



spiritsEUROPE calls on EU & US: "Stop using us as a bargaining chip"

Brussels- 13 March 2025 - *spiritsEUROPE is deeply alarmed by the renewed threat of tariffs on EU and US spirits—once again, as part of an entirely unrelated dispute.*

"This cycle of tit-for-tat retaliation must end now! We urge both sides to stop using our sector as a bargaining chip in conflicts that have nothing to do with us." said Pauline Bastidon, Director Trade & Economic Affairs

Spirits trade exemplifies how open markets create mutual benefits. Reimposing tariffs would be a step backward—hurting businesses, workers, and consumers on both sides.

"The EU and US must de-escalate this dispute now and ensure spirits are never again caught in the crossfire." she added.

Transatlantic spirits trade has thrived tariff-free since 1997, with brief but damaging disruptions due to past unrelated disputes. The spirits sector is fully united in its commitment to keeping it that way. EU spirits companies have invested heavily in US production, including American Whiskey, just as US spirits companies own distilleries across the EU, producing regionally distinctive products tied to local heritage.

"We are each other's top markets—interwoven by investment, tradition, and shared success, so keep spirits out!" she concluded.

ENDS



Note to editors

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- spiritsEUROPE is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 30 associations and 11 international companies: www.spirits.eu.

Background Information:

In response to the US tariffs, the EU issued a [press release](#) and a [memo](#) announcing retaliation in two waves, along the following lines. As an immediate reaction, President Trump has threatened a 200% tariff on alcoholic beverages from France & other EU member states in response to the Commission's announcement of EU tariffs on spirits yesterday.

- First, the Commission will allow the suspension of existing 2018 and 2020 countermeasures against the US to lapse on 1 April. These countermeasures target a range of US products that respond to the economic harm done on €8 billion of EU steel and aluminium exports – and include tariffs on US whiskeys. We understand that the intention is to apply both annexes of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/886 of 20 June 2018](#) on certain commercial policy measures concerning certain products originating in the United States of America and amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/724 – which would lead to a total tariff of 50% on US Whiskey.
- Second, in response to new US tariffs affecting more than €18 billion of EU exports, the Commission is putting forward a package of new countermeasures on US exports. They will come into force by mid-April, following consultation of Member States and stakeholders. The [public consultation](#) on this new list is open from today till 26 March. You can find the full list of products the Commission is proposing to target as part of a second wave of rebalancing tariffs [here](#). Many agri-food categories are on the list, including wines and several spirits categories such as gin, liqueurs and cordials and products falling in the “other” category (220890).
- **A Spirits of Unity** – A flourishing sector marked by strong transatlantic ties: click [here](#)
- **Calling for #ToastsNotTariffs** by spiritsEUROPE and the Distilled Spirits Council of United States: click [here](#) for the video