live in safe environments, with access to effective public policies, social justice, and opportunities. Social participation contributes to the construction of a culture of peace, based on dialogue, mediation, conflict prevention, respect for diversity, and cooperation between the State and society. Thus, strengthening democracy also entails promoting citizen security and consolidating a culture of peace, in which democratic coexistence is sustained by quality information, active participation, and a collective commitment to the common good.
- 1.4 The parties recognise Economic and Social Councils as prime forums of civil society diplomacy for promoting structured dialogue on questions regarding economic growth, competitiveness, sustainable development, food security and the mutual gains resulting from the energy transition, digital transformation and scientific and technological cooperation. The councils play a central role in combating poverty and social exclusion by enabling inclusive policy dialogue that promotes equitable access to opportunities and supports vulnerable groups.
- 1.5 The parties emphasise the importance of strengthening the Economic and Social Councils as spaces for democratic resilience in the face of growing threats to institutional integrity, factual information and social cohesion. The Councils should promote an open democratic debate to

address the polarisation and social discord caused by information manipulation and disinformation.

- 1.6 Councils should be valued as relevant bodies to support their governments in shaping regulatory and activity-driven frameworks for social media and artificial intelligence so that they stimulate responsible innovation and ethical use of new technologies.
- 1.7 The parties express concern about the advance of movements aimed at destabilising democracies on a global scale. In this context, they call for the development of international mechanisms and strategies to monitor these threats, as well as the promotion of joint actions to prevent and address them, with the aim of building stronger and more resilient democracies.

## **2. Trade and the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement**

2.1 The parties welcome the signature on 17 January 2026 of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement (EMPA) and the Interim Trade Agreement (ITA) and the efforts of their governments to find an agreement that is:

- fair and mutually beneficial, and oriented toward long-term cooperation, respecting each region's respective strengths and challenges,
- attentive to sensitive sectors such as agriculture and industry, in order to ensure that no region or sector is left behind and that the interests of affected sectors and their workers are adequately protected.

2.2 The parties underline the immense economic and trade potential of the EU-Mercosur partnership, particularly in terms of market access, diversification of trade and supply chains, and opportunities for businesses, including SMEs, in both regions. At the same time, they welcome the inclusion of strong environmental and labour protections in the agreement and express the hope that it will help prevent illegal deforestation and safeguard workers' rights, ensuring that economic growth remains inclusive, equitable, and responsible from a sustainable development perspective. The parties will ensure that civil society monitoring of the agreement, once set in place, will contribute to demonstrating that the agreement contributes to poverty reduction, equitable development, and measures that support vulnerable workers and communities in both regions.

Moreover, the parties call for a strong role for the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs), including the European Economic and Social Committee and the Mercosur Economic and Social Consultative Forum. The DAGs have to guarantee balanced and real representation of interests among civil society organisations and the social partners. The parties also recommend that the panel of experts on trade and sustainable development matters, and other relevant bodies, include adequate representation for civil society, the social partners and the DAGs.

The parties call also for a continuous monitoring of the impact, especially for SMEs.

2.3 The parties reaffirm the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the agreement and look forward to its entry into force expressing the hope that the recent decision of the European Parliament to refer the agreement to the European Court of Justice will not delay this process.

2.4 In the context of the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé, the parties reaffirm their support for a rules-based multilateral trading system and recognise the relevance of WTO reform for its effective, credible and inclusive functioning, benefiting businesses, workers, consumers and civil society in both regions.

### **3. Social and labour issues, social inclusion, digital transformation and the future of work**

3.1 In the context of the digital transition and its impact on the world of work, the parties reaffirm the essential role of economic and social councils in fostering consensus and promoting social dialogue. Their involvement is crucial to ensuring inclusive policies, reducing inequalities, and addressing the challenges posed by technological change – including managing potential digital and AI-related job reallocations and labour market disruptions but also exploiting the opportunities to improve work organisation, reduce repetitive tasks and assess prevention risks linked to health and safety at work. The human-centred and responsible use of AI has a positive impact on productivity which has to be strengthened.

3.2 The parties call for:

- A digital transformation which promotes job opportunities with recognition and implementation of labour rights and social protection for all workers, efforts to formalize informal work in line with the ILO recommendation No. 204, as well as mutual recognition of competences, including independent professionals. A human-centred approach in AI adoption at the workplace must include informing and consulting workers in line with agreed rules in order to promote job quality and improve work organisation.
- Measures to mitigate the risk of deepening inequalities through AI, ensuring that AI implementation is inclusive across sectors – particularly in technology, and services.
- Robust implementation and enforcement of the existing legislative and governance frameworks on AI and algorithmic management, while addressing and overcoming the gaps in the protection of workers' rights in the workplace and ensuring that humans remain in control in all human-machine interactions. Promoting responsible and 'trustworthy' AI and algorithmic management in the world of work requires a positive and enabling environment for social dialogue and collective bargaining, which should be supported in accordance with national rules and practices. Proactive measures should prevent future risks and ensure that AI contributes positively to the transformation of work.
- Heightened attention to be given to the emotional and mental well-being of children and young people, who are particularly exposed to the psychosocial impacts of digital and AI use, and social media. Special attention should be given to psychosocial risks in working environments.

