



Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

14.11.2023

MISSION REPORT

following the 6th EU-Viet Nam Inter-Parliamentary Meeting in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 19 to 21st June 2023

Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Members of the mission:

Daniel Caspary	(PPE) (Leader of the mission)
Svenja Hahn	(Renew)
Łukasz Kohut	(S&D)
Danilo Oscar Lancini	(ID)
Marian-Jean Marinescu	(PPE)
Angelika Niebler	(PPE)
Inese Vaidere	(PPE)

Introduction and general context

The 6th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) between the European Parliament and the National Assembly of Viet Nam took place in Ha Noi on 19 June 2023. The European Parliament's delegation also had an outreach to Ha Phong City and Deep C Industrial Zones, and Hạ Long on 21 June 2023.

Besides holding the 6th EU-Viet Nam Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) a number of meetings were held with a variety of interlocutors from different sectors: the parliament, government ministries, Communist party leadership, local authorities, UN agencies, EU Delegation, embassies of EU Member States and local businesses.

The European Parliament delegation was composed of seven Members from four political groups and five parliamentary committees, and chaired by Mr Daniel Caspary, Chair of the Southeast Asian and ASEAN Delegation (DASE). The Viet Nameese delegation to the IPM was chaired by H.E. Vu Hai Ha, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly.

The mission took place at the time when:

- 1) Viet Nam has become a **key partner to the European Union in ASEAN**. This was already the third official visit from the European Parliament to Viet Nam in 2023 highlighting the fast growing value of the bilateral political relations.
- 2) The 2020 **EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)** has delivered strong growth in bilateral trade so that Viet Nam had become the EU's largest trading partner in goods in ASEAN in 2022. The parliamentarians on both sides expressed hope that the **EU-Viet Nam Investment Protection Agreement (EVIPA)** could be concluded soon as well and fully ratified by all the EU Member States. European Parliament has supported and urged the ratification.
- 3) Viet Nam is one of the two ASEAN countries who have refrained from condemning **Russia's war on Ukraine**. At the same time it makes it essential to have a dialogue with Viet Nam to better understand where their position is derived from and to make the arguments of the EU and EP repeated in every meeting with the Viet Nameese counterparts.

Summary account of meetings

The mission was successful in having high-level meetings, an initial briefing by the EU Head of Mission, and European linked visits to businesses, in three days included:

- The 6th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting with active discussions over trade and security matters in particular (see [*annex 3*](#)).
- Meetings with the influential Chairman of the National Assembly, and the Standing Vice-Chairwoman of the Central Committee's Commission for External Relations of the Communist Party.
- Meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs:
- Meetings with UN agencies UNDP and UNICEF.

- Visits to a local company with European support to use solar panels in Ha Noi, a European run Industrial Zone in Hai Phong and local authorities and UNDP to discuss local economy and environment, and fighting plastic pollution in the bay area in Ha Long.

The full programme is attached to the present report (see *annex 2*)

6th EU-Viet Nam Inter-Parliamentary Meeting and meetings with Viet Nameese government and the Communist party

The following matters were consistently raised in the 6th EU-Viet Nam Inter-Parliamentary Meeting, and in most other meetings by both sides, or one of them: Russia's war on Ukraine, EU- Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), EU- Viet Nam Investment Protection Agreement (IPA), Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, the ground-breaking Just Energy Partnership, EU- Viet Nam Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), and the infrastructure needs and shortcomings of Viet Nam's growing economy.

On Ukraine DASE Chair asked what would happen in East Asia, if Russia won the war it started. Would China become more aggressive and expansionist in South China Sea and bordering areas to its neighbours, if Russia were rewarded of its aggression by gaining territory?

Viet Nam repeated that they stress the values of sovereignty of all nations, international rule of law, and respect of UN Charter, albeit adding that a “diplomatic solution to re-establish peace should take into account of the legitimate concerns of all parties”. Viet Nam repeated that they want to “see peace as soon as possible and stop of killings”.

MEPs from neighbouring EU MS countries to Russia were adamant too voicing their concerns that Russia must be stopped, otherwise other countries in the former Soviet Union might be next targets by Russian aggression, such as the Baltic states.

On EVFTA the discussion was centred in the extremely positive impacts of the FTA on bilateral trade but also reminding that ILO Convention 87 is still not ratified and solid implementation must follow. Viet Nam was hoping to finish off with the ratification of ILO 87 by end of 2023. Some experts think it will go to 2024 nevertheless.

On IPA Viet Nam pushed for ratifications to be completed in the EU, while DASE Chair stressed that the European Parliament had just urged the last Member States to complete the ratifications. Both agreed that the impact of the IPA, once in force, would be significant to the EU and Viet Nam and the bilateral trade and investment relations. There is a clear untapped potential in significantly increasing EU FDIs to Viet Nam.

On IUU fishing Viet Nam was growing impatient as the Commission's yellow card had been in place now for 6 years. While the Viet Nameese understood the values of protecting fish stocks from overfishing, it stressed the dependence of significant parts of the Viet Nameese population for fishing, pointed out progress made and difficulties to control disputed sea areas. Members said that the Commission, who is responsible for the dossier, is in the process of reviewing the case.

Site visits

At the highly successful European run Deep C Industrial Zone in Hai Phong the managers said that electricity cuts are common in Viet Nam since a few years as investments and maintenance of the network and generating capacities have not been able to follow increasing demand due to lack of pro-active investments. One advantage the Deep C industrial zone is offering, is less electricity cuts.

