



# FEMALE FILM DIRECTORS IN EUROPE

A statistical report on production, funding,  
distribution and reception, 2005-14.

Mediating Cultural Encounters through European Screens (MeCETES)  
[www.mecetes.co.uk](http://www.mecetes.co.uk)

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## Introduction

This statistical report examines the production, funding, distribution and reception of European films directed by women over the last decade. It is based on a dataset of over 10,000 films produced in Europe over the period 2005-14 which was obtained from the European Audiovisual Observatory's LUMIERE Pro World Database. Additional film data was also obtained from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), the Council of Europe's Eurimages website, the EU MEDIA programme, and other national film agencies (e.g. MiBACT and the DFFF). The analysis of the data was conducted by Dr Huw D Jones for the 'Mediating Cultural Encounters through European Screens' (MeCETES) project. Further details about the methodology used in this report are available in the appendix.

The report reveals that while female directed European films are as popular amongst audiences and film critics as male directed European films (based on, for example, their IMDb User rating and Metacritic scores), they are seen by far less people in cinemas in Europe. This is partly because European films directed by women receive far lower levels of production and distribution support.<sup>1</sup> For example, in the period 2007-13, the average MEDIA distribution award for female directors was 29% lower than for male directors. However, it is beyond the scope of this report to offer any deeper analysis into why women receive less production or distribution support, or how policymakers should address these concerns. Instead, the report simply aims to add to the evidence base on the position of women in European film industry, in order to inform policy and debate.<sup>2</sup>

### *The key findings are as follows:*

- Less than one in five (17%) films produced in Europe in the period 2005-14 were solely directed by women – Latvia (34%) and Finland (30%) have the highest proportion of films by female directors, while Greece (7%) and Hungary (9%) have the lowest proportions.
- Female directors in Europe are significantly more likely than men to direct documentaries (28% compared with 19%) and less likely to direct action/adventure (3% compared with 8%), comedies (19% compared with 26%) and crime/thrillers (5% compared with 14%).

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<sup>1</sup> For further analysis see: Jones, H. D. (2017) "Women's Film Held Back in Europe by Lower Production and Distribution Support". MeCETES, March 8, 2017. <http://mecetes.co.uk/womens-films-held-back-in-europe/>

<sup>2</sup> For further evidence on the position of film filmmakers in Europe see: Talavera (2014) *Female Directors in European Films*. Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory; European Women's Audiovisual Network (2016) "Where are the women directors in European films? Gender equality report on female directors (2006-2013) with best practice and policy recommendations", <http://www.ewawomen.com/en/research-.html>.

- About 16% of films supported by Eurimages, 18% supported by the German Federal Film Fund and 12% of Italian ‘Cultural Interest’ films have a female director.
- Only 15% of female directed European films received distribution support from the EU’s MEDIA programme, compared with 17% of male directed European films, while the average award for women’s films was 29% lower (€45,592) than for men’s films.
- Female directed European films reach 2.6 territories in Europe on average, compared with 3.1 territories for their male counterparts.
- Female directed European films are seen by half as many people in Europe as films made by their male counterparts – selling 127,343 cinema tickets on average, compared with 285,799.
- Female directed European films have an average IMDb User rating of 6.21 (compared with 6.18 for male directed European films) and an average Rotten Tomato User rating 3.33 (cf. 3.34).
- Female directed European films have an average Metacritic score of 62.4 (compared with 62.1 male directed European films), and an average Rotten Tomato score of 6.45 (cf. 6.47).

# 1. Production

## 1.1. Production levels

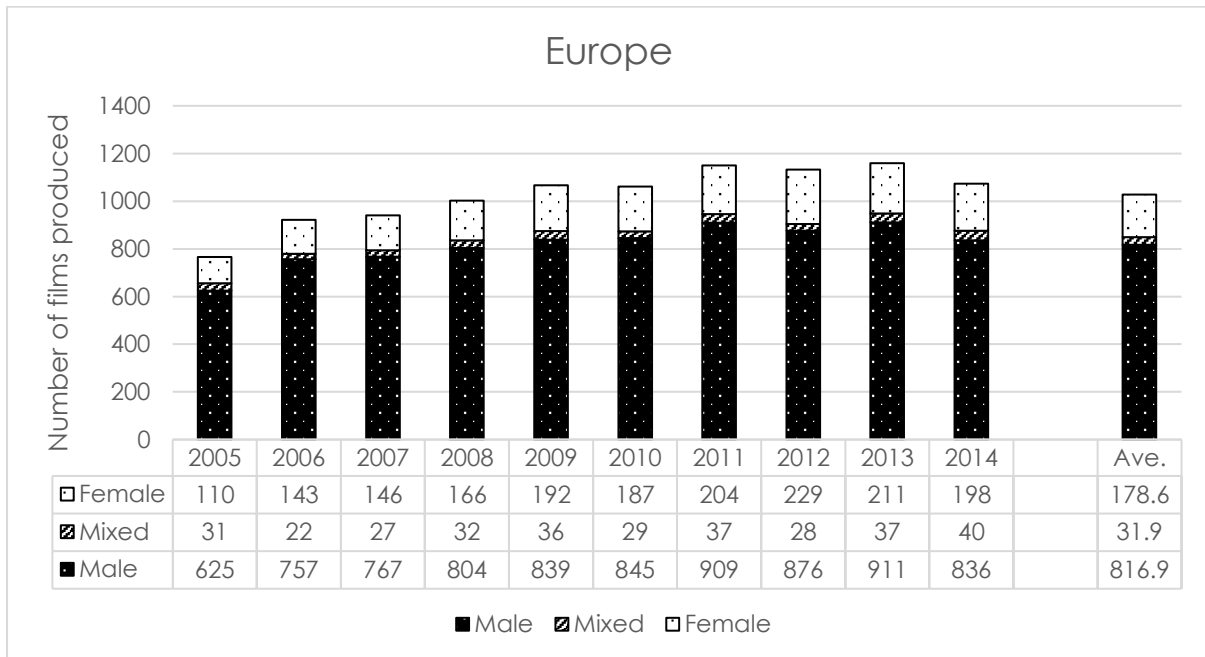


Figure 1. Number of films produced in Europe by gender, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

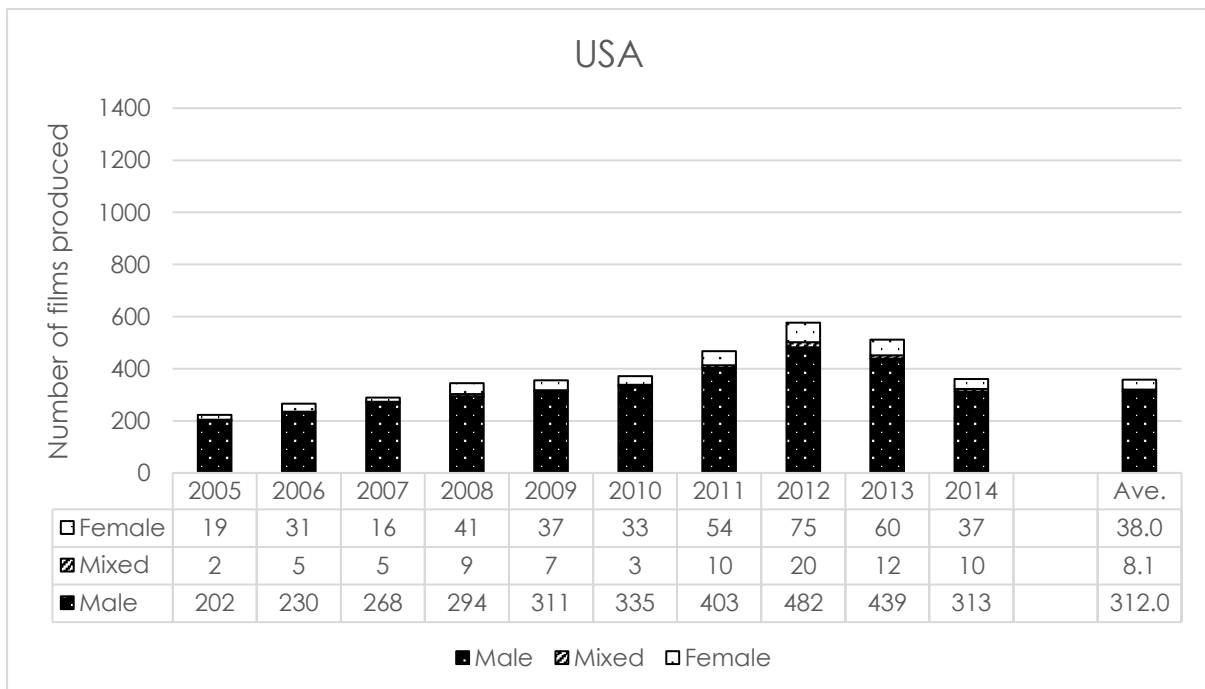


Figure 2. Number of films produced in the US by gender, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

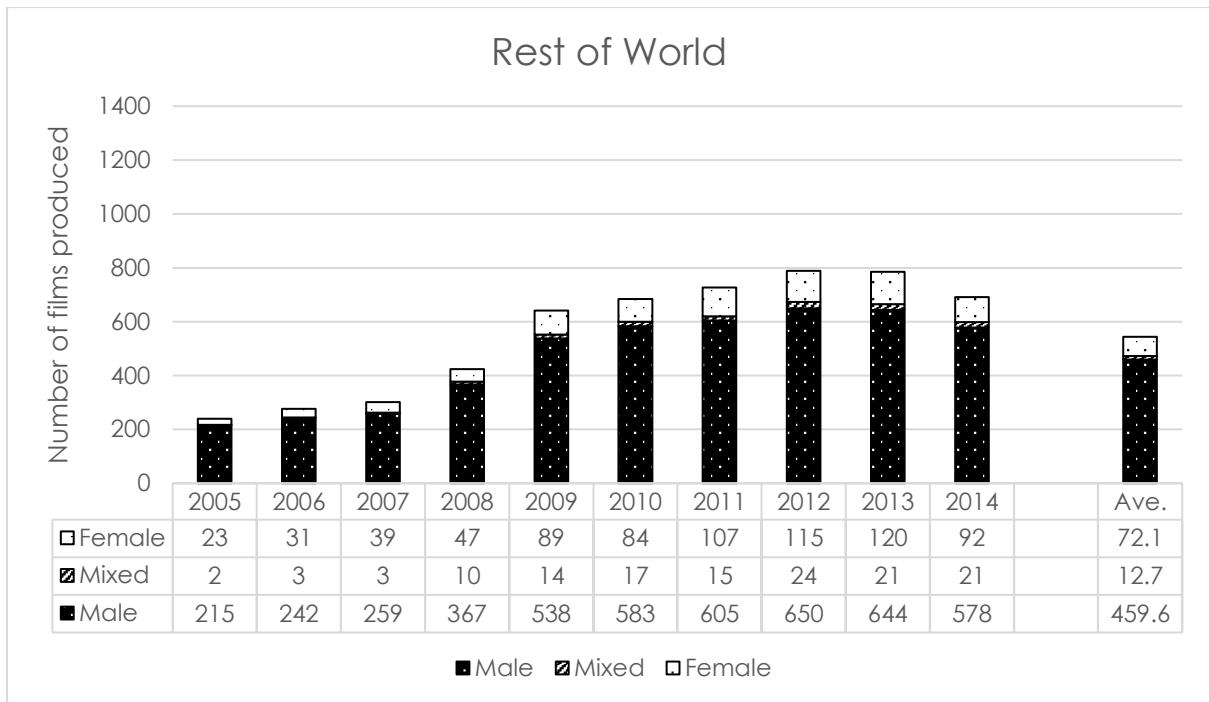


Figure 3. Number of films produced in the Rest of the World (i.e. non-European or non-US) by gender, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

