



Thursday 26 November 2009

ALCOHOL CONSENSUS IS ACHIEVABLE SAY DISTILLERS

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has today (26 November) re-affirmed the industry's commitment to work with all parties to address alcohol misuse and change attitudes to alcohol in Scotland.

Responding to publication of the Alcohol (Scotland) Bill, the SWA reiterated its support for the majority of the Scottish Government's recommendations, but warned that minimum pricing would not address alcohol harm, was probably illegal under EU law, and would damage Scotch Whisky at home and in export markets.

Whilst rejecting minimum pricing, the SWA believe that a viable alternative would be to consider measures to tackle loss-leading sales of alcohol. The industry has proposed that a mechanism to prevent sales below invoice or tax prices should be examined.

Only last week the industry also introduced tough new measures which will further regulate Scotch Whisky advertising and point of sale material in terms of the inclusion of a responsible drinking message.

Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of The Scotch Whisky Association, said:

"The industry agrees there is a need to tackle alcohol misuse. We support moves to regulate the display of alcohol, tough enforcement of existing licensing laws, and would back a ban on below cost sales to tackle loss leading of alcohol.

"Opposition parties' recognition that minimum pricing is not the answer to alcohol misuse in Scotland has been welcome.

"We must now develop a broad consensus around effective measures. We want to work in partnership with all parties in a way that directly tackles harm, but ensures the economic sustainability of the wider economy in which the Scotch Whisky industry plays a vital role."



“The evidence of research on minimum pricing is that the heaviest drinkers are less likely to adjust their drinking than moderate consumers. Minimum pricing is illegal and the Scottish Government has less trade restrictive means available to tackle alcohol harm.”

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Note to Editors:

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