CARTOON FORUM 2026: CREATIVITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

Held in Toulouse from September 14 to 17, Cartoon Forum celebrated its 37th edition with 65 animated series projects from 19 countries, offering a snapshot of the current state of European animation. Against a backdrop of changes in animation production, distribution and financing, the event highlighted key industry trends, including the growing importance of international co-production, greater geographical diversity, more flexible formats, broader strategies for reaching viewers and efforts to build audiences from an early stage.

Cartoon Forum brought together 902 participants from 35 countries, including 243 buyers, nearly one in five of whom were attending the event for the first time. Women accounted for 53.7% of participants, making up the majority for the first time in the event's history. The presence of Québec-Canadian animation professionals also opened new opportunities for collaboration and co-production beyond Europe.

As part of its sustainable development policy, CARTOON is committed to measuring and reducing the environmental impact of its events while promoting social inclusion. Key figures and results are presented below.



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Professional activities began on September 15 at the Centre de Congrès Pierre Baudis with opening remarks by Annick Maes, General Director of CARTOON, followed by addresses from **Eric Jean-François, City Councillor for Cinema and Culture at Mairie de Toulouse/Toulouse Métropole, and Serge Regourd, Regional Councillor for Culture of the Region Occitanie.** Jean-François highlighted the strong presence of local animation in this year's selection, with three projects from the region, as well as the international profile of domestic companies such as TAT Productions and Xbo films. Regourd, meanwhile, pointed to the strength and diversity of Occitanie's animation ecosystem, which today represents nearly 1,000 direct jobs in the region. Cartoon Forum has been based in Toulouse since 2012.



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After that, **Nathalie Clermont**, Executive Vice-President, Content Strategy and Industry Development at the Canada Media Fund, and **Sophie Labesse**, General Director of Financing & Tax Assistance at SODEC, presented the initiative **Québec-Canada Land in Europe: a Space for Creation**, which brought together a delegation of some 30 professionals, including producers, investors and broadcasters.



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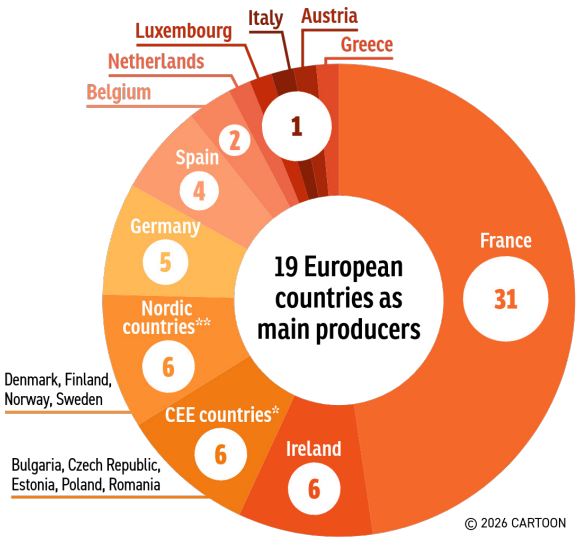


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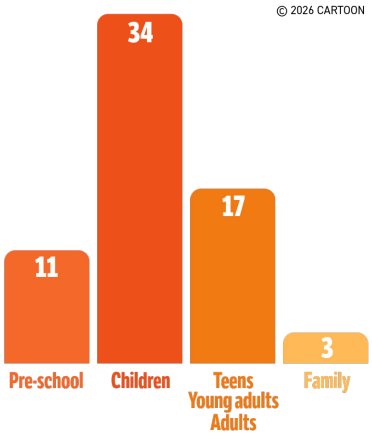
KEY FIGURES & TRENDS

This year's Cartoon Forum selection featured 65 projects at development stage, selected from 111 submissions. Spanning 19 European countries and representing 326 hours of content, the line-up had a combined budget of €280 million and an average of €4.3 million per project.

France led the selection with 31 projects, followed by Ireland with six, Germany with five and Spain with four. Poland, Belgium, Finland and Denmark were represented by two projects each, while Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Sweden each had one, reflecting the growing geographical diversity of European animation production. At the regional level, Central and Eastern Europe and the Nordic countries each accounted for six projects.



