



2018/0356(NLE)

16.10.2019

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on International Trade

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement
between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
(06050/2019 – C9-0023/2019 – 2018/0356(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Isabel Wiseler-Lima

PA_Leg_Consent

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will serve as a useful stepping stone for closer trade relations with the ASEAN region and also as a possible model for similar future agreements with emerging developing countries in Asia and other regions.

The FTA establishes a clear link with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), whereby both parties are committed to fulfil their human rights obligations. The relevant provisions of the PCA provide for an adequate framework for the protection of human rights as they define the respect for democratic principles and human rights as an essential element of the Agreement and set out procedures for cases of failure to meet obligations.

The Chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development of the FTA establishes clear commitments and institutional mechanisms for fulfilling obligations in the area of labour rights and environmental protection, being human rights in its nature.

Viet Nam has adopted an ambitious reform agenda, which includes amendments to the labour code and progress towards ratification of all ILO core conventions. However, Viet Nam still faces some challenges. There are shortcomings to be addressed as reflected by the European Parliament's last resolution of November 2018, as well as the 2019 Universal Periodic Review undertaken in the framework of the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The EU and Viet Nam should strengthen their human rights dialogue and build on all available mechanisms in the framework of the PCA and the FTA to enhance their dialogue and to fulfil all commitments of the FTA, as well as Viet Nam's other commitments in line with international conventions to which it is a party.

Your rapporteur is of the opinion that concluding the FTA will be in the best interest of both the EU and Viet Nam. With this in mind, she therefore recommends to give consent to the agreement that will also serve as crucial leverage allowing to improve the human rights situation.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.