KEY FACTS FROM 2021

Video games – a force for good
Foreword

From Olaf Coenen, Chair of ISFE and Hendrik Lesser, President of EGDF

The joint ISFE-EGDF Key Facts report is published during yet another global crisis. Whilst we continue to navigate the challenges and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is now also reeling from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The pandemic paved the way for a broader understanding and acceptance of the positive role video games play. There is an increasing body of research on player behaviour and well-being, such as that recently conducted by the Oxford Internet Institute (OII), which found that time spent playing video games is unlikely to impact well-being, whereas a survey conducted by Ipsos found that video game play had a positive effect on mental health during the lockdowns. We are proud that video games are not only a driver of Europe’s digital economy but that they are also being recognised as a force for good. Video games play a role in developing and enhancing digital skills and education, providing teachers with useful tools and helping them engage with hard-to-reach students. In addition, they enable connections across the world, positively impacting mental wellbeing.

In 2020, the EU had 4,600 game developer studios and publishers. Together, these companies employed 74,000 people (98,219 people in Europe) and had a combined turnover of €16.6bn in the EU. In 2021, the market value for the whole of Europe remained stable at €23.3bn, following the exceptional increase from 2019-2020 due to the role video games played in helping millions of people connect whilst being apart during the strictest of the Covid-19 lockdowns. The number of players has increased by 6%. Playing games has gained popularity across all age groups, with the 45-64 age group being the fastest growing. Actual playtime, however, went down to 9 hours per week, showing that playing video games regained its pre-pandemic place in players’ routines.

With 52% of Europe’s population playing video games, including children, the industry continues to take our responsibility towards our players very seriously, particularly with regard to minors. Children express themselves through play: they learn, create, collaborate, and connect. Our members dedicate considerable resources in terms of time and investment to ensure parents have the tools, support and confidence they need to guide their children’s video gameplay. The PEGI age and content label is one click away to help parents select the right games for their children in consultation with them. The parental control tools are intended to be utilised in a way that works for each family and to encourage a dialogue between the child and the parent in order to define the rules together.

At the end of 2021, we launched our #SeizeTheControls campaign to empower parents and guardians about the parental control tools, settings, reporting tools and the PEGI age labelling of games that are available to help them make educated decisions regarding their children’s gameplay. By being aware of the tools available, parents will be able to have conversations with their children about playtime, spending and interaction with confidence. The campaign also showcases the incredible work carried out by our trade association members across Europe, who work tirelessly to inform and educate consumers about the many tools and resources available. We have also partnered with the European network of Safer Internet Centres to ensure that they have access to dedicated information and education sources about responsible gameplay. Co-funded by the European Commission in Member States, and also operating in Iceland, Norway, Russia and the United Kingdom, Safer Internet Centres strive to keep children and young people safe online through a range of actions and initiatives.

It has been a busy year as we have also published a comprehensive Guide to Esports, which contains all you need to know about a sector that, according to games and esports analytics firm Newzoo, had 205 million enthusiasts worldwide in 2021 and is expected to increase to 286 million by 2024. Esports boast a total audience of 436 million, expected to reach 577 million in 2024. This is a guide produced by the video game companies that make esports possible and tells the story of the whole ecosystem: its economic impact, jobs and skills, demographics and how video game IP leads to innovative licensing.

Our members continue to work hard on improving our industry’s diversity and inclusivity, reflecting our players and making this a great sector to work in for everyone. As corporate ambassadors of Women in Games, we are delighted to support the second edition of their guide, “Building a Fairer Playing Field”. The guide provides practical recommendations for the industry as well as first-hand reflections from those working in the field. We look forward to sharing this important work through our European network.

Last but not least, we were delighted to support the Green Games Summit and be part of a global initiative engaging with players worldwide to communicate on climate change — yet another fantastic example of how video games can positively influence society. ISFE is proud that, as an associate member of the UN- facilitated Playing for the Planet Alliance, our office has achieved CO2-neutral status. This is a one-of-a-kind collaboration in which video game companies work together to address climate change.