The selection was predominantly aimed at children, with 34 projects (52%) targeting audiences aged 5 to 11. A further 17 projects (26%) were aimed at teens, young adults and adults, while 11 (17%) targeted pre-school audiences and three were family oriented. This year's selection also reflected a broader approach to audiences, with producers developing projects aimed at wider age groups and exploring new ways of building audiences from an early stage, particularly through social media.



International co-production was a key feature of the selection, with 26 projects (40%) involving 16 different countries. Of these, 13 were co-productions between two or three MEDIA countries, while five involved non-Creative MEDIA countries. France, Luxembourg, Austria, Germany and Belgium emerged as the most active co-producing countries in Europe.

Series formats are becoming increasingly flexible, with producers experimenting with shorter series and specials in response to changing viewing habits. Producers are also placing greater emphasis on where and how audiences consume their content, rather than assuming that projects are primarily intended for linear television.

The 2026 selection also reflected growing trends in diversity and representation. Projects addressing inclusion accounted for 31% of the selection, almost twice the 17% recorded in 2025, while projects led by female protagonists reached a record high, accounting for almost half of the selection.


Pitch Ernestine © Célia Lenoir



Pitch OUCH! © Célia Lenoir


Pitch The Old Lady and the Dragon © Célia Lenoir

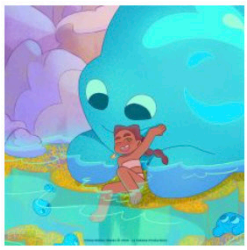
Adaptations also remained significant, with 20 projects (31%) based on comics, graphic novels, books or other existing IPs. Their growing presence highlights the increasingly close links between animation and other creative industries, with producers bringing existing stories, characters and universes from a wide range of sources to the screen.

In terms of animation techniques, 2D was the most widely used, with 37 projects, followed by 3D with 18 projects and a combination of 2D and 3D with nine.

Sustainability is also emerging as a growing trend in production, with 40% of the selected projects already implementing measures such as sustainability charters, certification processes, waste reduction and logistics and energy optimization.

PROJECTS UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Across target groups, the selection spans a broad range of genres and themes. Children's projects combine adventure, comedy and fantasy with stories about identity, belonging and emotions. Teen projects explore fantasy, coming-of-age, science, friendship and resilience, while young adult stories combine humour with a critical take on contemporary society, alongside personal journeys and questions of identity. Pre-school projects take a more educational approach, focusing on emotions, curiosity, discovery and imagination.



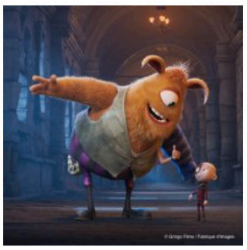
Emma Makes Waves © La Cabane Productions (France) and Thuristar (Belgium)



Rock Me Amadeus © Big Idea Farm (Germany), MARKAND Media (Austria) and Animoon (Poland)



Mebh And The Wolf Pups © Cartoon Saloon (Ireland) and Melusine Studio (Luxembourg)



Stitch Head © Gringo Films (Germany) and Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg)



Garden Square © Distillery Films (Ireland), Watch Next Media (France) and A Productions (UK)

Among the projects co-produced in at least two European countries, Emma Makes Waves, a co-production between La Cabane Productions (France) and Thuristar (Belgium), attracted the highest number of participants in the pitching sessions, followed by Rock Me Amadeus! produced by Big Idea Farm (Germany), MARKAND Media (Austria) and Animoon (Poland), and Mebh and the Wolf Pups, a co-production between Cartoon Saloon (Ireland) and Melusine Studio (Luxembourg). Other projects ranking among the highest in attendance included Stitch Head, produced by Gringo Films (Germany) and Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg); Garden Square, by Distillery Films (Ireland), Watch Next Media (France) and A Productions (UK); Outside Kabul, by Les Films du Poisson and Tchack (France) and Ström Pictures (Denmark); Mini Missions, by 20STM (Belgium), Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg), Trickstudio Lutterbeck (Germany) and Will Production (France); Dream Tango, by Uncloudy & Co (Sweden) and Athena Kalkopoulou (Greece); Emotsters, by Blaue Pampelmuse (Germany) and Wailing Wolves (Belgium); and Rainy Days, by Animadre Studio (Austria), Laïdak Films (France) and CUB Animation (Hungary).



