

# **ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP IN FORMULA ONE: A DANGEROUS COCKTAIL**



**MAY 2015**

**A FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF 2014 MONACO GRAND PRIX  
AND ALCOHOL SPONSORSHIP OF FORMULA ONE TEAMS**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alcohol sponsorship of sport is a contested issue, with the major medical and public health institutions in Europe calling for a ban, similar to the ban on tobacco sports sponsorship. This report reviews the available literature on the relationship between exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship and consumption. A number of studies from high income countries conclude that exposure to alcohol sponsorship is associated with significantly increased rates of hazardous drinking amongst schoolchildren and adult sportspeople.

The current EU policy framework for regulating alcohol marketing, the Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), stipulates that alcohol advertising should not link alcohol consumption to driving. However, an analysis of the F1 website identified three teams with alcohol company sponsorship agreements: William Martini Racing (Martini), Force India (Smirnoff and Kingfisher) and McLaren Honda (Johnnie Walker). In each of the three teams the sponsor's alcohol brand is highly visible on the uniforms for drivers and crew and on the team cars.

Further analysis of the alcohol sponsored team websites discovered that the risk of drink-driving is absent from two teams' promotional material (Force India and Williams Martini Racing). One team (McLaren Honda) has produced a campaign promoting greater awareness of drink driving, however the content of this initiative sits on the alcohol brand (Johnnie Walker), sponsor's Facebook page and could therefore be seen more as a branding exercise.

An alcohol brand frequency analysis conducted during the F1 Monaco Grand Prix 2014 race shows there were on average 11 promotional references to alcohol per minute. All references during the race were for spirits and vermouths, predominately Johnnie Walker and Martini – placed strategically at locations with relatively lengthy camera exposure.

**The authors of this report concluded that F1 racing has the highest level of alcohol brand exposure of any sports event reported in peer reviewed literature, with spirit and vermouth brands predominate. They argue that such exposure, during the world's most prominent motor racing event, contradicts the spirit of the current EU regulations on alcohol marketing.**

## INTRODUCTION

Alcohol sponsorship of sport is a contested issue, with the major medical and public health institutions in Europe calling for a ban, similar to the ban on tobacco sports sponsorship. Alcohol companies currently sponsor several high profile tournaments including the FA, EUEFA and World Cups, Rugby Union and Formula 1, and concerns have been raised about the high volume of child viewers. Bans are in place in France and Norway, and the governments of Ireland and New Zealand are considering proposals.

This report assesses the level of alcohol sponsorship in Formula One (F1), with an emphasis on the exposure of alcohol brands during the Monaco Grand Prix 2014. The report aims to draw attention to the high level of exposure alcohol brands currently receive during motor racing, and highlight how this may be problematic not only because of the links to drink driving, but also in terms of the marketing practices employed which contradict the spirit of the European Audio Visual Media Services Directive.

In the first part of the report, a literature review presents what the evidence says about the relationship between exposure to alcohol sponsorship and hazardous drinking amongst schoolchildren and adult sportspeople. The second part describes how alcohol brands are currently promoted via the sponsorship of three F1 teams (Martini Williams Racing, Force India and Maclaren Honda). The third part presents a frequency analysis of alcohol brand impressions during the Monaco Grand Prix 2014.

This report is the result of a pilot project spring 2015. The partners in the project have been the European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Belgium), Institute of Alcohol Studies (United Kingdom) and Monash University (Australia).

## BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

Alcohol is the third biggest risk factor in Europe for non-communicable diseases, ill health and premature death. Europe is the heaviest drinking region of the world. Consumption levels in some countries are around twice the global average<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, drink-driving is one of the three biggest killers on EU roads. Around one accident in four can be linked to alcohol consumption, and European Transport Safety Council has estimated that at least 6.500 deaths could have been prevented yearly if drink-driving laws were obeyed<sup>2</sup>.

The World Health Organization (WHO) lists restrictions on price, availability and marketing of alcohol as the three 'best buy' policies for reducing harm<sup>3</sup>. WHO and the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation and Development (OECD) recommend governments take action to protect children and young people from exposure to alcohol marketing<sup>4</sup>.

The EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) is the policy instrument regulating advertisement of alcoholic beverages in Europe, and advertisement of alcohol is addressed as a concern in the Directive. Article 22 (b) of the AVMSD states "Television advertising (...) shall not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced physical performance or to driving"<sup>5</sup>. The marketing and advertising industry also addresses alcohol marketing in their voluntary codes: The European Sponsorship Association (ESA) gives recommendations and guidelines for voluntary codes for the sector, and several alcohol producers are members of ESA<sup>6</sup>. Article nine of the ESA Guidelines for Rights Holders Regarding Alcohol Sponsorship states: "Particular care should be taken of alcohol sponsorship where motorsport is involved and, in such cases, appropriate messages regarding responsible drinking should be communicated".

Eurocare has raised the issue of alcohol sponsorship in F1 to the Federation International de l'Automobile (FIA)<sup>7</sup>, which is the regulator of International Motor Sport and has commercial interest in F1<sup>8</sup>. However, in the response to Eurocare, FIA's President Jean Todt claims FIA has no part in the management of commercial rights of F1.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Status Report on Alcohol and Health in 35 European Countries 2013

<sup>2</sup> <http://etsc.eu/drink-driving-towards-zero-tolerance/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/who\\_bestbuys\\_to\\_prevent\\_ncds.pdf](http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/who_bestbuys_to_prevent_ncds.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/health/oecdoutlinesactionforgovernmentstotackleheavycostofharmfuldrinking.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:en:PDF>

<sup>6</sup> <http://sponsorship.org/membership/current-members/>

<sup>7</sup> [http://eurocare.org/library/updates/an\\_exchange\\_of\\_letters\\_between\\_eurocare\\_and\\_the\\_fia](http://eurocare.org/library/updates/an_exchange_of_letters_between_eurocare_and_the_fia)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pitpass.com/50414/Ecclestone-gives-75m-F1-stake-to-the-FIA>

# ALCOHOL SPORTS SPONSORSHIP AND HARMFUL DRINKING AMONGST SCHOOLCHILDREN AND SPORTSPEOPLE: WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

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## **Impact of alcohol marketing**

There is strong and consistent evidence to show a link between exposure to alcohol marketing and increased alcohol consumption amongst young people: a number of systematic reviews have concluded exposure to alcohol advertising increases the likelihood that young people start drinking at an earlier age, and to drink more if they already use alcohol<sup>91011</sup>. Many studies have measured the impact of advertising on TV, radio, print media and billboards, however to date few have investigated the effects of alcohol sports sponsorship.

## **Alcohol sports sponsorship: Current landscape**

Alcohol sponsorship of sport is currently a hotly contested issue, with the major medical and public health institutions in Europe calling for a ban, similar to the ban on tobacco sports sponsorship: Alcohol companies currently sponsor several high profile tournaments including the FA, EUEFA and World Cups, Rugby Union and Formula 1, and concerns have been raised about the high volume of child viewers<sup>1213</sup>. Bans are in place in France and Norway, and the governments of Ireland and New Zealand are considering proposals<sup>1415</sup>.

## **Impact of sports sponsorship: what does the evidence say?**

A number of studies have examined the evidence to show a relationship between exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship and harmful or hazardous alcohol consumption. Several studies have looked at the impact of direct alcohol sponsorship (i.e. being in receipt of alcohol sponsorship at the team, individual or club level)

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<sup>9</sup> Anderson et al (2009) 'Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use', *Alcohol & Alcoholism* 44:3

<sup>10</sup> Smith & Foxcroft (2009) 'The effect of alcohol advertising, marketing and portrayal of drinking behavior in young people' *BMC Public Health*, 9(1)51

<sup>11</sup> Meier et al (2008) 'Independent review of the effects of alcohol pricing and promotion', Sheffield, 2008

<sup>12</sup> [Protect Children – stop alcohol sponsorship of sport](#), letter to the Guardian 26/12/2014

<sup>13</sup> [Alcohol advertising in Formula 1: An irresponsible message](#), open letter from members of Eurocare to President of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile.

