

CARTOON FORUM CELEBRATES THE SPIRIT OF EUROPEAN ANIMATION AMID GROWING CHALLENGES

***Cartoon Forum** continues to be a place of opportunities and collaboration for European animation against the backdrop of global economic uncertainty, a place where connections help turn ideas into reality. This is one of the main conclusions of the 36th edition of this European co-production forum, which brought together 904 professionals from 39 countries. Besides pitching sessions and networking activities for the 75 animated series included in the line-up, the programme also featured matchmaking sessions, the second edition of **Animated UK Meets**, and **Fill the Gap**, a new initiative aimed at enhancing the visibility of projects recently presented at Cartoon Forum that require additional funding for their completion. The pursuit of formats and themes that better address the current demand for content, the growing presence of the female perspective, and a slight decrease in budgets were some of the trends of this edition of Cartoon Forum, held in the French city of Toulouse from September 15 to 18.*



© CARTOON 2025



The already traditional tasting of local products at the quaint Victor Hugo Market in Toulouse marked the launch of Cartoon Forum, held annually in the capital of the Occitanie region since 2012. The following day, September 16, the Forum's activities kicked off at the Centre des Congrès with opening words by Annick Maes, **CARTOON** General Director, who underlined the creativity, resilience and ability of European animation to reinvent itself.



© CARTOON 2025

After that, **Pierre Esplugas-Labatut**, Deputy Mayor in charge of Image of **Mairie de Toulouse**, **Claudie Faucon Mejean**, Vice-president of Culture for all, Heritage and Regional languages of the **Région Occitanie**, highlighted the momentum gained by animation both in the city and in the region, as well as the public initiatives aimed at promoting the production of animated series and films in their territory.

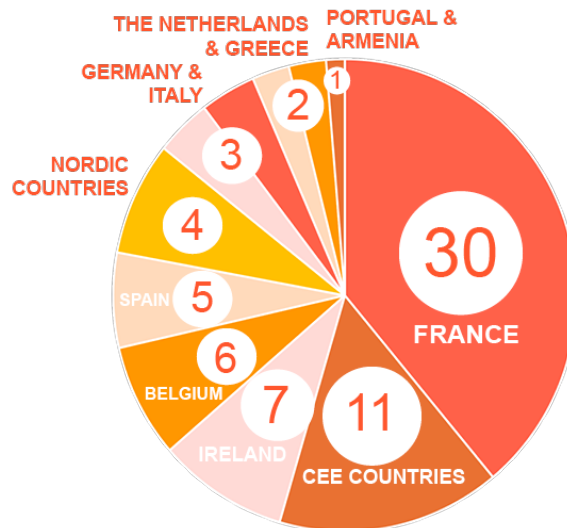


© CARTOON 2025



Seventy-five projects were presented at this year's Cartoon Forum in search of new partners to accelerate their production and subsequent distribution. Shortlisted from 108 submissions, the animated series hail from 20 countries, and amount to 391 hours of new content and a budget of EUR 339.5 million.

France led the line-up with 30 projects, followed by Ireland with 7, Belgium with 6, Spain with 5, and Poland with 4. Germany and Italy were represented by 3 series each, while Czechia, the Netherlands, Greece, and Serbia participated with 2 each. Projects from CEE countries continued to grow after almost doubling their presence from 6 projects in 2019 to 11 in 2025, including 4 from Poland, 2 from Serbia, 2 from Czechia, and one each from Bosnia, Latvia and Bulgaria. Already representing 15% of the selection, this steady trend by the CEE countries confirms the growth of animation production outside Europe's mainstream animation markets.

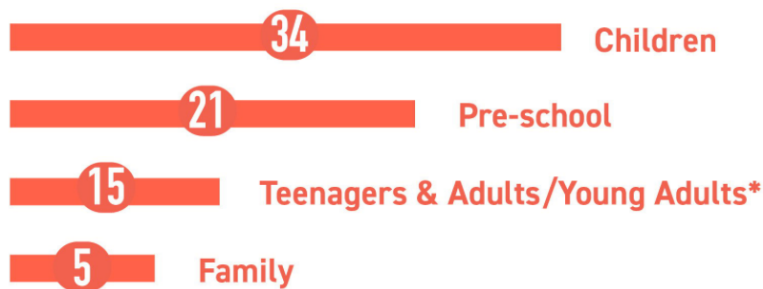


© CARTOON 2025 — all rights reserved

The Nordic countries, meanwhile, presented a total of 4 projects, one each from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, while Portugal and Armenia (non-EU country in the Creative Europe Programme) had one project each in the selection.

