



EU Delegation to Vietnam

18th February 2014

PRESS RELEASE

The European Union supports Civil Society engagement in the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade process in Vietnam

Hanoi, – Today, three European Union – newly funded projects, worth of 3 million EURO, were officially launched, aiming to support Vietnam and other neighbouring countries in combating illegal logging and to promote trade in legal timber and timber products as well as to improve sustainable use of forests in Vietnam. These projects will be implemented by European and Vietnamese Civil Society Organisations.

At the launching ceremony, Ambassador – Head of European Union Delegation to Vietnam Dr Franz Jessen said *"The EU Timber Regulation which came into force on 3rd March 2013 and Voluntary Partnership Agreements are two parts of the EU Action Plan of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) - the European Union's initiative to combat illegal logging and improve forest governance and Vietnam is one of EU's pioneer FLEGT partners in Asia."* He added *"The three projects we are launching today, to support Non-Governmental Organisations and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to contribute to the negotiation and participate in the implementation of the FLEGT's Voluntary Partnership Agreement, are important as CSO's participation is a key feature of Voluntary Partnership Agreements"*.

The EU FLEGT Action Plan first came into effects in May 2003 and sets out regulations and measures to minimise the risk of illegally harvested timber and timber products being placed on the European Union market. A significant proportion of around 19% of timber imports into the EU market is alleged to come from illegal sources.

Vietnam officially entered into the FLEGT negotiations with the EU in May 2010. To date, three negotiation rounds have taken place. As part of the negotiation process, technical sessions, stakeholder consultations and technical support are being conducted with the aim to conclude negotiations for a EU-Vietnam Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) by the end of 2014.

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Vietnam and the European Union will provide a legal framework and compliance monitoring system aimed at ensuring that all timber imports into the European Union from Viet Nam have been legally acquired, harvested, transported and exported. Consequently, this will strengthen the institutional reform process in forest sector, its law enforcement and enhance the national image and trademark of Viet Nam's timber industry. Therefore, it will ensure that Vietnam timber and timber products can maintain their access to the European Union market while enhancing their access to other markets.

For more information on the EU Timber Regulation see website: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eutr2013/>

For more information on VPAs and FLEGT-licensed timber see website: <http://www.euflegt.efi.int>

Media Contacts: For further information, please contact Ms Vien Ngoc Bich, EU Delegation in Vietnam, tel: 04-9461783, email: bich.vien@eeas.europa.eu