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European Spirits Industry Welcomes EU Move on Tariff Deal

The agreement could ease uncertainty for exporters facing a 15% U.S. tariff on European spirits

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Brussels — The European spirits industry on Tuesday welcomed an agreement in principle among the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission to move ahead with legislation that would put into effect the European Union's commitments under the EU-U.S. Turnberry trade deal, saying the step could reduce uncertainty for exporters facing a 15% American tariff.

The industry group, spiritsEUROPE, urged the institutions to complete formal adoption quickly, arguing that companies need clearer rules as transatlantic trade remains under strain. The group said the agreement was an important move toward greater predictability and stability for businesses that sell across the Atlantic, especially at a time when trade relations between Brussels and Washington remain sensitive.

“Today’s agreement in principle is a positive and timely signal in support of stability in transatlantic trade,” Mark Titterington, the group’s director general, said in a statement. He added that while the Turnberry framework “is not perfect,” it should be implemented quickly to avoid further escalation and give businesses as much certainty as possible.

The deal announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President Donald J. Trump last July set out a broader understanding on tariffs and trade between the two sides. As part of that arrangement, Mr. Trump signed an executive order on July 31, 2025, establishing a 15% tariff ceiling on imports of European Union products into the United States. A joint statement issued on Aug. 21, 2025, listed some product-specific exemptions, but spirits were not included.

That means European spirits continue to face a 15% import tariff in the U.S. market, a cost that distorts pricing and can squeeze margins for distillers, exporters and distributors. Industry officials have argued that the tariff adds pressure at a time when many producers are already dealing with higher costs for energy, packaging and logistics.

spiritsEUROPE said restoring a reciprocal zero-for-zero tariff arrangement for spirits should remain a long-term goal for both sides. Under that model, spirits traded between the United States and Europe would face no tariffs in either direction. The group said such an arrangement had supported investment, jobs and trade growth for decades before tensions returned to the sector.

According to spiritsEUROPE, transatlantic trade in spirits grew by 450% between 1997 and 2018 under the zero-for-zero framework. The organization said that history shows why it wants talks reopened to expand tariff exemptions and eventually return to a broader duty-free system for spirits.

The Brussels-based trade group represents 31 national associations and 11 international companies in Europe’s spirits sector. It said it would continue working with EU institutions, U.S. counterparts and industry partners to support what it called a stable and predictable trading environment.

The agreement in principle still needs final adoption before it can take full effect. For exporters of whiskey, cognac, gin, vodka and other spirits made in Europe, that next step could determine whether they continue operating under a tariff burden or gain some relief from one of their most important overseas markets.