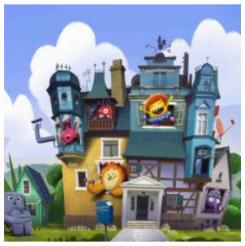
Outside Kabul © Les Films du Poisson and Tchack (France) and Ström Pictures (Denmark)



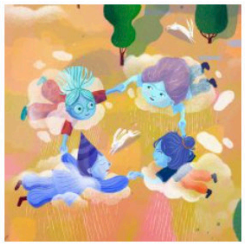
MINI MISSIONS © 20STM (Belgium), Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg), Trickstudio Lutterbeck (Germany), Will Production (France)



Dream Tango © Uncloudy & Co (Sweden) and Athena Kalkopoulou (Greece)



Emotsters © Blaue Pampelmuse (Germany) and Wailing Wolves (Belgium)



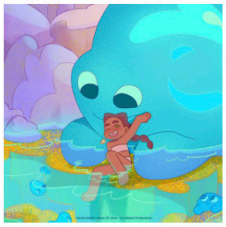
Rainy Days © Animadre Studio (Austria), Laïdak Films (France) and CUB Animation (Hungary)

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In terms of buyer presence in the pitching sessions, Animal Jack (Ellipse Animation, France) attracted the highest number of buyers, followed by Emma Makes Waves, by La Cabane Productions (France) and Thuristar (Belgium), and Toco Toco (Xilam Animation, France). Other highly ranked projects included The Little Shadow Thief, by Frog Box and Toutes Ces Choses (France); Zombie Kidz (Piano Sano, France); Akissi, by Everybody on Board Productions and Watch Next Media (France); Rock Me Amadeus!, by Big Idea Farm (Germany), MARKAND Media (Austria) and Animoon (Poland); Ernestine, by Ad Astra and Laïdak Films (France); Adonis, by Brain Comet (France); Danny Dreadson, by Watch Next Media (France); S(e)ummer Stories, by Werlen Ipsum and Premier Degré (France); Atta Slam, by Submarine Animation (Netherlands) and Igloo Studio (Thailand); and Stitch Head, by Gringo Films (Germany) and Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg).



Animal Jack © Ellipse Animation (France)



Emma Makes Waves © La Cabane Productions (France) and Thuristar (Belgium)



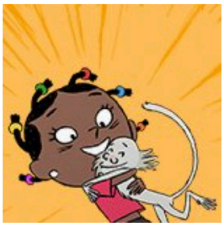
Toco Toco © Xilam Animation (France)



The Little Shadow Thief © Frog Box and Toutes Ces Choses (France)



Zombie Kidz © Piano Sano (France)



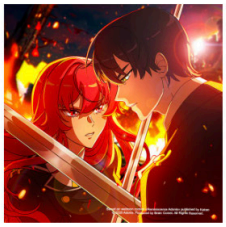
Akissi © Everybody on Board Productions and Watch Next Media (France)



Rock Me Amadeus © Big Idea Farm (Germany), MARKAND Media (Austria) and Animoon (Poland)



Ernestine © Ad Astra and Laïdak Films (France)



Adonis © Brain Comet (France)



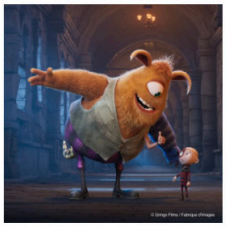
Danny Dreadson © Watch Next Media (France)



S(e)ummer Stories © Werlen Ipsum and Premier Degré (France)



Atta Slam © Submarine Animation (Netherlands) and Igloo Studio (Thailand)



Stitch Head © Gringo Films (Germany) and Fabrique d'Images (Luxembourg)

Both lists* are available here.

