

PRESS
RELEASE



European Spirits Organisation - CEPS welcomes a modernised EU trade policy

Brussels, 4 October 2006.

EU spirits producers welcome the European Commission's adoption of a Communication on "Global Europe: Competing in the world".

The EU spirits industry is the leading exporter of spirit drinks worldwide. To maintain this global leadership position, the industry must be given the freedom to produce and market its products in a responsible manner.

EU spirits producers share the Commission's view that, without questioning the benefits of the WTO multilateral negotiations, specific initiatives must be considered in order to improve the industry's competitiveness on the world market. In combination with an active multilateral agenda, the spirits trade welcomes the positive approach for a new generation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and fully supports the opening of negotiations with South Korea, ASEAN, India and Russia, all of which show extremely promising growth for exports.

At a time when EU spirits producers continue to face numerous barriers to trade in third countries, the industry commends the Commission for expanding the scope of trade agreements beyond tariffs in areas of regulatory convergence and transparency, and welcomes the need for strong provisions for IPR (trademarks and GIs), most notably, regarding its enforcement in third countries.

The European Spirits Organisation - CEPS welcomes the Commission's continued efforts to defend the external competitiveness of the industry. The organisation's Director General, Jamie Fortescue, commented, "We look forward to working with the European Commission to create new opportunities for EU spirits exporters and to build on current international success and we eagerly await the forthcoming new market access strategy which is expected early next year".

For more information:

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Note to editors: The European Spirits Organisation – CEPS is the representative body for the spirits industry at the European level. Its membership comprises 38 national associations representing the industry in 29 countries, as well as a group of leading spirits producing companies. In 2005, EU exports of spirit drinks amounted to €5.4 billion, making a positive net contribution of €4.5 billion to the EU's balance of trade. This constitutes 10 % of total EU food and drink exports.