



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championships begins this Saturday in Austria**

Lausanne, Switzerland, 11 August 2025 – **This Saturday 16 August marks the start of the 23rd FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championships in Wieselburg, Austria, where almost one hundred of Europe’s most skilled pilots will compete in an extraordinary demanding test of navigation, teamwork, and precision flying.**

With **84 pilots representing 22 countries**, the skies above the Mostviertel region will come alive with colour and competition from **16 to 23 August**. Launching each morning and evening from various sites near Wieselburg, pilots will face a fresh set of challenges with every flight: tracking elusive wind layers, dropping markers onto targets, and adapting to shifting conditions in the air.

As much about strategy as it is about spectacle, the Championship blends **centuries-old aviation tradition with modern sporting excellence**.

*“This event captures the very best of air sports,”* said FAI President Greg Principato. *“It’s visually stunning, technically demanding, and brings together a passionate international community. We are proud to see Austria hosting such a world-class event, and we thank the organisers and local authorities for their outstanding work.”*

Beyond the competition itself, the programme includes a popular night glow: **Night of the Balloons on 22 August**, when illuminated balloons light up the evening skies in a public celebration of the sport.

The Opening Ceremony takes place on 16 August, with daily competition flights from 17–22 August. **The new FAI European Champion will be crowned at the Closing Ceremony on 23 August.**

### Pilots to watch

Among the top contenders are **Switzerland’s Stefan Zeberli**, currently ranked number one in the FAI World Rankings, and **France’s Clément Seigeot**, the reigning World Champion. Also expected to perform strongly is the **UK’s Dominic Bareford**, ranked third and a previous European Champion.

### FAI Hot Air Balloon Competitions

Unlike powered aircraft, **hot air balloons rely entirely on wind direction**, which changes with altitude. Pilots must read subtle atmospheric clues, adjusting their balloon’s height to catch the ideal wind current and steer towards targets set for each task. It’s a test of judgement, adaptability, and deep meteorological awareness.

Over the course of the event, pilots must perform consistently across a wide **variety of tasks to score maximum points while avoiding penalties**. Their performance depends not only on flying skill, but also on strategy, team coordination, and sustained focus under pressure. A single miscalculation—or a perfectly placed marker—can mean the difference between winning and missing the podium.

## Schedule

- 16 August: Opening ceremony
- 17-22 August: Competition
- 22 August: 'Night of the Balloons' event
- 23 August: Closing ceremony

## **Editor's note**

FAI will provide extensive coverage of the Championship with regular updates on its website, Facebook, and Instagram. Images (free for editorial use) will be available on Flickr.

- [FAI Facebook](#)
- [FAI Instagram](#)
- [FAI Flickr](#)
- [FAI event website](#)
  
- [Organiser website](#)
- [Pilots registered](#)
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## **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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