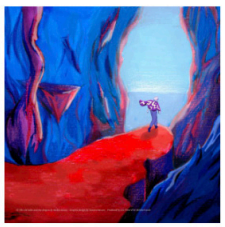
PlasticLand (Dwarf Entertainment), The Banana Complex (Xbo films) and The Old Lady and the Dragon (Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée) showcased the creative diversity of the **Occitanie region** at Cartoon Forum 2026.



Plasticland © Dwarf Entertainment (France)



The Banana Complex © Xbo films (France)



The Old Lady and The Dragon © Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée (France)

Two projects selected for this year's edition – WAW Resort by Peekaboo Animation (Spain) and OUCH! by Anna Films (France) – began their international journey at Cartoon Springboard, the pitching event for young European animation talent.



WAW Resort © Peekaboo Animation (Spain)



OUCH! © Anna Films (France)

As part of Cartoon Forum's ongoing partnerships, two projects joined the line-up through Germany's Animation Production Days (APD): Emotsters by Blaue Pampelmuse and Reinventing Herman by Wolkenlenker. Another project, Tolo&Bolo (Filmograf, Poland), joined through the CEE Animation Forum.



Emotsters © Blaue Pampelmuse (Germany)



Reinventing Herman © Wolkenlenker (Germany)



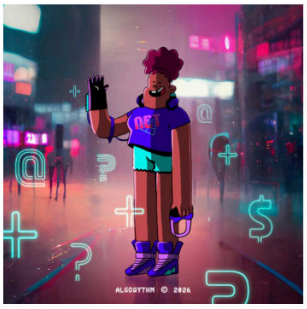
Tolo&Bolo © Filmograf (Poland)

NETWORKING & INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES

Beyond the pitching sessions, Cartoon Forum offered a range of networking and industry activities, including Québec-Canada Land in Europe: A Space for Creation, Fill the Gap and One-to-One Meetings.

Québec-Canada Land in Europe: A Space for Creation aimed to strengthen connections between Canadian and Québec talent and European creators and industry professionals, while fostering opportunities for collaboration and co-production. A dedicated pitching session presented six Canadian projects: Algorythm (Exterieur Jour), Alien Book Club (Big Bad Boo Studios), El Kapoutchi, the King of Villains (Punch! Animation), Miss Tzatziki's Classroom Mysteries (Happy Camper Média), Semanka (Chrystelle Maechler Productions) and The Labradoodles (Imagine Create Media).

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Algorythm © Exterieur Jour



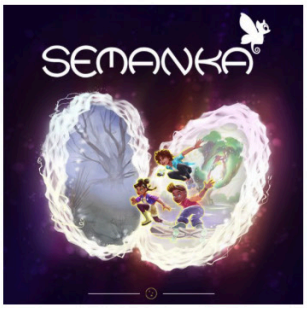
Alien Book Club © Big Bad Boo Studios



El Kapoutchi The King Of Villains © Punch! Animation



Miss Tzatziki's Classroom Mysteries © Happy Camper Média



Semanka © Chrystelle Maechler Productions



The Labradoodles © Imagine Create Media

Fill the Gap resumed its support for projects previously pitched at Cartoon Forum. The initiative targeted series with at least 70% of their budget secured and a broadcaster already on board, helping them move forward to the production stage. Five selected series were presented in five-minute pitches, giving producers an opportunity to secure the remaining funding needed to move their projects into production.

One-to-One Meetings provided participants with opportunities to connect with potential buyers, broadcasters and financial partners. More than 300 business meetings were held during the afternoon of September 17.

The programme also included a **Cartoon Talk** exploring the role of Public Service Broadcasters in engaging young audiences in the digital era, featuring Marysol Charbonneau (Télé-Québec, Canada), Telidja Klaï (VRT-Ketnet, Belgium) and Tiphaine De Raguenel (France Télévisions, France).



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CELEBRATING INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENTS

The **Cartoon Forum Tributes** recognised key players across the European animation industry in four categories. Chosen by Cartoon Forum participants, the three established awards – Producer, Broadcaster and Investor/Distributor of the Year – went to Bobby Prod (France), BBC (UK), and Folivari International (France), respectively.

