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A wasted opportunity to support sustainable development and human rights

Vietnam Trade Agreement

Tomorrow (11.02.2020) Members of the European Parliament will vote on the European Union's trade agreement with Vietnam. The Greens/EFA group will vote against the agreement on the grounds of the Vietnamese government's continuing human rights abuses, repression of opposition and organised labour, continued deforestation, lack of enforceable human, environmental and social standards and exclusive rights for investors. In its position on the European Green Deal, the European Parliament called for higher standards in trade agreements.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Greens/EFA group coordinator in the International Trade Committee in the European Parliament, comments:

"Agreements between the EU and Vietnam are undoubtedly very important geopolitically, however, this was a wasted opportunity to support sustainable development and human rights. Vietnam has made progress in reforming its labour rights but has on the other hand failed to amend its penal code to allow workers to enjoy those very rights. Oppression has become more severe, even during the last stage of the finalisation of these agreements. That is why our group cannot yet support the deal."

"The Parliament, by giving its consent, takes a heavy responsibility for making its own demands happen in reality, on sustainable development, human rights and participation of independent civil society. The Commission and its Vietnamese counterparts should set up an independent monitoring mechanism on human rights and an independent complaints mechanism with a recourse to remedy. We need a clear signal that this trade deal is not the end, but a beginning of positive developments in Vietnam."

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