**Ambitious trade strategy demands reallocation of Commission staff**

***Spirits sector – the EU’s most valuable agri food export – welcomes new plan***

Brussels- 14 October 2015 – *spiritsEUROPE welcomes the new EU Trade Strategy adopted today by the European Commission.*

Paul Skehan, Director General of spiritsEUROPE said:

“New jobs and growth in Europe will depend on how competitive companies are compared to global rivals, how well exporters do abroad, how much wealth can be created in Europe by selling our products around the globe.

“As such, we welcome the new Trade Strategy. As a very export-oriented sector, we appreciate the level of ambition set by the Commission, in particular in engaging in bilateral negotiations with emerging high growth markets.

“In particular, many Asian and South East Asian markets offer huge potential growth for European spirits, but tariffs and non tariff barriers prevent us from competing effectively with local producers.

“However, the strategy raises questions about the limited resources in the Commission devoted to trade. How many people does the Commission have to negotiate new agreements? How many to enforce them? How many people in EU Delegations around the world help our SMEs to make the most of those opened markets?

“We call on the Commission to reallocate and train more trade-related staff today to undertake future negotiations, to enforce the existing trading rules and to man EU Delegations abroad.”

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**Note to editors:**

* [spiritsEUROPE](http://www.spirits.eu/) represents the spirits industry & comprises 33 associations and 8 multinationals.
* Every hour, every day, the sale of high value, locally-rooted European spirits abroad generates €1.1 million for the EU. €9.6 billion per year flows into Europe because of our exports

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