

**Question for written answer E-004876/2018/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Francisco Assis (S&D)**

**Subject:** Statements by Commissioner Phil Hogan concerning Mercosur countries in the context of negotiations toward an Association Agreement with the EU

Not so long ago, Mercosur's gradual attempts to meet the EU's aspirations with regard to the Association Agreement between the two blocs boded well for the outcome of the negotiations in the short term. These attempts were particularly commendable as, for obvious reasons, Mercosur's concessions have less robust internal compensation mechanisms than those of the EU. Paradoxically, these efforts are now met with a dubious, and at times arrogant, stance embodied by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Phil Hogan, who appears highly susceptible to resistance from certain sectors, particularly agribusiness and Irish farming. This stance was apparent in the objectionable statements he made in Uruguay at the beginning of September, when he accused Mercosur of using 'megaphone diplomacy', publicly disparaging the conduct of the South Americans. Perhaps Phil Hogan believes that he is merely negotiating a trade agreement as he appears not to have fully understood the historic, geo-strategic and geopolitical importance of this agreement for relations between the EU and South America. In light of this, I would like to ask:

When does Phil Hogan plan to start behaving like the European Commissioner for Agriculture and not the Irish Minister for Agriculture?