



Donald Tusk
President of the European Council
Wetstraat 175
B-1048 Brussels

9 January 2019

To: Mr Donald Tusk, President of the European Council
Cc: Ms Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Trade

Dear President Tusk,

First and foremost, we would like to thank you for your support for free and fair trade in the EU and beyond. Now, more than ever, it is critical that the EU continues to deliver on its agenda to advance an ambitious and sustainable trade policy that offers benefits for society at large, especially when protectionism is on the rise in many parts of the world.

As leaders of European trade and business associations, we write to urge the Council to consider and approve the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), an agreement that will boost economic growth and promote job creation both in the EU and Vietnam. The EVFTA negotiations were concluded three years ago, and the agreement is now undergoing final legal review. We call on the Council and all member states to dedicate the resources necessary to complete this review expeditiously so that the agreement can be approved in early 2019.

Time is of the essence. As a fast-developing country of over 90 million people with a growing middle class, Vietnam will be an increasingly important consumer and sourcing market for EU companies. However, European companies are facing increased competition from countries with which Vietnam has free trade agreements, notably the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which recently entered into force. If the EVFTA is not approved by the current Council and Parliament, EU businesses risk losing market share in important sectors in Vietnam and harming their competitiveness in the region.



In addition to its commercial benefits, the EVFTA will deepen EU ties with a strategically important partner in Southeast Asia. The agreement will capture and lock in Vietnam's economic reforms, expand bilateral trade and investment flows, and link Vietnam more closely to Europe. The EVFTA also will fill a void created by the U.S. withdrawal from TPP and enable Vietnam to further diversify its global trading links.

The EVFTA will also set the precedent for trade and sustainable development with ASEAN and developing countries around the world that seek closer trade relations with the EU. The ambitious Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter of the agreement creates opportunities for closer engagement with Vietnam on sustainability issues with the aim of positively supporting its development and providing for continuous cooperation with Vietnam. In particular, it provides for deeper and continuous cooperation with Vietnam that will encourage open dialogue on social and environmental issues in the country.

We ask the EU to avoid further delay by concluding the legal review so that the European Parliament can ratify the EVFTA before the European elections in May 2019. Failure to do so would create uncertainty, send the wrong message to our trading partners, and hurt the EU's credibility in the global trading community. We therefore respectfully urge you to support the ratification and implementation of this important trade agreement.



SIGNATORIES

AmCham EU

AmCham EU speaks for American companies committed to Europe on trade, investment and competitiveness issues. It aims to ensure a growth-orientated business and investment climate in Europe. AmCham EU facilitates the resolution of transatlantic issues that impact business and plays a role in creating better understanding of EU and US positions on business matters. Aggregate US investment in Europe totalled more than €2 trillion in 2017, directly supports more than 4.7 million jobs in Europe, and generates billions of euros annually in income, trade and research and development.

www.amchameu.eu

amfori – Trade with Purpose

amfori is the association of European and international commerce that promotes the values of open and sustainable trade. It brings together over 2,400 of retailers, importers, brand companies, and national associations to improve the political and legal frameworks for trade and sustainable development.

www.amfori.org

Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins (CEEV)

CEEV is the voice of the European wine companies. It brings together 24 national associations and its members produce and market the majority of quality European wines, with and without geographical indications, and account for over 90% of European wine exports.

www.ceev.eu

European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-food Trade (CELCAA)

CELCAA is the EU umbrella association representing EU organisations covering the trade in cereals, grains, oils and fats, sugar, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, agro-supply, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, eggs and egg products, poultry and game, tobacco, spices, cut flowers and plants and general produces. Members include ASSUC, CEEV, CIBC, COCERAL, EUCOLAIT, EUWEP, FETRATAB, FRESHFEL, GAFTA, SACAR and UECBV. CELCAA's main objectives are to facilitate understanding of European decision-makers and stakeholders on the role played by the European traders in agri-products; to act as a platform of dialogue and communication with the European Institutions and to encourage public and general interests in agri-trade issues.

www.celcaa.eu



European Services Forum (ESF)

The European Services Forum (ESF) is a private sector trade association that represents the interests of the European services industry in International Trade Negotiations in Services. It comprises major European service companies at the CEO level and European service sector federations covering service sectors such as financial services, tourism, telecommunications, maritime transport, business and professional services, distribution, postal and express delivery, IT services, environmental services and the audio-visual industry.

www.esf.be

European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EuroCham Vietnam)

Established 20 years ago, EuroCham represents over one thousand European and Europe-related companies, counting among its members many of the world's leading enterprises. With offices in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, EuroCham has also opened Chapters in the Central, Northeastern and Southeastern regions of Vietnam. In 2017, EuroCham was awarded Best Large Chamber of the Year at the Asia Pacific International Chambers of Commerce Awards. In 2018, EuroCham was awarded by the Vietnamese Prime Minister for its outstanding contribution to promote Foreign Direct Investment in the country.

www.eurochamvn.org

EuroCommerce

EuroCommerce is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 31 countries and 5.4 million companies, both leading multinational retailers such as Carrefour, Ikea, Metro and Tesco, and many small family operations. Retail and wholesale provide a link between producers and 500 million European consumers over a billion times a day. It generates 1 in 7 jobs, providing a varied career for 29 million Europeans, many of them young people. It also supports millions of further jobs throughout the supply chain, from small local suppliers to international businesses. EuroCommerce is the recognised European social partner for the retail and wholesale sector.

www.eurocommerce.eu

Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI)

FESI is the representative body for the sporting goods sector in Europe. FESI engages with all European political institutions and other European authorities and bodies that are impacting the Sporting Goods industry. Moreover, FESI also represents the interest of its members vis a vis Sport Governing bodies such as UEFA.

www.fesi-sport.org



OAV – German Asia-Pacific Business Association

Comprising of more than 800 members, the OAV is the largest German foreign trade association with a focus on the thriving Asia-Pacific region. Of these 800 members, around 500 are corporate members from all sectors across the whole of Germany, such as representatives of the large industrial conglomerates, medium-sized manufacturing firms, trade companies, banks, insurance companies and service providers. Our mutual interest is the Asia-Pacific region: OAV offers the ideal platform for exchanging knowledge and experience across different industries, and offers members practical and comprehensive services. Since its inception the OAV has always promoted free trade between Europe / Germany and the Asia-Pacific region.

www.oav.de/en

spiritsEUROPE

spiritsEUROPE represents the interests of the spirits sector in 31 national associations as well as of the 9 leading multinational companies. Distilled spirits are as diverse as the EU's Member States, spanning 47 product categories and including a host of geographically-specific products that contribute to the culture of their regions and the European Union. As the leading voice of the European spirits sector, we seek to maintain and advance the freedom to produce and market spirits in a responsible way.

www.spirits.eu