<sup>14</sup> House of Oireachtas (2013) Joint Committee on Transport and Communications [report on sponsorship of sports by the alcoholic drinks industry](#)

<sup>15</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Health (2014) '[Ministerial Forum on Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship: Recommendations on Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship](#)'

on the drinking behaviours of sportspeople<sup>161718</sup>, and other studies have looked at the impact of exposure to alcohol sponsorship via the viewing of sporting events on children's drinking<sup>1920</sup>. All studies indicate exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship is associated with increased levels of consumption and risky drinking amongst schoolchildren and sportspeople, although the effect size varies across the studies.

### **Alcohol sports sponsorship and schoolchildren's drinking**

Two studies examined the impact of indirect exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship (i.e. awareness or viewing of alcohol sponsored sports) on alcohol consumption amongst schoolchildren. A study of schoolchildren aged 14-15yrs in Wales (n=294) found that awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship was linked to a 17% higher chance of boys, and 13% higher chance of girls getting drunk at the weekend (Davies, 2009). When the same schoolchildren had both positive attitudes towards alcohol and awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship, the chances of getting drunk at the weekend were 26% higher for boys and 27% higher for girls.

A much larger study of schoolchildren aged 13-14yrs (n=6,651) from four European countries – Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Poland – found that exposure to alcohol branded sports sponsorship, measured via frequency of viewing alcohol sponsored football championships, was associated with an 11% higher chance of increased positive alcohol expectancies and a 7% higher chance of schoolchildren drinking in the last 30 days (De Brujin et al, 2012). This was a longitudinal study that measured drinking behaviours and attitudes a year after the reported exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship.

### **Alcohol sponsorship and sportspeople's drinking**

A number of studies have examined the impact on sportspeople of being in receipt of alcohol sponsorship at the individual, team or club level. All studies measured self-reported consumption levels using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), a screening tool devised by the World Health Organisation to

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<sup>16</sup> O'Brien and Kypri (2008), 'Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking among sportspeople' *Addiction*,103(12)

<sup>17</sup> O'Brien et al (2011) 'Alcohol industry and non-alcohol industry sponsorship of sportspeople and drinking', *Alcohol and Alcoholism*,vol46:2

<sup>18</sup> O'Brien et al (2014) 'Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking in UK university students who play sport', *Addiction*,109:1647-1654

<sup>19</sup> Davies (2009), 'An investigation into the effects of sporting involvement and alcohol sponsorship on underage drinking' *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*,11(1)

<sup>20</sup> De Brujin et al (2012) [Report on the impact of European alcohol marketing exposure on youth alcohol expectancies and youth drinking](#), AMPHORA report

detect early signs of hazardous and harmful drinking and identify mild dependence<sup>21</sup>. AUDIT scores of 8 or more are defined as reporting hazardous drinking.

A study of sportspeople from several UK universities (n=2,048) found that those receiving alcohol industry sponsorship were 4 times more likely to report hazardous drinking than non-sponsored sportspeople (O'Brien et al, 2014). A similar study conducted in community sports settings in New Zealand found that athletes who were in receipt of alcohol industry sponsorship reported significantly higher AUDIT scores (average 2.4 points higher) than non-sponsored athletes (O'Brien and Kypri, 2008).

In Australia, a study at university sports settings found that athletes in receipt of alcohol industry sponsorship reported significantly higher AUDIT scores (average 1.67 points higher) than non-sponsored athletes, and rates of hazardous drinking were significantly higher amongst alcohol-sponsored sportspeople (68.6%) compared to non-sponsored sportspeople (58.6%) (O'Brien et al, 2011).

### **Strength of the evidence**

All the surveys in this review adjusted results for known predictors of drinking, such as age, gender and location. The five studies described found a significant association between alcohol sports sponsorship and increased levels of drinking – i.e. results that can be relied upon to explain that increased drinking was linked to alcohol sponsorship and not to chance alone.