With a massive 80% of the line-up, projects aimed at children – from pre-school to 11-years-old – and family audiences underline European producers' commitment to safer strategies and to developing highly sought-after content by public television networks.

TARGETS (number of projects)

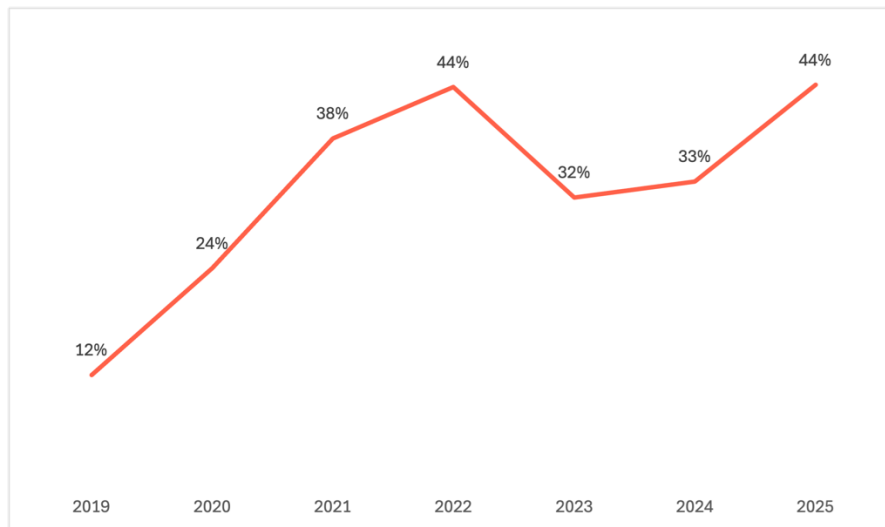


*Including 2 projects targetting teenagers

© CARTOON 2025

The average budget per series stood at 4.53 million EUR, while 33 projects (44%) arrived at the event with two or more countries on board. This high percentage of co-produced projects from the outset confirms the importance of this financing model for taking European projects forward, as well as the role of Cartoon Forum in finding new partners. France, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Spain and Germany are the most active European co-producers in this year's line-up. Co-production has grown dramatically in European animation over the last five years. After accounting for only 12% of the projects presented at Cartoon Forum in 2019, this percentage skyrocketed to 44% in this edition, confirming

co-production as a tool to address the lack of funding in the sector after the COVID crisis and the current economic slowdown.



©CARTOON 2025

With 68% of the selected projects made in 2D, this technique clearly emerges as the most widely used in European series, four times more than those developed in 3D.

NEW SIGNS OF IDENTITY

Each year, Cartoon Forum selection provides an accurate picture of the animated series production scenario in Europe, from which new trends within the sector emerge.

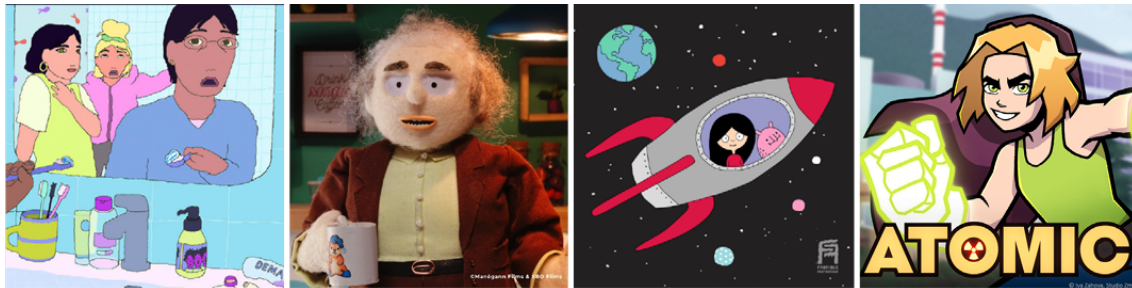
This edition has seen an increase in series aimed at pre-schoolers, children and families, as well as a slight decrease in the average production budget and length of the episodes. The former can be partly explained by the growing importance of public broadcasters and their interest in content aimed at these audiences. Meanwhile, the shorter episodes (73% of projects feature episodes of 13 minutes or less) may be related to the increasing importance of social media in the distribution of animated content. In this line, several of the projects presented at Cartoon Forum had versions exclusively designed for social media.

