



24TH FAI WORLD HOT AIR BALLOON CHAMPIONSHIP

Murska Sobota 2020

Competition Ballooning

in Slovenia







Speech

Aeronautical Association of Slovenia

Ljubljana, 3. 3. 2017

Dear Sir/ Madam,

AAS is the Slovenian NAC that gathers more than 2000 athletes from around 80 aeroclubs at the national level. More than 100 athletes are competing and flying in the FAI 1 category events every year and a hundred more athletes improve their flying skills on other, FAI 2 category events.

For the last few years, an idea of hosting the world hot air balloon championship in our region has been growing. The organiser proved themselves worthy by hosting three open national championships in the last few years in the flatlands of the picturesque north-eastern region of Slovenia, called Prekmurje, which is perfect for balloon flying.

As the president of Aeronautical Association of Slovenia, I would be very pleased and honoured if we would be able to host the 24th FAI World Hot Air Balloon Championship 2020 exactly 26 years after we successfully hosted Europeans 1994 in the same region.

Many soft landings,

Niki Musić
President



Aeronautical Association of Slovenia - Ballooning Commission

Dear balloonists and friends,

It has been a long time since we met in Murska Sobota. As a part of the organizing team for the event in 1994, I must admit I have, until recently, been sure it was a once in a lifetime experience for me. Meanwhile, Slovenia and the world have seen an entirely new generation of aspiring, young and ambitious pilots, who have pushed the boundaries of ballooning further than we could have imagined in 1994. We now have new technologies, new information and a completely new concept of competing.

It is this generation who is at the peak today, and its ambitions are growing. I am proud to present our letter of intention to organize the 24th World Championship in 2020, knowing they will make us proud.

Sincerely yours,

Štefan Pavlinjek
President



BALONARSKA KOMISIJA LZS

Ballooning Commission of AAS

Speech



To those who love the sport,

In 2013, the Roto Ballooning Club brought together several enthusiasts in the village of Polana, to organise a national championship. Many of them had previously participated at national and international events as pilots, team members, observers, debriefers or scorers. While some played parts in the organising team as early as 1994 and many of them took up ballooning later, they were all experienced and motivated.

Closely connected to Austria and their National Aeronautical Association, I had the opportunity to work with their pilots and organisers, who helped me with advice, teamwork and equipment. I am very grateful for their assistance.

Over the years, the Roto Club was able to attract numerous sponsors. Special thanks goes to Aeroclub Murska Sobota for providing us with sufficient space and allowing us to use their airport facilities every time.

To encourage the Slovenian pilots and give them the opportunity to learn and experience "the real deal", we invited pilots from abroad, hosting teams from Austria, Hungary, Germany, the Czech republic and Croatia.

If I could sum up my experience during these years, it would be versatility in setting competition tasks, lots of opportunities for safe landings, favourable weather and friendly locals.

It is now time to move forward. We invite you to join us this coming June for our nationals, meet the organiser and learn about the location. We will be monitoring the organisation of the event in Austria (2018) and hopefully pick up some pointers. Our goal is to organize the World Championships in 2020, while making memories along the way, which no one will want to let go!

