



25.1.2019

# OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on International Trade

on the Council decision on the conclusion of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on forest law enforcement, governance and trade (2018/0272M(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Jan Zahradil

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Strongly supports the FLEGT process with Vietnam, since about 45 % of Vietnam's land area is forested and the country plays a key role in the timber processing sector in Southeast Asia; welcomes Vietnam's commitment to this process and the progress made so far, including the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA);
2. Underlines that halting the import of illegal timber from neighbouring countries is a major challenge and an absolute necessity for successful continuation of the process; to this end, calls on Vietnam to adopt import legislation with due diligence obligations (covering risk assessment and mitigation) and which prohibits the placing of illegal timber on the market;
3. Recalls that sustainable and inclusive forest management and governance is essential to achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement;
4. Calls for the EU to ensure the coherence of the agreement with all its policies, including in the fields of development, the environment, agriculture and trade;
5. Draws attention to the crucial importance of full stakeholder involvement and of the role that civil society and the private sector must play as fully fledged actors, including in the implementation and monitoring of the Agreement; urges the Vietnamese Government to adopt a time-bound action plan for VPA implementation that further develops the working methods to ensure transparency, notably by ensuring the effective implementation of guidelines on public disclosure of information and the timely sharing of documents;
6. Stresses the need to end impunity in the forest sector by ensuring that infractions are prosecuted; calls on the Vietnamese Government to contribute to this objective by ensuring the full implementation of the VPA's provisions on whistle blowers;
7. Recalls that the implementation of the Agreement must complement EU commitments to environmental protection and ensure coherence with commitments to prevent mass deforestation;
8. Calls on the Commission to continue its FLEGT-related support to Vietnam and to ensure the integrity of the FLEGT process, in particular through the eradication of illegal timber, the protection of the rights of indigenous people and forest-dependent communities, and the full involvement of civil society both in the implementation and operationalisation of the Vietnamese Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) decree and in the delivery of FLEGT licences; recalls that in order to ensure effective monitoring of the Agreement and its impact on development, the Commission should continue to report back to Parliament regularly on its implementation;
9. Stresses that poor governance and corruption in the forestry sector accelerate illegal

logging and forest degradation; calls for the EU to direct its efforts towards the strengthening of Vietnam's legal framework and institutional capacity, by addressing the technical and economic challenges that impede the effective implementation and enforcement of existing national and international regulations;

10. Points to the need to avoid disproportionate administrative burdens on household suppliers of timber, while at the same time avoiding the creation of loopholes;
11. Emphasises that the success of the entire FLEGT initiative depends, inter alia, on tackling fraud and corruption, which can be found at all stages of the timber trade, from the harvesting of timber and its transportation to processing, manufacturing, exporting, importing and selling; to this end, calls for the EU to strengthen the scope and enforcement of the EU Timber Regulation with a view to tackling corruption risks in the EU's timber supply chain, including through more regular and systematic controls and investigations at EU ports.

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Title</b>                                   | Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on forest law enforcement, governance and trade   |
| <b>References</b>                              | 2018/0272M(NLE)  |
| <b>Committee responsible</b>                   | INTA   |
| <b>Opinion by</b><br>Date announced in plenary | DEVE<br>25.10.2018   |
| <b>Rapporteur</b><br>Date appointed            | Jan Zahradil<br>16.11.2018   |
| <b>Discussed in committee</b>                  | 20.11.2018   |
| <b>Members present for the final vote</b>      | Mireille D'Ornano, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Maria Heubuch, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Linda McAvan, Norbert Neuser, Vincent Peillon, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Elly Schlein, Bogusław Sonik, Eleni Theodorou, Anna Záborská, Joachim Zeller, Željana Zovko |
| <b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>  | Marina Albiol Guzmán, Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra, Frank Engel, Stefan Geier, Maria Noichl, Judith Sargentini  |

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

| 20        | +  |
|-----------|--|
| ECR       | Eleni Theoharous   |
| GUE/NGL   | Marina Albiol Guzmán, Lola Sánchez Caldentey   |
| PPE       | Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra, Frank Engel, Stefan Gehroid, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Bogusław Sonik, Anna Záborská, Joachim Zeller, Željana Zovko |
| S&D       | Doru-Claudian Frunzulică, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Linda McAvan, Norbert Neuser, Maria Noichl, Vincent Peillon, Elly Schlein                                      |
| VERTS/ALE | Maria Heubuch, Judith Sargentini   |

| 1    | -                 |
|------|-------------------|
| EFDD | Mireille D'Ornano |

| 0 | 0 |
|---|---|
|   |   |

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention