

MERCOSUR

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Mercosur may have a Court of Audit



The investments made in the Mercosur countries with the resources from Brazilian taxpayers have already begun to be monitored by experts of the Brazilian Court of Audit (TCU), said Minister Augusto Nardes to the members of the Brazilian Representation in the Parliament of Mercosur (Parlasur) in Montevideo, on Monday (August 9). During the meeting, he also defended the creation of a court of auditors for the bloc, inspired on the European model.

According to Nardes, who was at the meeting at the invitation of Senator Sérgio Zambiasi (PTB-RS), the first two audits carried out by the TCU shall be completed by October. The audits deal with programs to combat FMD and the implementation of the Library at the University of Latin American Integration (Unila), in Foz do Iguaçu (PR). Both with resources from the Fund for Structural Convergence of Mercosur (Focem). The results of these two audits will be forwarded to Parlasur, to which the future court may be subject to.

“The Court of Auditors of Mercosur would be modeled on the Court of Auditors of the European Union, which was created before the European Parliament itself. The public wants to know whether the resources employed in Mercosur are being well used”, said Nardes.

During the last meeting of Mercosur’s summit, in the Argentine city of San Juan in early August, projects in the four Mercosur countries totaling US\$793.9 million were approved, of which US\$587.6 million with Focem resources. The main project approved is the construction of an energy transmission line from the Itaipu hydroelectric power plant to Asuncion, Paraguay's capital, for which the fund will allocate US\$400 million. The electrical interconnection between Uruguay and Brazil, on the other hand, will receive US\$83.1 million from Focem.

Brazil contributes with 70% of the resources of Focem as a form of collaboration with the development of countries with smaller economies in the bloc. TCU's initiative to monitor the use of resources from Brazilian taxpayers may be seen as a first step towards establishing a control on the use of resources from Focem. The second step, in the opinion of the minister, may be the creation of the Court of Auditors of Mercosur.

Senator Marisa Serrano (PSDB-MS) has already submitted to Parlasur a draft resolution that determines the monitoring of investments with funds from Focem and other funds that have already been or will be created by the bloc.

“There must be assurance of oversight and monitoring of such expenditures, and hence arises the idea of creating an organization of the four countries for this purpose. Mercosur will only be consolidated when it has a parliament and an effective court of auditors”, he said.

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