See you in 2020,
Goran Grgič





History

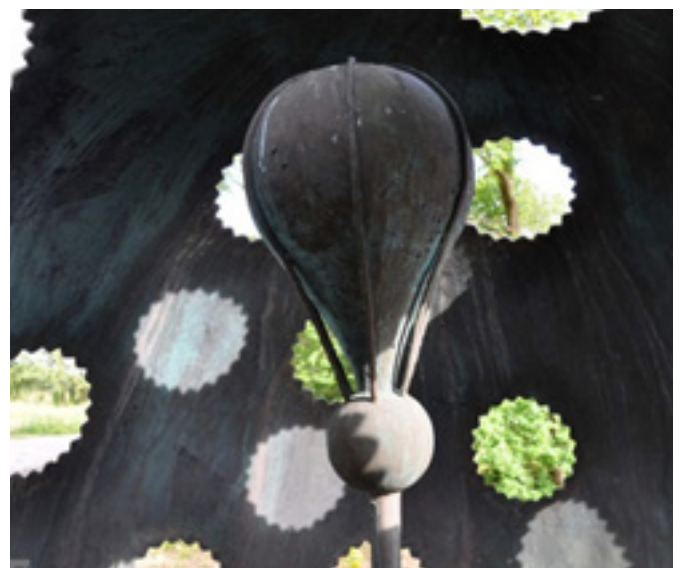
The ŽENAVLJE monument



On 18 August 1934, stratospheric aviator professor Max Cosyns and his assistant Nérée van Elst landed in a hot air balloon in the village of Ženavlje in Prekmurje, Slovenia. After having taken off at 6 pm from the airport at Hou-Havenne in Belgium, they reached the altitude of 16,000 meters and landed after 14 hours of flight. Since the wind in the lower levels was not very suitable for hot air ballooning, the currents flew them over Austria toward the village of Ženavlje. The landscape along River Mura, and thus also Ženavlje, has since become known throughout Europe. What that took place in the region of Goričko that day became a national sensation; in addition to various reporters, it attracted a crowd of no less than 6,000 heads. This was the first ever landing in a hot air balloon on the Slovenian ground.

At the spot where the stratospheric balloon landed, the municipality of Gornji Petrovci unveiled a memorial lasting artistic value in 1997, which is the work of sculptor Mirko Bratuša, and

proclaimed 18 August a municipality holiday. The bowl-shaped bronze statue, which symbolically represents a balloon, blends beautifully into the landscape, inviting the visitors to stop by and take a rest.



History



The first Slovenian HOT AIR BALLOONIST

The first Slovenian who had the opportunity to see a hot air balloon was the mathematician Jurij Vega, who saw it as early as 1784, less than a year after it was first flown in Paris. Vega saw the balloon while staying in Vienna. It was a hot air balloon with a cubic capacity of 4000m³, which was built by Johann Georg Ittner. In 1800, Vega published the fourth book of his lectures in physics and mathematics, including the extensive section on the atmosphere as well as aerostatical and aerodynamical lift.

Approximately ten years later, the Slovenian nation had the first man among the hot air ballooners, an aviator Gregor Kraškovic, who was a renowned doctor of his time. Gregor Kraškovic embarked on at least six flights at various locations, such as Pest, Vienna and other places, in a gas balloon. In the last two decades of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, professional ballooners often came to the Slovenian territories, appearing publicly mostly in Maribor and Ljubljana.

In 1904, Kraškovic got his hot air ballooning successor in the Slovenian territory, i.e. Maks Samec. Samec did not take up ballooning only for his love of sports but also from the scientific point of view as he researched luminous intensity and its absorption. Out of all his endeavours of this kind, there is now information available only on five of his flights.

In the period right up to World War I, Maribor had become an extremely vibrant hot air ballooning location, with Max Macher, a son of a Maribor merchant, as its most important figure. One of his ventures included a 20-hour flight over Europe, from Fischamend to the Bay of Pomerania. This active ballooning period in Maribor came to an end with the break out of World War I.

The beginnings of modern hot air ballooning in Slovenia date back to 1978, to 11 November 1978. To be exact, when the first hot air balloon flew up to the air, taking Slavko Šorn with it.



The early beginnings actually might be tracked further back when a group of enthusiasts in 1975 was pondering how to lift the gliding kite to 10,000 m. The flier was believed to be able to take flight from this height. The team prepared a project, designed by Fele, after which they only needed to find money to build the device in real life. Luckily, the Fructal company from Ajdovščina agreed to finance the project, and its advert was displayed on the dome of the balloon. The team spent two years tailoring, sewing and testing what they made. The balloon was finished and prepared for flight in the autumn of 1978. After several inflations, once all errors were eliminated, the rope to which the balloon was tied to snapped by accident. Luckily, the flight ended a few hours later at Žirovski vrh.

The ballooning sport slowly began gaining momentum in the then Slovenia, which was part of Yugoslavia at the time. In a land with a population of two million, we have trained a little less than 150 pilots and registered 50 warm air balloons. The central and eastern regions of Slovenia are especially suitable for flying.

We have so far organised 17 state championships and celebrated eight champions in Slovenia. Meanwhile, the young generation keeps knocking on the door and shifting boundaries. In this spirit, we were able to welcome the female European champion in 2010, when Gabriela Slavec won the title in Lithuania, and Vito Rome won a bronze medal at the European championship won in 2015.