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<sup>21</sup> Babor T, Higgins-Biddle J, Saunders J, Monteiro M (2001) 'The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, Guidelines for Use in Primary Care', Second Edition, Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, World Health Organization.

## References

Studies included in review:

1. O'Brien and Kypri (2008), 'Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking among sportspeople' *Addiction*,103(12):1961-6.
2. Davies (2009), 'An investigation into the effects of sporting involvement and alcohol sponsorship on underage drinking' *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*,11(1)pp.25-45.
3. O'Brien et al (2011) "Alcohol industry and non-alcohol industry sponsorship of sportspeople and drinking", *Alcohol and Alcoholism*,vol46:2
4. De Bruijn et al (2012) Report on the impact of European alcohol marketing exposure on youth alcohol expectancies and youth drinking, AMPHORA report, accessed on 17/11/2014 at [http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/19722/1/AMPHORA\\_WP4\\_longitudinal\\_advertising\\_survey.pdf](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/19722/1/AMPHORA_WP4_longitudinal_advertising_survey.pdf)
5. O'Brien et al (2014) "Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking in UK university students who play sport", *Addiction*,109:1647-1654

## DOCUMENTATION OF ALCOHOL SPONSORSHIP OF FORMULA ONE TEAMS

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This chapter documents the exposure of alcohol brands via sponsorship agreements of several F1 teams. The descriptions outlined below demonstrate how sports sponsorship deals perform a key marketing function, and show how, the current sponsorship agreements for three F1 teams facilitate the advertisement of alcohol brands both on and off the racing track.

The Formula 1 webpage [www.formula1.com](http://www.formula1.com) provides an overview of all competing teams, their team names, sponsors and promotional images of their cars and drivers<sup>22</sup>. From this webpage, it was identified that three out of the ten teams currently competing receive sponsorship from alcohol producers. These teams are (i) Williams Martini Racing sponsored by Martini, (ii) Force India sponsored by Smirnoff and Kingfisher, and (iii) McLaren Honda sponsored by Johnnie Walker. On the basis of these findings, these three teams' webpages and Facebook account were analysed further.

**Williams Martini Racing**<sup>23</sup> An image analysis of the Williams Martini Racing cars and uniform shows that this team awards its sponsor, Martini, a high level of brand visibility. The sponsor's name and brand are incorporated into the team name and the colours and stylistic elements used in its logo, which are prominently displayed on the team's cars, helmets and uniforms for drivers and crew. This prominent display of the sponsor's brand will naturally lead to a high degree of exposure of the Martini alcohol brand, not only during the race but also in all communication on e.g. Facebook.



The Williams Martini Racing team also publicises its corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy with three focuses, one of which is road safety. However, as part of this road safety promotion, no reference is made to the issue of risk of drink driving.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.formula1.com/content/fom-website/en/championship/teams.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.williamsf1.com/>

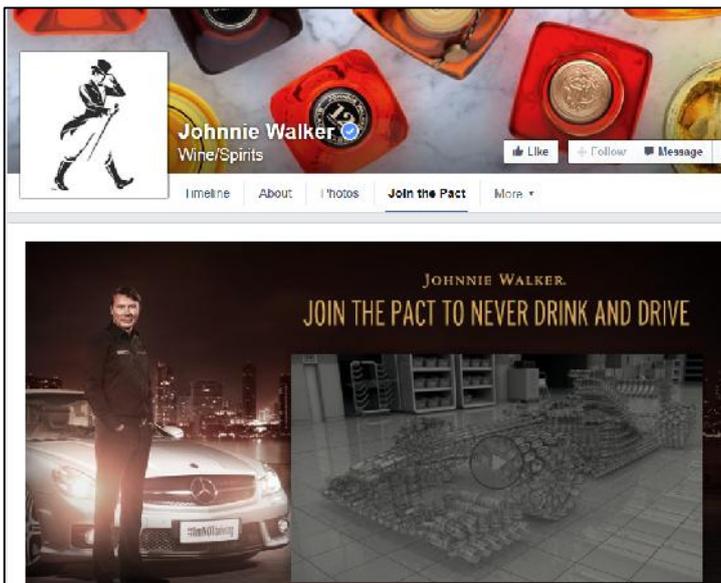
## Force India<sup>24</sup>

Force India, similar to Martini Williams Racing, awards its sponsors Smirnoff and Kingfisher beer a high degree of brand visibility by including each of the sponsors' logos on the team cars and official uniforms for drivers and crew members' suit. However, unlike Martini Williams Racing, Force India does not reference their sponsors in their team name, or in their Facebook profile picture.