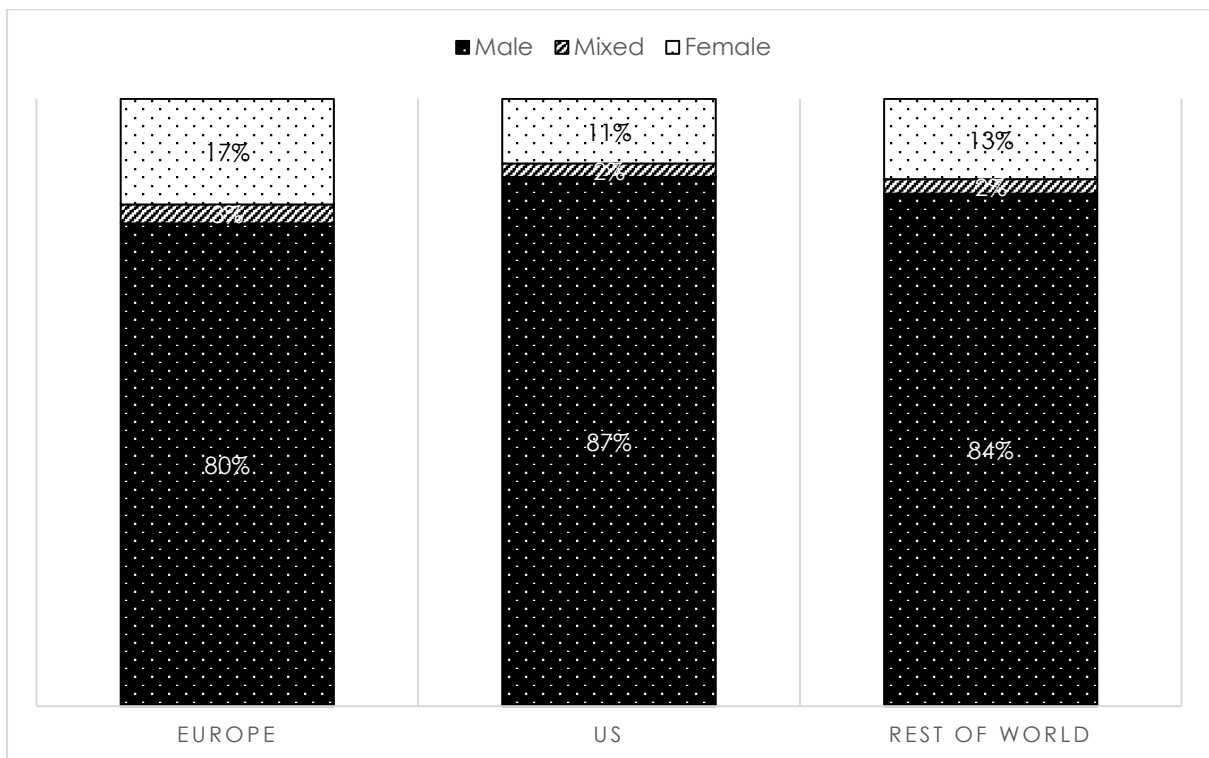


Figure 4. Average proportion of films produced by global region, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

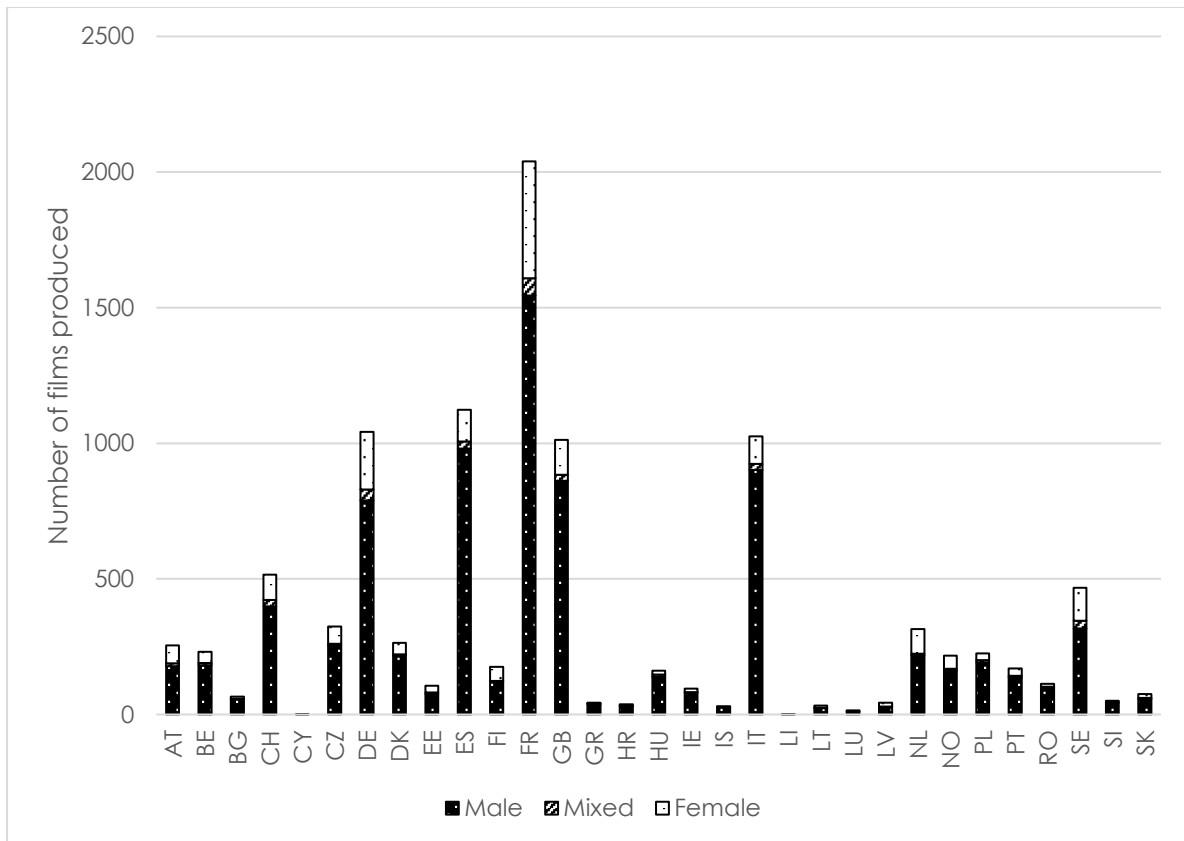


Figure 5. Total number of films produced in Europe by primary country-of-origin, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

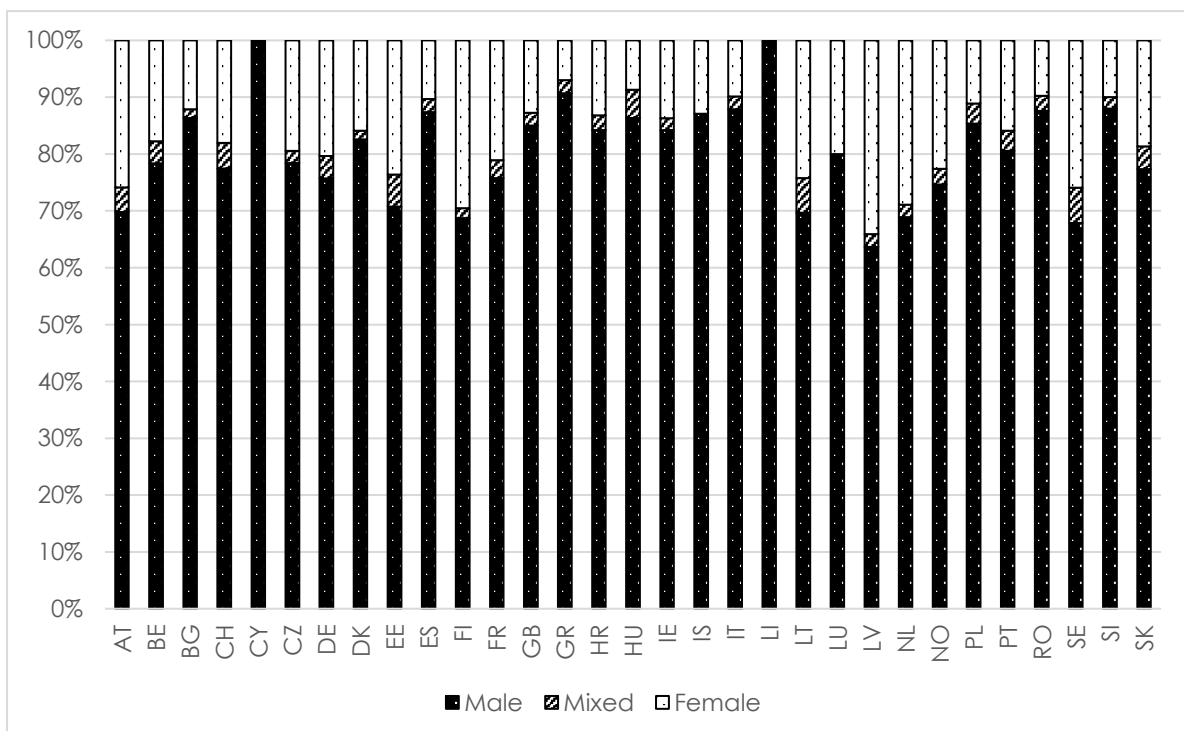


Figure 6. Proportion of films produced in Europe by primary country-of-origin, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

## 1.2. International co-productions

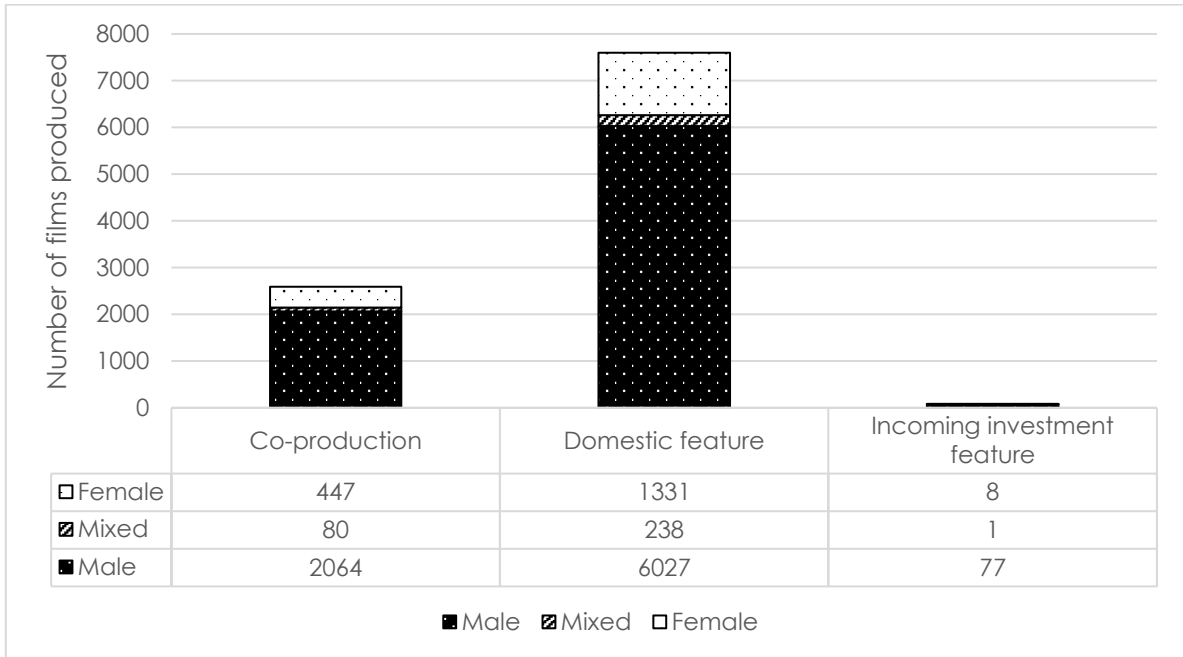


Figure 7. Total number of films produced in Europe by production category, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