The European Championship

1994



From 9 to 18 September 1994, the Prekmurje region in the north-east of Slovenia hosted the European Championship on hot air ballooning. The competition, with its central venue at the Rakičan airport near Murska Sobota, was attended by 56 teams from 23 countries. The competition area, which extended over the north-eastern Slovenia, as a first time in the history of European and World Championships, also covered air space of the surrounding countries, i.e. Hungary, Austria and Croatia. A large number of spectators were excited about the vast number of colourful balloons in the air.

The weather was favourable for flying, as pilots took flight seven times during the five competition days. After seventeen competition tasks set by the event director Les Purfield, the line-up was as follows:

No.	Name	Nationality	Total Score
1.	Jean Marie Huttois	FRA	13261
2.	Uwe Schneider	GER	12673
3.	Claude Sauber	LUX	12394

The Slovenian competitors achieved fairly good results: Avi Šorn was placed 25th, and Janez Bernard 55th. The competitors were very happy with the organisation, which was the responsibility of 92 members from 16 countries, and also with the friendly locals and beautiful countryside that seemed perfect for flying.

Jean Marie Huttois: I have been attending competitions for ten years, but the ranking I achieved here is my best yet. This was my dream, I am truly happy. I am very happy to be here. It was so nice to meet the owner of the field where I landed. We drank a cup of coffee and a glass of brandy together. Everyone was very kind to us. This place is very suitable for ballooning.

Uwe Schneider: You do not attend the European Championship wishing you would win. I would not mind winning, of course, but my greatest wish was to rank among the ten best pilots, so I am very happy with my final result. I have visited Slovenia before, and liked it then, as I like it now. It is a beautiful country with friendly people.

Claude Sauber: I did not come in first, but I ranked among the top ten and I am very happy. The flying conditions are quite difficult, because the circumstances change quickly. This probably happens because the place is situated south of the Alps. Flying here is something special and demands great concentration from the pilot. The competition was a great success, the people have done an excellent job, everyone from the organiser to farmers who allowed us to take off and land. The atmosphere during landings was very pleasant. People are extremely friendly here. I would absolutely love to come back to Slovenia.

National Championships



in Slovenia since 1995

The team which is at the core of the organisational activities of the competition part at the championships first got together in Polana in December of 2013 to organise the State Championship. They each had more than ten years of experience with ballooning in different roles as team members, pilots, spectators or organisers.

As members of competitive teams they participated in championships of all categories. They gained their first experience during balloon fairs in their home environment and abroad, and later tried themselves at numerous European and World Championships.

As organisers, they had participated in the many ballooning events organised in Slovenia prior to 2012. These competitions were recreational, held for "the mere love for the sport" or a sponsor's award, and some also allowed picks for state teams or the State Championship. Among the participants was a man who participated in many international competitions around the world, acting in many roles as part of the organising team. In view of a good long-term collaboration with neighbouring countries, the organisers invited an experienced pilot, organiser and functionary of the Austrian aeroclub and their ballooning section.

Since 2013, the team has organised three State Championships, relying on the chief organiser, i.e. BK Roto, as well as a number of sponsors, balloonists and ballooning clubs from the Prekmurje region. Aeroclub Murska Sobota was a great help, offering their facilities and airport area.



The championships were never very big but they were of an open type. The team has also managed to attract foreign competitors, who spiced up action the air and upped the competition for native pilots, with pilots from Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Germany and the Czech Republic appearing among the competitors.

After these successful championships, it now is time to take a step forward and enhance the international significance of ballooning championships in Prekmurje. We have already contacted a team who will organise the Ballooning World Championship 2018 in Austria; the peak of our achievements will absolutely be the part played in the organisation and implementation of the World Championship in Slovenia in 2020.





