

Independent Presidential Candidate MEO Vows to Nullify Codelco-SQM Lithium Agreement

El Ciudadano · 4 de noviembre de 2025

During the ARCHI presidential debate, the candidate asserted that the agreement 'was negotiated with a gun to our heads'. 'We will take advantage of the existing gap to halt that contract and reconsider it. We see it as a major mistake,' he stated.



Original article: [“Se echa abajo”: MEO promete anular el acuerdo Codelco–SQM por el litio](#)

Independent Presidential Candidate MEO Vows to Nullify Codelco-SQM Lithium Agreement

«It’s going to be canceled,» stated independent presidential contender Marco Enríquez-Ominami (MEO) clearly and emphatically when asked about the controversial [Codelco-SQM](#) agreement for lithium extraction in the Salar de Atacama.

During the ARCHI presidential debate, journalist Rodrigo Vergara questioned Enríquez-Ominami: «If you become president in March, will the lithium agreement between Codelco and SQM remain, be nullified, or changed? What will happen there?» The candidate responded, «It will be canceled. (The agreement) was negotiated with a gun to our heads. What SQM did is unforgivable; they threatened the Chilean State not to protect the salt flat in exchange for essentially renewing their contract.»

“We are transferring over \$6 billion in revenue. This government that has railed against SQM ends up delivering \$6 billion in revenue; it’s absurd. We will take advantage of the existing gap to halt that contract and reconsider it. We see it as a major mistake,” affirmed the former congressman.

The presidential hopeful stated that in the coming days, he will present his proposal for developing a mineral sovereign fund to promote a «new financial architecture.»

“Let’s be honest, our model is vulnerable. In the small economy, the only advantage of being small is flexibility and what has happened is that the rent-seeking, extractive model has left us with a mediocre growth rate. I want Chileans to know that there is no money, no savings. The extractive model has reached its peak; we need two or three more smelters, and for copper, each smelter costs between \$3 billion and \$6 billion to sell at a better price,” he emphasized.



Throughout the debate, MEO asserted that progress in Chile is impossible without tax reform.

“Everything that the seven candidates are saying is a lie,” he stressed.

In light of these statements, journalist Rodrigo Vergara asked if he plans to lower corporate tax rates if he reaches La Moneda.

“We will do three things, which is more complex. We will raise \$0.92 billion per year. We will reduce the tax on large companies from 27% to 25%, and for SMEs from 25% to 20%. Why? Because we are generating employment. Those who create jobs are large and medium enterprises. We will cut taxes,” he replied.

The filmmaker and philosophy graduate issued a warning to the 7,000 families in Chile with over \$5 million, committing to implement a wealth tax.

“The tax on the richest, a 0.5% tax on those who have more than \$5 million. To compensate for the tax reduction on the productive apparatus, I need the wealthiest to help. Remember that during the social uprising, everyone from the

right, a large part of the media, and much of the business sector asked for forgiveness for their cruelty. Now the right, like Heidi, unleashed, walks around the meadow saying outrageous things, and no one confronts them,” he claimed.

He clarified that his proposal is based on half of what the current government suggested rhetorically in the previous campaign.

“The 0.5% is the most responsible approach. In four years, I will collect \$12 billion, leverage \$18 billion to \$30 billion in a public-private fiscal package of \$113 billion to create 1.3 million jobs, growing at %, increasing investment by 25 points, and raising productivity to 1.5%. I state these figures not to boast but because I am offering numbers, and what I hear, I say it with much respect in the morning, and I apologize if the coffee gets bitter, is that they are lying in this debate.”

«The Only Way to Regulate Informal Trade Is for the State to Do It»

During the ARCHI 2025 debate, Marco Enríquez-Ominami was also asked how he would promote the regulation of informal commerce.

In this regard, he indicated that his proposal includes several points, starting with the need to increase the number of scanners at borders across the country.

“You know that the screening rate is extremely low. Some may argue it’s up to international standards, but Chile is very vulnerable. Therefore, I am not as concerned with that international issue. It’s understood that less than 5% is checked, and I would double that rate. That means more scanners and safer ports,” he explained.

“Secondly, concerning security in both formal and informal commerce, I would like to adopt practices similar to those in Peru, allowing merchants to deduct taxes if they invest in security. It’s called the Peruvian formula. What I like to say is,

‘Look, I’m there, you have my back, if you invest part of your profits in security,’” he clarified.

In his speech, Enríquez-Ominami addressed the right-wing candidates, Evelyn Matthei (Chile Vamos), José Antonio Kast (Republican Party), Johannes Kaiser (Libertarian National Party), and Franco Parisi (People’s Party), and questioned their proposals to reduce the state.

“I want to tell all the candidates present here that all the countries you admire have a larger state than Chile. Let’s be honest; all OECD countries on average have a state that is one-third larger. Franco, Evelyn, José Antonio, and Johannes, for your general knowledge, all the countries you admire have a bigger, stronger state,” he pointed out.

“The only way to regulate informal commerce is for the state to do it. The market does not regulate irregularity; the market complains and shouts but does not control informality unless it is through the state. This presidential debate is odd in which we are all candidates for heads of state, taking the reins of a horse, trying to turn it into a pony. That’s a ridiculous idea. All candidates for heads of state believing that this is about reducing the size of the state, including this government, are mistaken. I absolutely believe the opposite. Fewer public officials, fine, but to lie and tell Chile that there will be no Cesfam, no better public health, no better childhood, and no better SENAME, with less, that just isn’t true. That is outright lying,” emphasized the candidate.

Fuente: [El Ciudadano](#)