Adaptations remain an important source of creativity for European animation. Specifically, 27% of this year's selected projects were adaptations of comics, books, video games or even series born in social media.



© Piano Sano Films; © gretels gold; © De Argonauten; © Sixteen South

A significant number of projects tell stories from a female perspective featuring strong female characters in the leading roles. Also noteworthy is the number of women in key production or creative roles: 23% of the selected projects are directed by women and 27% have a female main producer. Besides, 37% feature female heroes or approach their stories from a female perspective, 17% promote diversity and inclusion, and 15%, address environmental issues.



© Les Valseurs; © Manégann films; © Fabrique Fantastique; © Studio Zmei

PROJECTS UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

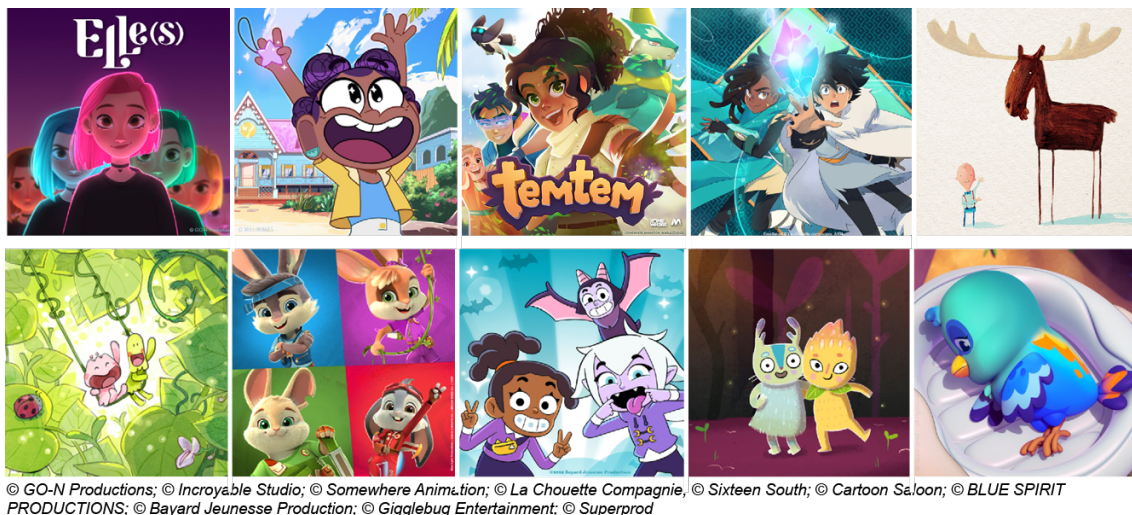
One of Cartoon Forum Cartoon Forum biggest strengths is the consistent participation of buyers. This year, 241 attended the event, 13% of them for the first time. This figure was partially boosted by the publishing sector's growing interest in creating synergies with the animation industry.

The five projects co-produced by at least two European countries that raised the most interest among the participants were **"Natu Natu"** from Cartoon Saloon (Ireland), Superprod Animation (France) and Melusine Productions (Luxembourg); **"This Moose Belongs to Me"** from Sixteen South (Ireland) and Creative Conspiracy (CC) (Belgium); **"Action Rabbits"** from Blue Spirit Productions (France) and Atomic Cartoons (Canada); **"2142"** from The World of 2142 (Serbia) and Hampa Studio (Spain); and **"VET ACADEMY"** from Superprod Animation (France) and Red Monk Studio (Italy).



