



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO VIETNAM

Message from the EU Ambassador to Vietnam, Franz Jessen

31 May 2013

The EU Ambassador to Vietnam, Franz Jessen, expressed today his concerns over the recent arrest and sentencing of a number of activists, bloggers and students to prison terms ranging from 2 to 13 years, followed by several years of house arrest, for acts related to the exercise of freedom of expression.

He specifically referred to the recent arrest of blogger Truong Duy Nhat, the trial of Dinh Nguyen Kha and Nguyen Phuong Uyen in Long An province on 16 May and the appeal trial of eight Catholics (Ho Duc Hoa, Paulus Le Son, Nguyen Van Duyet, Ho Van Oanh, Nguyen Dinh Cuong, Nguyen Xuan Anh, Thai Van Dung, and Tran Minh Nhat) that took place on 23 May 2013 in Nghe An province.

At a meeting with Vietnamese authorities on Friday 24 May, Ambassador Jessen called for an immediate review of these severe sentences and protested the refusal by Vietnamese authorities of the EU requests to attend the trials.

Ambassador Jessen recalled the fundamental right for all persons to hold and freely express their opinions in a peaceful manner, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam is a party. He added that this sentencing appears to be inconsistent with Vietnam's international obligations, and to continue the overall negative trend with sentencing of bloggers and Human Rights Defenders in the country.