

PRESS RELEASE



COVID-19 – OUR SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE

20 March 2020

The European spirits sector proudly produces high-quality spirits, from a great variety of agricultural products, that are enjoyed in bars, restaurants and homes all over Europe and the world. Today, many of those bars and restaurants are shuttered, the distilleries that welcome thousands of visitors each year are closed, and for millions of people, “a drink with friends” is suddenly no longer an option, at least for the next few weeks or months.

Our thoughts are first and foremost with those suffering and with the heroes of our health services and other public workers, who are on the frontline of this pandemic. Our thoughts are also with the bartenders, restaurant owners and hospitality professionals who serve our products and who are now out of work, or facing unimaginable stress in difficult months ahead.

Our first priority is to support our authorities’ efforts to tackle the epidemic: the safety and health of these workers and their patrons, as well as their economic welfare.

We are heartened that many of our members have already taken action – establishing funds to support bartenders through this period, or converting their distilleries so that they can produce and donate tonnes of hand sanitiser to their local communities. Such initiatives would not be possible without the commitment and professionalism of our people who, regardless of their locations and roles, are willing to help. This shows the warmth and responsibility of our sector, and of this we are very proud.

Governments across the EU are experimenting with novel forms of support for these frontline workers. We very much welcome this and we encourage them to also look at reforms that will support the sector as a whole, and contribute to the economic recovery.

As an association, spiritsEUROPE has announced our [support](#) for the European Tourism Manifesto and will do whatever we can to support other relevant initiatives.

We also welcome efforts of the European institutions to mobilise and support action in cooperation with the Member States and the international community, and ask them to continue to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market, to minimise business and supply chain disruptions, and to resist the imposition of barriers to international trade which will be vital to economic recovery.

Ultimately, we at spiritsEUROPE stand ready – in due course – to collaborate with our members, with policymakers, with tourism and hospitality representatives and other partners in our supply chains to get these sectors moving again, and do our part for a better, stronger, responsible, sustainable, vibrant Europe.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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- **spiritsEUROPE** proudly represents one of Europe's most valuable agri-food export sectors and, with it, the interests of 31 associations of spirits producers as well as 10 leading multinational companies. More information can be found here: <https://spirits.eu/>
- [@spiritsEUROPE](#) we have shared many stories of distilleries across Europe donating money or converting their distilleries so that they can produce and offer tonnes of hand sanitiser to their local communities.