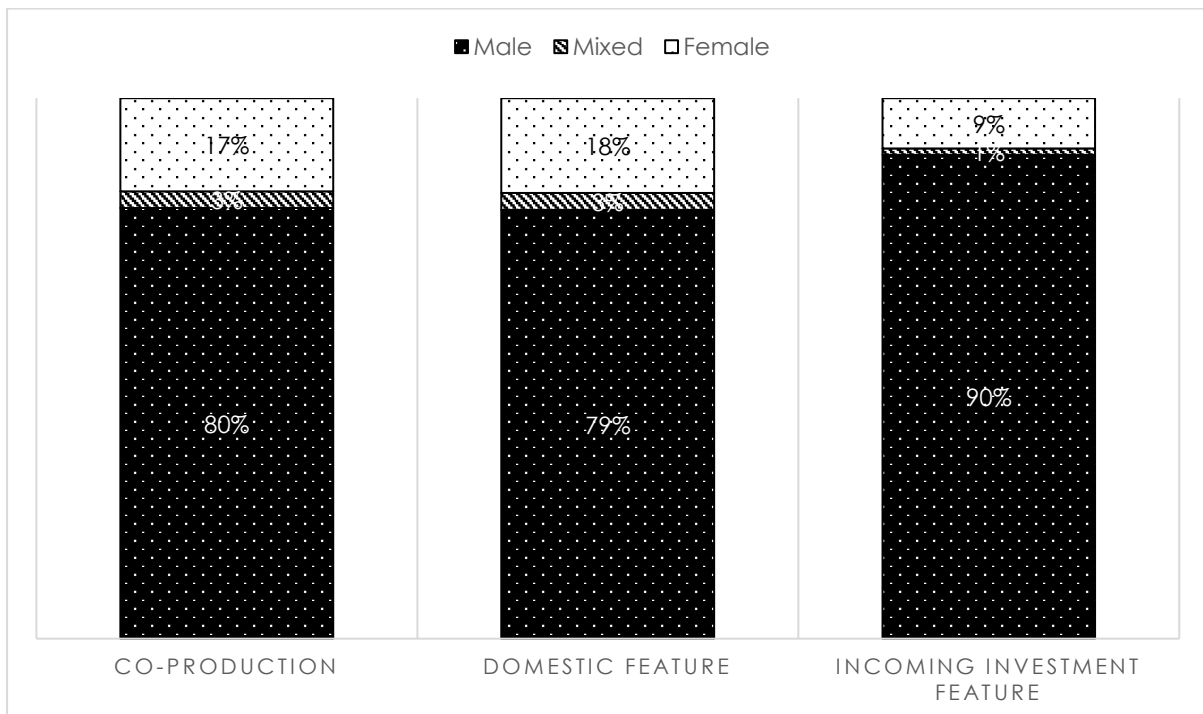


Figure 8. Total proportion of films produced in Europe by production category, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.



### 1.3. Cultural content

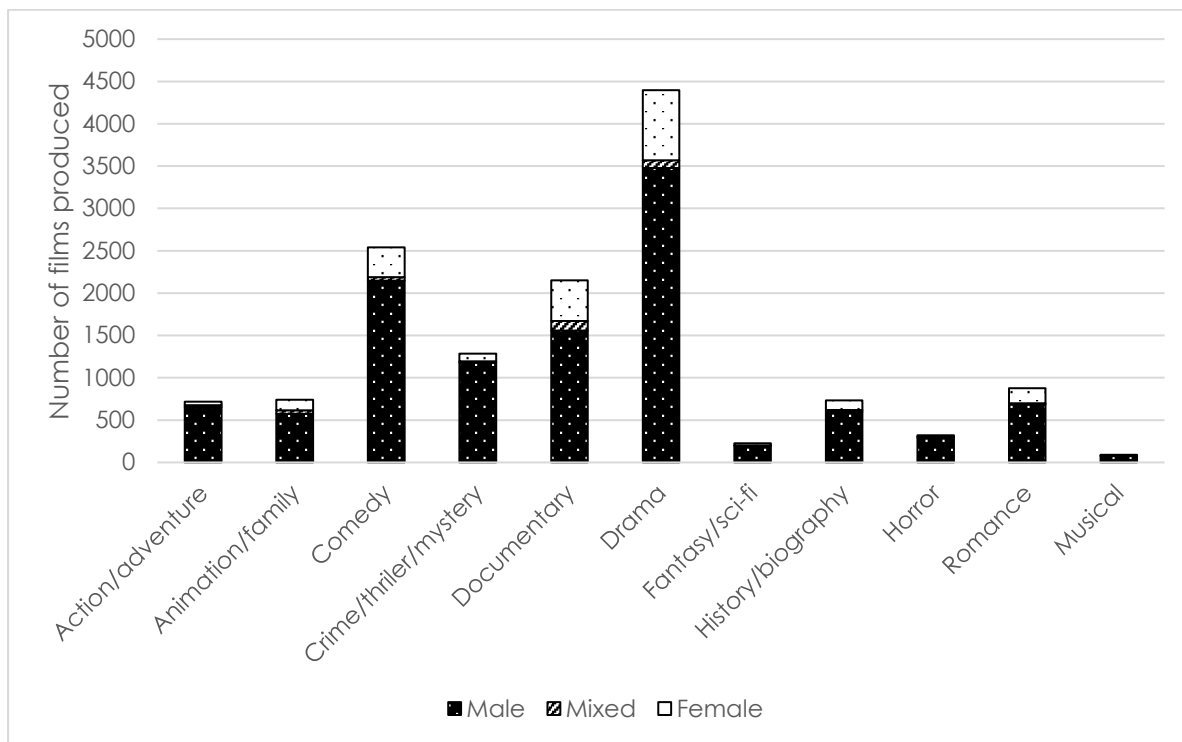


Figure 9. Total number of films produced in Europe by genre, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

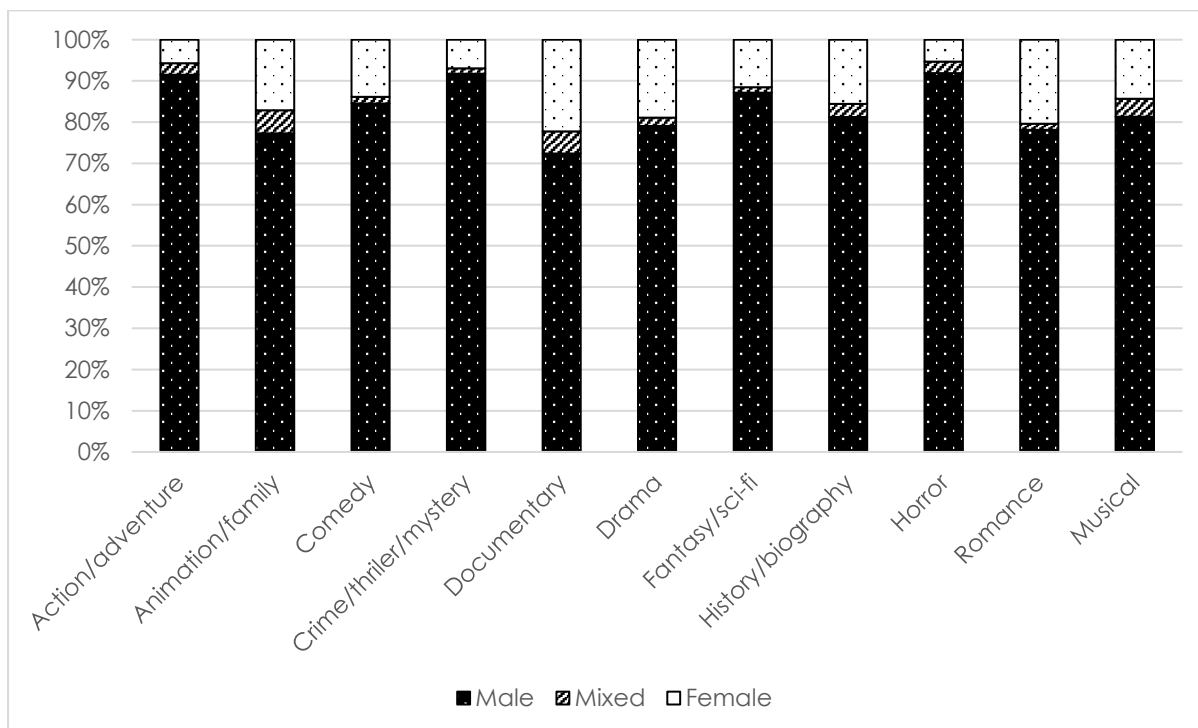


Figure 10. Total proportion of films produced in Europe by genre, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

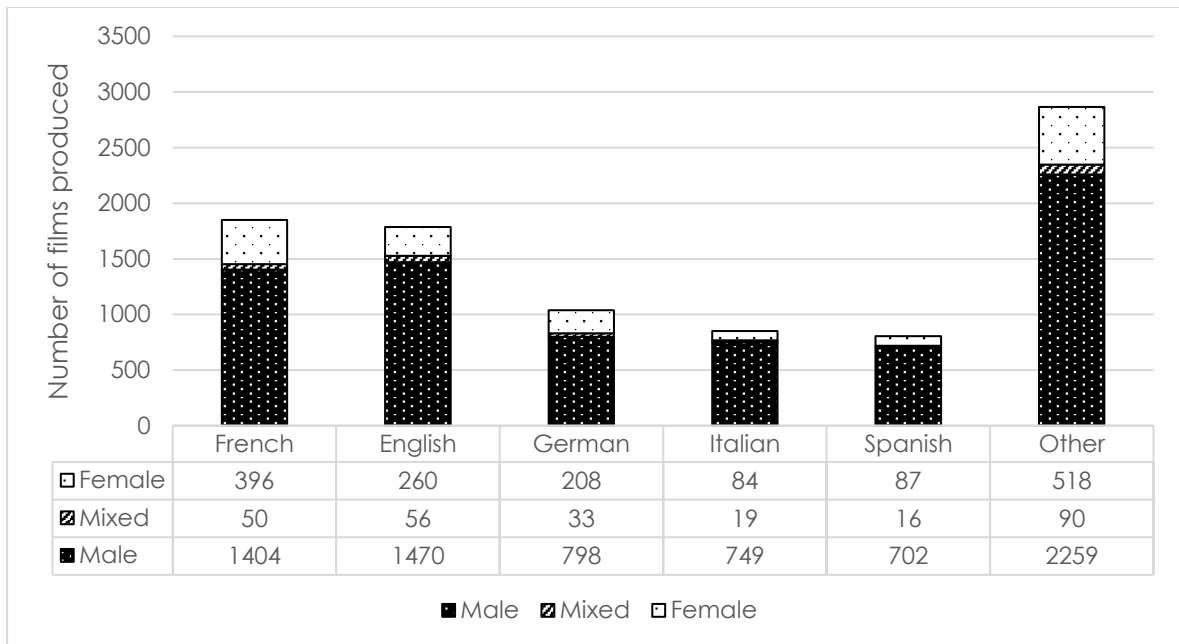


Figure 11. Total number of films produced in Europe by primary language of production, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

