



European Parliament
Brussels
21/11/2025

Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Bruxelles

Letter to Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, on the occasion of her upcoming diplomatic visit to Vietnam

Dear President von der Leyen,

As you prepare for your official visit to Vietnam, we, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, wish to draw your urgent attention to the grave and worsening human rights situation in the country. Despite years of engagement and dialogue, the Vietnamese authorities continue to tighten their repression of civil society and dissenting voices.

Human rights defenders, independent journalists, bloggers, environmental advocates, unrecognized trade unionists, and members of non-state-sanctioned religious communities are systematically targeted for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. Many have been arrested under vague and arbitrary provisions of the penal code, denied fair trials, and subjected to inhumane conditions in detention. In today's Vietnam, the mere exercise of free expression or peaceful assembly is routinely criminalized as "propaganda against the state."

This pattern of repression is not incidental; it is systemic.

The European Union and Vietnam are bound by formal agreements — most notably the EU–Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) — which explicitly link economic cooperation to respect for human rights and core labour standards. These include the right to freedom of association, the establishment of independent trade unions, and adherence to the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). To date, the Vietnamese government has yet to meaningfully fulfil these commitments.

Madam President, Europe must not be perceived as a partner driven solely by commercial interests while turning a blind eye to those who risk their freedom for the very principles we uphold. Our external relations, especially with authoritarian regimes, must demonstrate that our economic engagement is inseparable from our commitment to human dignity and democratic values.



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We therefore respectfully urge you to speak with clarity and conviction:

- To call for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience in Vietnam.
- To press for an end to the systematic persecution of civil society actors.
- To ask Vietnam to remove obstacles to the creation of independent trade unions in the 2019 labor law.
- To make any further deepening of economic relations conditional upon verifiable progress in civil and political rights, in full accordance with Vietnam's obligations under the EVFTA.

This letter is co-signed — and open to co-signature — by Members of the European Parliament who believe that the European Union must stand firm in defending human rights beyond its borders and refuse to remain silent in the face of injustice.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for the leadership and moral courage it takes to uphold Europe's values where they are most at stake.

Yours sincerely,

1. Jonas SJÖTEDT, Member of the European Parliament (SE/Left)
2. Per CLAUSEN, Member of the European Parliament (DK/Left)
3. Manon AUBRY, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Left)
4. Mounir SATOURI, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Greens)
5. Saskia BRICMONT, Member of the European Parliament (BE/Greens)
6. Leïla CHAIBI, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Left)
7. Alice KUHNKE, Member of the European Parliament (SE/Greens)
8. Pär HOLMGREN, Member of the European Parliament (SE/Greens)
9. Isabella LÖVIN, Member of the European Parliament (SE/Greens)
10. Hanna GEDIN, Member of the European Parliament (SE/Left)
11. Vladimir PREBILIČ, Member of the European Parliament (SI/Greens)
12. Rima HASSAN, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Left)
13. Udo BULLMANN, Member of the European Parliament (DE/S&D)
14. Damien CAREME, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Left)
15. Sebastian EVERDING, Member of the European Parliament (GE/Left)
16. Merja KYLLÖNEN, Member of the European Parliament (FI/Left)



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17. Marianne VIND, Member of the European Parliament (DK/S&D)

18. David CORMAND, Member of the European Parliament (FR/Greens)