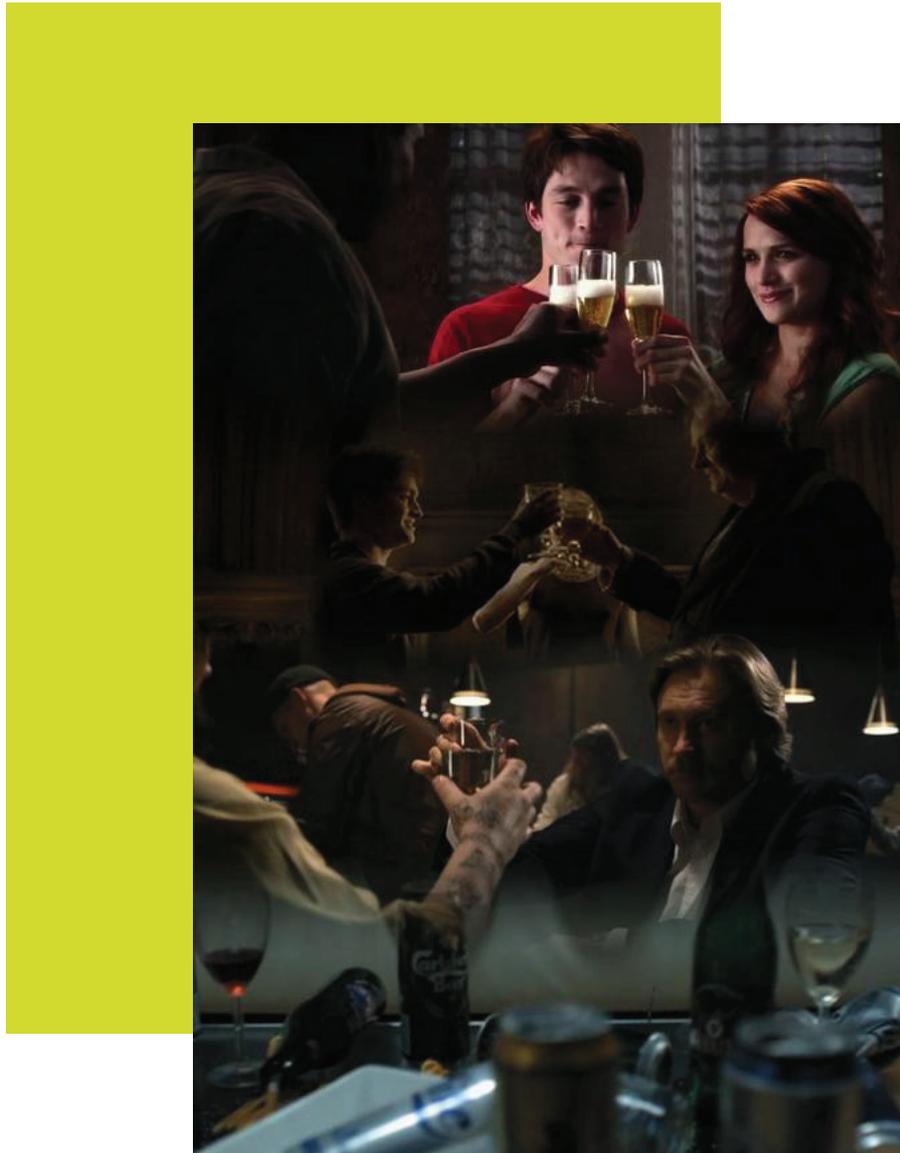


## **Movies with a tick**

**Inventory of alcohol portrayal in Europe's most popular movies**



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## **Introduction**

### **Alcohol portrayal in movies in Europe**

This trend report describes the size of alcohol portrayal in movies that have been most visited in cinemas in 27 European countries in 2009. Most of these movies are seen by numerous European adults as well as minors after release in Europe. The volume and content of alcohol portrayal in these movies give a first indication of the importance of alcohol portrayal in movies as a marketing tool by the alcohol industry in Europe.

