

ALMR Press Release

EUROPE DAY: BRITAIN TOPS THE DRINKS TAX TABLE

Date: Thursday 8 May 2008

Across the 27 countries of the European Union, events will take place tomorrow (*Friday 9 May*) to mark 'Europe Day' - but few people in Britain are likely to raise a glass in celebration.

Because of 2008's Budget, drinks duties are now higher in the UK than in any other EU member state.

This revelation follows research by a leading trade body - the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (*ALMR*) - which represents the operators of over 15,000 British pubs and bars. It found that beer duty in Britain – which now stands at 42.5p per pint - is now:

- more than 10 times higher than in Germany and Spain;
- 8 times higher than in France and Greece;
- 6.5 times higher than in Portugal; and
- 3.6 times higher than in Italy.

The most recent rise, announced in the Budget, mean that Britain's beer duties are also much higher than in each of the Scandinavian member states – Denmark, Finland and Sweden - where drinks taxes have long been some of the world's highest.

ALMR's Chief Executive, Nick Bish, said:

“Our pubs are a great British institution. They've long been world-renowned, for all the right reasons. But now they risk becoming world-famous for the wrong ones. They're having to charge higher prices because of ever-increasing Treasury taxes; indeed, our drinks duties are now the highest anywhere in the European Union. At the same time, we're seeing a record number of pub closures. That's not a coincidence; it's cause and effect. On Europe Day, the Government should listen to Britain's pub operators and learn from our European neighbours.”

The chasm between duty rates in the UK and the rest of the EU is destined to grow even wider following the Chancellor's announcement that he will increase drinks taxes by more than the rate of inflation from 2009 to 2013, inclusive.

The new *ALMR* Chairman, Tim Sykes of Interpub, which has outlets in Amsterdam, Berlin, Bruges and Paris, as well as across Britain, said:

“It's fine that we're members of the European Union. But our drinks taxes are now anything but European. In fact, the gap between drinks duties in this

