



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Hanoi, 31 October 2012
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**Statement of President Van Rompuy at the Joint Press
Conference with Vietnamese President Mr Truong Tan Sang**

Mr President,

- I am particularly glad to be in Hanoi today. We had a very open and fruitful meeting.
- Developing our relations with Asia across the board is a major strategic objective for the European Union. Europe and Asia need each other.
- Vietnam is a particularly important partner for the EU in Asia. An important player in ASEAN; a fast-developing economy and dynamic society; with a young and well-educated population.
- We have established robust relations grounded in a long history and in strong mutual interests.
- I look forward to broadening and intensifying even further our relations on the basis of the new Vietnam-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed this year. I also welcome the recent start of negotiations for a Vietnam-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which will mean more growth and more employment in Vietnam and in Europe. I hope these negotiations will be concluded swiftly.
- Despite current challenges, the EU is hopeful about the future of Vietnam. It is crucially important to show determination in its commitment to reform, including good governance, the rule of law and human rights.

P R E S S

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- We have strong stakes in the success of Vietnam's reforms. Because as Vietnam succeeds, it will benefit the region and its friends all around the world.
 - The EU will stand firmly on Vietnam's side in its economic and social development process. We are committed to keeping our market open; EU investment can and will continue to make their contribution to the future of Vietnam and of its people; we will continue our development assistance.
 - I have reassured the President, on its side, the EU is taking resolute and successful steps to stabilise the euro area. The Euro is an irreversible project.
 - We have also exchanged views on recent developments in the region. In many respects, Vietnam is currently at the centre of many of the strategic shifts going on in Asia.
 - I have stressed that the EU has a strong stake in prosperity and security in Asia, that it is very supportive of ASEAN integration, and that it is willing to be an active and constructive player, with Vietnam's support, in the evolving Asian regional architecture, including by joining the East Asia Summit.
 - As regards tensions in the area, I reaffirmed our trust in peaceful and cooperative solutions in accordance with international law.
 - Let me repeat, Mr President, that I believe strongly in the future of the EU - Vietnamese relationship.
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