

Report on hot air ballooning issues in Latvia, 2010.

The main task in 2010 in Latvian ballooning community was preparation to the organization of the 1st Worlds Women's, 2011. The test event was successful with the great help of the competition director Mathijs de Bruijn. Due to continuous consolidation of the Latvia's state budget, the state's financial support was cut significantly to the sports in general and to the support of 1st Worlds Women in particular. As result as for January 31st, 2011 the state's financial support was zero. Considering very limited sponsorship so far it was clear that without state support it is not possible to organize the competition of the FAI 1st Category. The only possible but painful decision was made – to cancel the 1st World Women's. Just to mention – in the sanction application we offered entry fee of 300 EUR; however without adequate sponsorship the entry fee should be 800 EUR to cover the primary organization expenses.

In spite the failure in the organization of the event, generally the ballooning in Latvia is developing: 2 new hot air balloons are registered, new members in the Ballooning Federation, and worth to mention the 5th place in the 1st European Women's and the 21st place in the World's in Debrecen – the highest results of Latvian pilots so far in the competition of such range.

The other tendency is that as a result of limited sponsorship to the event organizers, balloon clubs and particular balloon teams, the overall expenses for participation in the competitions rise and pilots are refusing to participate in the ballooning events at all or limit their participation to the minimum to be included in the National rating. Consequently less FAI licenses are required.

Generally the number of pilots and student pilots in Latvia are slowly growing and we hope that moving out from the economical crises will return more pilots to the competition. Also Latvia has successfully received European Union grant for the sport development and will train ballooning event volunteers and observers from 6 European countries.

Finally, please find attached the Results of Latvian Nationals, 2010 – INTERNET link :

<http://www.balticballoon.lv/lgbss/valmiera2010res.pdf>



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