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# Malaysia lifts ban on import of new brands of alcoholic beverages

In October 2007 the Royal Malaysian Customs temporarily suspended the issuance of new import licences for alcoholic drinks and made the conditions for renewal of existing approved import licences more restrictive. According to the Malaysian authorities, this new Decision was aimed at controlling counterfeit alcoholic beverages in the Malaysian market. In practice the Decision operated as a fully-fledged ban with no prior notice nor proposed end date. The restrictions imposed gave strong grounds for concern with regard to their compatibility with the WTO rules.

This situation was brought to the attention of the European Commission by the EU Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EUMCCI) as well as a Member State on behalf of its industry.

Following several discussions with the Malaysian authorities in both Brussels and Malaysia, as well as a joint letter from the European Commission and the EUMCCI, the Malaysian authorities finally lifted the restrictions effective from 1 July 2008. Since that time it appears that EU industry are able to freely import once more.

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