

¡Bienvenidas y bienvenidos to El CC, CCLATAM's newsletter!. Every other week you'll find the main events shaking up Latin America, from Ushuaia in the south to Los Algodones in the north. Sign up [here](#) to stay updated on the region. Get in touch with us, we may feature an excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.

A 25 Years Long Engagement Issue



The [EU-Mercosur agreement](#) arrives at a moment when global trade is being reshaped by rivalry between major powers, supply-chain insecurity, and a weakening of multilateral institutions, and after more than twenty years of negotiation its conclusion signals that large regional blocs are still willing to commit to long-term rules-based integration rather than retreat into protectionism.

For [Mercosur](#), the deal is not simply about exporting more goods to Europe; it is about anchoring the bloc more firmly in the global economic order and projecting political credibility at a time when South America has often been perceived as fragmented and inward-looking.

The European Union, with 450 million consumers and one of the world's largest import markets, offers Mercosur countries stable access to a high-value destination for their agro-industrial exports, and the agreement grants tariff advantages to virtually all such

products, with most entering the **EU duty-free immediately or after transition periods and sensitive sectors like beef, poultry, rice, dairy and ethanol receiving preferential quotas that are legally locked in and cannot be unilaterally withdrawn.** At the same time, new rules on sanitary standards, licensing and non-tariff barriers **reduce the risk of sudden trade disruptions and align procedures with science-based processes, something particularly valuable for Mercosur economies that have historically faced volatile trade policy shifts.** The political value for Mercosur countries is equally significant: the agreement acts as a stabilizing anchor for domestic trade and investment policy, encourages regulatory modernization, reinforces **For Europe, the pact secures long-term food and bio-industrial supply chains, strengthens ties with democratic partners in the Global South,** and embeds environmental and labor commitments through negotiation rather than unilateral trade restrictions.

Yet the agreement has exposed **Europe's internal political fault lines, particularly in France and Italy, where farmers have mobilized against it.** Their concerns are rooted in tangible examples: **French cattle producers** fear competition from Mercosur beef entering under new duty-free quotas, arguing that South American producers benefit from lower costs and less stringent environmental or animal-welfare requirements, while **Italian dairy and meat cooperatives** warn that increased imports of cheese and poultry could pressure domestic prices in already fragile rural economies. Recent farmer protests, highway blockades and political lobbying in both countries have turned the agreement into a sensitive electoral issue, forcing European leaders to balance strategic trade ambitions with domestic agricultural protection.

From the Mercosur side, each member country reads the agreement through its own economic and political lens. Brazil sees the deal as a gateway to diversify exports beyond raw commodities and deepen agribusiness penetration into premium European markets. For Brasília, it is also a diplomatic prize: concluding a long-stalled negotiation reinforces Brazil's image as a serious global actor capable of bridging North-South divides. **Argentina,** whose economy has long suffered from cycles of protectionism and policy volatility, stands to gain not only from beef, wine, citrus and processed food exports, but also from the agreement's built-in policy constraints that limit sudden trade restrictions and export taxes on shipments to Europe. This external anchor is viewed by many Argentine analysts as a mechanism to stabilize rules at home and attract longer-term investment. **Uruguay,** with its export-oriented economy and strong reputation in traceable beef and sustainable agriculture, sees a chance to consolidate its niche as a high-quality food supplier to Europe while gaining political leverage inside Mercosur by being among the first to ratify and therefore access early quota benefits. **Paraguay,** smaller and more dependent on agricultural exports, views the agreement as an opportunity to move up value chains and secure predictable market access that its domestic scale alone could never negotiate.

At the regional level, the agreement also eases internal Mercosur tensions. In recent years, disagreements over flexibility and bilateral trade initiatives had strained the bloc's unity; concluding a high-profile deal with the EU provides a shared external success and reduces pressure for unilateral departures. It modernizes regulatory frameworks across customs procedures, public procurement and intellectual property, preparing Mercosur for future negotiations with other partners.

In today's geopolitical climate, where trade is increasingly weaponized and economic blocs are hardening, the EU–Mercosur agreement stands as a deliberate statement in favor of openness, negotiated standards and interdependence. For Mercosur nations, it offers not only expanded export opportunities and foreign investment prospects but also a political platform to strengthen regional cohesion, lock in more predictable economic governance, and reassert relevance on a world stage that is rapidly reorganizing around competing spheres of influence.

CCLATAM Editorial Board

Cable Message

Title: The latest from Risk board



For years, global powers engaged Latin America through separate playbooks. Washington handled security and sanctions. Beijing financed infrastructure and secured commodities. Brussels pursued trade and regulatory alignment. Each assumed the region could absorb instability without forcing strategic confrontation. Venezuela has broken that assumption.