In the year ahead, we look forward to continuing our dialogue with policy makers across Europe, to better their understanding of how this creative and innovative sector can support Europe’s digital and cultural growth. We are here to provide facts, figures and the realities of running companies from the smallest start-up developers to the largest multi-national video game publishers. We are here to champion our members’ commitment to Europe’s video game creators, creating skilled digital citizens, supporting responsible gameplay and making video games brilliant fun for everyone.

Data used in this publication is provided by Ipsos and commissioned by ISFE. It is extracted from GameTrack, GSD and the EGDF-ISFE Video Games Industry Insights report.

GameTrack collects data on the behaviours of game players based on three metrics: volume, value, and playtime. Data outlined in this report is gathered from five key video game markets in Europe: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the U.K. These countries represent a diverse population and a large share of video games in the region.

Games Sales Data (GSD) is the first video games industry chart to include data on both retail and digital sales. Data outlined in this report is gathered from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

The EGDF-ISFE European Video Games Industry Insights report includes useful insights for the video games industry as well as European industry data.
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Talent & creativity

Innovation

Players are at the heart of what we do

Economic success

Societal & cultural impact
Who we are

Playing video games is an activity a majority of people integrate into their leisure time in some form or another.

52% of the population between the ages of 6 and 64 plays.

### Number of players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>118.3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>124.8m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Breakdown of players by age group

- 24% 6-14 years old
- 22% 15-24 years old
- 16% 35-44 years old
- 17% 45-64 years old
- 20% 25-34 years old

**EUROPE’S VIDEO GAME PLAYERS**

**KEY FACTS FROM 2021**

Unless stated otherwise, all data presented on this page is extracted from GameTrack, GSD and/or the EGDF-ISFE European Video Games Industry Insight Report. See page 3.
Women and Video Games

Almost as many women as men are playing video games.

47.8% of European game players are women

32 is the average age of women who play video games

Games are a way to introduce girls to STEM

48% of video game players are girls (6-15 years old)

3x more likely to pursue a STEM career than girls who don’t.*

Women make up

52.8% of all smartphone and tablet players

41.4% of all console players

43.4% of all PC players

Percentage of video game players by age group

71% vs 68% in 2020

80% vs 79% in 2020

76% vs 72% in 2020

61% vs 60% in 2020

45% vs 43% in 2020

35% vs 31% in 2020

Among video game players

63% play on smartphones or tablets

54% play on consoles

52% play on PC

31.3 is the average age of a video game player in Europe

76% of video game players are 18 years or older (up to 64)

63% 54% 52%

31.3 76%

6-10 11-14 15-24 25-34 35-44 45-64


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Supplementing health treatment options
Video games are used as supplemental treatment options for health conditions, such as alleviating anxiety\(^3\), ADHD\(^4\) and Alzheimer’s, and can help manage side effects from cancer treatment\(^5\).

Bringing People Together
Video games offer players a sense of community\(^6\) in which they can work together to investigate, compete, and solve problems. When other forms of shared entertainment were scarce, video games provided virtual socialisation\(^7\) and engagement in gameplay became a means of preventing feelings of loneliness\(^8\).

Improving mental health
Video games provided an important source of comfort and positively impacted mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.\(^1\) Some of the latest academic studies show a positive relationship between video game playtime and well-being.\(^2\)

KEY FACTS FROM 2021

4 Akili Announces FDA Clearance of EndeavorRx for Children with ADHD, the First Prescription Treatment Delivered Through a Video Game. Akili. 2020.
Video game genres

Video game experiences are as diverse as the billions of people who play them. The creative power of games is shown through the different genres.

**Action**
Fast-paced, full-throttle games that get your heart pumping.

**Role-playing**
Story-driven games that put you in charge of your own destiny.

**Racing**
Where you can drive without speed limits - or even a license.

**Strategy**
Outsmart the competition and strategise your way to victory.

**Sports**
From golf to basketball, and everything in between.

**Casual**
For those who want a simple game they can play, win and enjoy in a shorter period of time.

**Fighting**
Self-explanatory, and with far fewer consequences vs. IRL fighting.

**Adventure**
For the thrillseekers that want to explore new (and familiar) worlds.

**Shooting**
Defeat your enemies with your quick thinking and an even quicker trigger finger.

**Family**
Games designed for the whole family to play together.

---

**Playtime**

Playing video games offers a lot more than entertainment.

