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Whisky makers push for Korean trade deal

Scotch Whisky distillers have called on the EU and Korea to make a determined push to secure a landmark Free Trade Agreement when negotiators meet in Seoul next month.

Korea is Scotch Whisky's fifth largest export market, with shipments valued at £139 million in 2007. It is anticipated that a Free Trade Agreement signed in 2009 would be a major boost to exports through the elimination of Korea's 20% import tariff on Scotch Whisky.

Negotiators are also considering a deal that would provide legal protection in Korea for 'geographical indications', such as Scotch Whisky, helping to tackle imitation products.

Martin Bell, the SWA's International Affairs Manager, said:

"The elimination of Korea's whisky tariff and better protection of intellectual property rights are high priorities for the Association and would be a timely boost to exports to what is a major market for Scotch Whisky.

"Securing a deal is all the more important because the economic slowdown could have an adverse effect on EU-Korea trade, including of luxury products. Both sides need to make a determined push to reach an agreement during the next round of talks in Seoul."

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Note to Editors:

1. For further information please contact David Williamson at the SWA (0131 222 9230 or 07730 496 151).