For this research, the five movies most visited in theaters of each participating country in 2009 were analyzed. EUCAM partners from all around Europe filled in forms while watching the movies. The films were scored on the total amount of alcohol portrayal, the circumstances for drinking, brand visibility, binge drinking, drunkenness, and the age of the drinkers among other things.

The analysis shows that the portrayal of alcohol is much more prevalent in European movies than it is in Hollywood movies. While the way that alcohol is portrayed (negatively, positively or neutrally) is similar in Hollywood and European productions, the portrayal of the use of alcohol differs greatly. Both binge drinking and drunkenness appear more frequent in European movies.

### **Alcohol branding in movies as a marketing tool**

The numerous examples of movies sponsored by alcohol producers show the mutual beneficial relation between movie producers and the alcohol industry. In its 1999 report the Federal Trade Commission (Evans, 1999) in the US reported that during 1997-1998 the eight reporting alcohol companies placed alcoholic products in 233 motion pictures and in one or more episodes of 181 different television series. Additionally, the report states that "alcohol placement has occurred in films with significant appeal to teens and children; in films where the advertiser knew that the primary target market included a sizeable underage market; and on eight of the 15 television shows most popular with teens" (Evans, 1999). By showing alcoholic products in movies, the product is shown and therefore promoted to many viewers and the brand is often unconsciously but positively connected by the viewer to main characters in the movie.

Other interest groups, like 'Family First' have expressed their concerns on these activities ("TVNZ to stop alcohol adverts during family movies," 2010). The Marin Institute, a watchdog of the alcohol industry, raised their concern of Carlsberg's brand promotion in the 'Spider-Man' movies, a film highly attractive to minors ("Summer Time: No Vacation From Alcohol Promotions and Problems," 2004). In 2006, a coalition was aligned of interest groups to stop Coors Brewing Company from using the movie 'Scary Movie 4' as a marketing tool to promote its beer brand to millions of teens ("Watchdogs Stop Coors' Co-Promotion with 'Scary Movie 4'," 2006). The concerns on product placement in movies can be explained when the scientific evidence of the effects of youth exposure to alcohol portrayal in movies is taken into account.

### **The effect of exposure to alcohol portrayal in movies**

Scientific studies suggest that exposure to alcohol marketing affects young peoples' drinking behavior in the long term and the short term (Anderson, de Bruijn, Angus, Gordon, & Hastings, 2009) (Engels, Hermans, van Baaren, Hollenstein, & Bot, 2009; Smith & Foxcroft, 2009). Similar findings are found when studying the effect of exposure to alcohol portrayal in movies. A higher exposure to alcohol portrayal in movies increases the likelihood of onset of drinking and binge drinking (Hanewinkel & Sargent, 2009) (Sargent, Tanski, & Gibson, 2007) (Dal Cin, Worth, Dalton, & Sargent, 2008). Recently conducted experimental studies also suggest a direct effect of seeing alcohol in movies. Seeing people drinking on the screen makes people feel like drinking. Participants assigned to experimental conditions with substantial alcohol exposure in movies or commercials, consume more alcohol than other participants (Engels, et al., 2009) (Koordeman, Anschutz, Van Baaren, & Engels, 2009). The experiment by Engels et al (2009) suggests that, within a period of one hour, those adolescents in the condition with alcohol portrayal in movies drank on average 0.65 glasses more than those in the condition with no alcohol portrayal.

## Analysis

Countries participating in this analysis were: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The top five movies overlapped with each other more or less in most countries. For example in 22 of the 27 participating countries 'Avatar' filled the top spot of the most popular movies. For an overview of which movies were analyzed and in which country they were most popular as well as the amount of alcohol portrayals, see the appendix.

Among the top five of the participating countries where many family movies such as 'Avatar', 'Harry Potter and the Halfblood Prince', 'Ice Age: Dawn of the dinosaurs', 'Up' and 'Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa'. In total, eight movies were accessible for all ages, which is a quarter of the total analyzed movies.

