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Regional representation in the European Parliament: Parliamentary Questions on Geographical Indications

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Abstract:

The European Parliament represents the citizens of the European Union. However, individual Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) also face incentives to represent more narrow regional economic interests. Geographical Indications such as Feta or Champagne are an ideal policy area to study regional representation. Their defined regions provide clear incentives and a reliable measurement of regional representation. This article codes and analyses the written questions on Geographical Indications posed by MEPs during the period 2009-2019. Descriptively, we find that MEPs often mention products from their region. We also find that MEPs focus their questions on contentious products and on politicized free trade agreements. Quantitatively, logit regressions provide evidence for more regional representation by MEPs from countries with regional lists for EP elections. We conclude with the implications of our research for representation in the European Union, and the idea of transnational lists.