Sacre brew! Beer tax has French seething
Levy, which leaves wine uncathed, creates fears of lost sales, jobs

BY FRANCOIS DE BAXEY

PARIS — Stephanie Bouquet, the head of French microbrewery Brasserie Saint-Germain, is crying foul. Last Monday, the French government enacted a law that adds 582 million francs in excise duty on beer to bring in extra revenue. The new law has slashed the profit margins of many French brewers, she says.

The tax, which comes into effect in January, is another Maryam for brewers. It is the latest in a series of moves that have been aimed at increasing revenue and reducing the influence of the alcohol industry, following a meeting with President Francois Hollande that raised concerns, saying France's tax rate is far from the highest in Europe.

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