Recognising a European animation production company or initiative for its contribution to sustainability, the new **Ecoprod-Cartoon Tribute** went to Gao Shan Pictures (France). This new award is organised in partnership with Ecoprod, a non-profit organisation supporting the audiovisual industry's environmental transition.



Winners of 2026. Damien Brunner, Thibaut Ruby & Melissa Vega (Folivari International), Sarah Muller & Kate Morton (BBC), Gabrielle d'Andrimont (Bobby Prod), Bérangère Condomines (Gao Shan Pictures) © CARTOON

All nominees had previous ties to Cartoon Forum, having participated in the event to pitch projects and connect with the European animation industry. Companies from the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden were also among the nominees.

With the aim of promoting gender equity and supporting women professionals across the animation sector, the French association Les Femmes s'Animent awarded its LFA 2026 Coup de Cœur to **The Old Lady and the Dragon**. Written and directed by Nadja Anane, illustrated by Rozenn Busson and produced by Sophie Cabon for Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée, the project is an adaptation of a work by renowned American feminist science-fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin. The jury praised the proposal as "bold and so necessary today".



The Old Lady and The Dragon © Les Films d'Ici Méditerranée (France)

CARTOON FORUM AND THE NEXT GENERATION

Cartoon Forum also strengthened its ties with Toulouse and the Occitanie region through two initiatives connecting the event with the local creative ecosystem. The Coaching Programme introduced students from local animation schools to the industry, covering the different stages of production, market trends, project development, financing and international partnerships. The programme brought together 74 students and teachers.


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© Ivan Rozhdestvenskii

Les Toons D'ici, organised in partnership with the City and Metropolis of Toulouse, introduced children aged 7 to 11 to local animation productions through screenings and opportunities to meet the professionals behind them. The initiative reached 1,965 children and accompanying adults from 28 schools across eight sessions.



© Ivan Rozhdestvenskii

SUSTAINABLE EVENT

As part of its sustainable development policy, CARTOON is committed to measuring and reducing the environmental impact of its events while promoting social inclusion.

ISO 20121 is the international standard for sustainable event management. It provides a framework for integrating sustainability into event planning and delivery, addressing environmental, social and economic impacts.

ISO 20121

Sustainable venue: Cartoon Forum takes place at the Centre Pierre Baudis, an ISO 20121-certified venue committed to reducing the event's environmental impact.

Lower-impact travel: Encouraging train travel helped avoid an estimated 11.3 tonnes of CO_2e.

Responsible catering: With local caterer Falcou, CARTOON prioritised local, organic and seasonal products. One of the three lunches was 100% vegetarian, with vegan and special-diet options available throughout the event. Food waste had a second life: collected by Les Alchimistes Occiterra, it was transformed into compost.

Sustainable accommodation: 85% of overnight stays booked for Cartoon Forum were in hotels holding the Green Key certification or another recognised sustainability label.

Gender balance and inclusion: Women represented 53.6% of participants, men 45.6% and non-binary participants 0.8%. CARTOON supports gender balance through Collectif 50/50 and worked with Keep Festive to promote a safer, more inclusive environment.

Accessibility: Reduced participation fees help professionals from countries with low audiovisual capacity attend the event. They represented 6.7% of participants.

Responsible AI: CARTOON promotes transparency around the use of AI in its projects, in line with the principles and requirements of the European AI Act.

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: 45.8% of the respondents said that the event has resulted in business opportunities on site, 47.7% declared to be on ongoing conversations, and 25.4% have already obtained concrete results.

Meanwhile, 74.1% of the respondents declared that the networking opportunities were strong or very strong, and 87.7% 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 58.7% already plan to attend Cartoon Forum 2027.

Please note: Due to a technical issue with the scans during Funny Feelings, the project could not be taken into account in the Top 10 rankings. We sincerely apologise for the inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

The next edition of Cartoon Forum will take place from 13 to 16 September 2027!

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