



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Stefan Zeberli wins sixth FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championship title

Wieselburg, Austria, 23 August 2025 –**Swiss pilot Stefan Zeberli has claimed his sixth European title at the 23rd FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championship in Wieselburg, Austria, following a week of intense flights jam-packed with challenging tasks.**

Out of the 84 pilots competing, **Zeberli showed determination and skill** throughout the Championship to gather the highest average number of points and take the top spot of the podium once again.

Entering the competition as one of the favourites, ranked number 1 in the FAI World Rankings, Zeberli fully lived up to his status, securing yet another European Championship title. His first came in **2009** in France, followed by victories in **2011, 2015, 2017 and 2019**. He also won the **World Championship in 2022**.

Zeberli commented on the *“perfect weather conditions”* and said *“I feel very proud of my team, we had a wonderful week... I can't put it in words, I feel very emotional to have the trophy at home once again.”*

As pressure mounted towards the end of the contest in a head-to-head between the top ranking pilots. It was 43-year-old **Zeberli's skillful consistency** which saw him rise to the top in Wieselburg, Austria. **Dominic Bareford, 32, of the United Kingdom put up an impressive battle against the Swiss champion**, but finally succumbed to second place, saying, *“overall there were a lot of positives, but a little part of me still feels I've missed out on a chance.”* Zeberli's Swiss team-mate **David Strasmann, 44, took third place**, commenting that he was *“very proud to be on the podium again.”*

The Award Ceremony took place on 23 August, the culmination of a **spectacular week-long event** which saw the balloons splash the skies of the Austrian Mostviertel region with colour.

Speaking at the Award Ceremony, FAI Ballooning Commission President, Claude Weber said, *“With very good weather and a great flying region, the pilots were very lucky and were set challenging but interesting tasks. We could not have dreamed for more, with very good organisers hosting a great event in Europe.”*

Results

- 1) Stefan Zeberli (SUI)
- 2) Dominic Bareford (GBR)
- 3) David Strasmann (SUI)

At the end of the event, officials confirmed that the next FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championship will take place in Mallorca, Spain in 2027.

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.

Editor's note

23rd FAI European Hot Air Balloon Championship
Wieselburg, Austria
16-23 August 2025

FAI covered the Championship extensively with regular updates on its website, Facebook, and Instagram. Pictures are available on Flickr.

- [FAI Facebook](#)
- [FAI Instagram](#)
- [FAI Flickr](#)
- [FAI event website with daily reports from the competition](#)

- [Organiser website](#)
- [Pilots bios and full results](#)
- [More about FAI Hot Air Balloon competitions](#)
- [FAI Logo](#)
- [FAI Media Corner](#)

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.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [X](#)
- [Flickr](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Website](#)
- [#airsports](#)

For more details, please contact the FAI:

Faustine Carrera
Communication Manager
0041 21 345 10 70
communication@fai.org

###