

Varese to Host 14th Cartoon Forum During Italy's EU Presidency

Italy (which has just taken over the presidency of the European Union) will host the 14th Cartoon Forum from 17 to 20 September 2003 in Varese, Lombardy. The Forum, organised by Cartoon with the support of the Media Programme of the European Union, is dedicated to the financing of European television animation. Thanks to steady growth and improvement over the years, the event is now considered to be the major autumn rendez-vous for producers and broadcasters.

It is here that those responsible for children's programmes on TV, as well as video publishers, distributors, licensing agents and service providers, will have first sight of and get involved with the programmes that will reach our screens in two or three years. Approximately 700 participants will be able to choose this year from 83 brand new series or one-off programmes offering a broad and varied panorama of European animation creativity and amounting to 535 hours and 44 minutes of programming for a total budget of 294,237,945 EURO.

Our partners for this edition of the Forum are the Regione Lombardia, the Varese Chamber of Commerce, the Province of Varese, Varese Town Hall, Promovarese and the Ville Ponti Congress Centre of Varese.

This year 14 European countries are represented including, for the first time, Slovakia and Poland.

The British will be here in force, with 22 projects, followed by Italy (which had only offered one series in 2002) with 17 and France with 16 projects. Spain has 7 and Germany 6, bringing the total for the five "large territories" of Europe (UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy) to 67 projects or 80.7% of the total.

The nine smaller countries, which usually receive lower levels of state funding and support from their national TV channels, and are thus often obliged to link up with partners from the larger territories in order to assemble their finance, are bringing only 16 projects (19.3% of the total).

As usual, international half-hour (20 projects of 26 x 26') or quarter-hour (33 projects of 10' to 13') formats are in the majority, representing 67.5% of all projects. Here again, it is the "large territories" of Europe that account for most of these. But compared to earlier years it is the 10' to 13' format that has gained ground (39.8%). The economic situation in the animation sector is making producers more cautious and this Forum will feature more short formats. There are 16 series of 5 to 7 minute episodes, 6 series of under 5 minutes and 5 TV specials. The cost per minute is also lower in 2003 than it was in 2002: 10,555 EUR/minute in 2002, as against 9,146 EUR/minute in 2003.

Fourteen projects are adaptations, while 69 (83.3%) are original works. Adventure and comedy remain the most popular genres for series, two-thirds of which are targeted at children in the 5-12 age range.

The CARTOON d'OR 2003 prize for a European animated short will be awarded during the closing ceremony of the Forum. The five nominated films were selected from 25 prize-winners at the European animation festivals partnering Cartoon*. The films are:

"Dog" by Suzie Templeton - 6' (2001- UK)
"Ligne de vie" by Serge Avédikian - 12'17" (2002 - France)
"NSPCC:Cartoon" by Russell Brooke - 1' (2002 - UK)
"Sans queue ni tête" by Sandra Desmazières - 6'35" (2001 - FR)
"The Dog Who Was a Cat Inside" by Siri Melchior - 3'22" (2002 - UK)

* partners of the CARTOON D'OR :

- I Castelli Animati - Genzano di Roma (Italy)
- Cinanima - Espinho (Portugal)
- Holland Animation Film Festival - Utrecht (Netherlands)
- Anima 2003 - Brussels (Belgium)
- Animated Encounters - Bristol Animation Film Festival (United Kingdom)
- Nordic and Baltic Animation Festival, nime rte Dager - Fredrikstad (Norway)
- Festival International du Film d'Animation - Annecy (France)

Cartoon organisation : Annick Maes

Tel : 32 2 245 93 43 - annick.maes@cartoon.skynet.be

International press : Alexandra Tholance Conseil

Tel : 33 6 80 25 52 39 - athol@club-internet.fr