



Committee on Development

2018/0356(NLE)

4.1.2019

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on International Trade

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

(COM(2018)0691 – C8-0000/2018 – 2018/0356(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Doru Claudiu Frunzulică

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Vietnam has witnessed one of the fastest growth rates in ASEAN countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and is the EU's second largest trading partner in ASEAN. The EU - Vietnam agreement is the most ambitious and comprehensive FTA that the EU has ever concluded with a middle-income country. As such, it sets a new benchmark for Europe's engagement with emerging economies.

Your rapporteur is of the opinion that a strong framework is needed in which to regulate trade and investment between the two parties: not only to encourage increased trade, investment and job creation, but explicitly link this to the sustainable development agenda. With the stalling of progress in trade regulation at the multilateral level, the EU must continue to be a leading voice for fair trade and sustainable development, maintaining a strong link between trade liberalisation and human rights, labour rights and environmental standards.

There remain serious concerns over human rights, including freedom of expression, and labour standards in Vietnam. The linkage clause to the PCA and provisions of the trade and sustainable development chapter are therefore of the utmost importance in maintaining leverage and dialogue with Vietnam to support its progress.

The role of civil society in monitoring the implementation of these provisions is a crucial element of the FTA, and steps must be taken to show commitment on both sides to take these FTA provisions seriously, including the swift establishment of the Domestic Advisory Group.

It is of great concern that there are core ILO Conventions which remain unratified by Vietnam. Your rapporteur therefore urges Vietnam to engage meaningfully with the EU before European Parliament consent, on a timetable and process for further reforms to its Labour Code to ensure the timely ratification of these Conventions.

Your rapporteur is of the opinion that concluding the FTA will be in the interest of both the EU and Vietnam. With this in mind, he therefore recommends to give consent to the agreement, while drawing attention to the above-mentioned demands for action and swift implementation on the sustainable development provisions.

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to recommend that Parliament give its consent to the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.