In Ha Noi a visit took place to Dong Xuan Joint Stock Company, which has installed and uses solar rooftop on the Dong Xuan market. The solar project and a show case was heavily subsidized by Germany and would otherwise not have been possible to implement on commercial basis.

Conclusions and follow-up

Bilateral political relations with the Viet Nameese National Assembly will be continued actively as one of the priorities in Southeast Asia by DASE Delegation, but also EP's Foreign affairs (AFET), International Trade (INTA) and Human Rights Sub- Committees, as has indeed been the case in the last years. An appropriate follow-up to Inter-Parliamentary Meeting could take place early in the next legislature.

The meetings during the 6th EU-Viet Nam IPM mission were carried out in a constructive atmosphere where positives were stressed while differences were argued calmly and rationally. It cannot be expected that Viet Nam would suddenly change its position on Russia or the war in Ukraine, but it is important to raise the European concerns repeatedly which could together with other inputs initiate a gradual process of re-evaluation of Viet Nam's perception of its national interests.

The Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) has proven remarkably successful. European Parliament's support to ratification of the Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) is appreciated by the Viet Nameese. With the needs to diversify supply chains it is very much in European interest alike. Successful trade and investment relations create a foundation to raise other issues with Viet Nam, such as human rights, civil society, compliance to ILO conventions, and cooperation in green and digital transitions.

List of Annexes

1. List of participants
2. Final programme
3. Agenda of the IPM



Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

**DASE Mission
to the 6th EU-Viet Nam Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM)
from 19 to 21 June 2023
Ha Noi, Viet Nam**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

27/02/2024 12:08

Members of European Parliament

Daniel Caspary	EPP, Germany
Marian-Jean Marinescu	EPP, Romania
Angelika Niebler	EPP, Germany
Inese Vaidere	EPP, Latvia
Łukasz Kohut	S&D, Poland
Svenja Hahn	Renew, Germany
Danilo Oscar Lancini	ID, Italy

EP Secretariat

1 Desk officer AANZ

1 AST AANZ

Political Group Advisors

1 EPP

1 RENEW

1 ID

Interpreters

1

Annex 2

DASE Mission to Viet Nam (19 – 21 June 2023)

FINAL PROGRAMME

Time	Meeting
13:00 – 13:45	Briefing by EU Ambassador
13:45 – 14:30	Meeting with EU Member States Ambassadors
14:30 – 15:30	Meeting with UN Resident Coordinator, International Labour Organisation, UNICEF and UNDP
16:00	The 6th EU-Viet Nam IPM Co-chaired by H.E. Vu Hai Ha , Chairman of the NA Committee on Foreign Affairs
17:10	Courtesy call on H.E. Vuong Dinh Hue , Chairman of the National Assembly
18:15	Dinner hosted by H.E. Nguyen Duc Vinh , Chairman of the Viet Nam – EP Parliamentary Friendship Group
Tuesday, 20 June 2023	
09:00	Meeting with Ms. Le Thi Thu Hang , Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs
10:00	Meeting with Ms. Nguyen Thi Hoang Van , Standing Vice-Chairwoman of the Central Committee’s Commission for External Relations of the Communist Party
11:30 – 12:00	Visit to the Citadel
12:15 – 14:00	Working lunch hosted by DASE Chair with EuroCham
14:15 – 14:45	Press point: DASE Chair Daniel Caspary meeting with media
15:45 – 16:45	Courtesy call on H.E. Tran Luu Quang , Deputy Prime Minister
17:00 – 17:45	Visit to Dong Xuan Joint Stock Company (that runs the solar rooftop of Dong Xuan market)
19:00	Reception hosted by EU Ambassador Giorgio Aliberti with EU Member States Ambassadors

Wednesday, 21 June 2023	
08:30 – 09:30	Meeting with H.E. Pham Van Lap , Chairman of Hai Phong People’s Council, <i>with the presence of Heads of Departments of HP PC, Head of Office of the Delegation of NA Deputies of Hai Phong, Director-General of Hai Phong DOFA as well as local media</i>
10:00 – 12:00	Visit DEEP C and EU companies at the Deep C Industrial Park
12:45 – 15:15	Visit Ha Long Bay with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Le Van Anh, Vice Chairman of Quang Ninh People’s Council - Ms Nguyen Thi Thu Ha, Deputy Head of the Delegation of NA - Ms Nguyen Thi Hong Hanh, Director-General of QN DOFA - Ms Nguyen Huyen Anh, Director-General of QN Tourism Dept. - Director of Management of Ha Long Bay - Mr Patrick Haverman, Deputy UNDP Representative : UNDP project of reducing plastic pollution in the Bay area - local media
15:30 - 18:00	<i>Return to Ha Noi</i>
<i>(end-of-programme)</i>	

AGENDA

6th EU-Viet Nam Interparliamentary Meeting (IPM)

Monday 19 June 2023, from 11.00 to 12.30

Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Venue: the National Assembly of Viet Nam

1. Opening remarks by Chair from the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Southeast Asian countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of minutes of the 5th EU-Viet Nam Interparliamentary Meeting
4. Recent developments and future prospects in the EU-Viet Nam relations, in particular with regards to:
 - trade and investment area
 - climate change and transition to clean energy
 - digital transformation
 - connectivity
5. Global and regional security issues of mutual concern, including the global consequences of Russia's war in Ukraine and the situation in the Indo-Pacific
6. Closing remarks by Chair from the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Southeast Asian countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)