The collapse of authority in Caracas has drawn American coercive power, Chinese financial exposure, and European commercial interests into direct interaction. The significance lies not in Venezuela's immediate political outcome but in what it signals: Latin America is no longer a geopolitically permissive space.

Financial markets have already absorbed this signal. Capital flows into Latin American equities, bonds, and currencies have strengthened, driven less by short-term optimism than by recalibrated geopolitical risk assessments. Jurisdictions seen as institutionally

predictable and politically aligned with global capital preferences are attracting renewed inflows. Others face higher borrowing costs and thinner investment pipelines.

China's role in this environment is evolving rather than receding. Venezuelan exposure has revealed the vulnerabilities of politically tolerant sovereign lending. Beijing is now shifting toward commercially disciplined engagement: tighter contracts, shared risk structures, and preference for stable regulatory environments. Governments that once relied on unconditional Chinese credit must now compete for it by offering legal reliability and macroeconomic coherence.

What remains missing is regional political capacity. Latin America still lacks mechanisms able to manage cross-border crises or coordinate strategic bargaining with external powers. In their absence, instability invites external arbitration. The gap between economic relevance and political coordination continues to constrain collective autonomy.

Elsewhere in LATAM

 Venezuela's National Assembly announced the imminent release of a **“significant number of political prisoners,”** including Venezuelan and foreign nationals, as part of a government-led exacerbation process amid the country's ongoing political crisis.. According to the Venezuelan rights group [Foro Penal, there are currently around 820 political prisoners detained in Venezuela, including more than 80 foreigners](#) – despite the government's refusal to provide exact figures – reflecting continued international pressure and demands for their release following the U.S. military operation that resulted in the capture of President Nicolás Maduro

 The Mexican government executed its first international capital market placement of the year, issuing US \$9 billion (MX\$161.6 billion) in sovereign bonds in the international markets. According to the [Ministry of Finance and Public Credit \(SHCP\)](#), the transaction *established a placement record for the third consecutive year*, benefiting from high global market liquidity and attractive interest rate levels compared with peers. In the meantime the [Bank of Mexico policymakers mentioned](#) slowing pace for its interest cuts in 2026 following a cycle started in 2024.

  Ecuador's [Interior Minister John Reimberg](#) has criticized Spain for releasing [William Joffre Alcívar Bautista – alias “Comandante Willy”](#) – the alleged leader of [Los Tiguerones](#), despite approved extradition requests. Alcívar, accused of orchestrating the armed takeover of TC Televisión during a live broadcast in Guayaquil in January 2024, was freed after Spain said Ecuador failed to meet extradition guarantee deadlines – a claim Ecuador denies. Officials warn the decision poses security risks and have filed a formal diplomatic protest as Ecuador vows to pursue his recapture.

  The relationship between the United States and Colombia is entering a new phase following President Donald Trump's announcement that he will receive Colombian President Gustavo Petro at the White House in early February. The meeting aims to repair a bilateral relationship that had deteriorated over disagreements on

migration, anti-drug strategies, and regional tensions, including a recent operation in Venezuela.

 [Argentina's public administration has eliminated 60,494 jobs](#) since President Javier Milei took office in December 2023 through November 2025, marking a significant downsizing of the national workforce. [According to a report](#) released by the Ministry of Deregulation, the cuts represent a 12.1% reduction in national public sector employment, underscoring the government's aggressive push to streamline the state and reduce public spending.

 Colombia's economic emergency declared by [President Gustavo Petro](#) has unlocked a new fiscal package to cut the projected 2026 budget deficit of roughly \$4.3 billion USD by **targeting high-capacity taxpayers**, [Finance Minister Germán Ávila said](#), key measures include raising the wealth tax on assets above about \$580,000 USD, **increasing VAT on high-alcohol spirits from 5% to 19%**, boosting the **income tax surcharge from 5% to 15%**, and tightening rules on undeclared assets, along with **new levies on small-volume imports, financial services, and oil and coal sectors**, with the package expected to generate about \$3.2 billion USD in additional revenue.

 Starlink, [SpaceX's satellite internet network](#), has announced it will provide **free internet access in Venezuela until February 3**, aiming to maintain connectivity amid the country's political and security crisis. The company confirmed the measure in a statement on X, saying the goal is to ensure continuous service in the coming weeks.

