

PRESS RELEASE



LAUNCH OF THE NEW “TASTE DESTINATION EUROPE!” INITIATIVE PROMOTING #SPIRITSTOURISM ACROSS EUROPE

Brussels, 25 September 2019 – *A new campaign to boost spirits tourism across the European Union was formally launched today during a reception at the European Parliament co-hosted by MEP István Ujhelyi, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (Hungary, S&D) and spiritsEUROPE.*

Under the hashtags #SpiritsTourism and #SpiritOfEurope the interactive online campaign features daily portraits of different European spirits, distilleries and their regions as well as the diverse touristic attractions they hold on offer.

Spirits tourism is among the most exciting and fastest-growing trends in tourism, attracting millions of tourists in Europe every year. Last year, distilleries across Europe welcomed record numbers of visitors: 2 million visitors to Scotch Whisky distilleries, 1.6 million spirit tourists in France and nearly 1 million in Ireland.

In his opening remarks, **MEP István Ujhelyi (Hungary, S&D), Vice-chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism**, said: *“Europe is the world’s number one tourist destination. The value of spirits tourism is especially visible in rural areas where jobs are created and local economies are boosted as local tourism grows. In our work in the Transport and Tourism Committee we welcome the fact that the spirits sector contributes actively to addressing many of the economic and employment challenges we are aiming to tackle in the upcoming period.”*

Visitor tours offer distilleries not only the opportunity to communicate about their unique products, but also enable them to support their local communities. Wherever distilleries become tourist destinations and magnets for visitors they become positive agents of change, by driving demand for local services and fueling local economic growth. For example, in Ireland it is estimated that 400 people are directly employed by these craft distilleries, but these jobs and the visitors attracted to the area are supporting thousands more jobs in retail, catering and accommodation.

“It’s not just whiskey, but also craft and niche spirits all across Europe that are drawing in visitors and giving back to their local community. By attracting visitors from around the world, distilleries are acting as ambassadors of their countries, their unique cultural heritage and culinary traditions. Whether global companies with global brands or small craft distillers, they are all rooted locally and visitors to them are bringing a much-needed boost to local and rural economies”, said **Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE.**



During the launch event, spiritsEUROPE also announced its signature to the [European Tourism Manifesto](#), a document which highlights the policy priorities for the EU's tourism sector in the coming years.

Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of the European Travel Commission – which coordinates the Manifesto – said: *“We are proud to have spiritsEUROPE as the 50th signatory of the European Tourism Manifesto. Spirits tourism is a visible segment of Europe’s offering. It attracts large numbers of tourists from South and North America, as well as China and Russia. Spirits tourism thus adds considerable value to Europe’s brand internationally and at home, as Europeans and international tourists alike seek to explore and learn about, for instance, Cognac in France or Whisky in Scotland. We welcome the spirits sector’s dedication to developing spirits tourism and investment that adds value to the tourist industry, exports, local economies and employment across Europe.”*

Get involved!

Learn more about the campaign at <https://spirits.eu/spirits-tourism/> & contribute, by sharing your stories and anecdotes about #SpiritsTourism and the #SpiritOfEurope on Twitter via @spiritsEUROPE

SPIRITS TOURISM IN PRACTICE: 3 REGIONS, 3 SUCCESS STORIES

Scotland

...is one of the world's best-recognised spirits tourism destinations. Glenfiddich was the first distillery visitor centre to open in 1969 in Scotland, and, since then, the industry has made significant investments in visitors centres, developing architectural projects, offering workshops, tasting sessions, pairings of whiskey and food, and curating traditional and interactive exhibitions.

When asked about the campaign **MEP Sheila Ritchie (UK, Renew Europe)** said: *“Scotch Whisky is a recognised global brand and a product adored all around the world. Every year, more and more tourists are coming to visit our world-class distilleries, and we should do everything we can to support these local success stories. Scotch Whisky provides quality employment for people all across Scotland, particularly in rural areas, as do spirits producers all across the EU. Scotch Whisky is a real success story and one we should celebrate!”*

Named by Times as one of the 100 World's Greatest Destinations in 2019, Macallan's futuristically designed distillery is a standard-setter in the tourism industry. Located in the Scottish Highlands, the distillery is looking to draw 500,000 visitors this year, expanding its offer with the gastronomic experience of specialist local Scottish cuisine.

Cognac

Illustrating the significance of spirits tourism for the economic growth in local communities, **Anne-Sophie Diligent, Director of Sales at the Hotel Les Chaîs Monnet**, located in the heart of France's



Cognac-producing region, said: *“Tourists from all over the world are coming to the Charente region to visit Cognac production sites, to taste and smell this iconic French product. As the craze for Cognac boosts the number of tourists coming in, the region is seeing a rise in jobs in the tourism industry as demand for high-quality service and accommodation grows.”*

French Alps

The French Alps have always been a popular tourist destination for skiers but not only! The Chartreuse liqueur (Green & Yellow) produced until 2014 in an old Monastery in Voiron, built in 1084 is drawing in the crowds. While the production site was moved to Aiguenoire, some kilometers away, the Chartreuse cellars, the home of the longest liqueurs cellar in the world, has been converted to offer a unique experience to the 100,000 visitors per year, contributing to reinforce the territory’s attractiveness.

Emmanuel Delafon, CEO of La Chartreuse, said: *“The combination of history, culture, tradition, and an experience, is exactly what our tour and tours of distilleries all over Europe are offering to the modern visitor which seeks exactly that. We have seen visitors come from European countries but also from as far as Australia and the US to visit us specifically and to learn more about Chartreuse.”*

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NOTE TO EDITORS

spiritsEUROPE is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 31 associations and 10 multinationals: www.spirits.eu.

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