



PRESS RELEASE

Ha Noi, 21 - 22 January 2016

Fifth Negotiation Session between Viet Nam and the European Union

on

the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT-VPA)

In 2016 the partnership between the Government of Viet Nam and the European Union will enter into a new stage, with the expected entry into force of the EU-Viet Nam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and since the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Vietnam on the occasion of the official visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to Brussels, on 2 December 2015. During this official visit, leaders of both sides endorsed a Joint Statement setting strong commitments for the future and priority action for the implementation of our comprehensive partnership. They include action in the field of Trade, Sustainable Development, Institutional and Legal Reform as well as Foreign Policy.

Both sides agreed in particular to conclude negotiations for an EU-Viet Nam Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) promoting sustainable and legal timber trading (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade - FLEGT) by the end of 2016.

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade will ensure that all timber and timber products processed and exported from Viet Nam to the European Union are legally sourced and legally produced. It will ensure sustainability of the Vietnamese processing and exporting industry and its access to the European and other markets. It will strengthen the protection of forests in Vietnam and Vietnam's brand and country image as a responsible partner.

Good progress in VPA negotiations is also of particular importance in the context of the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which also contains a Chapter on Sustainable Development, defining specific responsibilities in the field of environmental protection and biodiversity.

Today, at the conclusion of our Fifth Round of Negotiations – which took place in Ha Noi from 21st –till 22nd of January 2016, we have achieved a considerable amount of technical work, preparing the ground for the Agreement, including eleven expert meetings and four negotiation sessions that have been held in both Ha Noi and Brussels.