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## Human rights: freedom in Vietnam

tabled by Nassauer and Posselt EPP-ED

### European Parliament resolution on human rights in Vietnam

#### The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Vietnam of 19 January 1995, 15 May 1997, 16 March 1998 and 16 November 2000,

- A. whereas Vietnam is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and
- B. whereas respect for human rights and democratic principles is an essential element in the 1995 cooperation agreement between the European Union and Vietnam,
- C. whereas Amnesty International reports that also after revision of the criminal code in December 99/January 2000 twenty-nine offences ranging from national security to economic crimes remain punishable by death. One hundred and twelve death sentences and 12 executions were recorded in 2000 while the true figures are believed to be much higher
- D. whereas dozens if not hundred of prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience continued to be detained for their political beliefs and religious affiliations. Many of those are known or believed to be elderly and in poor health. Among them is sixty-eight-year-old Professor Nguyen Dinh Huy, the founder and president of the "Movement to Unite the People and Build Democracy". He continues to be held in prison camp Z30A, in Dong Nai province, for his peaceful political activities. He had been arrested in November 1993 and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in August 1995 after trying to organise a conference about human rights and democracy in Ho Chi Minh City. He had previously spent 17 years in detention without charge or trial.
- E. whereas Human Rights Watch reported in September about the largest and most systematic effort to intimidate Vietnamese dissidents in a long time. Despite the speculation after the Communist Party Congress earlier this year that a more reform-minded group was now in power, this is evidence that the new regime may be no more tolerant of dissent than the previous one. On September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at least 15 dissidents have been detained and interrogated. Among them former military historian Pham Que Duong, writer Hoang Tien, former high-ranking Party cadre Hoang Minh Chinh, journalist Nguyen Vu Binh, and film producer Duong Hung. Sources in Vietnam have reported that another ten activists, including scholar Tran Van Khue in Ho Chi Minh City and geologist and political essayist Nguyen Thanh Giang, have also been detained, at least temporarily, since September 6.
- F. having regard to the persecution of business and foreign investors, notably the case of a Dutch citizen, Binh Vinh Trinh who as a businessman successfully invested private savings in Vietnam answering a call from the Vietnamese government. Following a legal argument with local authorities in the province of Vung Tau Binh Vinh Trinh had to flee the country and on 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of July all his property was auctioned.

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G. whereas human rights organisations continued to receive no response from the government to correspondence about human rights violations. Domestic human rights monitoring is not permitted and no access was given to independent human rights monitors.

H. whereas offences of opinion remain punishable (check out)

I. whereas foreign journalist are officially requested to seek advance approval for travel outside the capital as well as to apply to the foreign ministry four days in advance of any interview, by telephone or in person, with a Vietnamese national.

### **The European Parliament**

1. Calls upon the Vietnamese authorities to prepare legislation to abolish death penalty for all crimes and to ratify the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which aims form the worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

2. Asks the Vietnamese authorities that until the formal abolition of death penalty a moratorium on executions should be established and all remaining death penalties should be commuted.

x Reiterates its demand that the Vietnamese authorities must respect religious freedom and take concrete steps to allow for freedom of association and of worship

3. Reminds the Vietnamese authorities again that freedom of opinion and of the press are necessary conditions for Vietnams economic and social development

4. Urges the Vietnamese authorities to repeal Administrative Detention Decree 51/CP which allows for the detention of dissidents for up to two years without trial

5. Calls upon the Vietnamese authorities to authorise independent press bodies and

6. to allow for domestic human rights monitoring as well as to give access to independent international human rights monitors

7. Reminds the Vietnamese authorities that a functioning democratic society requires an active civil society. NGOs should be permitted to register and to work. (trying to find someone who knows more about this, if NGOs can be reigistered at least offically or not at all)

8. Recalls that the protection of private property and legal security are absolutely essential to successful economic activity. Corruption, questionable legal procedures and cases as the one of Binh Trinh Vinh hinder economic and social progress and scare off foreign investment

9. Calls upon all foreign donors to protest the September detentions (if in time maybe to mention 15-16 November World Bank Conference in Tokyo) and urges the Vietnamese authorities to continue a path of reform

10. Calls on the Council and the Commission to follow developments in this connection with the closest attention and to report to Parliament

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