Among the age restricted movies (thirteen years and older) that were analyzed where: '2012', 'The Twilight Saga: New Moon', 'Slumdog Millionaire', 'Angels & Demons' and 'The Hangover'. Above mentioned movies are all Hollywood productions, the different top fives however also included European national productions, such as: 'Komt een vrouw bij de dokter' (NL), 'Wickie und die starken Männer' (GE), 'Bobule 2' (CZ) and 'Rööperi' (FI). Also analyzed was a trilogy of European productions, namely the so-called 'Millennium trilogy' based on the books of Stieg Larsson, which were produced jointly in multiple European countries. Overall seventeen movies (47%) of 32 analyzed movies were European productions.

### Volume of alcohol portrayal

The popular movies analyzed contained an average amount of five scenes in which alcohol was depicted. Some interesting results are visible when the European films are compared to those from Hollywood. First of all, seven of the 17 Hollywood movies (22% of all analyzed movies) contained no alcohol portrayal at all. In contrast, all of the European movies depicted alcohol or referred to it in the dialogue. This is surprising on both sides, as not all of the 'alcohol free' Hollywood movies were aimed at youngsters. Among them was 'Angels & Demons', the prequel to the 'Davinci Code'. On the other side of the spectrum however, the European movies containing alcohol or references to alcohol, are in some cases aimed at children. Such is the case in both the German production 'Wickie und die starken Männer' and the French 'Le Petit Nicolas', which both contain five scenes showing alcohol or referring to it.

Back in Hollywood a movie franchise which is popular among all ages but even more so with the teens and pre-teens is 'Harry Potter'. The 2009 installment 'Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince' contains nine instances of alcohol portrayal. Both students and teachers of Harry Potter's school for wizards can be seen drinking various alcoholic substances in multiple shots. The Motion Picture Society of America rated the film as Parental Guidance (imdb.com, 2009), so it is very feasible that these scenes were viewed by many youngsters.

*(Right, three examples of alcohol portrayal in 'Harry Potter and the Halfblood Prince'.)*



Another striking difference between European and Hollywood movies is the amount of scenes per movie depicting alcohol or referring to it. In Hollywood productions an average amount of five scenes containing alcohol portrayal were found, while in the European movies this was an average of seven. Seven Hollywood movies shared the least amount of scenes with alcohol in it, as before mentioned they did not contain any portrayal of alcohol. The European movie with the least amount of alcohol portrayals was the Greek film 'Agora', with four scenes. The highest number of alcohol portrayals of the Hollywood movies was found in 'Inglorious Bastards' (eighteen scenes), in Europe this place is taken by the Finnish production 'Rööperi' containing 37 depictions or references to alcohol. The second place of the Hollywood movies was filled by the horror movie 'The Final Destination 4' (eleven scenes), runner up of the European movies was the Icelandic 'Bjarnfreðarson' (32 scenes).

### **Importance of alcohol in movies**

The prominence of alcohol to the plots of the analyzed movies is remarkable. The European movie with the highest amount of scenes depicting or referring to alcohol ('Rööperi') is a crime drama about bootleggers in Helsinki during the 1960's and 70's. With this subject matter it is understandable that the movie contains a lot of alcohol portrayal. The fourth place of European movies with the most depictions of alcohol (29) is held by the Czech movie 'Bobule 2'. This movie revolves around a winery, which again makes for a good explanation for the amount of alcohol in the movie. Yet, Hollywood films show that even when the plot revolves greatly around the abuse of alcohol and drugs, such as is the case in 'The Hangover', the volume of alcohol portrayal does not necessarily have to be large. With only eight scenes, of which two refer to the use of alcohol, this whole movie tells the story of a group of friends recovering on the day after a bachelor party has gone wrong. Another salient detail is that the plot of Hollywood's number one film with the highest number of alcohol portrayals ('Inglorious Bastards') takes place almost exclusively in Europe. Perhaps this might indicate the relationship of Europeans and alcohol compared to that of Americans and alcohol.



