

PRESS  
RELEASE



**spiritsEUROPE CALLS ON THE U.S. AND THE EU TO RESOLVE TRADE DISPUTES  
& RESUME A POSITIVE TRADE AGENDA**

Brussels, 3 October 2019 – *spiritsEUROPE deeply regrets the decision announced yesterday by the U.S. to impose tariffs to European spirit drinks in the context of the Airbus WTO case. The decision will result in the imposition of a 25% tariff rate to a number of European spirits exported to the U.S. as of 18 October 2019.*

Commenting on the decision, Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE said: *“As a totally unrelated sector, it is unacceptable for the spirits producers having to pay the price for a dispute that is essentially about civil aircraft subsidies. It is particularly irritating to see that unrelated sectors like ours will be hit by an extra 25% tariffs when the sector at stake will only be imposed a 10% rate!*

*Most importantly, for the last 18 months, we have recurrently underlined that imposing tariffs on spirits harms consumers and producers on both sides of the Atlantic alike. The success of the spirits sector in the United States and in the European Union is mutually reinforcing. Indeed, many of our European producers operate distilleries and production sites in the US, while many American producers also own distilleries in Europe.*

*We call on the President-elect of the European Commission and the Commissioner designate for Trade to find a negotiated solution with their American counterparts as soon as possible and to de-escalate the current situation.”*

The spirits sector was already disproportionately hurt in the context of the ongoing steel and aluminum dispute between the US and the EU – as a result of which the EU imposed a 25% tariff rate on imports of US whiskey in July 2018.

Finding a negotiated solution on both the steel and aluminum issue and the ongoing WTO dispute over aircraft subsidies must be the immediate priority for the European Commission and the U.S. administration.

This decision can be expected to exert a significant economic impact, considering that the tariffs imposed by the EU on Bourbon Whisky since July 2018 have resulted in a 21% sales decrease, which has affected many craft distillers in the US but also European companies who have made acquisitions in the Bourbon Whisky segment.

**- ENDS -**

#### NOTE TO EDITORS

- For more information, please contact Ulrich Adam: [adam@spirits.eu](mailto:adam@spirits.eu) / +32 477 63 67 51
- spiritsEUROPE proudly represents the most valuable European agri-food export and with it the interests of the spirits sector in 31 national associations as well as of the 10 leading multinational companies. Distilled spirits are as diverse as the EU itself, spanning 47 product categories and including a host of geographically-specific products that contribute to the culture of their regions (238 GIs).
- In 1997, the U.S. and EU eliminated tariffs on the majority of spirits. This landmark “zero-for-zero” agreement has resulted in a 450% increase in bilateral trade in spirits, reaching almost €6.7 billion in 2018.
- Almost 1/3 of spirits exports outside Europe are shipped to the USA (€4.271m); exports have increased by 100% over the last decade.
- The [list](#) covers the following HS codes:  
2208.30.30 Single-malt (or straight) Irish and Scotch Whiskies from United Kingdom  
2208.70.00 Liqueurs & Cordials from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain or the United Kingdom