**Among European video game players**

- **78%** play at least one hour per week
- **15%** play at least one hour per month
- **7%** play at least once a year

**Average playtime**

- **9.2 hours/week** in 2017
- **8.8 hours/week** in 2018
- **8.6 hours/week** in 2019
- **9.5 hours/week** in 2020
- **9 hours/week** in 2021

Average playtime has remained at consistent levels over the years, with a slight jump in 2020 due to the pandemic.

**On average, people in Europe spend**

- **9 hours/week** playing video games*
- **14.2 hours/week** on social media **
- **23.5 hours/week** on watching TV***

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Top selling games

Full game sales by unit tracked by Global Sales Data (GSD), sorted by rank for 2020, Retail and Network combined.
This listing does not include Nintendo digital sales data.

1. **Electronic Arts**
   - Sports
2. **Rockstar Games**
   - Action
3. **Electronic Arts**
   - Sports
4. **Nintendo**
   - Racing
5. **Nintendo**
   - Action
6. **Activision Blizzard**
   - Shooting
7. **Nintendo**
   - Strategy
8. **Activision Blizzard**
   - Shooting
9. **Rockstar Games**
   - Action
10. **Nintendo**
    - Role-playing

Top played video game genres by device:

**Men**

1. **Strategy** – 26%
2. **Adventure** – 24%
3. **Racing** – 22%

**Women**

1. **Strategy** – 20%
2. **Adventure** – 19%
3. **Racing** – 15%

**Consoles**

1. **Sport Games** – 26%
2. **Racing** – 24%
3. **Adventure** – 22%

**Smartphones**

1. **Brain / Puzzle** – 20%
2. **Trivia** – 12%
3. **Word** – 11%

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PEGI is the pan-European video game age rating system. PEGI’s goal is to educate, advise and empower players, parents and guardians on content in video games.

PEGI also ensures that games are sold and advertised responsibly, that consumer redress is available, and that companies pay attention to online game playing environments.

PEGI age ratings are established under the supervision of independent experts and classification bodies. PEGI is recognised by the European institutions and EU Member States as a model of European harmonisation in the field of minor protection and consumer transparency.

Visit www.pegi.info for more information and download the PEGI app for iOS/Android.

KEY FACTS FROM 2021

- 38+ European countries
- 2,600 member companies
- 35,000+ games and millions of apps classified

RESPONSIBLE GAMEPLAY

PEGI app

In-game purchase transparency

PEGI’s enhanced in-game purchase descriptor informs consumers if an in-game purchase includes paid random items.
Awareness of PEGI age labels

Parents

67% of parents are aware of PEGI age labels

Video game players

73% of video game players are aware of PEGI age labels

Aware of PEGI class among all parents (excl. Germany)

Aware of PEGI class among all game players (excl. Germany)

8,000+ games rated in 2021

These stats include age ratings on the following platforms: Microsoft Xbox and Windows, Nintendo, Sony PlayStation, PC and Google Stadia.

Suitable for all age groups, no unsuitable content

May contain some non-realistic or implied violence, and scenes that might be frightening to younger children

Can feature realistic violence against fantasy characters, non-realistic violence against humanlike characters, mild bad language, or sexual innuendo

May depict realistic violence against humanlike characters, bad language, use of drugs, or erotic nudity

Games that contain gross violence against defenceless characters, glamorisation of drugs, or explicit sexual activity

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Player and parental control tools

Parental control tools or family settings help parents and guardians decide with their children what works best for them, from time spent playing video games to communication with other players and much more. On every device, it is possible to discuss:

- **Age rating**: Which games they can play based on PEGI age rating and descriptors
- **Time limit**: Agree on playtime limits, allowing for better playtime management
- **Online spending**: Discuss with their children how much can be spent when purchasing games and other downloadable content
- **Online interaction**: Agree on communications in games: friends only, friends of friends, anyone, or no one.

List of devices offering parental control tools

- PlayStation
- Xbox
- Nintendo 3DS
- PS Vita
- Windows
- Mac OS
- Nintendo Switch
- iPhone/iPad
- Android/Google Play
- Windows 10
- Google Stadia
- Meta Quest

Visit ISFE’s website to access information on player and parental control tools for various devices and platforms: [www.isfe.eu/responsible-gameplay/parental-controls](http://www.isfe.eu/responsible-gameplay/parental-controls)

PEGI age labels are equally clear for both video game players and parents; however, they are slightly more useful, trustworthy and influential for parents.

- **Clear**: 87%
- **Useful**: 78%
- **Trustworthy**: 71%
- **Influential**: 57%

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Parental supervision

Children's in-game spending!

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Parental supervision remains high

Large decrease in children spending in game

75% 19%

of surveyed parents whose children spend money in-game have an agreement of some kind with their children about their level of spending.

of children who play video games engage in purchasing in-game extras (down from 42% in 2018)

Decorative and cosmetic items that don’t impact gameplay are the most popular in-game extras.

1. Children's in-game spending for 2020, by Ipsos, commissioned by ISFE

Guidance across Europe

The video games industry wants people to enjoy this popular pastime. To that end, the industry empowers parents so that they can engage with their children and agree on appropriate rules around video game play, and encourages parents to learn about the games their children love. Find support in your local language below:

ISFE’s 5 tips for parents

www.isfe.eu/news/5-tips

Austria
GemeinsamSpielen
www.gemeinsamspielen.at

Belgium
Jouezmalin / Speelhetslim
www.jouezmalin.be
www.speelhetslim.be

Finland
Pelivikko
www.pelivikko.fi

France
PédaGoJeux
www.pedagojeux.fr

Germany
Respektvoll in Online-Games
https://bit.ly/3gE2vUb

Italy
Tutto sui videogiochi
www.tuttosuivideogiochi.it

Netherlands
RuleTheGame
www.rulethegame.nl

Poland
Zapytaj o Gry
www.zapytajogry.pl

Portugal
#SaberJoger
Coming soon

Spain
The Good Gamer
www.thegoodgamer.es

Sweden
Fråga, Prata, Spela
www.fragaprataspela.se

Switzerland
PlaySmart
play-smart.ch

United Kingdom
Ask about games
www.askaboutgames.com

Unless stated otherwise, all data presented on this page is extracted from GameTrack, GSD and/or the EGDF-ISFE European Video Games Industry Insight Report. See page 3.
Revenue remained stable at €23.3bn in key European markets compared to 2020 with more people playing video games.

Player base increased to 124.8 million players.

Playerbase

Revenue

124.8m

121.2m

116.6m

118.3m

Playerbase

Revenue

€21bn

2018

€21.6bn

2019

€23.3bn

2020

€23.3bn

2021

Revenue split by device

42%

Consoles

(vs 44% in 2020)

45%

Smartphone/tablet

(vs 40% in 2020)

2%

On-demand/streaming

(vs 2% in 2020)

6%

PC

(vs 14% in 2020)

Source: * Market size data is extrapolated from GameTrack 2021 report and Newzoo 2021 Global Data Report

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Workforce and employment

98,219 employees in 2020 in Europe (74,000 are in the EU)

Whilst this percentage compares favourably to the figure of 17% in the European IT sector as a whole, it is clear that we have much more to do to make our sector a welcoming place to work for women and indeed for all genders. Steps we are taking:

- Corporate ambassadorship of Women in Games
- Supporting Women in Games Guide
- Diversity pledges across Europe (see page 31)

Source: * European Institute for Gender Equality report

Spotlight on digital

Digital ecosystem represents 81% of total revenue (80% in 2020)

- 9% subscription services and social games (vs 11% in 2020)
- 22% full game downloads (vs 25% in 2020)
- 69% in-game extras, additional downloadable content for acquired games (vs 64% in 2020)
- 45% app revenue (vs 40% in 2020)
- 19% physical revenue (vs 20% in 2020)

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Esports

What esports are worth

In 2021, global esports revenues exceeded $1 billion for the first time.

