



Thursday 19 November 2009

**ALL WHISKY ADVERTS TO DISPLAY RESPONSIBLE DRINKING MESSAGE  
- SWA CALLS FOR A BAN ON ALCOHOL SALES BELOW TAX -**

All future Scotch Whisky adverts and printed point of sale materials are to carry a responsible drinking message.

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) announced the tough new measures today as part of the industry's ongoing commitment to discourage the misuse of alcohol and help tackle Scotland's problem drinking culture.

The new requirement is part of a revised SWA Code of Practice for the Responsible Marketing and Promotion of Scotch Whisky. The Code's provisions have also been extended to apply to Scotch Whisky adverts across the EU.

The SWA took the opportunity to re-affirm its support for the majority of the forthcoming Scottish Alcohol Bill, including measures to stop irresponsible promotions. The industry also proposed that a ban on alcohol sales below tax (duty and VAT) to prevent loss-leading would be an alternative and better floor price mechanism than the Scottish Government's minimum price proposal. It would ensure tax is passed on to the consumer.

Under the revised SWA Code, every Scotch Whisky industry sponsorship is required to deliver an initiative that promotes responsible alcohol consumption.

The SWA Code is recognised as best practice at EU level and covers all commercial communications. An Independent Complaints Panel can impose tough sanctions on distillers - including fines and a 'name and shame' policy - if the Code is breached. The ultimate sanction for breaching the rules is expulsion from the SWA.

**Gavin Hewitt, the SWA's Chief Executive, said:**

"Scotch Whisky distillers are determined to tackle alcohol misuse and support much of what is likely to be in the Scottish Government's forthcoming Alcohol Bill.

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“An even tougher SWA Code of Practice - with a responsible drinking message in every Scotch Whisky advert - complements the wide range of initiatives backed by the industry.

“The Code continues to be well used by SWA members seeking advice on how to ensure compliance with its provisions. It is a good example of how self-regulation can be an effective mechanism as we work to change cultural attitudes to the misuse of alcohol.”

“We also believe a floor price mechanism to tackle loss-leading could be introduced in the form of a ban on alcohol sales below tax. This would be a better way forward than an illegal mechanism such as minimum pricing.”

- ENDS -

Note to Editors:

1. The SWA Code of Practice was launched originally in 2005. The amended edition is available at: [www.scotch-whisky.org.uk](http://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk).
2. Questions regarding the SWA Code or complaints about a particular Scotch Whisky's marketing, should be sent to the Association at [complaints@swa.org.uk](mailto:complaints@swa.org.uk).
3. For further information please contact Campbell Evans (0131 222 9231 or 07768 002 262) or David Williamson (0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151) at the SWA.