

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 12 NOON, THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2007.**



**Brussels, 7 June 2007**

### **EU spirits producers sign up to EU Alcohol and Health Forum**

The European Spirits Organisation – CEPS has today, 7 June, signed up to become a founding member of the EU ‘Alcohol and Health Forum’, the creation of which is foreseen in the European Commission’s, ‘*Communication on an EU Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm*’, published in October 2006. Driven by the five key areas outlined in the EU Strategy, the Forum’s central objective will be to secure concrete commitments from all stakeholders (economic operators and NGOs, amongst others), so as to more ably tackle alcohol related harm across the EU. Having played an important role in the cross-stakeholder dialogue leading up to the creation of the Forum, EU spirits producers look forward to playing an active and fully participatory part in this body and hope that commitments made under its governance will receive the recognition and backing they deserve from EU officials, national Health Ministries and others.

EU spirit producers’ own set of future self-responsibility commitments are outlined in the CEPS Charter on responsible alcohol consumption, adopted in 2005, with a deadline of 2010 set for their implementation. The CEPS Charter pledges to promote responsible alcohol consumption advocating the ‘targeted approach’ to tackling alcohol misuse and sets an important precedent among the alcohol industry at EU level, including a commitment to report back annually on progress made, independently verified.

Speaking ahead of the Forum launch, Director General of the European Spirits Organisation – CEPS, Jamie Fortescue, commented:

“We have always advocated a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing problems of alcohol misuse. The Forum represents an important step forward in achieving this. EU spirits producers look forward to sharing their experience in implementing the commitments of the CEPS Charter within the sphere of the EU Alcohol and Health Forum.”

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Note to Editors:

The ‘First year progress report 2006’ on implementation of the CEPS Charter on Responsible Alcohol Consumption, independently verified by KPMG Sustainability, and publicly unveiled at the EU spirits industry’s conference in November 2006, is available at:

<http://www.europeanspirits.org/news/Publications.asp>

The European Spirits Organisation – CEPS is the representative body for the spirits industry at the European level. Its membership comprises 37 national associations representing the industry in 29 countries, as well as a group of leading spirits producing companies.

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