



India and MERCOSUR Sign First Additional Protocol to Facilitate Electronic Certificates of Origin

Protocol to Facilitate Paperless Trade and Modernise Customs Procedures under India–MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement

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India and MERCOSUR signed the First Additional Protocol to the India–MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to facilitate acceptance of electronic Certificates of Origin, marking an important step towards facilitating paperless trade and modernising customs procedures between India and the MERCOSUR countries.

The Protocol was signed by Commerce Secretary, Government of India, Shri Rajesh Agarwal and Ambassador of Uruguay to India H.E. Mr Alberto Guani, and Ambassador of Paraguay to India, H.E. Mr Fleming Raul Duarte Ramos, in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay H.E. Mr Mario Lubetkin, in the exercise of the Pro Tempore Presidency of MERCOSUR and the representatives from Embassies of Argentina & Brazil.

The India-MERCOSUR PTA was signed on 25 January 2004 and entered into force on 1 June 2009. The Agreement provides preferential tariff concessions on 450 tariff lines by India and 452 tariff lines by the MERCOSUR side.

The First Additional Protocol amends Article 16 of Annex III (Rules of Origin) of the PTA by providing that Certificates of Origin issued in electronic format shall have the same legal validity and identical value as Certificates of Origin issued in paper format. Such electronic Certificates of Origin will be required to be issued and electronically signed in accordance with the respective domestic legislation of the Parties, by duly authorised entities and officials.

The move is expected to facilitate the transition towards digital and paperless trade documentation, reduce transaction costs and processing time associated with the issuance and verification of Certificates of Origin, and improve the efficiency of preferential trade under the existing India-MERCOSUR PTA.

The initiative follows discussions in the Joint Administrative Committee of the India-MERCOSUR PTA. At its fourth meeting held on 27 November 2025, both sides supported updating the Agreement to facilitate the use of digital Certificates of Origin. The proposal for the Additional Protocol was subsequently adopted by mutual consent at the fifth meeting of the Joint Administrative Committee held on 9 April 2026.

The Protocol will enter into force upon completion of the respective internal procedures by India and the MERCOSUR Parties and notification of the same to each other.

The signing of the First Additional Protocol underscores the commitment of India and MERCOSUR to deepen trade facilitation, adopt modern customs practices and strengthen the institutional framework supporting bilateral trade.

The signing also represents a significant step in the ongoing engagement between India and MERCOSUR to further strengthen and expand their trade and economic partnership.



Abhishek Dayal/Garima Singh/Anushka Pandey

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