

**Question for written answer P-000232/2018  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Protection of the 'Queso Manchego' designation of origin in the EU-Mexico agreement

The 'Queso Manchego' protected designation of origin refers to cheese made with the milk of ewes from the Manchega breed. It is produced exclusively in the La Mancha area.

Protected designations of origin (PDOs) are seals that the EU uses to protect the distinctive quality of European food products. They play a vital role in ensuring that Europe's flagship products can be marketed fairly and effectively, and the recognition of PDOs by third countries is an essential prerequisite for the conclusion of any kind of trade agreement.

Negotiations to update the EU-Mexico free trade agreement are currently in their final stages, but Mexico is objecting to the full recognition of PDOs, because one of the products involved is Manchego cheese. The name 'Manchego' is also used by the Mexican food industry, and this misuse of a protected EU designation is commercially damaging to the Spanish cheese.

In the light of the foregoing:

1. Does the Commission undertake to ensure that Manchego cheese is afforded the maximum possible level of protection before negotiations with Mexico are concluded?
2. Can the Commission guarantee that it will not adopt a compromise solution like the one chosen in relation to Feta cheese in Canada, and that it will always and in all circumstances protect the sole and exclusive use of the name 'Queso Manchego'?