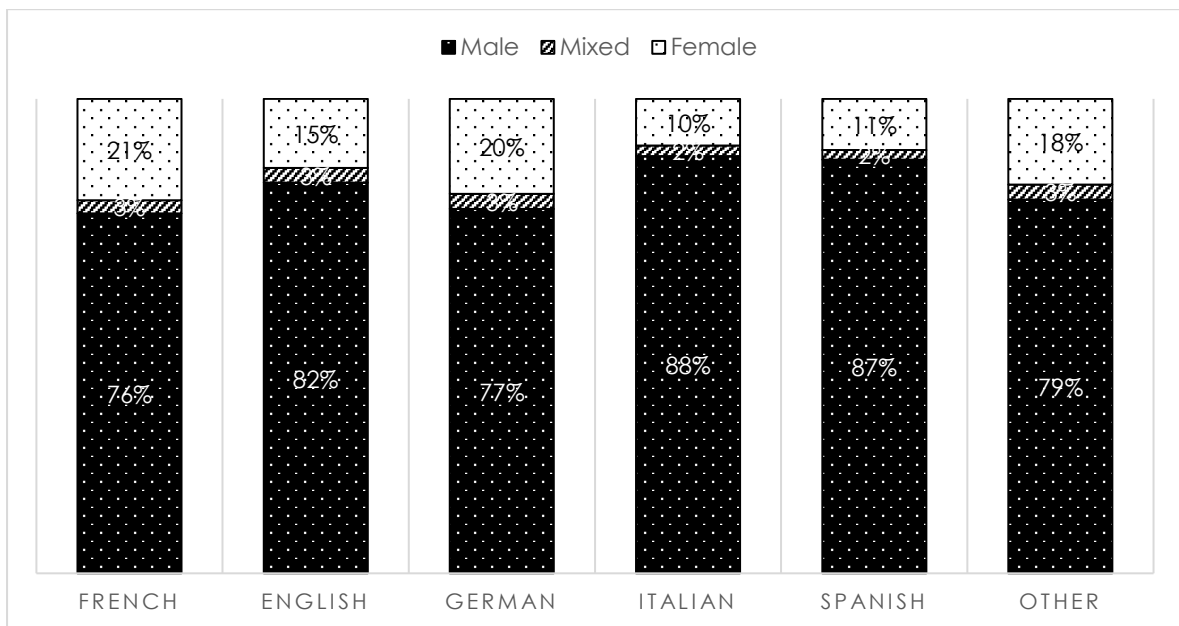


Figure 12. Total proportion of films produced in Europe by primary language of production, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

## 1.4. Production funding

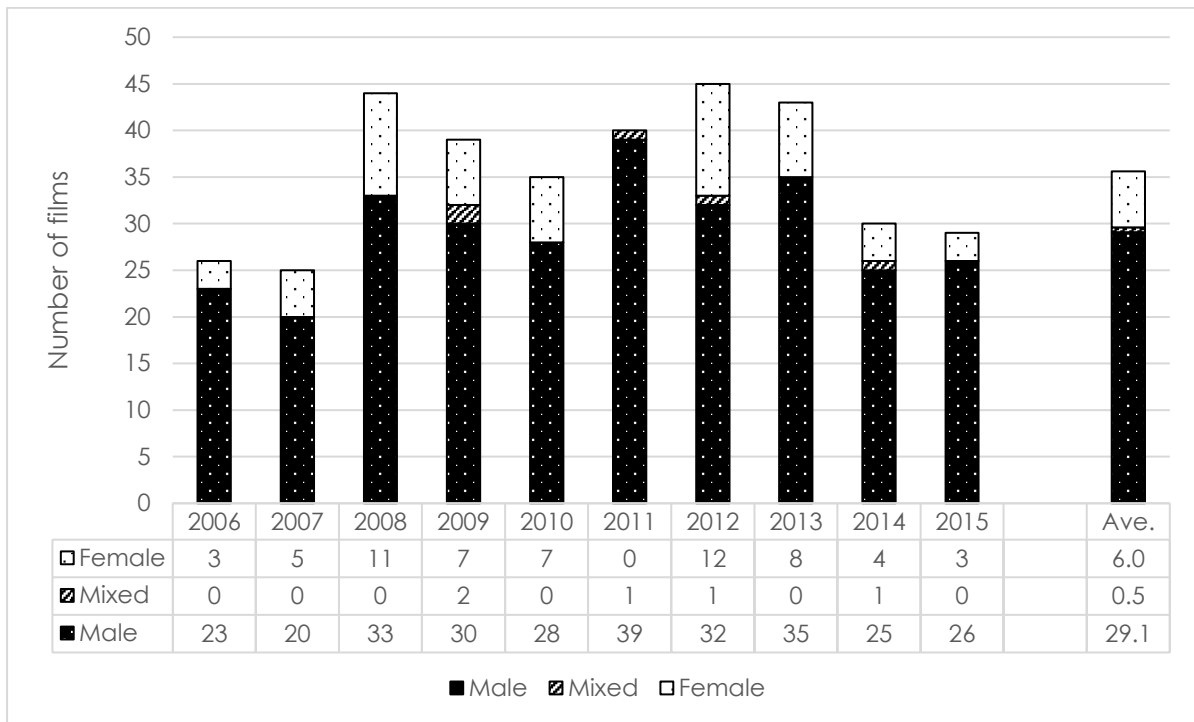


Figure 13. Number of Eurimages award, 2006-15. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / Eurimages.

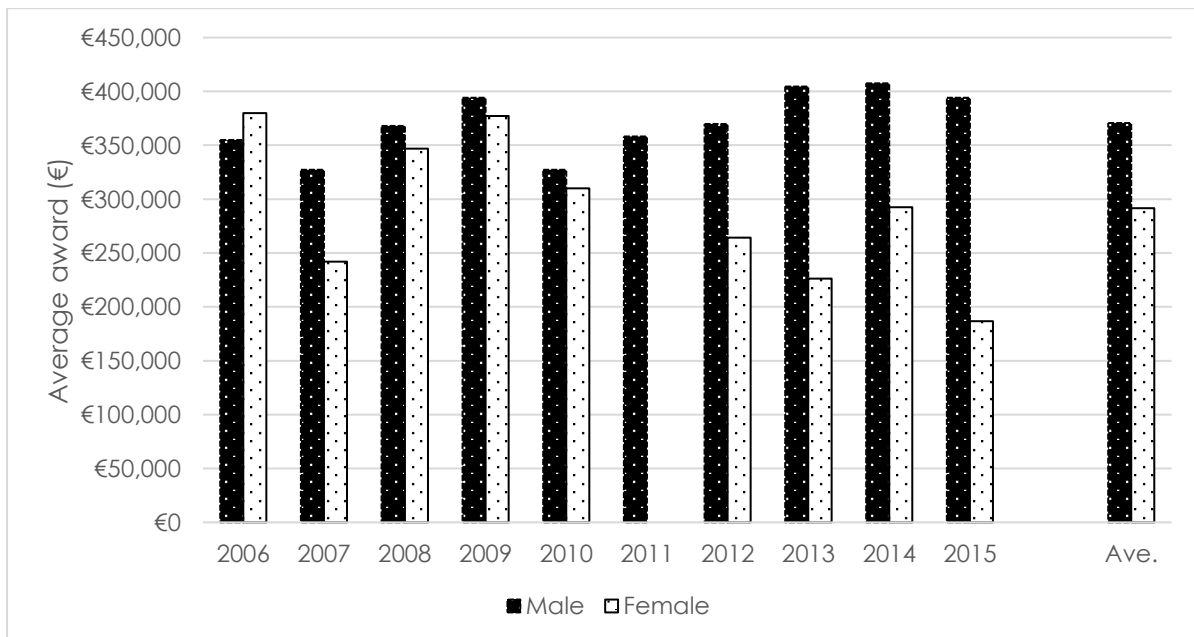


Figure 14. Average Eurimages award (€), 2006-15. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / Eurimages.

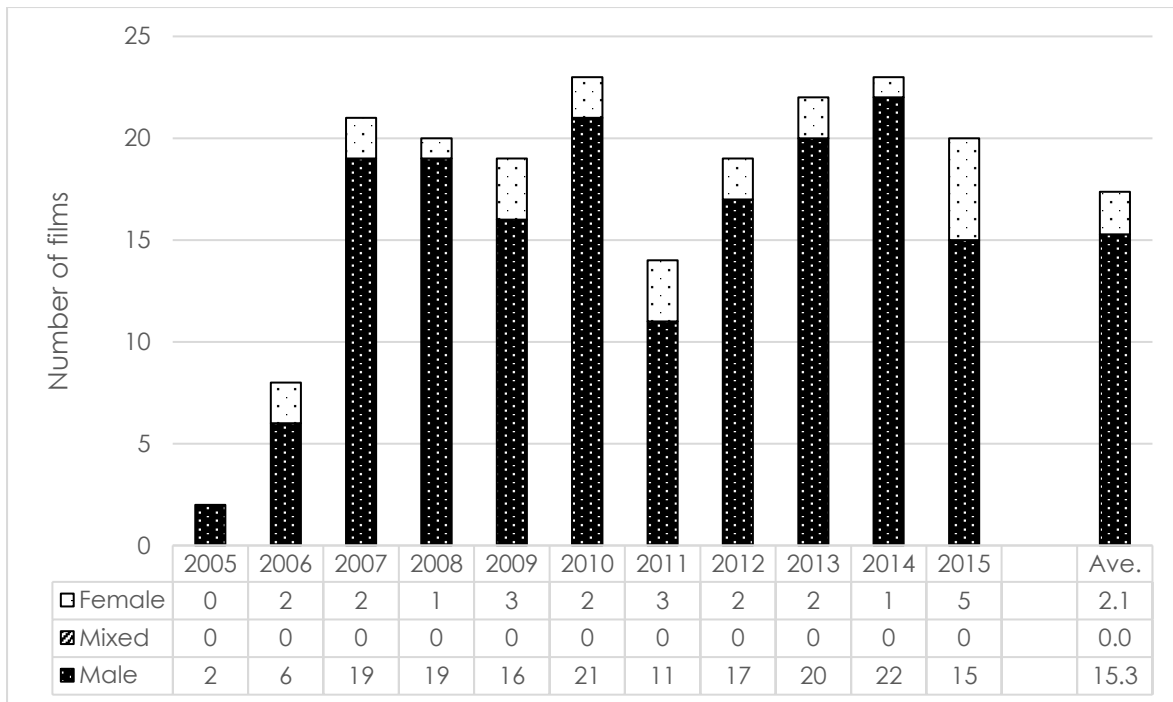


Figure 15. Number of Italian 'Cultural Interest' film awards, 2005-15. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / MiBACT.

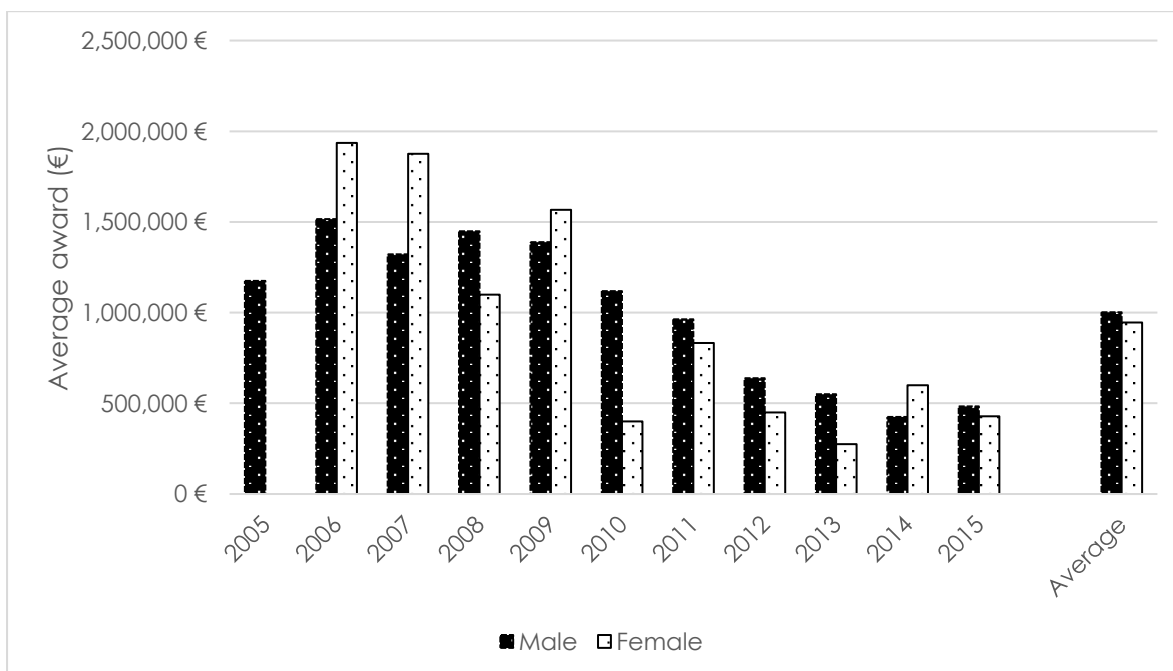


Figure 16. Average Italian 'Cultural Interest' film award, 2005-15. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / MiBACT.