*(Above a shot from Quentin Tarantino's 'Inglorious Bastards' where a female spy is drinking and with a group of Nazi's in a Beer cellar.)*



*(Above a shot from Rööperi where the gang of bootleggers is hanging out, drinking their own product.)*

## Alcohol themed product placement

In most of the movies that were analyzed the brands of the alcohol depicted or referred to were never shown or spoken of. Of the Hollywood movies three patently showed brand labels, namely Latrobe Brewing Company's Rolling Rock lager in 'Yes Man', and Jack Daniels in '2012' and Jägermeister in 'The Hangover'. In 'The Final Destination' a reference is made to Diageo's Johnie Walker whisky. Of the European productions, two movies that showed multiple brands have been found. 'Bjarnfreðarson', the European movie with the second highest amount of alcohol portrayal in it, contains eight portrayals of Thule beer (Vífílfell), six portrayals of Carlsberg Beer (the Carlsberg Group), six portrayals of Víking Gylltur (Vífílfell), five portrayals of Viking Lite (Vífílfell) and one portrayals of both Kahlua (Pernod Ricard) and Southern Comfort (Brown-Forman Corporation). The other clearly placed logo's of alcohol brands where found in the Greek production 'Nisos'. Here we could see both Amstel beer by Heineken and Kaiser beer by the Carlsberg Group. All in all, 12.5% of the examined movies contained alcohol promotions and almost ten percent of the alcohol portrayals are alcohol promotions.

*(Right, product placement of alcoholic beverages from top to bottom 'The Hangover' (Jägermeister), 'Yes Man' (Rolling Rock Lager), '2012' (Jack Daniels) and two examples of product placement in the Icelandic production 'Bjarnfreðarson' (Viking and Viking Lite).)*



## Who does the drinking?

As for whom is drinking in films, the most striking results involve the age of the drinkers. While only two films show underage drinking ('Harry Potter and the Halfblood Prince' and 'Slumdog Millionaire', both Hollywood productions) most drinking characters in both European and Hollywood films are in their 30's or 40's. In the majority of the movies the drinking is most dominantly done by the main character, while often in company with side characters. There does not seem to be a great imbalance between the sexes when it comes to alcohol portrayal in movies, though it is apparent that women seem to drink more often when in the company of men.

## Why they are drinking

As for the circumstances of the drinking, many of them are very typical (for example drinking in bars, at parties, in nightclubs or restaurants) and represent many real life drinking situations. Also much drinking is done in a romantic context, or between friends. Another part of the drinking seems to be plot driven such as taking a sip after finding a dead body, while fighting, during a negotiation or after the final phone call with your son before the world ends. Most striking was the prevalence of drinking while working, this was found twice in the Hollywood movies examined ('From Paris with Love' and 'Sherlock Holmes'). While in the selection of European movies seven instances of drinking while working were found. These were mostly writers and journalists, working from home.

## How they are drinking

In the European films, 70% of the alcohol portrayal is presented in a neutral context, against 26% of alcohol portrayal in a positive light and 3% that is presented as negative. In Hollywood movies the neutral portrayal amounts to 61% of all the alcohol portrayal, against 33% of positive alcohol portrayal and 4% of negative alcohol portrayal. In total eight movies (24%) depict binge drinking, half of them European. However in Hollywood movies binge drinking is seen eight times, and referred to once (4,8% of all the alcohol portrayals). In the European movies fifteen instances of binge drinking were found (8% of all the alcohol portrayals). This means that 13% of alcohol portrayal in the selected movies is that of four or more glasses during one occasion.



(Above: An example of negative alcohol portrayal, from 'The Final Destination 4'. Where an angry drunk tries to get revenge.)

Except for binge drinking, the amount of alcohol consumed was not researched. A good approximation of this however can be gathered by looking at the state of drunkenness that characters are in. This shows a decidedly big difference between European films and Hollywood films. Hollywood movies contained thirteen scenes depicting either characters getting tipsy, drunk or ultimately passing out from alcohol, against 54 in European movies. What also differed was the amount of depictions of the different states of drunkenness; Hollywood movies showed four scenes with characters getting tipsy, against 27 scenes in European films (respectively 6% & 40% of the amount of intoxication portrayals); characters got drunk in eight scenes from Hollywood (12%), while the same happened in 22 scenes from Europe (33%); and one scene portrayed a character passing out in Hollywood movies (1%), whereas this happened in five scenes from European movies (8%).