© Cartoon Saloon; © Sixteen South; © BLUE SPIRIT PRODUCTIONS; © The World Of 2142; © Superprod

Meanwhile, the list of projects whose presentation aroused the most interest among buyers was topped by **"Elle(s)"** from GO-N Productions (France), followed by **"Pepper"** from Millimages (France), **"Temtem"** from Marla Studios - Kiss a Frog (France), **"Frostheart, the Seven Hearts of Darkness"** from La Chouette Compagnie (France), **"This Moose Belongs to Me"** from Sixteen South (Ireland), **"Natu Natu"** from Cartoon Saloon (Ireland), **"Action Rabbits"** from Blue Spirit Productions (France), **"Vampirette & Me"** from Bayard Jeunesse Production (France), **"The Underglow"** from Giggiebug Entertainment (Finland), and **"VET ACADEMY"** from Superprod Animation (France).



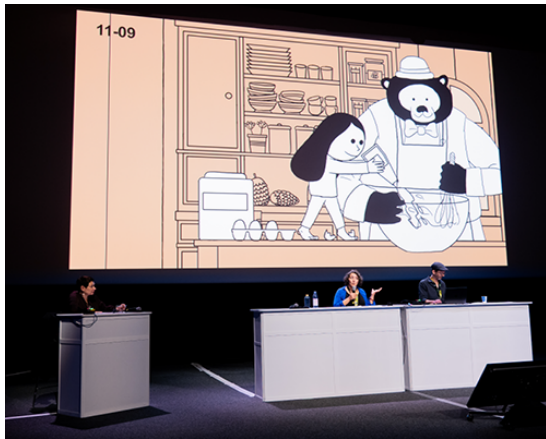
Both lists are available [here](#).

With the aim of promoting gender equity and supporting female professionals across the animation sector, the French association Les Femmes s'Animent awarded the LFA 2025 Coup de Coeur to **“Welcome to Happycracy”**, directed by Laurène Fernandez and produced by Manégann Films & Xbo films. The association also highlighted the strength of the creative, powerful proposals presented by emerging young talents such as Lola Lefèvre (**“Beasties”**), Clara Kennedy (**“Welcome Back Clara”**), Lucy Vallin (**“Ugly Neko Café”**), and Katerina Karhankova and Marek Naprstek (**“Animalies”**).



Welcome to Happycracy © Manégann Films - Xbo films

Lastly, the steady participation of projects from the Occitanie region – with two projects presented this year at the event: **“The Zzli Brothers”** (Xbo films) and **“Welcome to Happycracy”** (Manégann Films & Xbo films) - confirms current boom in animation in this area, where leading production companies such as TAT productions, which celebrated its 25th anniversary at the event, have emerged.



© CARTOON 2025



BEYOND THE PITCHING SESSIONS

Besides the pitching sessions, the agenda included a number of activities aimed at strengthening cooperation and promoting networking, such as **Animated UK Meets Europe** and **Fill the Gap**.



© CARTOON 2025



A collaboration between Animation UK and CARTOON with the support of BBC Children's and Education, [Animated UK Meets Europe](#) looks to showcase UK talent and creativity in European markets with the aim to obtaining European co-production and distribution partners. The second edition of this event created in 2023 featured three UK's series selected by the BBC and S4C: "Amelia Fang" produced by CAKE Entertainment & Germany's DCM, "Let's Play in Tiger Bay" produced by Hoho Entertainment & Bumpybox, and "The Adventures of Robin Robin" produced by Aardman Animations.

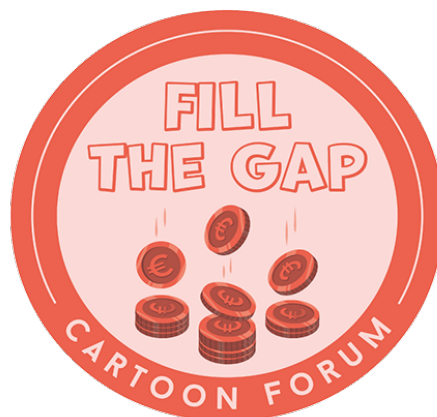


© CAKE Entertainment - DCM; © Hoho Entertainment - Bumpybox; © Aardman Animations



© CARTOON 2025

Following the pitching sessions, Sarah Muller (BBC - UK), Vicky Schroderus (YLE - Finland) and Pierre Siracusa (France Télévisions - France) discussed about the importance of public service broadcasting and cross-border collaborations in the talk **Funding the Future: Unlocking the Power of Co-Productions in Animation**, moderated by Vanessa Chapman.



