



EU Domestic Advisory Group under  
the EU-Vietnam FTA

## **Statement from EU DAG on the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Viet Nam – European Union Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum**

12 November 2021

Representatives of the two Domestic Advisory Groups (DAG) from the EU and Viet Nam, established under Chapter 13 on Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, held their first meeting virtually on 9 November 2021. The EU DAG welcomed the first meeting taking place.

We are keen to see the Trade and Sustainable Development chapter of the EVFTA implemented in full. The creation of the respective Domestic Advisory Groups is the bedrock on which it can be ensured that the commitments undertaken are implemented in practice by both Parties.

At this occasion, it was recalled that the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development are equally fundamental to the effective implementation of the FTA and its TSD chapter. The DAGs have an essential role in monitoring implementation.

While, welcoming the first DAG-to-DAG meeting, it was recalled by the European DAG members that the FTA explicitly calls for DAGs to be composed of “independent representative organisations” (article 13.15.4). The EU DAG has consistently raised the cases of several civil society representatives in Vietnam arrested and imprisoned in recent months directly with both Parties to the EVFTA.

We are concerned by the limited number of participants in the Vietnamese Domestic Advisory Group and therefore ask that a defined process for further civil society engagement and participation be clarified. This is all the more urgent as we understand that a number of civil society organisations have had their applications for participation rejected on unclear grounds.

In particular, the importance of the DAGs ability to comment and to make recommendations on, and arising from, the implementation of this TSD chapter, must be underlined. This especially includes the opportunity for each DAG to make recommendations through the right of own initiative, as specifically outlined in this Article. This power of own initiative will cover both issues arising from the actual implementation of the TSD Chapter and those issues where participants consider action should be taken.

In light of the commitments undertaken by the government of Viet Nam ahead of the European Parliament ratification of the EU-Viet Nam FTA on the ratification of ILO fundamental conventions and the reform of the labour code, DAG members from the European Union stressed the importance of including the implementation of the so-called 'roadmap' in the scrutiny of the DAGs and Civil Society Dialogue.

Furthermore, a number of topics of mutual interest to EU DAG have been identified for further work in the coming mandate period:

- Follow-up of the implementation of the TSD-chapter and the role of civil society in that regard
- Reform of labour law and the implementation of the roadmap
- Sustainable food systems and wildlife trade and keeping
- The relationship between EU and Vietnamese businesses in global supply chains - and global supply chains in the context of due diligence.