



PRESS RELEASE
18 July 2022

Slovenia to host 24th FAI World Hot Air Ballooning Championships in September

Lausanne, Switzerland, 18 July 2022 – **The town of Murska Sobota, Slovenia will host 105 ballooning teams from 33 countries, who will compete in the 24th FAI World Hot Air Ballooning Championships between 16-23 September. There will also be 200 places per day for visitors to experience a hot air balloon flight, to encourage new participants to the sport.**

The Pomurje region is ideal for ballooning due to its flat terrain and favourable temperatures and winds, and the area has a history of hosting ballooning events, having previously been home to the FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championship in 1994.

After a delay of two years following the pandemic, anticipation is high for this international competition which will see a total of 105 teams from 33 countries around the globe compete.

Spectators will admire more than 150 balloons in the air, watching the pilots compete in various tasks over the six days of competition, showing their balloon handling skills and skills in solving various flying tasks.

Slovenia has a number of excellent hot air balloon pilots who have achieved outstanding results in international competitions, including in the first category of FAI events. They will be joined by current World Champions Dominic Bareford (GBR) and Daria Dudkiewicz-Golawska (POL) and two junior world champions Roy Gommer (NED) and Jan Suchy (CZE) in the 24th edition of the world championships.

How do balloons compete?

The competition is conducted in accordance with the standard rules of the FAI Ballooning Commission, which defines the tasks in which the pilots compete and the rules on the basis of which the winning pilot is selected at the end of the competition.

Two flights are planned each day. Each flight may contain several different tasks, which are announced before the flight starts, once weather conditions are assessed. The aim of competition flights is not to achieve the best time, distance, or altitude as in other sports. Competitions require pilots to use their skills to control balloons over a specific area. Tasks include targets, objectives, scoring areas, time and space constraints that the pilot must observe to demonstrate his/her ability to plan, anticipate and manage the balloon in the given weather conditions. The competition is essentially a strategy game in which the competitors combine several components, requiring considerable tactical skills.

Introducing the public to the world of ballooning

The multitude of colourful balloons in the air is a feast for the eyes and balloon enthusiasts from around the world will flock to Pomurje to enjoy the show which includes a 'key grab' discipline, and "fly outs" and "fly-ins" of over 100 balloons, and the Night Glow, where 40 festival balloons of all colours and shapes will shine in a special glow event.

The most eagerly awaited novelty of this year's event will be the commercial flights – 100 places on the morning and 100 places on the evening flights will be available every day of the Championships for visitors to fly in a hot air balloon and get a bird's-eye view of the venue.

pEditor's Notes:

Photos and videos: bit.ly/WHAB2022

- Presentation film and presentation of HAB2022
- Photos from the press conference (author Nina Lepoša)
- Photos from the 2019 Pre-World Championship and 2020 National Championship

FAI logo: bit.ly/FAI_logo

FAI media corner: www.fai.org/media

About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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