

Argentina Government Blocks Civil Society Attendance at WTO Summit in Buenos Aires, Critique of Neoliberalism Banned?

By [Friends of the Earth International](#)

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Friends of the Earth International

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Friends of the Earth International, the world's largest grassroots environment network, condemn the unprecedented and undemocratic decision by the Argentine government to [revoke the accreditation](#) of two Friends of the Earth experts and much of civil society from attending the upcoming World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 10-13 December.

Together with a diverse range of trade unions, farmers and consumer rights organisations we call on Argentina's government to comply with human rights obligations and allow civil society to participate in this international meeting and the right to protest. We call for greater democracy in global trade policy making and, if this decision is not reversed, for WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo to move the meeting.

Friends of the Earth International has been advocating for a fair and sustainable trade agenda for over two decades, yet this is the first time we have been banned from participating in the WTO.

Sam Cossar-Gilbert, spokesperson on trade at Friends of the Earth International, said:

"Trade deals affect people's everyday lives, from the food we eat to the energy we use, and must not be discussed in secret, behind closed doors. Locking people out of the WTO will only further undermine its legitimacy. We need more public participation in trade policy, not less."

Alberto Villarreal, spokesperson on trade at [Friends of the Earth Latin America and the Caribbean](#), who has been banned from attending the meeting, said:

"The black lists of President Mauricio Macri's government in Argentina are worrying, and reveal the true face of his government: neoliberal, corporate and serving one-per-cent of the population. This is a government attempting to silence the voice of civil society."

Ernst-Christoph Stolper, Friends of the Earth Germany/ [BUND](#) Vice President and member of the Executive Committee of Friends of the Earth Europe, has also been banned from attending the meeting. He said:

“The unprecedented move of the Argentinian government challenges international rules of civil society participation in global governance, as well as the authority of the WTO. One day before the G20 presidency is handed over from Germany to Argentina, no-one could imagine a worse signal for shaping international order in a social and ecological manner.”

Below is an email from the WTO informing a Friends of the Earth International delegate of the cancellation of their accreditation.

Von: MC11-NGO, WTO [<mailto:mc11-go@wto.org>]

Gesendet: Mittwoch, 29. November 2017 16:27

An: 'ec.stolper@t-online.de'

Cc: MC11-NGO, WTO

Betreff: URGENT – MC11 cancellation of accreditation

Wichtigkeit: Hoch

Dear Mr Stolper,

The WTO has duly accredited your NGO as an eligible participant of WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires from 10 to 13 December 2017. However, we are informed by the host government that for unspecified reasons, the Argentine security authorities have decided to deny your accreditation.

We have made repeated enquiries about this unexpected development, but we have little to no hope that a solution will be found. We therefore discourage you from travelling to Argentina so as to avoid being turned away upon entry into the country.

We asked the Argentine authorities to contact you directly and inform you of their decision but to avoid that it does reach you at too late a stage, we have decided to contact you now.

We apologise for the inconvenience that the Argentine decision may cause. We are unfortunately not in a position to provide any explanation or background and suggest you contact the Argentine authorities directly on acreditaciones.mc11@mrecic.gov.ar.

Yours sincerely,

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