# [BE] Flemish Commercial Broadcaster Infringes Product Placement Provisions

**IRIS 2012-4:1/11**

*Katrien Lefever*
*iMinds - ICRI - KU Leuven*

During the programme Huizenjacht on VT4, a Flemish commercial broadcaster, showed the logo of Martini Brut (sparkling wine) several times. According to Vlaamse Regulator voor de Media (Flemish Media Regulator - VRM), this practice infringes Article 100, § 1, 3° Mediadecreet (Flemish Broadcasting Act) requiring that product placement is allowed if no undue prominence is given to the products included in the programme.

Huizenjacht is a programme about the renovation of houses and house hunting. Huizenjacht contains an item in which an interior designer informs a couple about the renovation of a specific room in their house. When doing so, the interior designer gives a 3D presentation on a computer screen. During Huizenjacht on 16 November 2011, a bottle of Martini Brut was standing next to the computer. During this item, different shots of the computer and the bottle were shown clearly displaying the logo and the brand of Martini Brut. The logo of Martini was shown 11 times during this item of 3 minutes. At the end of the presentation, while the interior designer and the couple were drinking a class of sparkling wine, the bottle of Martini was once more displayed.

According to the broadcaster, when dealing with the notion of ‘undue prominence’, VRM should take into account the content and context of the programme in which the brand appears. The broadcaster argued that it is the tradition of Huizenjacht to drink a glass of sparkling wine after the presentation. As a result, drinking a glass of sparkling wine is an intrinsic part of the programme. However, VRM disagreed with this reasoning. Huizenjacht is programme about house hunting, renovating and decorating houses and the item deals with a question about renovating a specific room of a house. Given that neither the concept nor the nature of the programme is related to sparkling wine, the drinking of a glass of sparkling wine is not an intrinsic part of the programme. VRM decided that VT4 had violated the limits of acceptable attention that can be directed at a product in programme containing product placement. As a consequence, the product had benefited from undue prominence, in breach of Article 100, §1, 3. Due to the gravity of the violation, VRM decided to impose a fine of EUR 5,000.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

***VRM t. SBS Belgium, Beslissing 2012/002, 23 Januari 2012***

http://www.vlaamseregulatormedia.be/media/18325/2012-002.pdf

*VRM v. SBS Belgium, Decision 2012/002, 23 January 2012*

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026