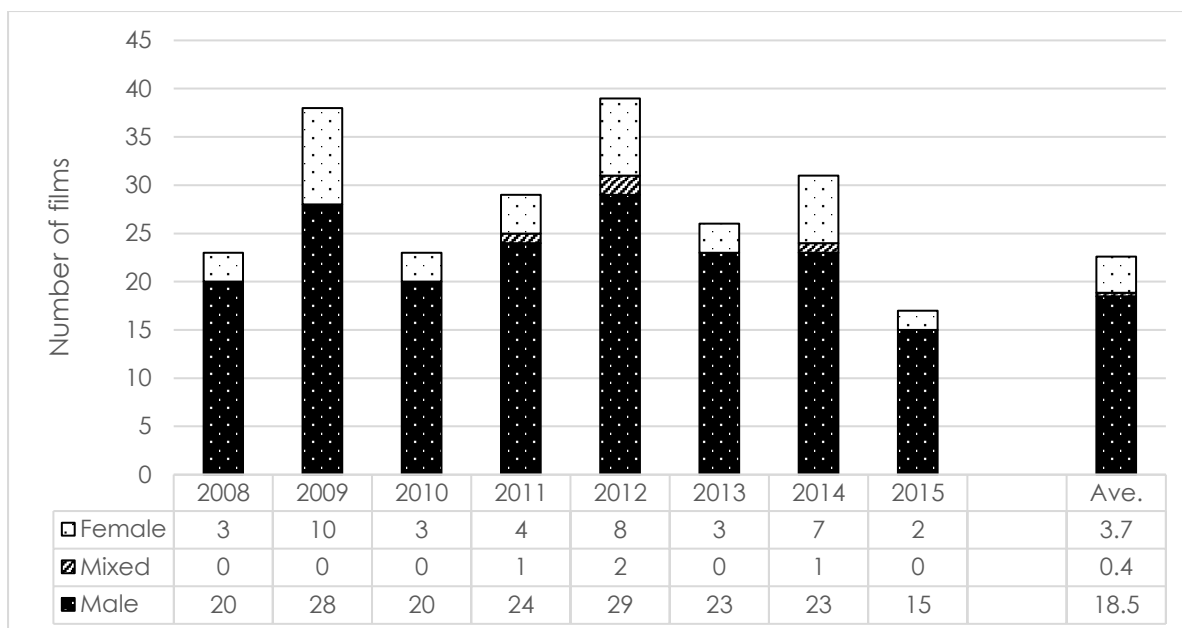


Figure 17. Number of German Federal Film Fund awards, 2008-15. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / DFFF.

## 2. Distribution

### 2.1. Markets

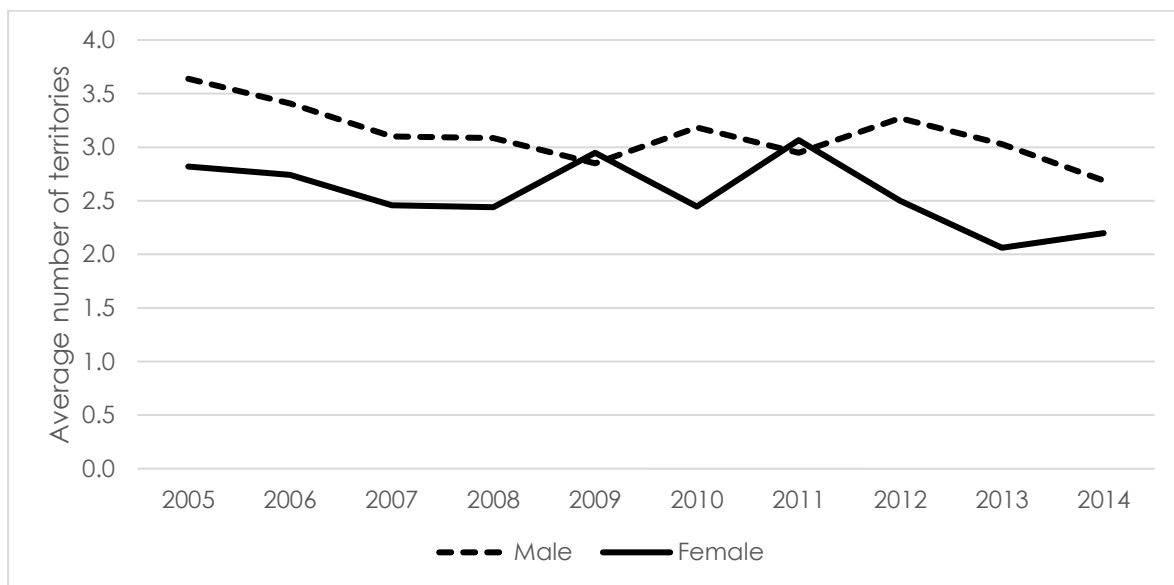


Figure 18. Average number of European territories distributed, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

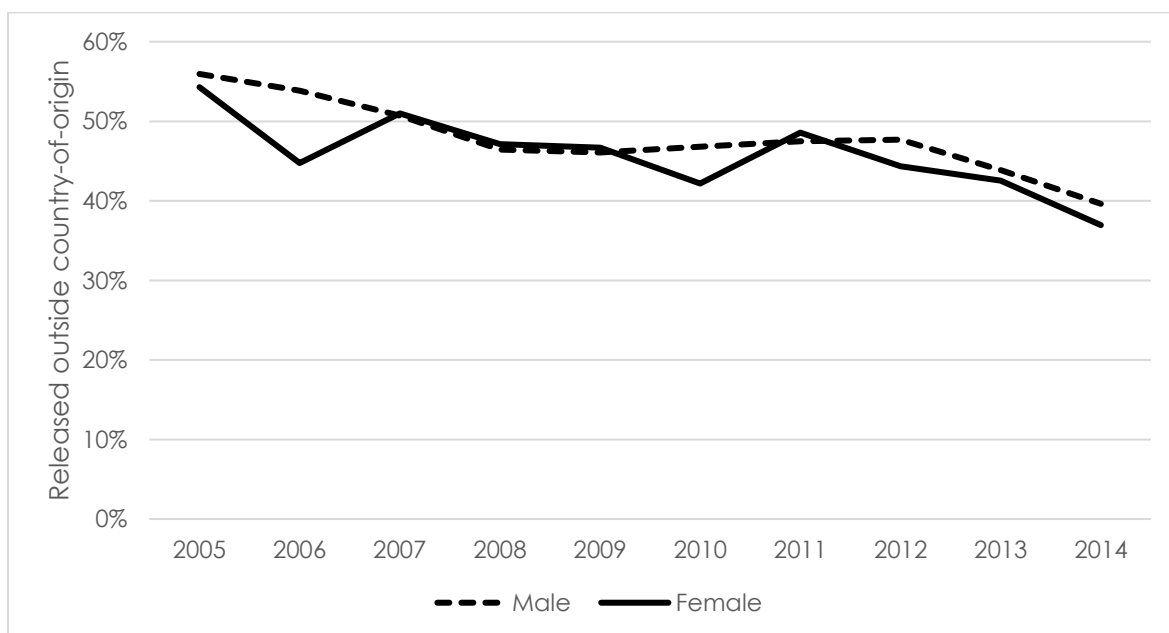


Figure 19. Average proportion of European films released in Europe outside country of origin, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE World Pro.

## 2.2 DVD releases

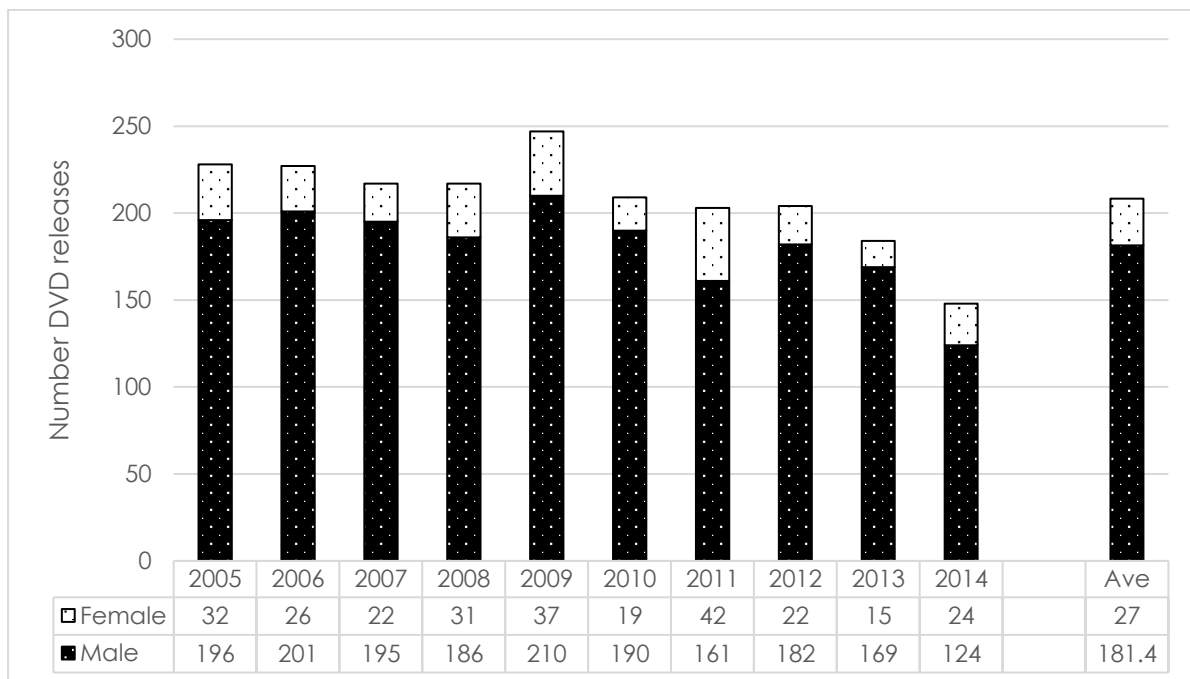


Figure 20. Number of European films released on DVD, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