Esports revenue grows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue ($bn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$996m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$1.1bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>$1.4bn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viewers in 2021

- **Occasional viewers**
- **Esports enthusiasts** (Defn)

Audience growth will continue at a more moderate pace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Viewers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>215m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>240m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>261m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual revenue per enthusiast per market

Europe ranks 2nd, globally, in esports revenue per enthusiast

- **Esports revenues ($m)**
- **Revenue per enthusiast ($)**


New publication!

The Guide to Esports

Without video games, there are no esports

Esports are revolutionising the way consumers watch, follow, and engage with video games. While everyone wants to be part of the esports ecosystem, many overlook that esports are an important part of the video games industry. That is why we created a guide that outlines the current state of esports, including their impact on economic growth, demographics, job creation, educational and social opportunities, and the often-overlooked nature of video games as creative works, as well as the copyright and intellectual property rights protection that they enjoy.

The Guide is available in English, French, Italian, Polish and Portuguese.

Supported by

Authorised by

Download now
Diversity pledges across Europe

In early 2021, ISFE and EGDF established a Diversity Working Group with the goals of committing to advancing gender equality and diversity in the industry, promoting ongoing efforts of our members, and serving as a resource for information on diversity-related policy and legislative issues. Below are a few of our member initiatives:

SELL and SNJV, representing the French video games sector signed a Diversity Charter alongside Women in Games France to promote diversity within the French games industry.

On 1 March, coinciding with Zero Discrimination Day, AEVI, representing the Spanish video games industry launched their #PlayEquall initiative, created to materialise the video game industry’s commitment to the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. More than 120 video games companies (including AEVI’s members) and more than 40 industry professionals have signed on to the effort.

Over 400 companies and more than 1,000 individuals have already signed game’s (German video games association) declaration to actively support diversity and inclusion in the video games industry and became part of #TeamDiversity in Germany.

Dataspelsbranschen, representing the Swedish games industry, engages in a number of initiatives aimed at improving diversity in the local video games industry. Dataspelsbranchen hosts networking events at Nordic Games, scholarships for female game students to attend the Game Developers Conference, job fairs, the Kvarvaro study, and much more with the goal of encouraging more women to study game development and of creating an industry where women want to stay and make a career.

ISFE became a corporate ambassador of Women in Games, a not-for-profit looking for equity and parity for all women and girls in the video games industry and esports.

#RaiseTheGame is a collaborative, high-impact and industry-wide pledge initiative, managed and facilitated by Ukie, representing the UK’s games and interactive entertainment industry. With more than 200 organisations involved, #RaiseTheGame strives to inspire meaningful, cultural and behavioural change in all games businesses, companies and organisations, regardless of size or stage of their equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) journey.

Hand-point-right womeningamesfrance.org

Hand-point-right hier-spielt-vielfalt.de/en

Hand-point-right playequall.es

Hand-point-right diversi.nu

Hand-point-right raisethegame.com
For the seventh year in a row, European Schoolnet, the network of 34 Ministries of Education across Europe, and ISFE are continuing their Games in Schools project designed to train teachers and educators across Europe on how to use video games as pedagogical support in the classroom.

The project’s outputs include a 6-week long Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) (see below) about Games in Schools, a selection of teacher-created lesson plans, and a handbook for teachers on using video games for educational purposes.

In 2020, the governments of Poland and of Belgium’s Flanders region became the first in Europe to integrate video games into mainstream education.

Modules of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

1. Why use computer games in the classroom?
2. Using games for thematic learning
3. Learning games
4. What can we learn from games?
5. Designing games
6. Why is it important to teach about games?
Climate commitment

The video game industry shares the European Union’s belief that addressing climate change is one of the most critical challenges of the 21st century. As a result, it has taken numerous initiatives to protect the environment and is striving to improve the energy efficiency of its devices and services.

