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Poland confab draws Euro animators

Cartoon Forum shows growth of medium

By NICK HOLDSWORTH

LONDON -- European cartoonists will gather in Poland's Baltic resort of Sopot in September for the 22nd Cartoon Forum Polska, the annual animation co-production event, as the medium enjoys a worldwide boom.

Organizers say there has been a spectacular rise in the global budget for toons with investment of €214.5 million (\$308 million) in the past year, up nearly a third on the previous year.

Production volume is up by a quarter with 467 hours of animation created worldwide.

"The figures reflect the positive outlook for the sector, as well as the consolidation of European animated series on broadcasters' schedules, both on the continent and abroad," organizers said.

Cartoon Forum Polska, which runs Sept. 16-19, will present 66 new animation series to more than 700 producers, investors and decision makers from TV and new media platforms.

The event is designed to set up co-productions and speed up financing for series that will roll out on Euro TV screens over the following months.

Projects this year include series aimed at children ages 6-9 and short-format series with episodes under 11 minutes.

The move toward cross media continues, with more than a third of projects designed for TV and other platforms, including the Internet, mobile phones, video consoles and hand-held tablets.

The biggest number of projects this year come from France, with 21, followed by the U.K. and Spain, with 14 and 11 respectively -- twice the number they brought last year.

Nineteen European countries are represented at the event, founded by industry org Cartoon. Backed by Europe's Media program and national cultural funds, event has helped 450 animation series obtain funding of more than \$2 billion.

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