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**The Stars and the Maple Leaf: new growth opportunities!**

**Brussels, 18 October 2013. A market for European spirits worth €288 million is just about to get bigger**

One hour ago,, the Canadian Prime Minister, Stephen Harper and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso signed off on a historic free trade agreement between the EU and Canada – the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), further opening each other’s market to trade.

spiritsEUROPE, the body representing the European producers of whiskies, gin, vodka, cognac, etc welcomes such a deal. Paul Skehan, Director General, said: “*This is great news for European and Canadian consumers, and great news for the spirits sector in Europe. At a time when domestic markets are extremely difficult, export markets are providing the only opportunities for growth. Canada is already the 5th largest market for European spirit drinks, generating €288 million for the European economy each year, and a deal now would open the opportunity for increasing our sales there. It would also mean greater access to quality European spirits for Canadian consumers.”*

spiritsEUROPE is particularly satisfied by the following key achievements:

* Full elimination of all import tariffs on European spirits and wines;
* Better enforcement of previous agreements with the CETA dispute settlement mechanism;
* Abolition of the obligation to blend bulk spirits imports with local content;
* More transparency in the way Liquor Boards operate in Canada and abroad;
* Protection of centuries of European culture. The Canadians have agreed to recognize and protect those European products with specific geographic characteristics – e.g. Scotch Whisky, Irish Whiskey, Cognac, Grappa, etc.

Skehan: *“We raise a toast to the conclusion of the CETA deal.”*

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* **spiritsEUROPE** is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 31 associations and 8 multinationals. ([Read more)](http://spirits.eu/page.php?id=98&parent_id=7)

[EC Daily News of 18 October 2013](http://europa.eu/rapid/midday-express.htm) PR-010-2013