

29 May 2024

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OIA 29341

Tēnā koe Nick M

I refer to your email of 1 May 2024, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

According to some sources online, New Zealand is an observer state of Mercosur (the Southern Common Market). I would like to inquire about New Zealand's status and involvement in Mercosur.

Specifically, I would like to know about the following aspects:

- 1. Membership - Firstly, are these online sources correct about New Zealand's status as an observer state of Mercosur?*
- 2. Extent of Involvement - How involved is New Zealand in the regular activities and meetings of Mercosur? What roles or positions do we currently hold or participate in within this group?*
- 3. Contributions Over the Last Five Years - Could you provide details on what New Zealand has contributed to Mercosur in terms of trade negotiations, economic dialogues, or other forms of cooperation from 2019 to 2024?*
- 4. Benefits and Objectives - What are the primary benefits that New Zealand aims to achieve through its observer status in Mercosur? Are there specific goals or outcomes that the Ministry is working towards in this relationship?*

While there are online sources that reference New Zealand's status as an observer state of Mercosur, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) has not been able to identify any documented evidence of New Zealand being an observer state of Mercosur. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(e) of the OIA, as the information does not exist, or despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

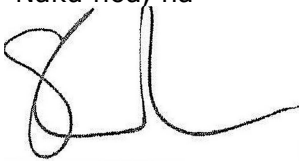
New Zealand is not involved in the regular activities and meetings of Mercosur, and therefore holds no roles or positions within the group. New Zealand has not held any dialogues or negotiations, or contributed to any forms of economic cooperation, with Mercosur over the last five years. The last official dialogue between New Zealand and Mercosur took place in 2018.

I note that while New Zealand does not have any current specific goals or outcomes in relation to Mercosur, New Zealand does have positive bilateral relationships with Mercosur member countries.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/.

If you have any questions about this response, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sarah Corbett
for Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade