



University of Social Sciences and  
Humanities, VNU-Hanoi

## PRESS RELEASE

# Perceptions of the EU in Vietnam

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According to a public opinion survey carried out by “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” research team, the EU ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in a list of most important partners for Vietnam both in terms of the present and future partnership. The survey sees the EU rank behind China, Japan, USA and the rest of Asia, yet according to the Vietnamese Ministry of Planning & Investment the EU’s cumulated implemented Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) till 2008 (approximately US\$ 7 billion) confirms the EU as the second largest investor in Vietnam after Japan.

“Misperception or ill-informed views of the European Union’s global role puts the EU at risk of being overlooked or undervalued by third countries with [which] the EU is a significant partner. Similarly, low awareness of the EU expose[s] third countries, like Indonesia, to the risk of slipping under the EU’s radar,” according to **Prof Martin Holland**, Jean Monnet Chair ad personam, National Centre for Research on Europe of the University of Canterbury.

In 2006, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) in reaction to this existing knowledge gap initiated the “EU through the Eyes of Asia” project to address “How the EU was perceived in Asia”. The project’s latest publication, “The EU through the Eyes of Asia Volume II: New Cases, New Findings”, was recently launched at Vietnam National University in Hanoi, Vietnam. The event was organised in partnership by the Asia Europe Foundation, the Delegation of the European Commission to Vietnam, and the University for Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University.

**Mr Willy Vandenberghe**, First Counsellor/Head of Cooperation Section, Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam, said, “This publication is very timely, just after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which will pave the way for better coherence in and visibility of the EU’s external action, through the nomination of a High Representative for External Relations and the forthcoming establishment of the European External Action Service.”

“For Vietnam, the European Union is an entity with familiarity and exoticism, proximity and distance, and tangible existence and invisibility. This could be explained by various historical, cultural, political, economic factors to even personal connections. The Europeans were the first to romanise the script of the Vietnamese which is now used as the national official writing system”, noted **Prof Vu Duc Nghieu**, Vice Rector of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities of VNU-Hanoi, adding, “The relations between Vietnam and member states of the EU have undergone different ups and downs, ebbs and flows, throughout the colonial period to the Cold War, and the recent process of globalisation and regionalisation. For those reasons, the EU has been reflected in the lenses of the Vietnamese in a diversity of forms and shapes.”

This unprecedented comparative study looks at the attitudes and citizens' perceptions of the EU in Asia, and, to date, the project has been undertaken in 12 research sites throughout Asia. The Asia wide research project is a major academic collaboration to measure media, public and elite perceptions of the EU in the Asian countries of the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)\*. The latest findings of this project are expressed in this new publication which provides detailed empirical

insights into EU's visibility in the public discourses of 3 Southeast Asian countries – the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. The data and analyses in this work cover the period between 2008 and the first half of 2009, and compares the findings with those included in Volume I (published in 2007), which examined the perceptions of the EU in China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand. The data collected through this project is of direct relevance to policy-makers and opinion leaders across Asia and Europe, providing essential recommendations to the EU, Asian governments, the media and those managing relations between the two regions.

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The publication launch was organised by the **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**, the **Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam**, and the **University for Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University-Hanoi**.

About the organisers:



The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)\*. ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM. Since then, ASEF has implemented over 350 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. [www.asef.org](http://www.asef.org)

\* The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** now brings together 43 member states (Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam), the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. [www.aseminfoboard.org](http://www.aseminfoboard.org)



The European Commission (EC) represents and upholds the interests of Europe as a whole. It is independent of national governments. The EC is one of the biggest financial contributors to ASEF. The **Delegation of the European Commission to Vietnam** represents the European Commission's External Service. It serves the Commission and the European Union by publicising, explaining and implementing EU policy, promoting Europe's interests as embodied in the European Community policies, and playing a key role in development assistance.



**Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU)** is the first modern university established in Vietnam. VNU has undergone various development stages: the University of Indochina established on 16 May, 1906; Vietnam National University (November, 1945); the University of Hanoi (June, 1956). In December, 1993, VNU was reorganised on the basis of amalgamating the University of Hanoi, Foreign Language Teachers' Training College (established in 1967) and other leading universities in Hanoi.

VNU is the largest multidisciplinary higher educational and research centre in Vietnam. VNU is entrusted with the task of producing qualified human resources for the industrialisation and modernisation of the country. VNU holds a special position in the system of tertiary education in Vietnam, operating according to a special regulation promulgated by the Prime Minister. VNU reports directly to the Prime Minister and has the high autonomy in organisation - personnel, training programs, scientific research and technological development, planning - finance, international relations and other fields. VNU is entitled to work directly with ministries, ministerial level organisations, governmental bodies, people's committees of central cities and provinces concerning affairs related to VNU. VNU's colleges and institutes maintain their juridical person status of a higher education and scientific research institution as regulated by the Law on Education and the Law on Science-Technology.