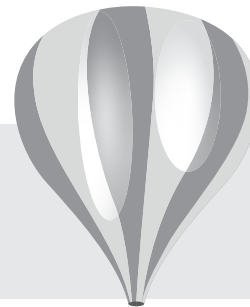
national

National Championships

Year	Venue	1st place	2st place	3st place
1992	Podpeč	Gregor Čuk	Borut Grogl	Slavko Avi Šorn
1993	Ljubljana	Slavko Avi Šorn	Janez Bernard	Mitja Bernard
1994	Murska Sobota	Grega Trček	Slavko Avi Šorn	Aleš Švagelj
1995	Ptuj	Slavko Avi Šorn	Aleš Švagelj	Radko Petrovič
1996	Banovci	Slavko Avi Šorn	Štefan Bertalanič	Boštjan Avbelj
1997	Šentvid pri Stični	Aleš Švagelj	Boštjan Avbelj	Slavko Avi Šorn
1998	Ptuj	Slavko Avi Šorn	Radko Petrovič	Boštjan Avbelj
1999	Podpeč	Radko Petrovič	Marko Šercer	Grega Trček
2000	Vojnik	Milan Šercer	Slavko Avi Šorn	Marko Šercer
2001	Vrhnika	Milan Šercer	Slavko Avi Šorn	Radko Petrovič
2003	Vrhnika	Slavko Avi Šorn	Marko Šercer	Milan Šercer
2005	Vrhnika	Slavko Avi Šorn	Radko Petrovič	Darko Kralj
2010	Vojnik	Slavko Avi Šorn	Vito Rome	Jernej Bojanovič
2011	Trebnje	Vojko Zupan	Jernej Bojanovič	Slavko Avi Šorn
2013	Polana	Slavko Avi Šorn	Vito Rome	Vojko Zupan
2015	Murska Sobota	Vojko Zupan	Vito Rome	Radoš Švagelj
2016	Murska Sobota	Vito Rome	Aleš Švagelj	Dejan Buzeti



Champions Vito Rome



- Vito Rome was born on 28 April 1985 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where he attended the primary and secondary school. In 2004, he enrolled in the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana, choosing the electronics as a major subject. He acquired a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering a few years later. Since 2010, he has been running his own small company, which focuses in the design and implementation of passive and active LAN and WAN networks.
- He became a hot air balloon pilot as soon as he was 18 years old, in the year of 2003. Vito Rome has been involved in ballooning from his early age, having learned a great deal from his father, who was also a great ballooning enthusiast and hot air balloon pilot. However, while he, on the one hand, became a pilot at a very early age, on the other hand, he did not fly a lot. He never had any real sponsors and therefore performed only a few dozens of flights per year.
- Rome gained his first ballooning competition experience as a co-pilot on his father's team at the national competition. Since 2007, he has been competing more often on his own at the national, European and world championships. Vito Rome participated at more than five national and five European and world championships combined. Since then, he has been one of the best Slovenian hot air balloon pilots, and is the European bronze medal winner for 2015 and the national gold medal winner for 2016.
- He is a member of the Uranos Balloon Club, which was the first balloon club in Slovenia to obtain a commercial EASA license. Vito Rome acquired his commercial balloon piloting license at the end of 2014.
- Flying with: S5-OCO, Kubiček Balloons, 2200m3, BB22 – N type.
- 400 hours flown as PIC.
- **Results:**
 - 2007, FAI Debrecen, 8th place among 19 competitors
 - 2008, Worlds Hofkirchen, 83rd place among 98 competitors
 - 2009, Europeans Brissac-Quince, 48th place among 83 competitors
 - 2009, FAI Debrecen, 2nd place among 25 competitors
 - 2010, Nationals, 2nd place among 8 competitors
 - 2010, Worlds Debrecen, 57th place among 118 competitors
 - 2011, Europeans Lleida, 13th place among 77 competitors
 - 2013, Nationals, 2nd place among 8 competitors
 - 2013, Europeans Wloclawek, 47th place among 81 competitors
 - 2015, Nationals, 2nd place among 8 competitors
 - 2015, Europeans Debrecen, 3rd place among 96 competitors
 - 2016, Nationals, 1st place among 7 competitors





Champions **Gabriela Slavec**



Gabriela Slavec was born in Brazil in 1975 but has Slovenian citizenship as her father and family are from Slovenia.

She has been involved in ballooning since 1987, when she served as crew member at the first organized ballooning event in Brazil.

In 1991, she worked as an observer at the Brazilian Nationals for the first time and since helped as an official at major events in Brazil.

In 1997, Gabriela participated as an observer at the World Championship in Japan and has since been helping as an international official at major competitions.

In 2000, she became a hot air balloon pilot and started competing at both national and international events.

Slavec won a few minor competitions and festivals in Brazil, ranked 7th at the 1st FAI South American Championship in 2006, and came in 1st at the 1st Women European Championship in Lithuania in 2010.

She also worked as an event organizer at the Open Brasil de Balonismo in both 2007 and 2008, and also at an international competition and some minor events in Brazil.



