

**Question for written answer E-002052/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Negotiations with the Member States of Mercosur concerning a free-trade agreement with the European Union

In 2015, the EU became the number one trade partner of Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela), with European imports accounting for EUR 110 billion. Between 2004 and 2015, the value of EU exports to that region grew from EUR 21 billion to EUR 46 billion.

After six years of suspension, negotiations on a free-trade agreement recommenced in 2010. On 9 March 2017, Mercosur foreign ministers adopted a common position with a view to launching negotiations in the next few days.

A free-trade agreement with the Member States of Mercosur would enable the EU to export more to Latin America. However, European farmers fear the increase in competition that this agreement could lead to. Beef should therefore be excluded from the scope of negotiations. Many agricultural sectors could suffer in the face of the Mercosur Member States' high levels of competitiveness.

The difficult process of adopting CETA, the free-trade agreement between the EU and Canada, shows the need for the EU to be extremely vigilant during trade negotiations, in particular as regards agricultural issues.

In this connection, what red lines has the Commission set with a view to protecting farmers?