PRESS
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SPIRITSEUROPE CALLS FOR ACTION AS EU–US TALKS CREATE OPPORTUNITY TO RESET AND STRENGTHEN TRANSATLANTIC SPIRITS TRADE

Brussels, 24 November 2025 -– spiritsEUROPE welcomes the renewed engagement between the EU and the US at today's ministerial-level meetings and encourages both sides to seize this momentum to implement, fully and without delay, the commitments made in the Joint Statement issued this summer.

Today's discussions between Commissioner Šefčovič, Secretary Lutnick, Ambassador Greer, and EU Trade Ministers come at a pivotal moment in transatlantic trade relations. The Joint Statement of August clearly reaffirmed the shared ambition to expand the return to MFN (Most Favoured Nation) tariffs for "other sectors and products that are important for their economies and value chains".

"*For the European spirits sector, this language was, and remains, a vital signal of political will*," said Mark Titterington, Director General of spiritsEUROPE. "*We strongly support renewed efforts to advance these discussions, which are of vital importance to the spirits and hospitality sectors on both sides of the Atlantic. We also call on both sides to deliver on the commitments they made as a matter of urgency. Our sector needs timely, concrete results to restore balance and predictability in transatlantic trade*."

Since the summer, industry on both sides of the Atlantic has grown increasingly concerned about the slow pace of follow-up. Both EU and US producers, along with hospitality operators who rely on a stable and diverse offering, have been vocal in calling for a full return to the long-standing zero-for-zero framework for spirits to ensure predictability, support investment, and underpin continued recovery in the on-trade sector. While acknowledging the complexity of the process, spiritsEUROPE urges the EU and US to accelerate implementation of the agreement, so that spirits, long a flagship of transatlantic cooperation, can benefit from a return to MFN treatment.

"*A full return to tariff-free transatlantic spirits trade is within reach*," Titterington added. *"With constructive engagement and a shared commitment to honour the agreement made this summer, both sides can deliver a win for growth, investment, and consumers. We urge negotiators to use today's meetings as a springboard toward completing this work swiftly*."

spiritsEUROPE stands ready to support the European Commission, US counterparts, and industry partners to ensure a durable and mutually beneficial outcome that strengthens one of the most successful bilateral spirits trading relationships in the world and continues to support producers, workers, and the hospitality sector on both sides of the Atlantic.

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- spiritsEUROPE is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 31 associations and 11 international companies: www.spirits.eu.

Background Information:
On 27 July 2025, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and US President Donald J. Trump announced a bilateral agreement on tariffs and trade. As part of its implementation, President Trump signed an Executive Order on 31 July 2025 (accessible here), establishing a 15% tariff ceiling on imports of EU products into the US.

On 5 August 2025, the EU formally announced a six-month suspension of retaliatory tariffs on U.S. imports, including US spirits, wines, and used barrels. The suspension will remain in place until 5 February 2026.

On 21 August, both sides issued a Joint Statement to provide further details on what was agreed through negotiations (the Joint Statement can be accessed here). It contains a list of product-specific exemptions from tariffs. Unfortunately, spirits are not part of this list, meaning that EU spirits remain subject to a 15% import tariff in the US. However, the Joint Statement specified that: "*The United States and the European Union agree to consider other sectors and products that are important for their economies and value chains for inclusion in the list of products for which only the MFN tariffs would apply*". Talks are ongoing with a view to expanding the list of products benefitting from a reciprocal tariff exemption. The MFN (Most Favoured Nation) rate for spirits in the US is 0%.

US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer are holding discussions with Commissioner Šefčovič and EU trade ministers on 24 November, in Brussels, on transatlantic trade cooperation, as follow-up to the EU-US joint statement.