Green Game Jam

How video games are influencing societal change

In 2021, 30 mobile and console studios decided to integrate content in their respective games on the theme of restoring forests and oceans

- $800,000 in donations to charities
- 130 million players globally engaged with the content (80% positively welcomed the activation)
- 266,000 trees planted
- 60,000+ individual pledges

Source: Playing for the Planet Alliance 2021 Annual Impact Report, page 13

Member initiatives - sharing best practices

A Climate Handbook for Game Companies

PlayCreateGreen was founded in 2019 by a group of leading Nordic game companies to assist video game companies in effecting real change by sharing knowledge essential to achieve climate neutrality.

Green Games Guide

In early 2021, Ukie collaborated with Games London and the UN’s Playing for the Planet Alliance to develop a Green Games Guide to assist businesses in thinking about how they can improve their approach to sustainability.

Encouraging industry discussion

- The Green Games Summit, delivered by Ukie in collaboration with ISFE and the Playing for the Planet Alliance, took place in October 2021
- The event encouraged the international games sector to share knowledge and discuss the industry’s approach to the climate crisis ahead of COP26
- Hundreds of games businesses from over 20 different countries participated
- The Summit also received additional support from the global games community, with trade bodies from across the world signing up as global partners:

Enhancing the sustainability of video game consoles

In 2015, Nintendo, Sony Interactive Entertainment and Microsoft launched the Games Consoles Voluntary Agreement (GCVA) together with the European Commission, to improve energy and resource efficiency of current and future games consoles.

GCVA saved over the lifetime of PS4 and Xbox One series consoles (equivalent to Portugal’s annual consumption)

54 TWh of energy

A Climate Handbook for Game Companies

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Green Games Guide

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ISFE Secretariat’s commitments

During the 2021 EU Green Week, ISFE became an Associate Member of the UN-facilitated Playing for the Planet Alliance.

With the help of ClimatePartner, the ISFE Secretariat measured and offset its environmental impact for 2020, estimated at 17,570 tco2 eq. The calculation follows the GHG Protocol and includes Scope 3 emissions. We are committed to repeating this exercise each year in order to achieve continuous climate neutrality.
Video game companies

- Activision Blizzard
- Bandai Namco
- Electronic Arts
- Embracer Group
- Epic Games
- Microsoft
- Niantic
- Nintendo
- Riot Games
- Roblox
- Sega
- Sony Interactive
- Entertainment
- Square Enix
- Supercell
- Take 2 Interactive
- Ubisoft
- Warner Bros Interactive

National Trade Associations

- Austria: OVUS, PGDA
- Belgium: VGFB, FLEGA
- Czechia: GDACZ
- Denmark: Producentforening
- Finland: Suomen pelinkehittäjät
- France: S.E.L.L., SNJV
- Germany: game, game
- Italy: IIDEA, IIDEA
- Lithuania: LZKA
- Netherlands: VGFN, DGA
- Nordic (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden): ANGI
- Norway: Produsentforeningen
- Poland: SPIDOR, PGA, Indie Game Poland Foundation
- Portugal: AEPDV, AVPV
- Romania: RGDA
- Serbia: SGA
- Slovakia: SGDA
- Spain: AEVI, DEV
- Sweden: Spelplan-ASGD
- Switzerland: SIEA, SGDA
- Turkey: TOGED
- United Kingdom: Ukie, TIGA

ABOUT ISFE

ISFE represents the video games industry in Europe and is based in Brussels, Belgium. Our membership comprises national trade associations in 18 countries across Europe which represent in turn thousands of developers and publishers at national level. ISFE also has as direct members the leading European and international video game companies.

T: +32 261-21777
E: info@isfe.eu

ABOUT EGDF

EGDF represents European game developers on a European level, helping to build up policies that support the growth of the European game developer studios and foster the development of the entire digital ecosystem in Europe.

T: +358 40 716 3640
E: jari-peka.kaleva@egdf.eu

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