4.4 In particular, the parties call for:

- Greater convergence among the Rio Conventions – the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification – to ensure stronger synergies and mutual reinforcement.
- Accelerated implementation of the first Global Stocktake (GST), which evaluates collective progress toward the Paris Agreement’s goals.
- The full integration of just transition dimensions in NDCs and long-term net-zero strategies, including their design, implementation and reporting. The parties welcome the progress made at COP30 with the adoption of the Just Transition Mechanism and pathways promoting human and labour rights, social dialogue, gender equality and support for marginalised communities. This progress strengthens social justice in climate action and international cooperation. The parties stress that the coming year will be crucial for operationalising the Just Transition Work Programme and moving from commitments to tangible implementation, supported by strong civil society engagement.
- Continued development of climate adaptation policies grounded in social justice and a just transition, addressing sectoral and regional disparities. Nature-based solutions, the bioeconomy, the circular economy and climate-resilient agri-food systems are fundamental for achieving both the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Paris Agreement’s temperature goals. These efforts require coherent approaches research, innovations and new technologies, as well as targeted support for farmers, agricultural workers and the fisheries sector.
- Significant scaling-up of climate finance, noting that despite commitments to double adaptation finance by 2025 and triple it by 2035, adaptation finance remains seriously underfunded relative to mitigation. For this reason, the Parties request that the EU and its Member States commit to the necessary financing of the Tropical Forest Forever Facility and also finding mechanism to protect other ecologically relevant ecosystems. The Parties also request the necessary systematization of the financing programs linked to the Global Europe and the Global Gateway for environmental sustainability projects in the Brazil Amazon rainforest.
- The Parties underline the need to translate the accumulated scientific knowledge of climate change into concrete, timely and measurable action. They recognize that, in light of the available evidence and existing technological capacities, it is imperative to strengthen implementation.
- The Parties reaffirm that climate action must recognize the differentiated impacts of climate change, on populations, territories and economic sectors. They advocate for prevention and response strategies grounded in equity, with differentiated levels of protection according to specific vulnerabilities. The Parties emphasize that adaptation and just transition policies must promote decent work, social justice and inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind.

- Sector-specific AI literacy and tailored upskilling or reskilling initiatives, prioritising sectors such as healthcare, defence, public services, manufacturing, energy, mobility, and professional services. Support mechanisms should assist workers, businesses and educational systems in training and in adapting to AI-driven changes, backed, where needed, by monitoring tools to track progress and skills uptake.
- Strengthened social dialogue and the promotion of ethical AI in the workplace and other forms of social interaction, in accordance with national rules and practices.
- Supportive environment for entrepreneurship, social and inclusive entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurship literacy, access to finance and an enabling regulatory environment which encourages risk-taking and innovation.

3.3 Worker involvement in accordance with national rules and practices is key to safeguarding fundamental rights and ensuring a human-centric approach and the development of trustworthy AI. The parties underline the need for a positive and enabling environment for social dialogue and collective bargaining in accordance with national rules and practices. The social partners should be equipped with the necessary resources – capacity-building, information, and guidance on the regulatory framework – to advance negotiations in addressing the challenges of digitalisation and AI in workplaces. Ethical principles should be embedded in AI deployment, including sector-specific codes of conduct, and clear guidance for businesses. This approach should combine human-centric innovation – such as AI tools that support decision-making, help manage workloads, and enable personalised learning and professional up-scaling so that AI adoption can contribute to enhancing productivity, job quality and positive outcomes for both workers and businesses.

#### **4. Climate action, multilateralism and COP30**

4.1 The parties recommend strengthening the role of economic and social councils in shaping national strategies for implementing both national and international climate agreements.

4.2 Empowering civil society in democratic climate decision-making requires a stronger UNFCCC governance framework with inclusive, participatory processes and meaningful feedback loops. Bottom-up and grassroots initiatives must be genuinely supported to accelerate mitigation and adaptation efforts to reinforce social resilience. The Climate Action Agenda – anchored in civil-society-driven initiatives and dialogues – plays a vital role in communication and in shaping narratives, raising ambition and advancing discussions on governance reform and process innovation.

4.3 The parties call for a renewed push on climate diplomacy by the EU and Brazil, urging their leaders to strengthen multilateral climate governance and assume a leading global role. With the United States stepping back and some fossil-fuel-producing states blocking progress on phasing out fossil fuels in COP decisions, exploring new forms of multilateralism, looking at strengthened cooperation approaches among countries, will be essential. Beyond formal COP outcomes, the parties also call for complementary initiatives and political processes with like-minded partners to maintain momentum and sustain ambition.

- The Parties reaffirm the inseparable link between democracy, inclusion and climate justice. They recognize that strong democratic institutions, transparency, meaningful public participation and structured social dialogue are essential conditions for the legitimacy and effectiveness of climate action. They further underscore that the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups strengthens the quality of decision-making, and broadens collective commitment to the implementation of climate policies, consolidating social justice as a central pillar of international cooperation.
- Global mobilisation to deliver strong results at the next COP, in line with the *Global Mutirão Decision: uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change*, reflecting the spirit envisioned by the Brazilian Presidency and the Roadmaps for ending deforestation and decarbonising the economy. The ambition of the Mutirão now depends on follow-up actions by the COP Parties, the UN system and civil society. In this context, the parties commit to jointly mobilising civil society worldwide to amplify global citizens' voices and engage COP leaders in delivering outcomes that match the scale of the planetary crisis.

Brussels, 26 February 2026.

Signed by:

Sustainable Economic and Social Development  
Council (CDESS) of the Secretariat for  
Institutional Relations of the Presidency of the  
Republic of Brazil



European Economic and Social Committee  
(EESC)

