



SPIRITS SECTOR DETERMINED, STRESSES NEED FOR OPEN EU TRADE POLICY AMID CHALLENGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Brussels, 8 September 2026 - European spirits exports declined by 6% in value between 2024 and 2025, reflecting an increasingly challenging global trading environment marked by geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty and disruptions to international trade. Yet, with strong assets and a proven ability to adapt, the European spirits sector remains determined to overcome these challenges. To support the sector's efforts, the sector needs an ambitious and pragmatic EU trade policy focused on three priorities: preserving established trading relationships, removing unnecessary barriers, including through regulatory dialogue, and opening new opportunities through trade agreements, trade diplomacy and promotion efforts.

These findings are highlighted in spiritsEUROPE's 2026 Trade Report, ***A Spirit of Determination***, published today. The report, which analyses 2025 trade data, underlines both the importance of international markets to the European spirits sector and the resilience and adaptability of producers in an increasingly volatile global economy.

More than 55% of EU spirits exports by value were destined for markets outside the EU in 2025, demonstrating the fundamental role that international trade plays in the sector's competitiveness. European spirits are also closely linked to Geographical Indications (GIs), with many products supporting agricultural value chains, rural communities and regional economies across Europe.

"The trading environment facing European spirits producers is undoubtedly challenging, and geopolitical tensions, economic headwinds and disruptions to global trade are having a real impact on our sector. But we are determined to pull through. European spirits have strong assets: iconic products, global recognition, deep-rooted expertise and an ability to adapt to changing markets. Our producers are ready to do their part. What we need is an open trade policy that supports them in these efforts," said Pauline Bastidon, Director of Trade and Economic Affairs at spiritsEUROPE.

The sector's two main export markets, the United States and China, were particularly affected by the challenging economic and geopolitical environment in 2025, contributing to the overall decline in exports. At the same time, emerging markets, notably India and countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, continued to gain importance, highlighting the role of diversification in supporting the sector's long-term resilience. However, new markets cannot replace established ones overnight, particularly where European spirits producers have built strong commercial relationships and invested over decades, and in some cases centuries.

"First and foremost, we need the EU to maintain stable and predictable trading relationships with our established partners and remove unnecessary barriers that make it harder for European spirits to compete. At the same time, we need to open new opportunities through ambitious trade agreements, trade diplomacy and promotion, while recognising that new markets cannot replace traditional growth engines overnight", added Bastidon. She concluded: "Our message is one of determination. The global trading environment may be more challenging, but Europe's spirits sector has the strength and adaptability to overcome these headwinds. With the right support from an open and ambitious EU trade policy, we can continue to compete, grow and contribute to European competitiveness.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

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spiritsEUROPE (www.spirits.eu) represents the interests of the spirits sector in 31 national associations as well as of the 11 leading multinational companies. Distilled spirits are as diverse as the EU's Member States, spanning 44 product categories and including a host of geographically specific products that contribute to the culture of their regions and the European Union. As the leading voice of the European spirits sector, we seek to maintain and advance the freedom to produce and market spirits in a responsible way.

Click [here](#) for the spiritsEUROPE's 2026 Trade Report, ***A Spirit of Determination***.