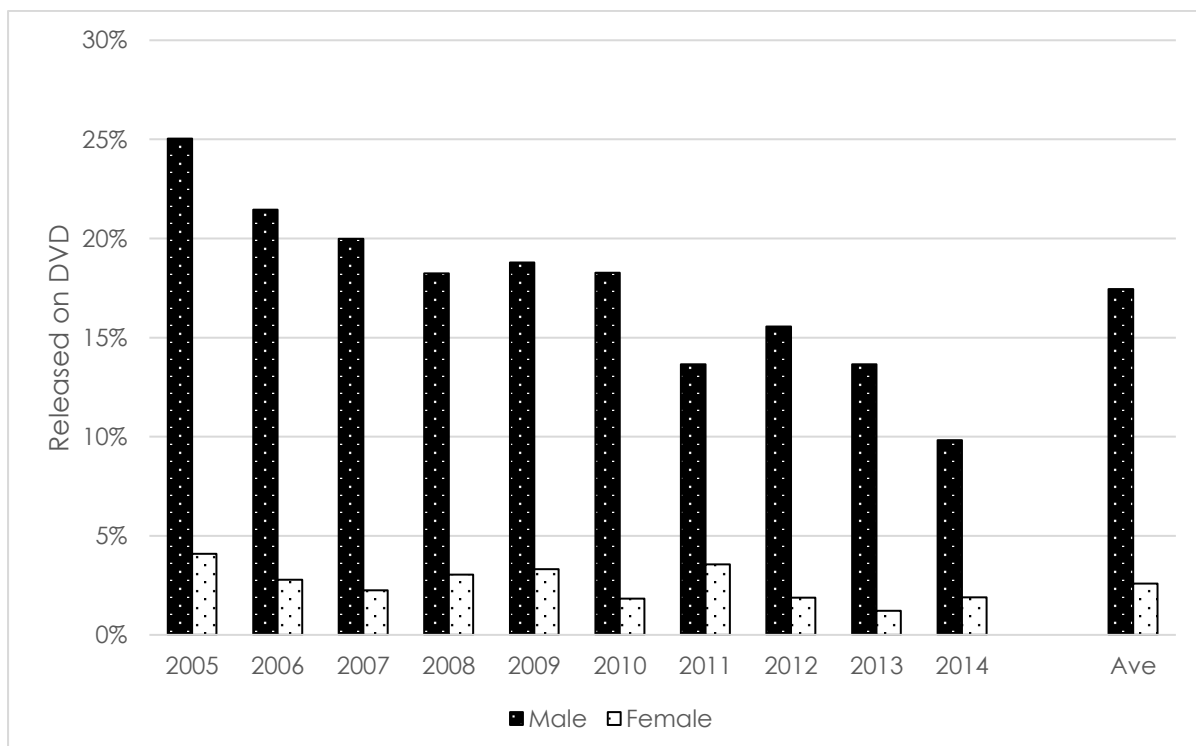


Figure 21. Proportion of European films released on DVD, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

## 2.2. Distribution funding

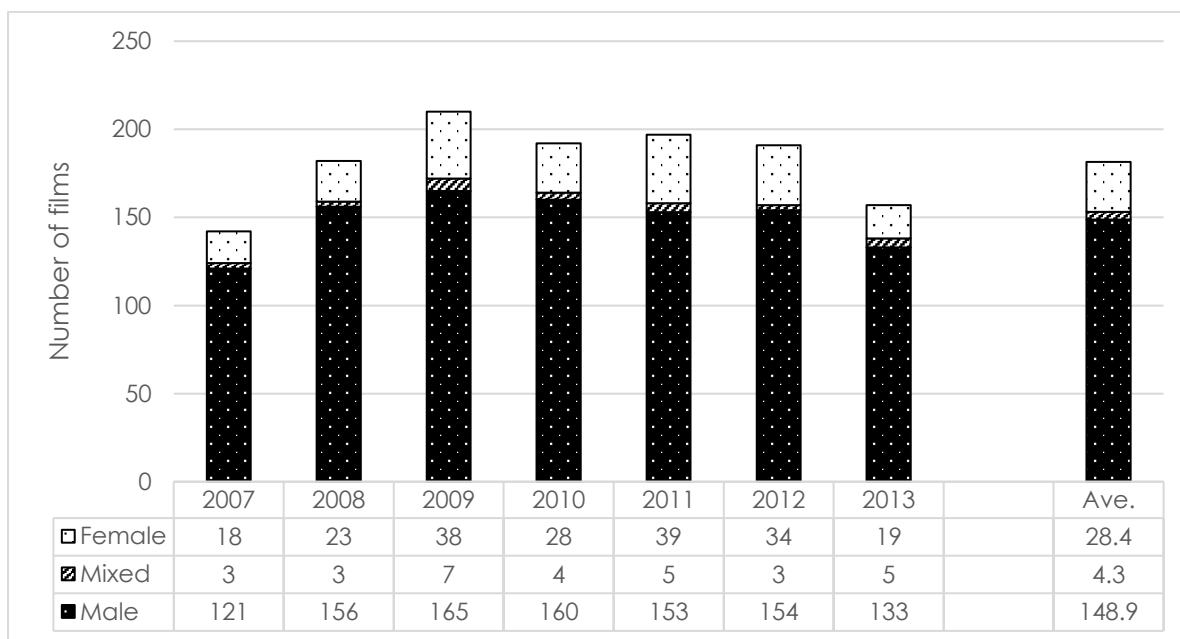


Figure 22. Number of MEDIA distribution awards, 2007-13. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / MEDIA.

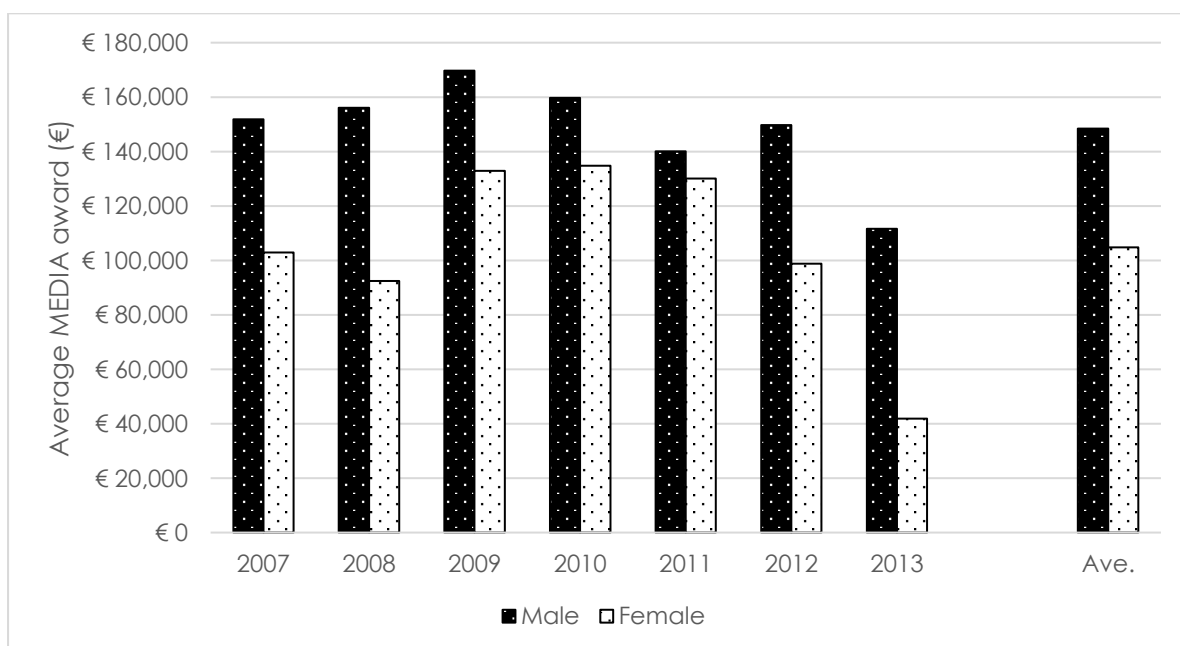


Figure 23. Average MEDIA distribution award, 2007-13. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / MEDIA.



### 3. Audience reception

#### 3.1. Cinema admissions

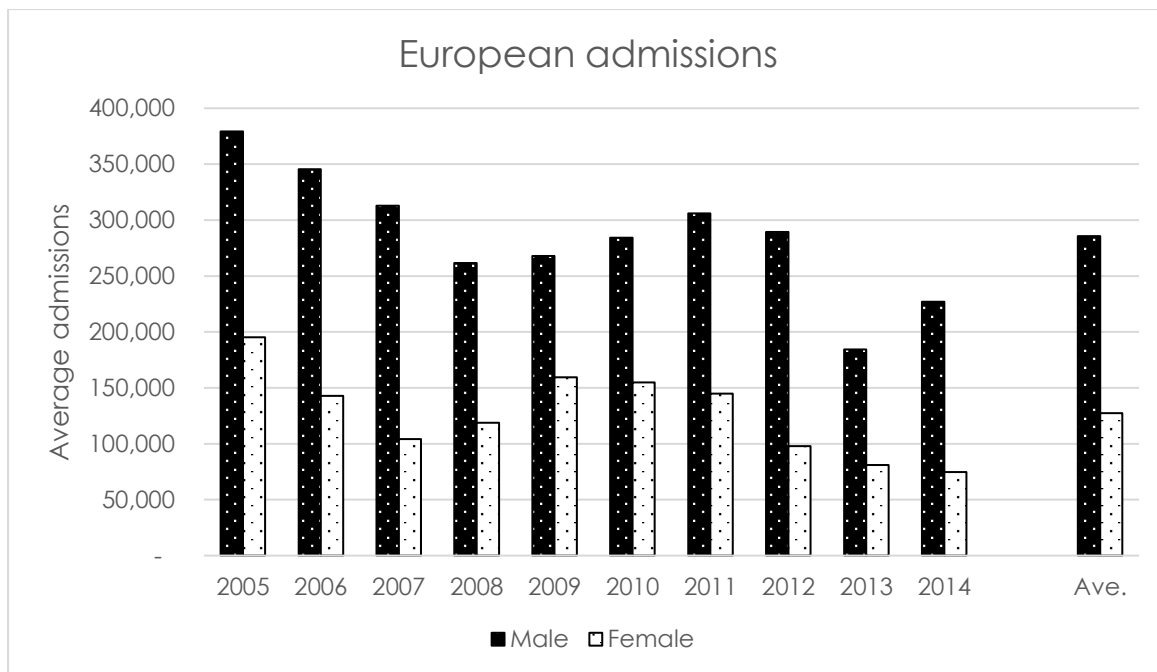


Figure 24. Average European admissions for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

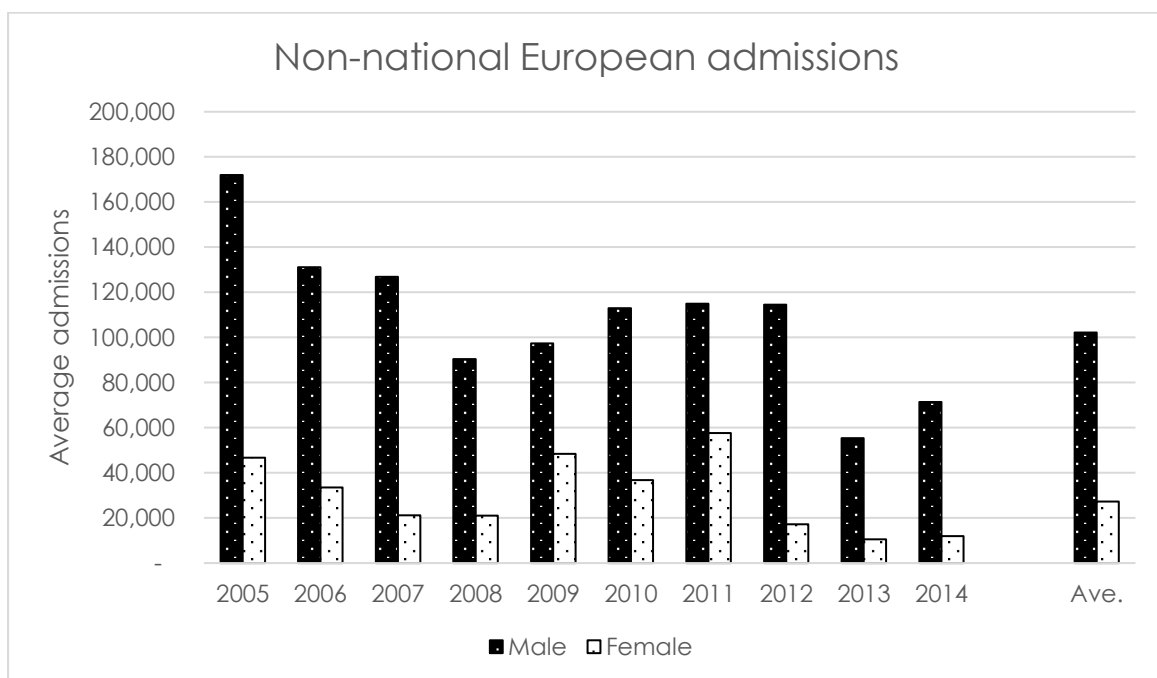


Figure 25. Average non-national European admissions for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World.

