

PRESS RELEASE  
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## CARTOON MOVIE KICKS OFF IN BORDEAUX WITH 50 EUROPEAN ANIMATED FEATURE PROJECTS

**Cartoon Movie**, the co-production and pitching forum for European animated feature films organised by **CARTOON**, will hold its 28<sup>th</sup> edition on March 3–5 in Bordeaux with the aim of accelerating the financing and international distribution of the selected projects. Chosen from a record 150 submissions – a 22% increase on the previous edition – 50 projects from 21 countries will be presented to potential co-producers, sales agents, distributors, streaming platform representatives and investors. The line-up includes 30 projects in development (60%), followed by 12 in concept (24%) and 7 in production (14%); the slate is rounded out by one sneak preview.

Together with the pitching sessions, the event will also host networking and training activities, the presentation of the Cartoon Movie Tributes and the Eurimages Co-production Development Award, and a special spotlight on Quebec–Canada animation to encourage partnerships between European and Canadian producers.

France leads the selection with 15 projects, followed by Germany (6) and Spain (5). Collectively, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) – Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Poland and Romania – account for 11 projects, underscoring the region’s growing presence. The Nordic countries – Denmark, Norway and Sweden – are represented with four projects. Belgium, Italy, Ireland and the Netherlands each present two titles, while Austria, Greece, Luxembourg and Ukraine complete the line-up with one project apiece.

With a combined production volume of €275.3 million, the selected projects represent an average budget of €5.5 million per film. Co-production continues to be a key financing pillar for animated features in Europe: 34 projects (68%) are structured as international co-productions between Creative Europe MEDIA countries and/or in collaboration with partners from outside the programme.

The line-up brings together emerging voices and established filmmakers, auteur-driven and audience-focused stories, as well as productions from independent studios alongside works by internationally acclaimed production companies. Among the new projects by renowned directors

are **“Kindred Spirits”** by Tomm Moore (Cartoon Saloon, Ireland), **“Starseed”** by Anca Damian (Aparte Film, Romania), and **“Hakim's Odyssey”** by Patrick Imbert (Folivari / Solab Films, France).

In terms of audience segmentation, 56% of the projects are aimed at families and children, while films targeting young-adult and adult audiences continue to gain ground, accounting for 38% of the selection. The programme also features two projects intended to pre-school audiences: **“Betty Balloon”** by Puk Grasten (Regner Grasten Filmproduktion, Denmark) and **“Onno & Ontje - Friends are the Best Gift”** by Eliza Plocieniak-Alvarez (Blaue Pampelmuse, Germany).

Besides, the selected projects embrace a wide array of genres—from adventure and action to comedy, drama and sci-fi—while also venturing into documentary and hybrid forms, reflecting the creative diversity and narrative ambition shaping today’s animated features in Europe. 2D animation remains the most widely used technique with 54% of the selection, while projects developed in 3D represent 30% of the line-up.

As in previous years, books and graphic novels are a key source of inspiration for European animation, with nine projects adapted from published works: **“Betty Balloon”** by Puk Grasten (Regner Grasten Filmproduktion, Denmark), **“Blaise”** by Dimitri Planchon & Jean-Paul Guigue (KG Productions, France), **“Cornebidouille”** by Mathias Varin (Les Armateurs, France), **“Igi”** by Natia Nikolashvili (20 Steps Animation, Georgia), **“Monster Mia”** by Verena Fels (arx anima animation studio, Austria), **“Nine Lives Left”** by Zacharias Mavroeidis (Wild At Heart, Greece), **“Pirate Mo and the Legend of the Red Ruby”** by Florian Westermann (Ulysses Filmproduktion, Germany), **“Onno & Ontje - Friends are the Best Gift”** by Eliza Plocieniak-Alvarez (Blaue Pampelmuse, Germany), and **“Sam & Julia”** (Submarine Animation, Netherlands).

Reflecting a growing emphasis on representation and diverse perspectives in European animation, 38% of the projects place diversity and inclusion at the heart of their narratives. Among the projects featuring characters with different types of disabilities are **“Akira’s Flying Wheelchair”** by Marco Balsamo (TeamTO Films, France), **“DREAMERS - The Hunt for Shadowclaw”** by Christopher Jenkins (parapictures film production, Germany), and **“The Wild and the Tame”** by Tibor Bánóczki & Sarolta Szabó (Domestic Infelicity, Hungary).

