

# PRESS RELEASE



## TIME TO STAND UP FOR TRADE

Brussels, 20 June 2017. ***The European spirits sector's annual Trade Review shows that 2016 was an excellent year for European distilled spirits export sales. Continued growth will depend on an even more assertive and more positive trade agenda. The European Commission must reallocate additional staff resources to trade-related activities to make the most of current opportunities.***

***The report confirmed increased exports in 2016. Exports sales exceeded €10.2 billion, representing sales of approximately €1.1 million every hour. These exports far exceed spirits imports to the EU, meaning our sector generated just under €9 billion in net value for the EU last year.***

Commenting on the report, Paul Skehan, Director General of spiritsEUROPE, said *"These results show how much our European spirit drinks are appreciated around the world. Where markets open, and local economies grow – our whiskies, vodkas, cognacs and gins all sell well. Indeed, this export success is an example of a very effective public-private partnership: the Commission goes in and negotiates tariff removal and the elimination of non-tariff barriers; and our spirits companies, large and small, follow, building awareness and appreciation of their brands and selling their products.*

*"But we cannot take any of this for granted. The trade 'narrative' last year was very difficult, with much unjustified criticism of the benefits of open trade. We also witness moves towards a more protectionist stance in many countries around the globe. In that regard, we will oppose any rolling back of agreements already signed, either multilaterally or bilaterally with the EU. In addition, we believe the opportunity now exists for the European Union to forge ahead with an even more assertive, positive trade agenda, accelerating new trade negotiations with more countries. European business, employees and investors will all benefit – as will the consumers in those third markets.*

*"We also urge quicker and more robust enforcement of rules already negotiated at WTO level or in free trade agreements. For all these reasons, we call on EU decision-makers to reallocate staff resources towards the trade agenda within the Commission."*

*"Finally, Brexit has certainly opened a new complexity for the European spirit sector. We have shared interests, both human and corporate, based on positive, welcome integration over the last 44 years. We need to find a new, constructive partnership to preserve the trade flows and business linkages between the EU27 and the UK" concluded Skehan. "We all need to stand up for trade."*

The launch of the spiritsEUROPE Trade Review on 20 June will offer the opportunity for Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, Australian Ambassador Mark Higgie and MEP Emma McClarkin to highlight the trade challenges and opportunities facing the European Union and to explain why it is so important to stand up for trade. Hanna Deringer (ECIPE) and spirits producer Cristina Esparza will bring their practical experiences to the fore. Paul Skehan will present the key results of the report.

ENDS

PR-004-2017



## Note to editors

- **spiritsEUROPE** is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 31 associations and 8 multinationals: [www.spirits.eu](http://www.spirits.eu).
- **Trade Review 2017** (click [here](#) for pdf)
- **Many quotes** available in the Trade Review 2017 for you to pick from:
  - ✓ MEP Bernd Lange (Chairman of the Committee on International Trade);
  - ✓ Blandine and Anne-Laure Conte (Cognac and Pineau des Charentes producers); MEP Franck Proust (EPP); John Carberry (Master Cooper at Diageo's Cambus Cooperage); Cristina Esparza (spirits and liqueurs producer, distillery Hijos de Pablo Esparza), Torgil Folger (Farmer and wheat producer in Sweden).
- **Review of our trading performance and issues of concerns** with the Americas, Asia Australia/New Zealand, the UK and Africa.
- **Analysis of untapped markets with huge potential.**
- **Promotion of agri-food products abroad: "Enjoy, it's from Europe"**.
- **spiritsEUROPE trade 'wish list': we urge the EU to:**
  - ✓ Seek ambitious trade agreements with emerging high-growth markets.
  - ✓ Ensure the implementation and effective enforcement of FTAs.
  - ✓ Minimise the Brexit impact on FTA's negotiations.
  - ✓ Complete ratification process of CETA.
  - ✓ Promote EU food & drink products in third countries.
  - ✓ Preserve the essential role of WTO.
  - ✓ Enhance the protection of Intellectual Property Rights and promote the Geographical indications.
  - ✓ Tackle illicit trade by enhancing public and private sectors partnerships and conceive new approaches for effective policy strategies.
  - ✓ Devote additional staff resources to trade agenda within the Commission.
  - ✓ Recognise the strategic importance small distilleries and promote their internationalisation.
  - ✓ Devote the necessary human resources to deliver effectively on its trade agenda.

**[Programme of the launch event](#) (personal invitation only) – [@spiritsEUROPE](#) / [#spiritsEvents17](#)**