



PRESS RELEASE
and BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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MEET EUROPE 2018 CONFERENCE

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**PRIME MINISTER, VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND PROVINCIAL LEADERS PRESENTED WITH
THE BEST OF EUROPEAN BUSINESS**

Hanoi – 25 May 2018, the *Meet Europe 2018* conference gathered an audience of more than 500 attendees, including corporate representatives, Government officials and diplomatic corps. **Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc** spoke at the event, praising the connection between European business and Vietnam and stressing the importance of Vietnam-Europe relations.

The conference was organised by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (MOFA)**, with the support of the **European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EuroCham)**.

The purpose of the event was to launch a broad discussion on the state of Europe-Vietnam relations, particularly regarding trade and investment, ahead of the coming into force of the **EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA)**. The Agreement is on its way to ratification, a process which both the EU and Vietnam have committed to speed up with the aim of making it effective later this year as scheduled.

The conference was marked by the presence of more than **200 Vietnamese Government officials**, including more than **30 Provincial Government Leaders**. Alongside Prime Minister Phuc, the **Standing Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam Bui Thanh Son** also spoke at the plenary session, as well as the **Secretary of the Hanoi Party Committee Hoang Trung Hai**, and the **Chairman of the Hanoi People's Committee Nguyen Duc Chung**.

Meet Europe 2018 attracted more than **200 company representatives** – mostly European-Vietnamese businesses – some of which were invited on stage to share their success stories and projects, as well as their development plans in Vietnam and its provinces. They were also heard by most of the European ambassadors to Vietnam, as well as a large number of international organisations.

The conference's "Thematic Sessions" gave the stage to European companies that have been successfully doing business in Vietnam and in the country's provinces. The "case-studies" presented cut across several areas such as **Automotive, Wine & Spirits, Renewable Energy, Agriculture, Infrastructure, and Industry 4.0**, among many others. They were delivered by the highest ranks of leading European enterprises in Vietnam, including **Dr. Thai-Lai Pham (Siemens Vietnam)**, **Guru Mallikarjuna (Bosch Vietnam)**, **Gianluca Fiume (Piaggio Vietnam)**, **Brian Hull (ABB)**, and many other business leaders.

Meet Europe 2018 showcased the best that European business has to offer and made the case that Europe is the best partner for Vietnam. The words "reliable, innovation-driven, and sustainable" were often heard throughout the conference by several speakers and were the cornerstones of the statements from **EuroCham's Co-Chairs Denis Brunetti and Nicolas Audier**.

In the third part of the conference, companies met one-on-one with the leaderships of more than 30 provinces of Vietnam who travelled to Hanoi to attend the event. More than 70 B2G meetings dedicated to potential business and investment opportunities were organised at *Meet Europe 2018*, record number of encounters between the private sector and Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Party Secretaries from Vietnam's Provinces.

Meet Europe 2018 was yet another landmark business-to-Government event in Vietnam, the result of cooperation between EuroCham Vietnam and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam under a longstanding agreement between the two entities.

A good example of the regular dialogue between the Vietnamese Government and the European business community, the conference showed that European business is strongly invested in Vietnam's development, and wishes to be a key partner in its continued advancement. This message comes at a momentous time, as Europe and Vietnam are set to embark on an historic trade and investment connection under the EVFTA, a deal which has the potential to open a unique trade corridor that can produce historic benefits for citizens on both continents.

EuroCham Co-Chairman Mr. Denis Brunetti said: *"Vietnam has decided that it wants to walk the path of quality, efficiency, sustainability and innovation. We see it in Government statements, in their efforts to improve the regulatory environment, and in the re-positioning of once traditionally-managed Vietnamese enterprises. The country is changing and needs partners that can support this change, while preserving long-term partnerships which can contribute to the advancement of the country. EuroCham is firmly convinced that European businesses are those partners because of the knowledge, skills and investment that they bring. This conference showed that not only are enterprises – those already here and prospective investors – enthusiastic about Vietnam, they want to go further and work with the provinces to seize new opportunities that will benefit their business and the local economies. At this point in time, nurturing Europe-Vietnam trade and investment relations is certainly a win-win. Judging from the more than 500 attendees today, it is definitely on the radar of many sectors of society."*

Co-Chairman Mr. Nicolas Audier said: *"This is the year of the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement and EuroCham will remain highly dedicated to its promotion and discussion. Prime Minister Phuc honoured us with his presence here today and we are certain that he accords the conclusion of the EVFTA process the highest priority. Meet Europe 2018 was a unique event, confirming that EuroCham's tireless advocacy efforts are taken on board by the Vietnamese Government. Today, we had the opportunity to show our partners in the public sector why Europe is the best partner for Vietnam. We believe the message was clear: Europe is reliable, innovation-driven, and sustainable. These three words characterise the kind of partner we believe European businesses can be - one that can help Vietnam to develop in a smart way. We are certain that European Member States and EU Institutions will re-iterate this message and show that Europe is committed to strengthening our partnership through the fast ratification of the EVFTA, the effectiveness of which will prove that this effort was worthwhile for businesses on both sides."*

Ambassador – Head of the European Union Delegation Bruno Angelet said *"I am strongly convinced that the FTA between the EU and Vietnam has an enormous potential to enhance trade and investment exchanges between us and generate growth and prosperity both in the EU and in Vietnam. This potential should be used by all companies, big multinationals but also small and medium enterprises, and it should bring benefits to all EU Member States and to all provinces of Vietnam. Our first challenge is to inform about the potential of the FTA. "Meet Europe" event is intended with this aim precisely. I hope that this*

event will help to create new business relations, contacts and possibilities between the European companies and all Vietnamese provinces as well attract new investment to these provinces even before the FTA is in force. I therefore wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the initiative of organising this event."