## Conclusion

Alcohol portrayal in movies is more pervasive in European productions, then it is in Hollywood movies. The average number of alcohol portrayals in Hollywood films is five, whereas European motion pictures on average show seven alcohol portrayals per film. All the European movies that were analyzed contained alcohol portrayals, even those aimed at children. On the other hand, of the Hollywood movies that were analyzed, eight did not contain any portrayal of alcohol, even though they were not all family oriented movies.

Some of the European films had plots which revolved around the production or sale of alcohol, making the large number of alcohol portrayals seemingly reasonable. However, Hollywood shows that a film in which the use and abuse of alcohol is a central theme, can come about with a much more moderate amount of alcohol portrayals.

While the alcohol flowed freely in much of the most popular films of Europe, product placement of alcohol was not used in many productions. One eighth of all the researched movies contained alcohol portrayals with overtly recognizable logo's and brand names. One tenth of all the alcohol portrayals that were analyzed consists of product placement and as such are alcohol promotions. The brands that were found during the analysis are: Rolling Rock lager, Jack Daniels, Jägermeister, Thule beer, Carlsberg Beer, Víking Gylltur, Viking Lite, Kahlua, Southern Comfort, Amstel beer and Kaiser beer

Alcohol is portrayed in strongly similar ways in European and Hollywood productions. Between 61% (Hollywood) and 70% (Europe) of the portrayals are neutral; between 26% (Europe) and 33% (Hollywood) are shown in a positive context; while only 4% (Europe) and 6% (Hollywood) paint a negative picture of alcohol.

Finally, 36% of all alcohol portrayals in the researched movies show the intoxicating effects of alcohol (grouped as tipsiness, drunkenness and passing out of alcohol). Of this, no less than 81% comes from European productions. Furthermore, one percent of the portrayals of intoxication shows characters passing out from alcohol in Hollywood films, in the European movies, this percentage is eight times higher. Also twelve percent of the intoxication portrayals consists of drunkenness in Hollywood films, in European productions drunkenness is shown almost three times more often.

*(Below a shot from 'The Hangover', where a group of friends discover their hotel suite is ruined, and full of alcohol after a bachelor party.)*



## **Recommendations**

A large amount of alcohol portrayal has been found in the movies examined. Research suggests that watching movies with a high amount of scenes depicting alcohol will increase young people's drinking behavior. In order to protect European youngsters against a large amount of exposure to alcohol portrayal in movies, several policy measures can be given.

### **Banning product placement in movies**

Product placement of alcohol in movies as a marketing tool is not regulated in European law. Even countries with a stringent alcohol marketing regulation like Sweden and Norway, do not regulate the broadcast of international movies that are sponsored by alcohol producers. The FTC report of 1999 already indicated the importance of product placement in Hollywood movies by the alcohol industry (Evans, 1999). The FTC concludes that due to the industry's interest, voluntary rules by the industry are not able to minimize alcohol product placement in movies (Evans, 1999). The number of scenes depicting alcohol brands suggests that also in the popular European movies analyzed, some examples have been found of movies that might have been used by the alcohol industry as a marketing tool.

The international circulation of popular European movies like 'The Millennium Trilogy' emphasizes the need for regulation at a European level. The Master Settlement Agreement in the US prohibits tobacco companies from paying movie producers to use cigarettes in movies and can be seen as an example of how to regulate and to prohibit product placement of alcohol in movies. Similar regulations can be found in countries like India and Thailand.

The researcher Chapman (2008) argues that there are legally important differences between commercial speech (such as product placement in movies) and free speech of the sort contained in cultural expression like movies and literature. Any attempt to equate them as a basis for regulation will face ethical and political obstacles and will fail in most nations (Chapman, 2008). He concludes that where product placement can be shown to be a direct result of the industry's promotional efforts, the matter crosses the line and can be regulated.

The large majority of alcohol portrayal seen in the movies examined might not be a direct result of the alcohol industry's marketing efforts but simply an artistic expression by the movie makers. By introducing a rating system, transparency of movies depicting non-branded alcohol portrayal might be a first step to protect young people.