## McLaren Honda<sup>25 26</sup>

Of the three teams in receipt of alcohol sponsorship, McLaren Honda could be described as the most discrete in terms of exposure of its sponsor's brand Jonnie Walker in team merchandise, including cars and uniforms. However, an analysis of McLaren Honda's promotional materials online shows that this team has



developed a long relationship with its sponsor and presents highly branded promotional campaign materials featuring both F1 and the alcohol sponsor. An example of such promotions of the Johnnie Walker brand includes the McLaren Honda CSR campaign on road safety. The 'Join the Pact (to never drink and drive)' campaign displayed on the team's Facebook page is in fact an area of the Johnnie Walker Facebook page, and would therefore be better defined as a marketing exercise than awareness campaign.

When documenting the presence of alcohol brands as part of their sponsorship of F1 teams, it is evident that the sponsorship leads to a high degree of exposure of alcohol brands in all their communication and other visual appearances as a F1 team, both on and off the racetrack.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.forceindiaf1.com/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.mclaren.com/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/McLaren.Racing?ref=profile>

# ALCOHOL MARKETING IN TELEVISED FORMULA 1 MOTOR RACING: A FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF 2014 MONACO GRAND PRIX

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## Background

Formula 1 has an approximate TV viewing audience of 500 million worldwide. Formula 1 is therefore a valuable platform for the marketing of products to a diverse and global audience and consumer base. Anecdotally, alcohol advertising and sponsorship appears common in Formula 1 racing, however, to date there has been no research on the extent and nature of alcohol advertising in this arena. The present research sought to establish the extent of alcohol advertising in, arguably, Formula 1's marquee race, the Monaco Grand Prix.

## Methods

Live coverage of the Formula One Grand Prix, held in Monaco 25<sup>th</sup> May 2014 (broadcast internationally by Sky Sports) was recorded in its entirety. There was 284 minutes of TV coverage including pre-race build up (93 min), the race (109 min) and the post-race analysis (82 min).

The coding framework for the study employed similar methods as to previous alcohol sponsorship and advertising research,<sup>1-8</sup> and captured all verbal and visual references to alcohol during the whole broadcast. Specifically, the coding framework coded/counted individual instances of alcohol marketing material on trackside signage (e.g., fences/barriers); track surfaces; audience seating areas; gantries; free standing signs or flags; Formula 1 cars; drivers uniforms; crew uniforms; spectators clothing; digital overlays; alcohol advertising and sponsorships in commercial breaks (frequency and duration); and other references to alcohol not covered by the categories above. Visual occurrences received a single count for each instance they were on screen.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of coding, the TV coverage was coded independently by two trained coders using the play, pause, review method.<sup>1,2</sup> Inter-rater reliability of the judges' scores was established by summing the frequency of references to alcohol within each 5 minute time period for each judge then using Intra-class correlations to establish the reliability between coders. The intra-class correlation was  $r$

=.96, indicating high agreement and reliability in coding. Any remaining count differences were reconciled by between coder agreement on the presence or absence of an instance of alcohol marketing material.

## **Results**

There were 1352 identified instances of alcohol advertising and sponsorship messages from the entire 284 minute broadcast (see Table 1). Of these, 74 (5.5%) occurred in the pre-race broadcast segment (average of 0.8 per min). The majority (87%) of instances of alcohol advertising and sponsorship occurred during the race, with 1177 coded instances (average of 10.8 instances per min). There were 101 (7.5%) post-race instances of alcohol advertising and sponsorship (1.2 per min).

