



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **The gas balloons of the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett have lifted off from Bern, Switzerland**

Lausanne, Switzerland, 28 September 2018 – **The twenty gas balloons competing in the 62nd Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett rose into the skies above Bern, Switzerland this evening. The pilots' aim is simple: to travel as far as possible without touching down.**

The aim of the race is to fly as far as possible with a set amount of gas. Each team has a different strategy to use the weather systems and available airspace to their advantage and gain the furthest distance.

Live tracking is allowing a huge worldwide audience to track the progress of the balloons as they sail gracefully across Europe for up to 3-4 days without touching down.

The race meteorologist Peter Pöschl report for today's launch gave two likely options for pilots:

“Low and slow to the South West, using the Mistral wind to take balloons to the Mediterranean or over Perpignan, or high and fast to the South East, crossing the Alps at night to head into Italy and perhaps towards the Balkans.”

Markus Haggenev, Event Director, commented:

“The highly trained balloonists will read and use the weather information to their advantage to fly as far as possible from the launch site in Bern, embracing the spirit of adventure that makes this race so exciting.”

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> time that Switzerland has hosted the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, the legendary balloon race which dates back to 1906.

The 20 teams represent 11 nations, with the hot favourites coming from Germany, Switzerland and France, whose two-person crew Vincent Leys and Christophe Houver won in 2017 and will be competing again this year.

The launch will take place as part of a free air sports event weekend in Bern at which the audience will enjoy helicopters, parachute displays, music and entertainment, and a night glow. The prize-giving ceremony will take place on Saturday 6 October in Bern.

### **Editor's notes**

Competition website: <https://www.gordonbennett.aero/en>

Competition Facebook page:

Live-tracking: <https://live.gordonbennett.aero/>

Pictures in high resolution (free for editorial use): <http://bit.ly/GB2018pics>

General information about the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett: [www.fai.org/gordonbennett](http://www.fai.org/gordonbennett)

#gordonbennett2018

### **About the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett**

The Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett ([www.gordonbennett.aero](http://www.gordonbennett.aero)), the FAI World Long Distance Gas Balloon Championship, is the oldest and most prestigious event in aviation and the ultimate challenge for the pilots.

The world's best gas balloonists compete on a simple principle: each team launches from the same location with the same quantity of gas. The competitors launch to their national anthem at intervals of a few minutes and up to three teams per country can take part.

The team whose balloon lands furthest from the starting point after an average of 3-4 days of uninterrupted flight wins.

The first edition of the balloon competition, launched in 1906, was held in front of 200,000 spectators at the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris.

Today, the Gordon Bennett Cup benefits greatly from technology, as a wide audience can access the position, altitude and speed of all participating balloons in near real time. As a result, the Gordon Bennett fan community has grown rapidly. In 2016, the Cup was followed in 152,000 web sessions. Since then, the media presence has also been strongly increasing. In 2017, Gordon Bennett appeared on TV channels in 580 hours and 13,000 news reports in 50 countries.

### **About FAI**

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation ([www.fai.org](http://www.fai.org)), 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 and Astronautic sporting activities.

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