Table 1. Top 20 female directed European films by total cinema admissions in Europe, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

Title	Release year	Country	Director(s)	Principal language	Genre	Europe Admissions
The Iron Lady	2011	GB / FR	Phyllida Lloyd	English	Biography, Drama	6,203,227
Gnomeo & Juliet	2011	GB[Inc] / US	Kelly Asbury	English	Animation, Comedy, Family	5,860,256
Nanny McPhee Returns	2010	GB / US / FR	Susanna White	English	Comedy, Family, Fantasy	5,650,728
LOL (Laughing Out Loud) ®	2009	FR	Lisa Azuelos	French	Comedy, Romance	4,088,115
You Are So Beautiful	2006	FR	Isabelle Mergault	French	Comedy, Romance	3,892,936
Coco Before Chanel	2009	FR	Anne Fontaine	French	Biography, Drama	3,732,307
La Rafle	2010	FR / DE / HU	Rose Bosch	French	Drama, History, War	3,128,925
The White Massai	2005	DE	Hermine Huntgeburth	German	Drama, Romance	2,925,699
Palais royal!	2005	FR / GB	Valérie Lemercier	French	Comedy	2,804,417
The Merry Widow	2008	FR	Isabelle Mergault	French	Comedy, Drama	2,494,261
Polisse	2011	FR	Maiwenn	French	Crime, Drama	2,464,140
De l'autre côté du lit	2009	FR	Pascale Pouzadoux	French	Comedy	2,181,416
Avenue Montaigne	2006	FR	Danièle Thompson	French	Comedy, Drama, Romance	2,166,892
Desert Flower	2009	DE / AT / FR	Sherry Hormann	English	Biography, Drama	1,966,129
Almanya: Welcome to Germany	2011	DE	Yasemin Samdereli	German	Comedy, Drama	1,909,216
Change of Plans	2009	FR	Danièle Thompson	French	Comedy, Drama	1,872,561
The Hedgehog	2009	FR / IT	Mona Achache	French	Drama	1,818,523
French Women	2014	FR	Audrey Dana	French	Comedy, Romance	1,788,732
Olé!	2005	FR	Florence Quentin	French	Comedy	1,750,333
Tout pour plaire	2005	FR / BE	Cécile Telerman	French	Comedy	1,717,615

### 3.2. Audience appreciation

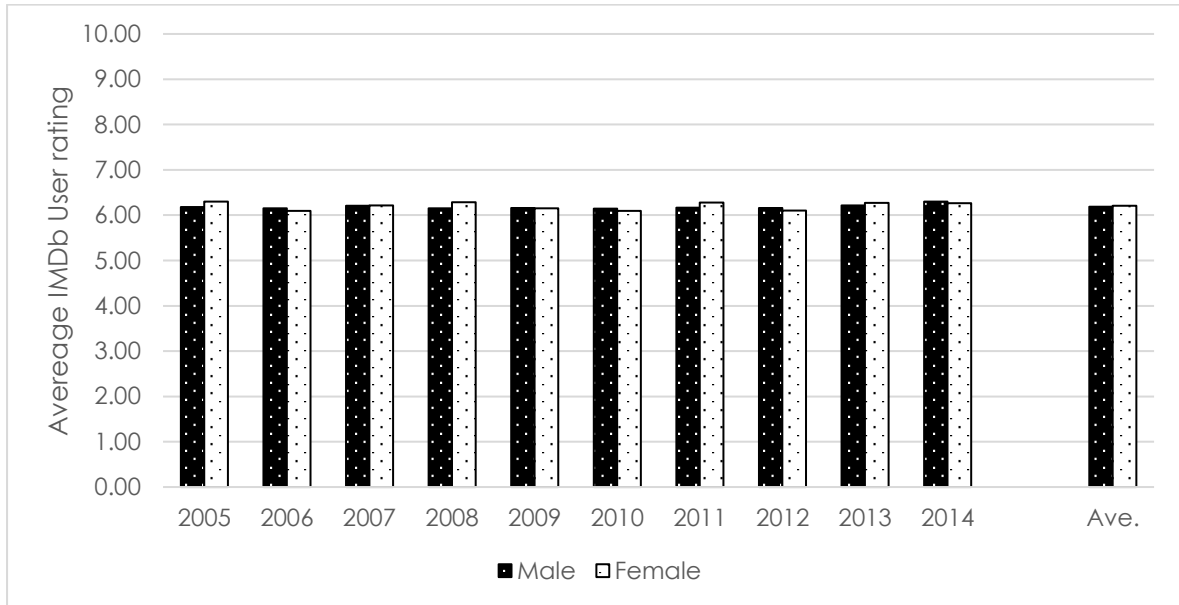


Figure 26. Average IMDb User ratings for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE World Pro / IMDb.

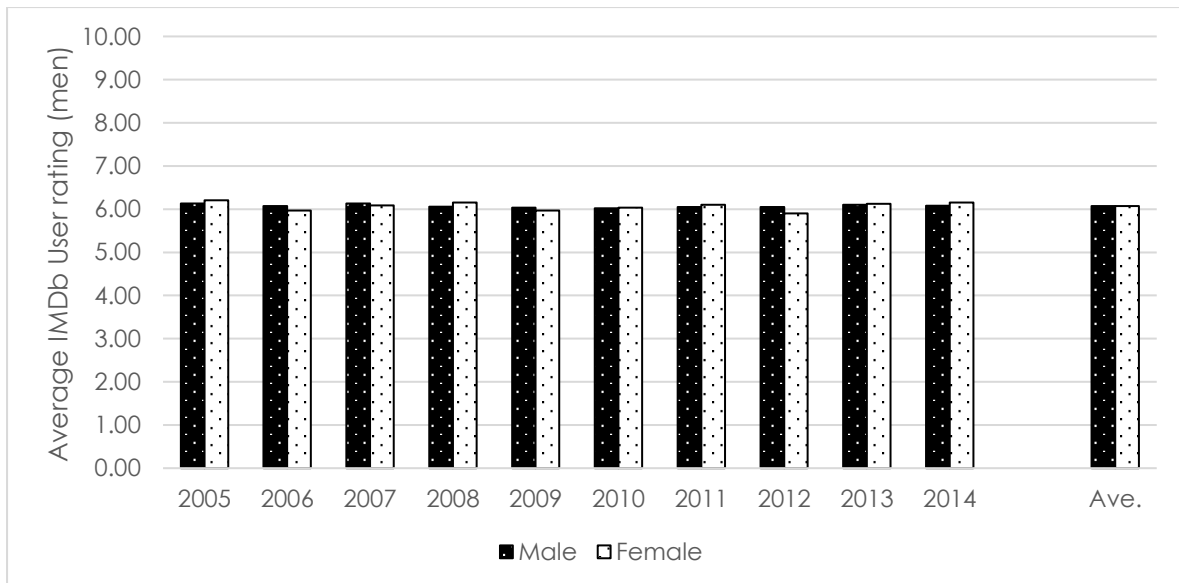


Figure 27. Average IMDb User rating (men) for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

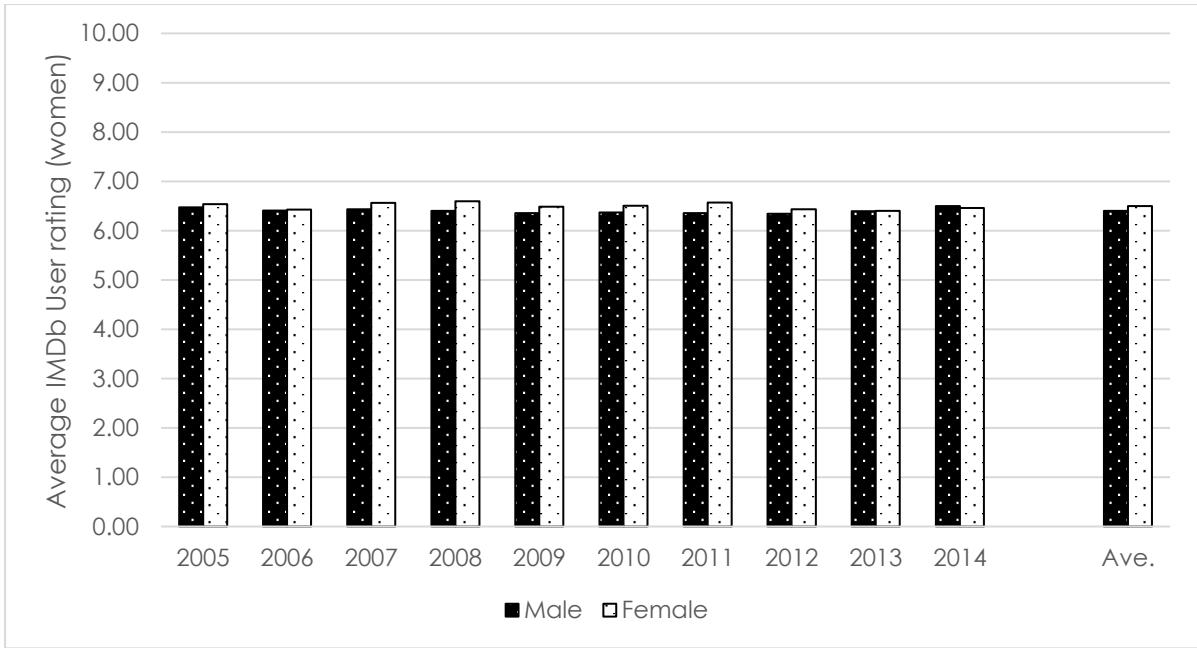


Figure 28. Average IMDB User ratings (women) for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