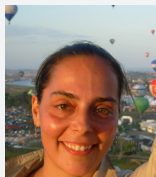


Slavko Avi Šorn



- A pioneer of Slovenian hot air ballooning, first hot air balloon flight on 11 November 1978
- A national record holder in all hot air balloon national categories (length, height, duration), multiple national championships medal winner
- Competitor at numerous Europeans, World Championships and WAGs
- Personal best: 4th place at the 2007 European Championship in Germany

Gabriela Slavec



- Started as observer and an official at the Brazilian national championships
- Participated as observer at World Championships in Japan in 1997 and has since become an international official in major competitions
- Became a hot air balloon pilot in 2000
- Serves as Slovenian FAI/CIA delegate for many years
- Personal best: Winner of the 1st Women European Championship in Lithuania in 2010

Vito Rome



- Became a hot air balloon pilot when 18 years old
- Since 2007 competed at nationals, Europeans and worlds
- President of NAC sport commission, the bronze medal winner at the 2015 European championship in Debrecen, Hungary
- Gold medal winner at the 2016 Nationals
- Other personal bests: 13th place at the 2011 European Championship in Spain

Dejan Buzeti



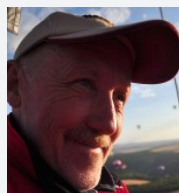
- Became a hot air balloon pilot in 2007
- Competed in several national championships and events
- First appearance on national team as a competitor at the 2017 European Championship in France

Štefan Bertalanič



- Became Hot Air Balloon pilot in 1994
- Participated on several events and championships in Slovenia and abroad (also World Championship Saga 1997)
- Hot air balloon instructor

Branko Ambrožič



- Became a hot air balloon pilot in 1992
- Participated in multiple events and championships at home and abroad
- Participated in several European and World championships as a debriefer
- Hot air balloon pilot instructor
- Has also been competing over the last years
- The current Slovenian FAI/CIA delegate





Pilots

Radoš Švagelj



- Started flying in 1990
- Hot air balloon pilot instructor and examiner
- Participated at several national championships (best result: 3rd place in 2015)
- Participated in the 1996 European Championship in Austria (30th place)

Aleš Švagelj



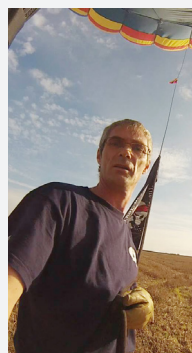
- Became involved in the sport in 1990
- The 1997 national champion
- Participated at Europeans (Schilleiten and Katrineholm) and at WAG in Turkey
- Enjoys flying in special shapes
- Hot air balloon pilot instructor, had a comeback to competitions in 2016

Jernej Bojanovič



- I'm 32 and I've been flying balloons for the last 14 years.
- A lot of my flying experiences I gained in Canada where I flew for the biggest Canadian company for 5 seasons. I also had the opportunity to fly in Mexico, Africa and to be part of the biggest balloon festival in Albuquerque and also compete on European championship.

Igor Divjak



- Started as a photographer in 2007. In 2009 he became a co-pilot and in 2011 a pilot.
- As a co-pilot he participated in the World Championship in 2010 and European Championship in 2011;
- Bought his own Balloon in 2012;
- First Competition as PIC was in 2015,
- Participated in several Balloon meetings in Slovenia, Austria, Germany and France;
- 212 hours as PIC of which 140 are with his own Balloon

Darko Kralj



- Ancestry: With father as an aviator he became addicted to flying as child.
- Events: Competed in national and international events.
- Personal best: bronze medal winner at national championship in Vrhnika, 2005

Vojko Zupan



- Born in 1966, became involved in the sport through a close friend and a hot air balloon pilot instructor Borut Groegl.
- Personal best: Two times national champion in 2011 and 2015.
- Balloon club: founder of Balloon club LETIMO, owns two hot air balloons.

A list of competitors appearing at latest competitions:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Gabriela Slavec | • Igor Divjak |
| • Vito Rome | • Branko Ambrožič |
| • Aleš Švagelj | • Darko Kralj |
| • Radoš Švagelj | • Štefan Bertalančič |
| • Dejan Buzeti | • Silvo Vohar |
| • Vojko Zupan | • Slavko Avi Šorn |



Hot Air Balloon Club

Bakovci Hot Air Balloon Club



- Founded in 2005
- Located at Ulica ob potoku 7, Murska Sobota
- Balloons S5-OSV and S5-OBV
- Members: 4 active pilots, helpful team members and officials
- Events: organiser of a traditional ballooning festival in Bakovci in May

Vojnik Hot Air Balloon Club



- **Balloon registration:** S5-OCF
- **Volume:** 2000 m³
- Competition achievements: the 2011 State Champion (Jernej Bojanovič) at the open State Championship in hot air balloon flying at Trebnje
- Club's location: Vojnik
- Description: The club is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and has six members.