### **Rating system (R-rating)**

An R-rating system which takes alcohol behavior into account might be a helpful tool to policy makers, cinema owners, television stations and parents to protect minors from being exposed to these movies. A similar rating system is in place in most European countries and the US for drug portrayal in movies, but is missing for tobacco and alcohol portrayal. Policy makers can use the R-rating system as a tool to create policy to limit access of young people to movies that depict substance use like alcohol use. Parents can use the R-rating system as a guideline for parental monitoring of media use. First studies have indicated that parental restrictions on watching these R-rated movies will decrease and delay the initiation of alcohol use (Dalton et al., 2006) and smoking (Dalton, et al., 2006; Sargent et al., 2004).

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## Appendix: Number of scenes with alcohol (#) in 5 most visited cinema movies in 2009

<b>Austria</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
3. Wickie und die starken Männer...	5	3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	3. 2012	4
4. Harry Potter and the Half Blood...	9	4. Up	0	4. Angels & Demons	0
5. Angels & Demons	0	5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0	5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0
<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Män som hatar kvinnor...	11	2. Avatar	0
3. Libáš jako buh	30	3. Flickan som lekte med elden...	15	3. 2012	4
4. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	4. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	4. Bolt	0
5. 2 Bobule	29	5. Luftsloppet som sprängdes...	12	5. Inglourious Basterds	18
<b>Finland</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9
4. Röoperi	37	4. Le Petit Nicolas	5	4. Angels & Demons	0
5. Up	0	5. 2012	4	5. Wickie und die starken Männer	5
<b>Greece</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Iceland</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. 2012	4	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Bjarnfreðarson	32
3. Nisos	7	3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	3. The Hangover	8
4. Angels & Demons	0	4. The Hangover	8	4. Män som hatar kvinnor...	11
5. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0	5. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood ...	9	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Avatar	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
3. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	3. Natale a Beverly Hills	13	3. 2012	4
4. Up	0	4. Sherlock Holmes	8	4. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0
5. Slumdog Millionaire	5	5. Angels and Demons	0	5. Angels & Demons	0
<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Norway</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Avatar	0	2. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
3. 2012	4	3. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	3. Män som hatar kvinnor	11
4. Yes Man	9	4. Komt een vrouw bij de dokter	17	4. Harry Potter and the Half Blood...	9
5. Up	0	5. Up	0	5. Flickan som lekte med elden	15
<b>Poland</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
3. Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	0	3. Up	0	3. 2012	4
4. 2012	4	4. 2012	4	4. From Paris with Love	5
5. Kochaj i tancz	10	5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0	5. The Final Destination 4	12
<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	2. Avatar	0	2. Up	0
3. Harry Potter and the Half Blood...	9	3. Angels and Demons	0	3. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
4. Janosik. Prawdziwa historia	11	4. Couples Retreat	7	4. Agora (Mists of Time)	4
5. The Final Destination 4	12	5. 2012	4	5. The Twilight Saga: New Moon	0
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Avatar	0	1. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0	1. Avatar	0
2. Män som hatar kvinnor	11	2. Harry Potter And The Half Blood ...	0	2. Harry Potter And The Half Blood ...	9
3. Flickan som lekte med elden	15	3. Slumdog Millionaire	5	3. Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	0
4. Harry Potter and the Half Blood ...	9	4. Angels and Demons	0	4. Up	0
5. Luftsloppet som sprängdes ...	12	5. 2012	4	5. Slumdog Millionaire	5

## Summary

Scientific studies suggest that seeing alcohol in movies makes youngsters drink earlier and drink more extensively. By looking at the volume of product placement in movies and TV programs, alcohol producers seem to be aware of the strong impact of this kind of marketing in films.

This EUCAM trend report describes the findings of an inventory of alcohol portrayal in popular cinema movies in 27 European countries. It shows that especially in movies that have been produced in Europe, alcohol is displayed rather often. Even among films aimed at children. Characteristics of this alcohol portrayal are described in the EUCAM trend report. Finally, recommendations for policy are provided.

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