



Hanoi, 12 August 2014
140812/01

R E M A R K S

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh

"It is a great pleasure to be in Hanoi today and I appreciate very much the warm welcome received. Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh and I meet regularly, most recently we met in Myanmar and Brussels. Mr Binh Minh and I co-chaired the EU-ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels, an important event that brings together the Foreign Ministers of the 10 ASEAN countries and the 28 EU Member States.

As Minister Pham Binh Minh said, our relationship is being constantly strengthened in a wide range of areas. The EU is Vietnam's largest export market, with 21 billion euros representing 19% of Vietnam's total exports. As you said Deputy Prime Minister, trade is growing fast, Vietnam's exports to the EU increased by 28% from 2012 to 2013.

The EU is also Vietnam's main development assistance partner. We are committed to continuing our support: the EU and Member States development assistance is increasing, and will amount as you said to 400 million euros in the coming six years.

With the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in June 2012 we have lifted our relationship to a new level beyond the traditional areas of trade and development. We have since been working together on issues ranging from environment and climate change to migration, from science and technology to security and crisis management, to name just a few areas.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja

Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 - Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu

Follow us on Twitter @eu_eas

www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService

www.eeas.europa.eu

The implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) will hopefully be complemented soon with a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which will bring our bilateral relations to a new level.

The FTA will increase opportunities for Vietnamese businesses, granting preferential market access for your exports to the EU. Negotiations are making good progress, although an acceleration of talks would be required to complete the FTA before the end of the year. In this regard, President Barroso's visit on 26 and 27 August will be an important opportunity to inject new momentum in FTA talks.

As you said Deputy Prime Minister we had a very open and fruitful meeting this morning. We discussed not only the state of our bilateral relationship, but also regional and global issues of common interest.

We have also discussed the situation in the region, including maritime issues. Let me stress again that the European Union encourages all parties to seek peaceful solutions, through dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with international law - in particular with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The European Union is proud to be a party to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and we recall its fundamental principles, namely the commitment to settle differences by peaceful means, to renounce the threat or use of force and to effectively cooperate among partners. I also expressed our high appreciation of Vietnam's constructive role in ASEAN. We welcome and encourage Vietnam's growing engagement on the international scene, notably as participant in UN peacekeeping operations – an initiative we warmly welcome and support.

So as I began Deputy Prime Minister, may I thank you so much for your hospitality and for the opportunity to be with you here today.

Thank you so much."