Women continue to gain ground at the event, with 39% of projects directed or co-directed by women, 34% produced by women, and more than half (62%) featuring at least one main female character.

Eight of the projects selected for this year’s Cartoon Movie have previously participated in the event – or in other CARTOON initiatives – at earlier stages of development. Among them are **“Aya in the Desert”** by Julia Horrillo Pla (Alhena Production, Spain) and **“Silence Sometimes”** by Álvaro Robles (Filmmakers Monkeys, Spain), both of which were first presented at **Cartoon Springboard**, the pitching event dedicated to young talents from European animation schools.

The full list of selected projects is available [here](#).

## **Beyond the pitching sessions**

Together with the attendance of an important delegation of Québec-Canadian producers, distributors, sales agents, editors and broadcasters, Cartoon Movie 2026 will host the launch of **Québec-Canada Land in Europe: A Space for Creation**, an initiative focused on international co-production with Europe. A selection of six projects (three from Quebec and three from other Canadian provinces) seeking European co-producers will be presented in a dedicated session organised in collaboration with SODEC and Telefilm Canada.

Cartoon Movie will also host a new edition of **Cartoon Talks**, an initiative dedicated to fostering synergies between the animation industry and related sectors such as gaming and publishing. On March 3, the programme will feature three sessions exploring green practices in animation and the evolving relationship between XR and cinema.

The programme will conclude with a round of pre-scheduled one-to-one meetings in which animation, gaming, and transmedia professionals will have the opportunity to exchange ideas, explore collaborations, and forge meaningful industry connections.

With an eye on the future, the **Coaching Programme** is an activity in which some 70 students from animation schools in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region will gain insight into the animation industry and the challenges of launching a project. The programme includes presentations by seasoned professionals who will share their experiences. In addition, the students will have the opportunity to connect with companies and professionals at a **Job Fair** and to present their animation projects during the **Elevator Pitch Workshop**, one of this year's new initiatives.

Two prizes will be awarded at the event. **Eurimages Co-production Development Award** is an initiative by The Council of Europe's Eurimages Fund to encourage international co-production from the initial stages of an animation project. In this edition, thirteen projects in development will compete for the award, which in 2025 was granted to **"ZAKO"** by Tigran Arakelyan, a film produced by OnOff Studio (Armenia), in collaboration with Sacrebleu Productions (France).

Finally, the **Cartoon Movie Tributes** will celebrate the most outstanding achievements in European animation over the previous year. Attendees at Cartoon Movie will vote for Producer, Distributor, and Director of the Year among the nominees from ten European countries. The winners will be announced on March 5.

## **Animation: A Strategic Industry in Nouvelle-Aquitaine**

**Nouvelle-Aquitaine** ranks as France's second-largest hub for animated content production after the Paris region. The sector brings together 1,300 artists, 25 specialised schools, and 30 studios, most of them based in Angoulême, within **Magelis**, the city's creative industries hub.

Since establishing itself in Bordeaux in 2017, Cartoon Movie has reinforced this strategy, expanding the international reach of the region's animation industry. In this new edition of Cartoon Movie, the territory is represented by nine projects. Six of them are supported by the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and accompanied by ALCA, while others are produced or co-produced by Bordeaux and Nouvelle-Aquitaine-based companies. The regional presence also includes local co-writers and co-directors involved in selected projects, as well as additional support from the Charente Department.

## **About Cartoon Movie**

Since its first edition in 1999, 504 films have been financially supported by Cartoon Movie with a total budget of €3.37 billion. Organised by CARTOON, Cartoon Movie is an annual forum aimed at strengthening the production and distribution of animated feature films in Europe. The event has the support of Creative Europe – MEDIA, CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée), Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Bordeaux Métropole, Magelis, Creative industries hub in Angoulême, and France Télévisions.

CARTOON – European Association of Animation Film is an international non-profit association based in Brussels that organises Cartoon Movie, together with Cartoon Forum, a co-production forum for animated TV series, and the training seminars CartoonNext, Cartoon Springboard, and Cartoon Business.

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