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CARTOON FORUM KOLDING - SEPTEMBER 2005

MAKE A DATE WITH HUMOUR AT OUR DANISH RENDEZVOUS

For this 16th Cartoon Forum the selection committee chose 69 series projects from 24 countries, representing a total of 422 hours of programming for an overall budget of 239 million EUR.

So 69 European TV series projects will be presented at Kolding, a small seaside town in Denmark, in the context of the 16th Cartoon Forum on 22, 23 and 24 September 2005. This Cartoon Forum is supported by the Media Programme of the European Union, the Danish Film Institute, Kolding Municipality, Vejle County, Nordisk Film Fonden/Egmont, Nordisk Film- & TV Fund, Filmkopi, Danmarks Radio (DR), TV2, Film & TV-Arbejderforeningen (FAF), the Association of Danish Film Directors (Filminstruktører) and the Association of Animators (Anis).

The United Kingdom is presenting the largest number of series this year with 19 projects, i.e. 27.5% of the total. Then come Spain with 9 projects, Germany with 8, France with 7, Ireland with 6, Italy with 4, Denmark and Sweden with 3 each, Iceland and Belgium with 2 each and, finally, Norway, Slovenia, Finland, Austria, Latvia and Bulgaria with one project each.

But thanks to various collaborations between producers and studios, several projects also have partners in Luxembourg, Greece, Cyprus, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary or the Netherlands. Thus 24 countries are involved in Cartoon Forum 2005.

It is interesting to note that the Danish projects have the highest per-minute cost at 12,600 EUR, followed by Germany at 11,000 EUR, the UK at 10,500 EUR, Italy at 9,500 EUR, France at 9,300 EUR, Sweden at 9,100 EUR, Spain at 7,700 EUR and Ireland at 5,200 EUR per minute.

As for the target audience, this is the first year that we have seen so many pre-school projects, 28 in fact, i.e. 40% of the total. There are 30 projects targeting 6-12 year-olds, 5 for the whole family and 6, i.e. almost 10% of the total, are oriented towards teenagers and adults. The vast majority of television programmes are still targeting children, unlike feature films which are more and more frequently addressing teenage and family audiences.

3D animation is on the increase in television programmes, just as it is in the cinema. Pure 3D accounts for 28 projects, mixed 2D-3D technique for 11 projects, 2D for 24, Flash for 4 and stop motion and a combined technique using live action for one each. Spain is presenting 5 projects in 3D (i.e. 55% of the total Spanish projects).

As for formats, 13-minute episodes are the most numerous this year, with 26 projects, followed by 19 with episodes from 5 to 7 minutes, 16 of 26 minutes, 7 from 2 to 4 minutes and one 26-minute TV special.

Ten of the 19 UK projects have 13-minute episodes.

Six of the 7 French projects are either 13 minutes or 5 minutes. France has no 26-minute series this year.

As regards the characters and stories, 2005 seems more optimistic than previous years, with many characters designed in playful, witty style and stories which are lively and humorous. Among the characters, humans account for almost half the total, with 33 projects, 7 of them with female leading characters and 4 featuring groups of teen or adult chums. Next come the animals, with 19 projects, many of them featuring bands of African or other exotic creatures, all absolutely adorable, and some heroes such as dogs, a girafe, a sheep that is completely off its trolley, a strange rabbit, an extra-terrestrial frog, a cat, a bear, some crabs and dragons. We find of course magic and supernatural beings in 5 projects – wizards, vampires, monsters, ghosts and elves. Then come the aliens, which are all kind and lovable this year, in 7 projects. Two projects are vegetable-oriented, featuring mushrooms and food from the fridge. And, finally, there are 3 projects that do not fit into any of the above-mentioned categories and star, respectively, Jesus, some bubble gum friends and a band of sperms with problems. As for the stories, comedies predominate with, in the case of pre-school programmes, more didactic themes (learning about the body, questions about the world, the environment...), and there are some really thrilling adventures, ancient legends and space discoveries. These too are TV shows, but done with humour, innovative graphics and a lot of care in the plot structure.

The singing Mayor of Kolding, Mr Per Bødker Andersen, has decided to transform Kolding into a totally animated town for the week of Cartoon Forum, with exhibitions and animation screenings for the townspeople and schools. Cartoon Forum 2005 will most definitely have optimism and humour in the ascendant.