President and CEO of Siemens Vietnam Dr. Thai-Lai Pham said: *"Meet Europe was an excellent event to show what Siemens, as well as other European companies, have been bringing to Vietnam in terms of next generation technology, operations and training. Siemens operates across many industrial segments but the one I had the opportunity to speak about today is of crucial importance. Vietnam must reform its energy production and consumption and renewables are an inevitable piece of the puzzle. But the country cannot yet make such a shift alone, it needs partners. Vietnam would benefit from opening the renewable energy market further and implement the highest standards of technology services and products. We were pleased to be able to show what Siemens Vietnam has been producing in this field and how it can keep contributing to this change moving forward."*

Vice President and Managing Director of Bosch Vietnam Mr. Guru Mallikarjuna said: *"Meet Europe was successful in attracting so many levels of the Vietnamese Government and business community, and was even attended by Prime Minister Phuc. For a company like Bosch, which serves national industries and has the development of its local staff all around the world as one of its highest priorities, this was a momentous occasion. At this conference, we had the chance to discuss the future of industry and manpower in Vietnam before the Vietnamese Government. As one of the leading global supplier of technology and services in Vietnam, we appreciated the chance to discuss the changes which the industrial landscape must undergo to be prepared for the fourth industrial revolution. A key moving part of this process is vocational training, the ongoing development and technological education of staff and a correct and rewarding shift the skills and qualifications available in the labour market. As a hi-tech company, Bosch has always taken a proactive approach to train skilled workforce and we leave today's event more certain of the role we can play as partners for Vietnam."*

General Manager of The Anam Mr. Herbert Laubichler-Pichler said: *"As a hotel business at the forefront of sustainable tourism and concern about the preservation of our surroundings in Cam Ranh, we were happy to be able to show our business case before the Vietnamese Government and Provincial authorities here today. Vietnam's tourism is booming, or at least that is a fact that is widely publicised. However, this boom can only be an opportunity to position the country as a good quality destination, one to which travelers return, if managed carefully. At the moment, the return rate has been low. There are many reasons for this, but one would definitely be a lingering indefinable of what identity Vietnam wants to adopt as a destination. Today, property development with the purpose of creating hospitality businesses is at historic levels. However, one must remember that many travelers want to come to Vietnam to see the essence of the country. Behind preserving this essence is determination from the authorities to ensure that tourism operations are sustainable is to train and develop the local staff, and it is to benefit the business unit's surroundings. We were happy to be able to show that that is the way of The Anam and that our example, as well as that of many other European businesses in the Hospitality sector, is definitely one to be considered as an inspiration for the standards required building Vietnam into a world-class destination."*

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ABOUT EUROCHAM

Since its establishment with only 60 members in 1998, the European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EuroCham) has grown to represent over 950 European businesses, counting among its supporters many of the world's leading

enterprises. With offices in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and with regional Chapters in Central Vietnam and in Northeastern Vietnam, EuroCham's mission is to represent the business interests of our members in Vietnam and to improve the business environment in the country for the benefit of all players.

The Chamber is the leading organisation representing European business interests in Vietnam, and also an umbrella organisation with the Belgian Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (BeluxCham), the Central and Eastern European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (CEEC), the Dutch Business Association Vietnam (DBAV), the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Vietnam (CCIFV), the German Business Association in Vietnam (GBA), the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (ICham), the Nordic Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (NordCham), and the Spanish Business Group in Vietnam (SBG). The British Business Group Vietnam (BBGV) and the Swiss Business Association (SBA) are also associated as partner organisations. EuroCham is also a founding member of the inter-foreign chamber platform Vietnam Business Forum (VBF).

EuroCham is a member of the European Business Organisation Worldwide Network ASBL (EBOWWN) representing European businesses in nearly 40 countries across the globe and addressing common trade and investment related issues to the European Commission. Regionally, EuroCham is a member of the EU ASEAN Business Council.

Since the end of 2015, EuroCham is the implementing partner of the South East Asia IPR SME Helpdesk providing free of charge advice and support on intellectual property protection when entering and expanding in the ASEAN market. Since 2016, EuroCham has also served as an implementing partner of the EU-Vietnam Business Network (EVBN), an EU co-funded project under the ICI+ programme, which aims to support EU Small and Medium Enterprises interested in doing business in Vietnam, while promoting the country and ASEAN's business opportunities in Europe. In 2017, EuroCham was awarded Best Large Chamber of the Year at the Asia Pacific International Chambers of Commerce Awards.

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