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## Minimum alcohol prices likely to be illegal

Minimum pricing for alcoholic drinks is likely to breach both EU and International Trade law, The Scotch Whisky Association warned today, as it called on The Scottish Government to withdraw the proposal.

International rules and case-law suggest that minimum retail prices for alcohol act as a barrier to trade. The introduction of a trade barrier to imports in Scotland through minimum pricing would have damaging consequences for Scotch Whisky overseas, encouraging discriminatory restrictions against whisky, justified on the basis of Scotland's own violation of international rules. This would undermine the industry's nearly £3bn a year export trade.

Scotch Whisky would be hit at home also. In a challenging market, an additional 90p a bottle on today's typical price will do nothing to support the communities that rely on the industry.

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

"We agree that attitudes to alcohol in Scotland need to change, but minimum pricing is not the answer.

"It is hard to believe any Scottish Government would bring forward proposals that are likely to be both illegal in international trade law and risk damaging the whisky industry. Regrettably, minimum pricing achieves both and undermines our success in breaking down illegal discrimination against Scotch Whisky around the world.

"Any proposal on minimum pricing needs to be properly debated. By proposing to introduce this measure through secondary legislation, The Scottish Government is preventing the full debate on the consequences of minimum pricing which such a damaging proposal deserves."

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