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Export of French Wines and Spirits: Record success of “Made in France” SMEs

French Wines and Spirits exports reached a new historic record with €11.2 billion sales in 2012. Thanks to a 10 % growth, the sector is once again the second surplus item of France’s trade balance (€9.5 billion), after aeronautics (€20 billion).

FEVS welcomes the result of the sector’s companies, which have pursued their investments, in both their traditional markets and emerging countries.

Various factors contribute to this excellent result:

- Wines keep their growth in value (+ 8.5 %). This growth is even stronger for still wines (+ 10 %). Volumes also grow, albeit more modestly (+ 4 %);
- Spirits have done more than consolidate their figures: export sales have grown by 13 %, boosted by Cognac. As regards vodka and liqueurs, the volume decrease has been offset by growth in value, which confirms these categories premiumization;
- Lastly, the 2012 global environment was more favourable for French exports with the decline, from last spring, of the Euro over foreign currencies (USD, GBP and JPY), thus improving our products competitiveness on many markets.

Louis Fabrice LATOUR, Chairman of the French Wines and Spirits Exporters’ Association (*Fédération des Exportateurs de Vins et Spiritueux de France*- FEVS), has highlighted the 2012 main features:

- **Growth is more structured around value (+10 %) than volume (+1.6 %);**
- **French wines face constant difficulty in increasing market shares in volume.** Over 10 years, wine exports lost 10 % in volume and grew by 30 % in value, mainly due to Champagne and Bordeaux wines;
- **Continuing progress on emerging markets, despite a slowing down growth.** In 2012, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) account for €1.2 billion, i.e. more than 10 % of our total exports (taking into account re-shipments, this figure may be increased to €1.5 billion).

The some 500 French wines and spirits exporting companies are mostly SMEs settled in every area of the country, exporting products that cannot be relocated as they are rooted throughout the French territory.

For Louis Fabrice LATOUR, *“what’s essential is that our companies are capable, year after year, of renewing such export performance, then making a decisive contribution to our country’s economy. This contribution is not as visible as large contracts, but it is equally effective”.*

Louis Fabrice LATOUR also pointed out that exports are increasingly essential for our companies and, more globally, for the entire industry: 40 % of the filière depends on opportunities provided by export markets for its wine or spirits!

A consolidated and secured access to third countries markets is therefore strategic for our companies, and consequently for the French economy. For Louis Fabrice LATOUR, “Support from public authorities is absolutely necessary to strengthen our export activities. State action is required to lift the various trade barriers that can affect our access to new markets”.

Yet, FEVS Chairman also pointed out that part of our future export success relates to the situation in France: “Our progression also requires awareness regarding the necessity to offer products that will meet market demand. Designing such products requires a new way of thinking for the industry, including a joint management of the filière, both for wines and spirits, as far as Cognac is concerned. Ignoring the need to increase our market share in terms of volume may turn out to be counterproductive for the whole industry and impair our potential to create value. This is a shared responsibility for both our Industry and the Government.”

Wines (9L cases) Spirits (8.4L cases at 40% vol)	Volume (12 bottle cases)		Value (€1,000)	
	12 months 2012	%/2011	12 months 2012	%/2011
Total wines	152,755,186	3.4	7,597,348	8.5
<i>Including Champagne</i>	11,185,793	-1.0	2,238,207	4.7
<i>PDO Still Wines</i>	63,734,824	5.9	4,076,823	12.1
<i>PGI Wines</i>	41,729,402	-0.9	730,137	2.0
<i>Varietal wines</i>	11,848,366	26.8	167,202	24.6
<i>Other Wines without GI</i>	17,359,650	-5.3	161,454	-3.9
Total Vermouths & ABV	1,783,193	20.6	32,548	26.1
Total Spirits	52,798,917	-3.7	3,526,359	13.5
<i>Including Cognac</i>	13,941,221	3.5	2,394,227	17.1
<i>Armagnac</i>	193,389	9.3	25,504	31.9
<i>Other Brandy</i>	12,008,094	5.2	188,904	30.5
<i>Vodka</i>	12,839,592	-13.4	372,697	2.6
<i>Liqueurs</i>	4,252,941	-9.9	327,294	2.2
<i>Calvados</i>	310,660	10.2	19,205	10.1

Source : customs/F.E.V.S.