



## *WHO removes Duty-Free Ban from Alcohol Strategy*

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**25 January 2010**

ETRC welcomes the decision of the WHO Executive Board to remove a provision from its Draft Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol that proposed taxing duty-free alcohol sales.

Following the publication of the Draft Strategy in early December, ETRC engaged in an intensive 6 week lobbying campaign with national delegations in Geneva. This activity was carried out in parallel with political action at national level by our member companies and by our sister trade organizations in other parts of the world.

ETRC successfully argued that customs allowances that exist worldwide for duty-free liquor sales to international travelers are sufficient to ensure that we are not a contributor to the harmful use of alcohol. ETRC had overwhelming support for its position from practically all of the country representatives it met in Geneva.

Reacting to the decision ETRC Secretary-General Keith Spinks said – *“I am delighted that common sense has prevailed. In the past 6 weeks we have spoken to Government representatives from all over the world. Our message was clear – duty free is not part of the problem. It appears that we have been listened to.*

*This is a WHO strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, not to reduce or restrict alcohol consumption. Duty-free is already strictly controlled by customs authorities. There is absolutely no need whatsoever for the WHO to propose any further regulations”.*

ETRC is delighted with the decision taken by the WHO Executive Board at its meeting on 18-23 January, but is aware that there may still be support for a ban amongst certain countries and NGOs. The industry needs to remain vigilant as efforts may be made to re-introduce the deleted provision into the strategy when it is considered by the World Health Assembly in May. ETRC will be monitoring developments very closely.

ETRC would like to thank the liquor companies and their trade organisations for their support and assistance during this crucial campaign.

**ENDS**  
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### **Notes to editors**

*Whilst there are minor differences in some countries, Customs rules generally limit duty free purchases to a maximum of one litre of spirits or two litres of fortified wine, plus limits on other alcohol beverages.*

*The European Travel Retail Council represents the interests of companies retailing tax and duty free products and services to international air and sea travellers. The organisation works closely with European and international government, regulatory and other stakeholders and is composed of national trade associations made up of over 500 European companies.*

*The European Travel Retail Council's operations are directed by its supervisory board and carried out by a full-time secretariat headquartered in Paris. For more information about the organisation, please see our website – [www.etric.org](http://www.etric.org)*