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) ahead of the visit of the European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security to Viet Nam

23 November 2026

Ahead of the forthcoming visit of Maroš Šefčovič, European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, to Hanoi on 25-26 November 2026, the European Union Domestic Advisory Group (EU DAG) under the EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) recognises the EVFTA's contribution to expanding trade and investment opportunities and to strengthening economic growth for both partners. The EU DAG reminds the European Commission that it should have a structured and meaningful role in all initiatives affecting the implementation and evolution of the EVFTA.

The EU DAG welcomes the recent visit of the EU-ASEAN Business Council delegation to Viet Nam, which highlighted the potential for closer EU-Viet Nam cooperation in green growth, clean manufacturing, sustainable value chains and the clean energy transition. The DAG also considers that European investment in Viet Nam can play a significant role in promoting technological advancement and vocational training. The EU DAG encourages both Parties to ensure that economic cooperation contributes to inclusive and sustainable development, benefiting businesses, workers and local communities.

At the same time, the EU DAG reiterates its ongoing concerns regarding fundamental freedoms, human rights and labour rights in Viet Nam, including continued restrictions on civic space and independent civil society activity. In particular, the continued lack of ratification of ILO Convention No 87 on freedom of association remains a major outstanding commitment in the context of the EVFTA. The DAG calls on Viet Nam to demonstrate concrete progress towards ratification and effective implementation of fundamental labour standards, including measures to guarantee freedom of association, independent workers' representation and effective social dialogue.

In this respect, the EU DAG also stresses the importance of transparent and effective follow-up to labour rights concerns raised through the European Commission's Single Entry Point, including those concerning freedom of association and trade union rights, restrictions on civil society and human rights defenders, and expresses its concerns on allegations of forced prison labour.

The EU DAG also encourages the Commissioner to address concerns with the Vietnamese authorities regarding restrictions on freedom of assembly, persistent gaps in the Trade Union Law and the arbitrary arrests of civil society activists.

The EU DAG encourages practical support in particular for EU and Vietnamese SMEs, small producers and farmers in adapting to sustainability requirements related to green transition, through cooperation on responsible supply chains and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, but also in supporting women's empowerment, as identified during the joint meeting of the EU and Viet Nam DAGs in January 2026.

The EU DAG calls on Commissioner Šefčovič to raise these priorities during his forthcoming visit.

The EU DAG remains committed to strengthening the meaningful participation of independent civil society organisations and social partners in monitoring the implementation of the EVFTA's TSD commitments. It calls for concrete follow-up of its recommendations through the EVFTA Trade and Sustainable Development Committee and the EU-Viet Nam Human Rights Dialogue.