 The Peruvian government plans to begin executing eight large-scale mining investment projects in 2026, with total investment estimated at nearly **€7 billion**, [according to the Ministry of Energy and Mines](#). The projects, currently in advanced development stages, will be located across four key mining regions – [Pasco](#), [Puno](#), [Arequipa](#), and [Áncash](#) – and are expected to boost mineral production, employment, and fiscal revenues amid a climate of reduced uncertainty for private investment. [Vice Minister of Mines Carlos Talavera](#) said the initiatives have already passed critical risk phases in the investment cycle, allowing clearer execution timelines.

 The U.S. administration has initiated a **gradual and selective lifting of economic sanctions on Venezuela** to allow the sale and transport of Venezuelan oil to international markets. The U.S. Department of Energy confirmed immediate authorization for oil exports, with an [initial shipment of 30–50 million barrels destined for the United States](#). The agreement has no fixed end date and will remain in effect as long as U.S. conditions are met. **All revenue from Venezuelan oil sales will be deposited in U.S.-supervised international bank accounts to ensure transparency and prevent fund diversion**. Only U.S.-approved channels will be permitted for oil exports. Washington has also authorized the import of equipment and services to restart Venezuela's oil industry and announced support for rehabilitating the country's deteriorated power grid, considered essential to restoring oil production.

 [The Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires \(Malba\)](#) has acquired the [Daros Latinamerica Collection](#), formerly housed at [Casa Daros in Rio de Janeiro](#), in a landmark deal that adds more than **1,200 works** to its holdings and doubles the museum's collection. Founded in 2000 by Swiss philanthropists [Ruth and Stephan](#)

[Schmidheiny](#), the Daros collection is renowned for its focus on modern and contemporary Latin American art. The collection contains 1,233 works' by 117 artists, including key pieces by Doris Salcedo, Ana Mendieta, Julio Le Parc, Lygia Clark, and Cildo Meireles.

La Foto



Soya vs Amazon forest

The [Amazon Environmental Research Institute \(IPAM\)](#) says **deforestation in the Amazon fell 69% between 2009 and 2022 while soy production in the region grew 344%**. The achievement is possible thanks to the [Soy Moratorium](#), a voluntary agreement in place since 2006 that barred the purchase of soy grown on deforested land in the Amazon that **has long been considered one of the most effective private-sector tools to curb Amazon deforestation while allowing agricultural expansion**. Now Brazil's [Association of Vegetable Oil Industries \(Abiove\)](#) announced its withdrawal from the **Soy Moratorium**. The decision follows the adoption of a law in [Mato Grosso state](#) removing tax incentives for companies participating in the pact. The legislation is currently under review by Brazil's Supreme Court. Abiove represents major global soy traders, including **Cargill, Bunge, Amaggi, JBS, and Cofco**, which together control a large share of Brazil's soy exports. **IPAM warns that ending the moratorium could increase deforestation by up to 30% by 2045, undermining Brazil's goal of ending illegal deforestation by 2030.**

La Cita

We don't just eat food. We eat information that talks to our genes

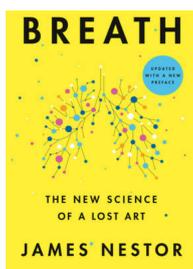
[Dr. Michael Mosley](#)

El Evento



After the incredible success of the 2025 edition, we are thrilled to announce that the 2nd edition of the [Digital Summit LATAM](#) will take place once again in Madrid – at the iconic [Casa de América](#) – on 26 and 27 February 2026. This new edition will be even bigger and bolder counting on world-class speakers from Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States; new strategic partnerships and sponsor; cutting-edge discussions on AI, connectivity, regulation, inclusion, and digital transformation. Together with our partners [DPL News](#), we will continue building the platform where Latin America meets the world – including Europe, the Middle East, and beyond – to shape the future of our digital society.

La Lectura



You should read *Breath* because it reveals how something you do every second—breathing—quietly shapes your health, energy, sleep, and even your lifespan, yet most of us are doing it wrong without realizing it. [James Nestor](#) uncovers fascinating scientific research and real-world experiments showing that simple changes in how you breathe can reduce stress, improve physical performance, sharpen focus, and support long-term well-being. It's an eye-opening book that turns an unconscious habit into a powerful tool for feeling and living better, with practical insights that can make an immediate difference in everyday life.



Enjoyed this read? Spread the inspiration by sharing our newsletter with your peers and join us in fostering a vibrant community passionate about the wonders of Latin America.

You can also find us on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Or maybe you want to donate to our cause and help promote the region, you can do that [here](#). Want to stop receiving this newsletter? You can unsubscribe [here](#).

Thank you for reading, nos vemos en la próxima.