All references to alcohol during the race were for spirits and vermouths, predominantly Johnnie Walker and Martini (see Table 1). Pre-and post-race references included beer (n = 8), spirits/vermouths (n = 134), wine (n = 32) and alcopops/mixers (n = 1). There were no references to cider. References to wine occurred mostly during coverage of end-of-race celebrations when drivers on the winner's presentation podium were presented with and used the champagne.

The location of references to alcohol during the race (see Table 2) occurred predominantly on track-side signage (1074), gantries (54) and on the car (48). There were no verbal references to alcohol. There were three alcohol advertisements during commercial breaks that each lasted between 18 and 40 seconds in duration. All three alcohol advertisements were for beers and occurred during the post-race analysis.

**Table 1. Count and corresponding percentage of alcohol advertising and sponsorship within each broadcast segment and within each location category.**

Location	Pre-race		Race		Post-race		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Fence signage</b>	48	64.9	1074	91.2	61	60.4	1183	87.5
<b>Gantry signage</b>	3	4.1	54	4.6	2	2.0	59	4.4
<b>Spectators</b>	2	2.7	-	-	-	-	2	0.1
<b>Crew/other uniform</b>	3	4.1	-	-	8	7.9	11	0.8
<b>Driver uniform</b>	5	6.8	1	0.1	6	5.9	12	0.9
<b>Car</b>	4	5.4	48	4.1	3	3.0	55	4.1
<b>Commercial breaks</b>	-	-	-	-	3	3.0	3	0.2
<b>Other</b>	9	12.2	-	-	18	17.8	27	2.0
<b>Total</b>	74	100.0	1177	100.0	101	100	1352	100.0

**Table 2. Count and corresponding percentage of instances of alcohol advertising and sponsorship within each broadcast segment for each product type.**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Pre-race</b>		<b>Race</b>		<b>Post-race</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Beer</b>	1	1.4	-	-	7	6.9	8	0.6
<b>Spirits &amp; vermouths</b>	61	82.4	1177	100.0	73	72.3	1311	97.0
<b>Wine</b>	11	14.9	-	-	21	20.8	32	2.4
<b>Alcopops/mixers</b>	1	1.4	-	-	-	0.0	1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	74	100.0	1177	100.0	101	100.0	1352	100.0

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## CONCLUSIONS

This report has presented new data on the exposure of alcohol brands during the Formula One (F1) Monaco Grand Prix 2014 together with an analysis of F1 teams' sponsorship from alcohol producers. It is evident from the findings that alcohol sponsorship in F1 leads to an extremely high exposure of alcohol brands.

During the Monaco 2014 F1 race, there were on average 11 references to alcohol brands per minute. In other words – the audience of a total 500 million worldwide were exposed to an alcohol brand on average every five seconds for almost two hours. In 2014, Johnnie Walker was named the official whiskey of F1, and several of the teams were sponsored by alcohol companies, which led to this massive exposure of alcohol brands during F1.

What is further revealed in the findings is that there is a lack of recognition or understanding within the F1 community about their role when providing a platform for alcohol advertisement for more than 500 million viewers world wide.. The massive exposure of alcohol brands is evident, both during the race and on the teams' web- and Facebook pages

The legal framework in Europe, the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) acknowledges the importance of regulating alcohol advertisement, but is not responding satisfyingly to the issue of sponsorship. The sponsorship practices shown in this report clearly go against the spirit of the AVMSD. Furthermore, the practices in F1 also go against the existing voluntary codes set up by the industry itself. When previously addressing these concerns to FIA, Eurocare has been met with little understanding and FIA claims no involvement in the sponsorship deals in F1. However, FIA still is a shareholder which gives them a vote on all issues related to F1, including sponsorship codes.

The picture which has been drawn in this report shows an irresponsible industry providing a huge exposure of alcohol brands despite legal and voluntary regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, the report provides important knowledge about the weaknesses of the current regulations outlined in the AVMSD.

## PARTNERS AND CONTACT DETAILS

This report is the result of a pilot project addressing sport sponsorship, road safety and alcohol marketing, spring 2015.



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