© CARTOON 2025

Lastly, seven projects previously presented at Cartoon Forum and still lacking funding for their completion gained visibility thanks to **Fill in the Gap**, a new initiative to enable series with at least 70% of their budget secured and a broadcaster on board to move forward to the production stage. In addition to presenting the trailer, the producers of the selected projects engaged in the **Matchmaking sessions**, a new networking activity in which 285 meetings involving 116 producers and 53 buyers from 29 countries were organized.



© CARTOON 2025

CARTOON FORUM TRIBUTES & EBU CO-DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

[Cartoon Forum Tributes](#) have distinguished companies from Belgium, Denmark, and France in recognition of their professional contributions to the promotion of European animation. Presented for the first time in 2006, these awards have since become a prestigious recognition in the European animation industry. The winners in the three categories were voted by Cartoon Forum's participants.

Denmark's **Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR)** was recognised Broadcaster of the Year, while Paris-based **Mediatoon Distribution** was selected as Investor/Distributor of the Year. The list of winners is rounded out by Belgium's **Creative Conspiracy (CC)**, voted as Producer of the Year.

Among the finalists were also companies from Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK.

For the third year in a row, CARTOON has joined forces with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and France Télévisions in [EBU Co-Development Initiative](#), a collaborative model for animation focused on co-funding the development of pilot episodes. As in previous editions, one or two projects will be selected to receive this fund; this year's winner will be announced soon.



© CARTOON 2025



BBC (UK), DR (Denmark), FTV (France), LTV (Latvia), NPO (Netherlands), NRK (Norway), RAI (Italy), RTBF (Belgium), RTÉ (Ireland), RTVE (Spain), STVR (Slovakia), SVT (Sweden), SWR

(Germany), VRT (Belgium) and YLE (Finland) were the participating broadcasters in this third edition of EBU Co-Development Initiative.

Last year's selected project, "My Life is a Manga" (Brain Comet and Blue Spirit, France), presented its latest developments at the event.

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

Cartoon Forum has served once again as a link between emerging talents and the animation industry. One of this year's projects - "ATOMIC" (Studio Zmei, Bulgaria) - had previously participated at [Cartoon Springboard](#), CARTOON's pitching event dedicated to new talents in animation.

Training tomorrow's professionals and engaging with the local public were also on Cartoon Forum's agenda through the [Coaching Programme](#) and Les Toons d'ici. Coordinated by Agnès Bizzaro, the former made it possible for 82 students from 13 animation and arts schools from Toulouse and the Region Occitanie to have a broad overview of the industry and the challenges that are faced when implementing a project. Besides, a mini-pitch workshop was held in which 6 projects were presented to regional experts.



© CARTOON 2025



Lastly, thanks to **Les Toons d'ici**, more than 1,960 elementary school pupils from Toulouse were invited to explore different animation techniques through screenings of series, feature-length films and shorts born and bred in Toulouse and the Occitanie region. The activity was organised by APIFA (Association of Independent Producers of Occitanie) in partnership with the Mairie de Toulouse and Toulouse Metropole.



© CARTOON 2025

FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

In order to assess and improve its events, CARTOON has conducted a survey among the participants in Cartoon Forum with the following results: 66% of the respondents said that the event has resulted in business opportunities on site, 28% declared to be on ongoing conversations, and 23% have already obtained concrete results.

Meanwhile, 73% declared that the networking opportunities were strong or very strong, and 86% said that the event allowed them to increase their skills and their knowledge of the animation market.

Lastly, all respondents said they would recommend Cartoon Forum to their peers in the animation sector and 90% plan to attend Cartoon Forum 2026.

Cartoon Forum 2026 will take place from 14 to 17 September in Toulouse.

A SUSTAINABLE EVENT

Following its [sustainable development policy](#), CARTOON has developed a mobile app including the event's catalogue, among other features. Regarding gender parity, to which CARTOON is actively committed after signing the charter of the Collectif 50 /50, this year's gender breakdown was men (50,3%) and women (49,7%). CARTOON also partnered with [Keep Festive](#) to provide a safer event to all participants.

Following the internal audit for our CSR certification, which took place during Cartoon Forum 2025, we calculated the carbon footprint of digitising our materials (guidebook, roll-ups...). After taking into account the digital weight of the information and files on the app and website, as well as the average time spent on social media per day and per user, the environmental cost of this digital transition, is three times lower and thus prove the efficiency of our strategy.