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20 May 2014

PRESS RELEASE

International experiences at the UN Human Rights Council shared in Vietnam

Hanoi – The Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam hosted today a international one-day seminar with the title “*The Universal Periodic Review Process: Sharing International Experiences*”, co-organized by the Delegation (on behalf of all EU Member States) and the Embassies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the United States.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in human rights promotion and protection worldwide, rests on the principles of universality, fairness, consensus, cooperation and dialogue. The UPR is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States, based on equal treatment for all countries. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.

In February 2014, Vietnam went through the second UPR. In this year’s UPR, 106 delegations made statements and 227 recommendations were provided during the interactive dialogue at the UN in Geneva. The recommendations will be examined by Vietnam which will provide its responses at the latest during the 26th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2014.

Against this background, the seminar aimed at supporting Vietnam by examining the experience of other countries in the UPR process and providing expertise on various human rights related matters. The event was opened with speeches from H.E. Ambassador Hugh Borrowman (Australia), H.E. Dr. Franz Jessen, (European Union), H.E. Ambassador Andrej Motyl (Switzerland, on behalf of the G4 -Switzerland, Canada, New Zealand and Norway) and Ms. Claire A. Pierangelo, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the United States of America.

Dr. Annabel Egan -a Human Rights specialist from Ireland- shared the Irish experience at the UPR. She highlighted the organizational challenges of the review and the interaction between government and civil society. Mr. Dicky Komar, Deputy Director of Human Rights Protection at the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also shared his country's experience and lessons learned from its own UPR exercise. Ms. Le Nam Huong of the UNDP Rule of Law and Access to Justice program presented the UPR process and its application in Vietnam. Representatives from Vietnamese Civil Society also had the opportunity to review the local engagement in the UPR-process, remaining challenges for civil society participation and the related follow-up on the recommendations.

The workshop was well attended by approximately 70 participants, including representatives from the diplomatic community, United Nations, Vietnamese agencies and civil society. Additionally, the EU Delegation will also organize an international roundtable for Vietnamese scholars, in collaboration with the Ho Chi Minh Political Academy on the “*Role of the UN Council of Human Rights in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights: Vietnamese and European Experiences*” on 21 May 2014 in Hanoi.

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