Hot Air Balloon Club

Štajerc Hot Air Balloon Club



- Location: Maribor
- **Balloon:** S5 – OHN
- **Volume:** 2180 m³
- Members: family and friends
- Moto: Up, up and away!



Uranos Hot Air Balloon Club



- Founded in 2002
- 9 active hot air balloon pilots
- 3 active competitors
- 2 hot air balloon pilot instructors
- Based in the Ljubljana area
- Motto: have fun, travel, experience new things



Hot Air Balloon Club

Roto Hot Air Balloon Club



- **Balloon registration:** S5-OBC
- **Volume:** 2200m³
- Club's location: Temlinova ulica 2, SI-9000 Murska Sobota
- Achievements at competitions and festivals: Vojnik Festival 2013 – 1st place
- Description: The ROTO Hot Air Balloon Club was founded in 1993 with the intention of promoting the ROTO company and hot air ballooning in the Pomurje region. The club has three active pilots who attend regional, state and international competitions.

Pegaz Flight and Nautical Club



- Seated in Maribor
- 3 active pilots and a large team
- Attendance at local and international festivals
- Organises the traditional ballooning festival in Ruše



Hot Air Balloon Club

Ogenj Hot Air Balloon Club



- Founded 18 November 1998
- Seated in Maribor
- Attendance at local and international ballooning festivals and competitions
- Active in organising festivals and competitions

Opa Hot Air Balloon Club



- First flight of club members in 1996
- Seated in Velenje
- Organises the traditional "Martinov festival" in Majšperk, which is held every November
- Attendance at local and international ballooning festivals



Hot Air Balloon Club

Berta Hot Air Balloon Club



- **Registration:** S5-OBR (type: KAMERUN A105)
- **Volume:** 3000 m3
- **Registration:** S5-OAF (type: V77)
- **Volume:** 2020 m3
- **Club's location:** Brezovci 70B, SI-9201 Puconci, Slovenia
- **Achievements at competitions and festivals:**
- The 1997 national vice-champion
- Participant of the SAGA World Championship in Japan
- **Description:** The BERTA Hot Air Balloon club was founded in 1998. It has three active pilots, who regularly compete in international competitions in Serbia, Croatia and Hungary. The club also organises hot air balloon festivals in Moravske Toplice and Murska Sobota.

Aeroklub Prlek Ljutomer



- 3 active pilots
- Home base: Veržej, Prlekija
- Moto: Soft landings, blue skies
- Their balloon represents the heart of Prlekija, the northeastern part of Slovenske Gorice. The people of Prlekija have been making wine for centuries, some of the highest quality vintages are made at Jeruzalem. The team is very proud of their heritage.



Hot Air Balloon Club

Letimo Hot Air Balloon Club



- 2 active pilots, competitors, officials
- Home base: Gabrovka, Litija
- Founded in: 2000
- Balloon registration: S5-OHK
- Volume: 2200 m3
- Hosted national championships in 2011, organised ballooning events in Trebnje.

NE Hot Air Balloon Club



- Founded on 15.11.2014
- Location: Maribor
- Balloon: S5 – OSR
- Members: family and friends
- Club members are actively involved as organisers of events and officials. Balloon club has organised a traditional Maribor balloon festival for years.



Hot Air Balloon Club

Barje Hot Air Balloon Club



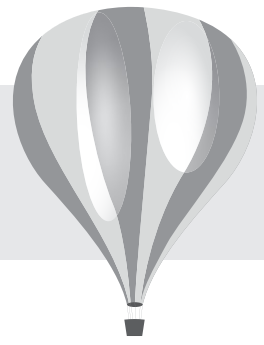
- **Balloon:** S5-OHD
- Founded: 19.3.1992
- Located: Flandrova ulica 1, Ljubljana
- Pilots: Grega Trček, Filip Štucin
- Events: hosted a ballooning festival in Ljubljana
- Competitions: competed at national and international events



The best photographs



The best photographs





The best photographs



