



and affiliated business associations:



and in partnership with:



16 April 2018

Support for Quick Progress on the EU-Vietnam FTA

The EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) has been concluded for some time, and business is eager to see it ratified and implemented now. It will create a useful precedent in the field of trade and sustainable development for ASEAN and the wider region. Therefore, it is high time that both parties finally proceed with the ratification to allow its entry into force before the European Parliament elections in spring 2019. The undersigned associations call on the EU and its Member States to speed up the EVFTA ratification process so that consumers and businesses on both sides can reap its intended benefits.

For the signatories of this letter the EVFTA is a significant agreement:

1. Economic importance:

- The agreement will eliminate up to 99% of tariffs, opening up markets in the EU and in Vietnam. Vietnam is a fast-developing country of over 90 million people, and with a growing middle class, which will make it an important consumer market in the coming years;
- It will position the EU squarely within the ASEAN value chain and give it the possibility to reduce its trade deficit with the region; Moreover, European companies are currently facing tough competition from other countries that Vietnam has free trade agreements with, for example. Since 1st January 2018, Vietnam has granted a 0% import duty to most ASEAN imports.
- The EVFTA is very important for all our sectors, notably due to the first-time market opening opportunities it provides.
- It is also important for Vietnam, due to the growing need to modernise its economy to become a major actor in global value chains.

2. Geopolitical importance in strengthening EU-Vietnam relations:

- With increased uncertainty around global trade, the EU can fill the void created by the hesitation of larger economies towards liberalising trade, and their faltering efforts to avoid increased protectionism;
- Vietnam is a signatory of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which has already been sent for ratification, and a further delay in implementing EVFTA would undermine the EU's current position in South East Asia;

3. The trade deal is the EU's first new generation FTA with an emerging country: the FTA will set a precedent for deals with similar countries and put a clear emphasis on trade and sustainable development provisions, especially in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment;

4. The trade deal opens up the possibility for closer engagement with Vietnam on sustainability issues: continuous cooperation with Vietnam will encourage open dialogue on issues of social and environmental rights in the country, with the aim of having a positive impact on the country's development for the benefit of its citizens and businesses.

The EU needs to act swiftly to avoid even further delay of the entry into force. We call on the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to refrain from taking the EVFTA hostage for institutional reasons, to the detriment of consumers and businesses on both sides. We acknowledge that other recently concluded agreements require attention and resources; it is, however, vital to respect the patience already shown by other third countries. We urge the EU not to side-line the EVFTA, since doing so sends the wrong message to our trading partners and hurts the EU's credibility in the global trading community. Moreover, Vietnam already expressed its readiness to sign and ratify the agreement as soon

JOINT-STATEMENT BY BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

as possible in 2018, as confirmed by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong in Paris on 26th March 2018.

Next steps:

The signatories of this letter ask the EU institutions and the Member States to take account of, and take decisive action on, the following points:

1. The European Commission should submit the trade parts of the agreement to the Council after its College meeting on 18th April 2018;
2. The Council should put Vietnam on its agenda for the meeting in May 2018 and initiate discussions immediately thereafter with the European Parliament;
3. The EU should aim for the agreement's ratification and entry into force by the end of 2018 and before the European Parliament elections in spring 2019.

By addressing the above concerns, we can ensure that EU Trade Policy continues to deliver on its promise of economic growth, job creation and engagement on issues of sustainable development.

SIGNATORIES:

amfori – Trade with Purpose

amfori is the association of European and international commerce that promotes the values of free and sustainable trade. It brings together over 2,200 retailers, importers, brand companies, and national associations, to improve the political and legal framework for trade in a sustainable way. Our members come from 43 countries and represent over €1.5 trillion in combined annual turnover.

www.amfori.org

AmCham EU

AmCham EU speaks for American companies committed to Europe on trade, investment and competitiveness issues. It aims to ensure a growth-orientated business and investment climate in Europe. AmCham EU facilitates the resolution of transatlantic issues that impact business and plays a role in creating better understanding of EU and US positions on business matters. Aggregate US investment in Europe totalled more than €2 trillion in 2017, directly supports more than 4.7 million jobs in Europe, and generates billions of euros annually in income, trade and research and development.

www.amchameu.eu

The European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade (CELCAA)

CELCAA, is the umbrella organisation representing at European level associations and companies active in the sector of agricultural and agri-food trading. Its full and affiliated members include cooperative and non-cooperative wholesale traders (collectors, distributors, storers, importers and exporters) delivering agricultural and agri-food products as feed materials to farmers and compound feed industry, as well as raw material to food industry, as food and drink to retailers (meat and eggs, fresh produce and wine). On retail level CELCAA represents the Butcher Crafts sector.

www.celcaa.eu

EuroCommerce

EuroCommerce is the leading representation of the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes national commerce federations in 31 countries, Europe's 27 leading retail and wholesale companies, and federations representing specific sectors of commerce. Overall, it is the voice for six million retail, wholesale, and other trading companies.

