

## **EBC WELCOMES THE RECENT NOTICE FROM THE NATIONAL TAX AGENCY ON TRACEABILITY**

The European Business Council in Japan (EBC) welcomes the notice on Traceability issued by the National Tax Agency (NTA) to eight liquor related industry associations on 22 September.

In the notice, the NTA clearly states concerns about the distribution of liquor whose lot codes have been erased by stating, “Quite a few imported liquor products with erased lot codes have been seen in the market. We believe this situation to be undesirable as it could lead to a lack of confidence among consumers about the reliability of liquor in general.” The NTA further confirmed the importance of lot codes by saying, “The code, which identifies the time and place of production (Lot Code), is very useful from the viewpoint of food safety, as it fulfils an important role in the prompt identification of foodstuffs that are the subject of dispute or constitute a consumer health risk, and will efficiently limit the scope of the product recall or withdrawal. Thus, many foreign countries impose the obligation to display Lot Code.”

James Paton, the chairman of the EBC Liquor Committee, says, “It is an important step to have the NTA issue this notice requesting all the liquor industry members to jointly refrain from trading and selling decoded products. EU wine & spirits importers, in compliance with the EU Directive 89/396/EEC, apply and ensure that lot codes are in good order when products are marketed and distributed in Japan. We would like to monitor and lead the market for better consumer safety, in collaboration with the NTA, liquor industry associations, and the other food & beverage related associations.” The EBC will monitor the outcome of the notice and request further action if the undesirable situation does not cease to exist.

The EBC Liquor Committee started to take the initiative on Traceability in 2010, with the support and advice from the Japan-France Friendship Caucus of the House of Representatives, an influential parliamentarian caucus in Japan with a long history.

### ***About the EBC:***

*The European Business Council in Japan (EBC)/European (EU) Chamber of Commerce in Japan is the trade policy and advocacy arm of 16 European national chambers of commerce and business associations in Japan. Established in 1972, the EBC works to improve the business and investment environment in Japan. It currently represents more than 2,500 local European companies and individuals, some 400 of whom participate directly in the EBC's 28 sector-based committees. For more information, please contact: Bjorn Kongstad, EBC Policy Director  
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