



EU Domestic Advisory Group under  
the EU-Vietnam FTA

**Statement from the European Union Domestic Advisory Group  
under the EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)  
following the EU-Viet Nam DAG-to-DAG meeting and the Joint Forum  
held on 20 and 22 January 2026**

2 February 2026

1. Following the DAG-to-DAG meeting on 20 January 2026 of the EU and the Viet Nam Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) and the EU-Viet Nam Joint Forum on Trade and Sustainable Development under the EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) on 22 January 2026, the EU Domestic Advisory Group (EU DAG) would like to highlight the following:
2. The EU DAG raised concerns about the continual delays to the ratification of ILO Convention No 87 on Freedom of Information and Protection of the Right to Organise and the effective application of other ILO fundamental conventions by Viet Nam. In this context, the EU DAG also expresses its concern regarding the lack of progress in the ratification of ILO OSH Fundamental Conventions, namely ILO C155 and C187, by certain EU Member States.
3. Questions were also raised on the recent Viet Nam Trade Union Law regarding its conformity to ILO standards and trade unions' independence. The EU DAG also raised the issue of the ongoing complaints through the EU Single Entry Point, highlighting the need for further progress in their examination. The EU DAG welcomes, however, the open dialogue on this reform during the Joint Forum and the commitment of the government of Viet Nam to exchange further on the reform to clear up the concerns of the EU DAG regarding in particular its conformity with ILO standards.
4. The DAGs discussed more extensively the sustainable dimension of the textile and garment sectors, including their role in ensuring a global playing field and a just transition that leaves no one behind. The EU DAG points out that Viet Nam can be a force for shared prosperity if it respects human dignity and rights, with textile workers in Europe and Viet Nam sharing common goals: fair pay, safe conditions, and respect at work.
5. Related to the discussion on sustainable aquaculture, a consensus emerged on the importance of the cooperation with the ILO regarding the fight against child labour, pointing towards past years of active cooperation.
6. The EU DAG also welcomes the renewal of the joint project of Viet Nam, the European Commission and the ILO on decent work, which will support further efforts on fighting forced and child labour in Viet Nam's fisheries sector. This is a key condition for the EU DAG's support in working towards lifting the EU Yellow Card on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.
7. Regarding the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), the EU DAG underlines that cooperative development and the transfer of business models for farmers' organisations will be important to ensure that smallholders are not excluded from the EU market. In addition, the EUDR provides Vietnamese civil society with a powerful tool to put an end to deforestation. Both sides welcomed

the Commission's commitment to facilitate implementation within the existing legal framework and updating guidance and FAQs.

8. It was further highlighted that the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), operational since 1 January 2026, requires cooperation to remove elements making it difficult for Vietnamese enterprises to meet its requirements. Compliance can be facilitated through partnership, and smaller EU Member States can play a strategic role in supporting exporters. Further consideration of its impact on workers is needed to ensure a just transition, which remains a joint commitment of Viet Nam and the EU.
  9. Cooperation on animal welfare remains a concern. Viet Nam has been subject to an EU 'yellow card' for IUU fishing since 2017. Progress on legal reforms, vessel monitoring and community engagement would support sustainable fisheries, improve animal welfare outcomes and safeguard Viet Nam's access to the EU market. A proposal was put forward to establish a Joint Technical Working Group to develop a sustainable aquaculture and fisheries framework aligned with Vietnamese conditions while progressively approaching EU standards.
  10. It was highlighted that the supply chains of EU companies are under increased scrutiny to ensure that environmental, workers' and human rights are respected. Any failings jeopardise reputation and investment and risk adverse consumer reactions. If Viet Nam can show that it is a country where EU companies can be confident that such rights are respected, then the economic advantages of the EVFTA will continue to be seen. However, the EU DAG notes that Viet Nam continues to violate environmental, worker and human rights in a systemic manner, as noted by various United Nations (UN) mechanisms and treaty bodies. The role of the DAG was recognised during the Joint Forum as supporting EU trade partners' implementation of high standards despite their complexity, as per the desk study on due diligence in EU-Viet Nam value chains.
  11. The EU DAG is greatly concerned at the precedent set by the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) meeting of 21 January, where, unlike past TSD Committee meetings between EU and Viet Nam, the DAG chairs were not able to report and share their key messages and concerns regarding the implementation of Chapter 13 of the EVFTA, thus undermining the mission of both DAGs.
  12. The EU DAG recognises the efforts of Viet Nam to ensure broader representation and more active participation in the Viet Nam DAG while efforts are still needed to ensure an equal representation of the EU and Viet Nam. However, the EU DAG continues to question the impact of the last constitutional reform in Viet Nam and its implications regarding the participation of some members of the Viet Nam DAG. The EU DAG remains particularly concerned regarding the ongoing repression of human rights defenders, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders, which negatively impacts active and diverse representation in the Viet Nam DAG.
  13. At the DAG-to-DAG meeting, both the EU and the Viet Nam DAG reiterated their strong commitment to the DAGs' work and their mission to ensure more sustainable trade between the EU and Viet Nam. In a short joint statement, they agreed that future areas of cooperation between the DAGs may also include sustainable aquaculture, fisheries, the empowerment of women and consensus building relating to the ILO.
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