www.eurocommerce.eu

European Services Forum (ESF)

The European Services Forum (ESF) is a private sector trade association that represents the interests of the European services industry in International Trade Negotiations in Services. It comprises major European service companies at the CEO level and European service sector federations covering service sectors such as financial services, tourism, telecommunications, maritime transport, business and professional services, distribution, postal and express delivery, IT services, environmental services and the audio-visual industry.

www.esf.be

Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI)

The Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI) is the representative body for the sporting goods sector in Europe. FESI engages with all European political institutions and other European authorities and bodies that are impacting the Sporting Goods industry. Moreover, FESI also represents the interest of its members vis a vis Sport Governing bodies such as UEFA.

www.fesi-sport.org

spiritsEUROPE

spiritsEUROPE proudly represents the most valuable European agri-food export and with it the interests of the spirits sector in 31 national associations as well as of the 8 leading multinational companies. Distilled spirits are as diverse as the EU itself, spanning 47 product categories and including a host of geographically-specific products that contribute to the culture of their regions (240 GIs). spiritsEUROPE's mission is to represent, defend and promote the European spirits sector and help members achieve sustainable business growth.

www.spirits.eu

European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EuroCham Vietnam)

Established 20 years ago, EuroCham represents nearly one thousand European and Europe-related companies, counting among its members many of the world's leading enterprises. With offices in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, EuroCham has also opened Chapters in the Central, Northeastern and Southeastern regions of Vietnam. In 2017, EuroCham was awarded Best Large Chamber of the Year at the Asia Pacific International Chambers of Commerce Awards.

www.eurochamvn.org

Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (BeluxCham)

Founded in 2006, BeluxCham is an independent, non-profit, non-commercial, and professional association serving a growing Belgian business community in Vietnam and organising regular networking events.

www.beluxcham.com

Central and Eastern European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (CEEC)

The Central and Eastern European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (CEEC) covers 15 countries i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia - all sharing decades of excellent diplomatic and friendship relations with Vietnam, and a rich geographical, cultural and historical background among each other.

<http://ceecvn.org/>

Chamber of Commerce and Industry France Vietnam (CCIFV)

The French Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (CCIFV) was created in 1989. It gathers over 280 members, from individual members to MNCs, including SMEs as well. CCIFV is part of the worldwide network "CCI France International" (French Chambers of Commerce network abroad) which is composed of 115 French Chambers in 85 countries, gathering 28 000 companies.

www.ccifv.org

Dutch Business Association in Vietnam (DBAV)

The DBAV is active since 1999 and promotes stronger business relationships between the Dutch and Vietnamese business communities. DBAV is committed to promoting social, cultural activities and initiatives and maintains close links with the Netherlands Embassy in Hanoi and the Consulate General of the Netherlands in Ho Chi Minh City.

www.dbav.org.vn

German Business Association Vietnam (GBA)

The GBA started its activities in 1995. Today, GBA has more than 200 members and organizes regular events for the German business community. GBA decided to form a German-Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce together with the Delegate of German Industry and Commerce in Vietnam (GIC/AHK), also a co-signatory of this joint statement.

www.gba-vietnam.org

Italian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (ICHAM)

Established in 2008, ICHAM's main purpose is to support commercial exchanges between Vietnam and Italy. The Chamber cooperates regularly with institutions in Italy, the European Union and export consortia.

www.icham.org

Nordic Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (NordCham Vietnam)

NordCham Vietnam provides support to Nordic companies and individuals from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in Vietnam. With 50 members, NordCham maintains relations with chambers of commerce in the Nordic countries and in South East Asia.

www.nordchamvietnam.com

British Business Group Vietnam (BBGV)

Formally licensed in Vietnam in 1998, BBGV has nearly 200 members and is an accredited overseas British Chamber of Commerce, and a part of the British Chambers of Commerce overseas network. BBGV is also a Department of International Trade Overseas Delivery Partners, having created its Business Centre in Vietnam in 2014 to support new UK companies to trade and/or invest in Vietnam.

www.bbgv.org

Irish Business Association in Vietnam (IBAV)

Created in 2016, IBAV is a business and social network of Irish professionals living and working in HCMC. It strongly supports and advocates for closer ties between Ireland and Vietnam, encouraging closer cooperation between governmental institutions on both sides for the mutual benefit of all citizens.

Spanish Business Group (SBG)

The Spanish Business Group was created by a group of Spanish companies in the early 90s to promote trade between Spain and Vietnam and to work towards serving as a bridge between businesses, the Spanish Trade Commission Office in HCMC, and the Embassy of Spain in Hanoi.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Portugal-Vietnam (CCIPV)

The CCIPV was founded in 2017 and is headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal with a branch office in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, being the sole business association representing bilateral business between the two countries.

www.ccipv.com