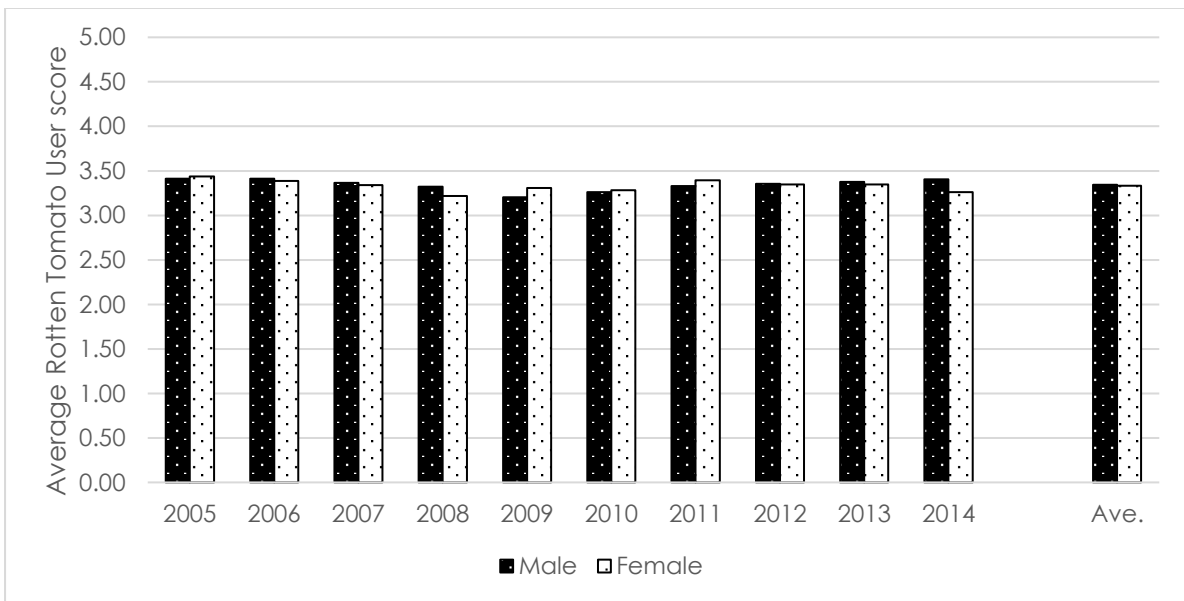


Figure 29. Average Rotten Tomato User score for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

Table 2. Top 20 female directed European films by IMDb User Rating, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

Title	Release year	Country(s)	Director(s)	Principal language	Genre	IMDb Rating
Nordfor sola	2014	NO	Jørn Nyseth Ranum, Inge Wegge	Norwegian	Documentary, Adventure, Sport	8.5
The Affair	2008	LV	Una Celma	English	Drama	8
The Beaches of Agnès	2008	FR	Agnès Varda	French	Documentary, Biography	8
The Pervert's Guide to Cinema	2006	GB / AT / NL	Sophie Fiennes	English	Documentary	7.9
Waste Land	2011	GB / BR	Lucy Walker, Karen Harley	English	Documentary	7.9
After the Wedding	2006	DK / GB	Susanne Bier	Danish	Drama	7.8
Gulabi Gang	2013	NO / IN / DK	Nishtha Jain	Hindi	Documentary	7.8
Living Legends	2014	BG	Niki Iliev	Bulgarian	Comedy, Drama, Romance	7.8
Enemies of Happiness	2006	DK / NO / FI	Eva Mulvad	English	Documentary	7.8
4 Elements	2006	NL	Jiska Rickels	English	Documentary	7.7
In a Better World	2010	DK / SE / DE	Susanne Bier	Danish	Drama, Romance	7.7
Happily Ever After	2014	HR / NL	Tatjana Bozic	English	Documentary, Drama, Romance	7.7
Katka	2010	CZ	Helena Trestíková	Czech	Documentary, Biography, Drama	7.7
Cherry Blossoms	2008	DE	Doris Dörrie	German	Drama, Romance	7.7
Palme	2012	SE	Maud Nycander, Kristina Lindström	Swedish	Documentary, Biography	7.7
Peter & the Wolf	2007	GB / PL / CH / NO / MX	Suzie Templeton	None	Animation, Short, Family	7.7
Draquila - L'Italia che trema	2010	IT	Sabina Guzzanti	Italian	Documentary	7.6
Her Name Is Sabine	2008	FR	Sandrine Bonnaire	French	Documentary	7.6
Forest of the Dancing Spirits	2013	SE / CA	Linda Västrik	Swedish	Documentary	7.6
Blame it on Fidel	2006	FR / IT	Julie Gavras	French	Drama, History	7.6

### 3.3. Critical appreciation

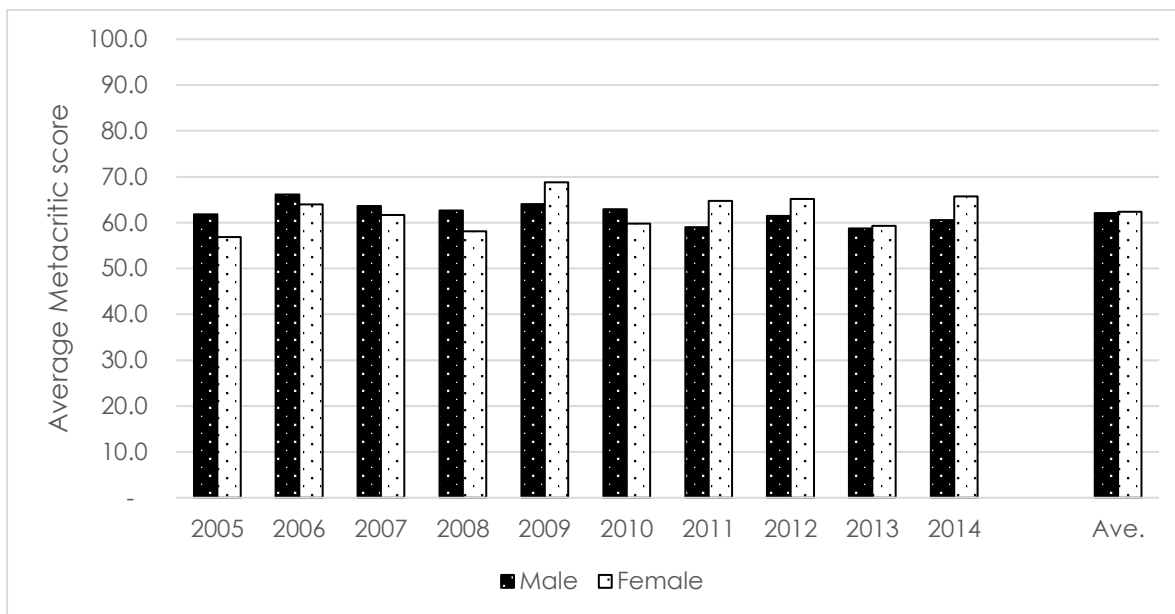


Figure 30. Average Metacritic score for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

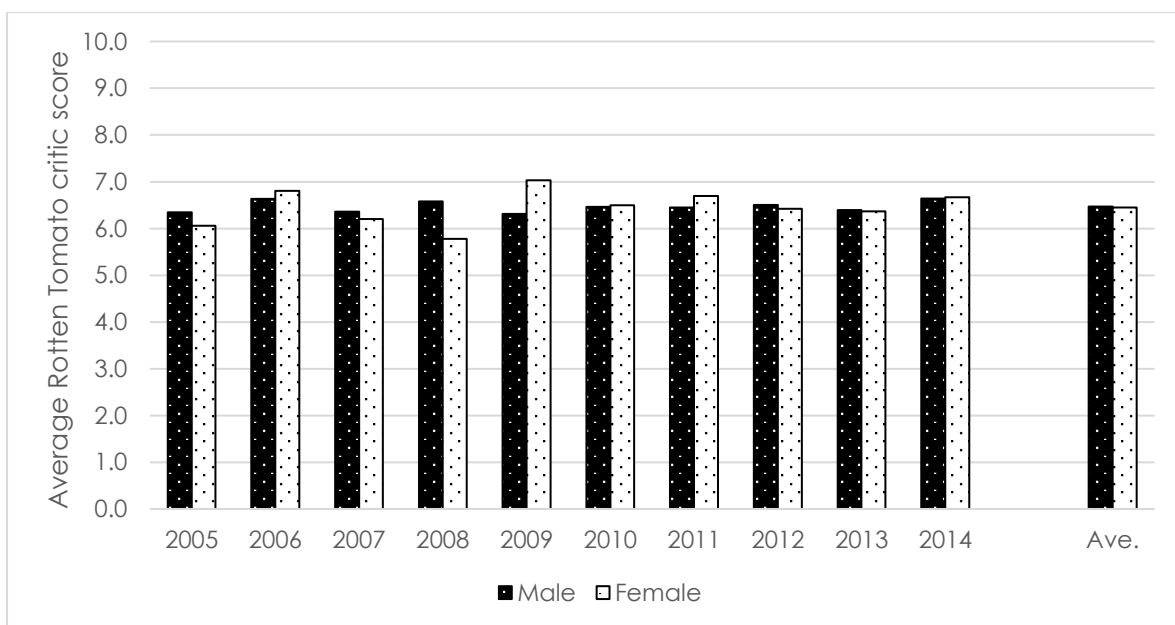


Figure 31. Average Rotten Tomato critic score for European films, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb

Table 3. Top 20 female directed European films by Metacritic score, 2005-14. Sources: MeCETES / LUMIERE Pro World / IMDb.

English Title	Release year	Country(s)	Director(s)	Principal language	Genre	Metascore
35 Shots of Rum	2009	FR / DE	Claire Denis	French	Drama	92
Almayer's Folly	2012	BE / FR	Chantal Akerman	French	Drama	92
Big Men	2014	GB / DK / US	Rachel Boynton	English	Documentary	90
The Arbor	2010	GB	Clio Barnard	English	Documentary, Biography, Drama	88
The Beaches of Agnès	2008	FR	Agnès Varda	French	Documentary, Biography	86
Girlhood	2014	FR	Céline Sciamma	French	Drama	85
The Selfish Giant	2013	GB	Clio Barnard	English	Drama	83
Archipelago	2011	GB	Joanna Hogg	English	Drama	82
Eden	2014	FR	Mia Hansen-Løve	French	Drama, Music	82
Bright Star	2009	GB / AU	Jane Campion	English	Biography, Drama, Romance	81
Fish Tank	2009	GB	Andrea Arnold	English	Drama	81
Sister	2012	FR / CH	Ursula Meier	French	Crime, Drama	81
White Material	2009	FR	Claire Denis	French	Drama	81
Il Futuro	2013	IT / CL / DE / ES	Alicia Scherson	Italian	Drama	80
Lady Chatterley	2006	FR / GB / BE	Pascale Ferran	French	Drama, Romance	80
Goodbye First Love	2011	FR / DE	Mia Hansen-Løve	French	Drama, Romance	80
108	2011	ES	Renate Costa	Spanish	Documentary	79
Our School	2012	RO / US / CH	Miruna Coca-Cozma, Mona Nicoara	Romanian	Documentary	79
After the Wedding	2006	DK / GB	Susanne Bier	Danish	Drama	78
Breathe	2014	FR	Mélanie Laurent	French	Drama	78





## Appendix:

### Methodological remarks:

- The analysis looked at European films produced or released in Europe in the period 2005-14. 'Europe' is defined as the EU28 member states plus Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. A 'European film' is defined as a film which is majority produced in Europe. Data on films and admissions comes from the European Audiovisual Observatory's LUMIERE Pro World database.
- LUMIERE Pro World provides identifies the gender(s) of the director(s) for approximately 89% of the European films released in Europe in the period 2005-14. The figures presented here focuses of films which are solely directed by women. Films partly directed by women (e.g. Slumdog Millionaire, dir. Danny Boyle & Loveleen Tandan) are identified as 'mixed'. Films without gender information were excluded from the analysis.
- Eurimages data is based on a sample of 356 films (51% of total awards) from the period 2005-15.
- DFFF data is based on a sample of 238 films (27% of total awards) from the period 2007-14.
- MiBACT data is based on a sample of 191 films (41% of total awards) from the period 2004-14.
- MEDIA data is based on a sample of 1,457 films (88% of total awards) from the period 2004-14.
- IMDb User and Rotten Tomato ratings excludes films with less than 100 votes.
- Metacritic and Rotten Tomato critic scores excludes films with less than 20 reviews.
- Language and genre codes come from IMDb. Language is the first named language only. Films may be identified with up to three genres (e.g. a film coded Action/Musical/Comedy on IMDb would be identified as an 'action/adventure', 'musical' and 'comedy' film).