

Hans Gutmann Memorial Rally 2019

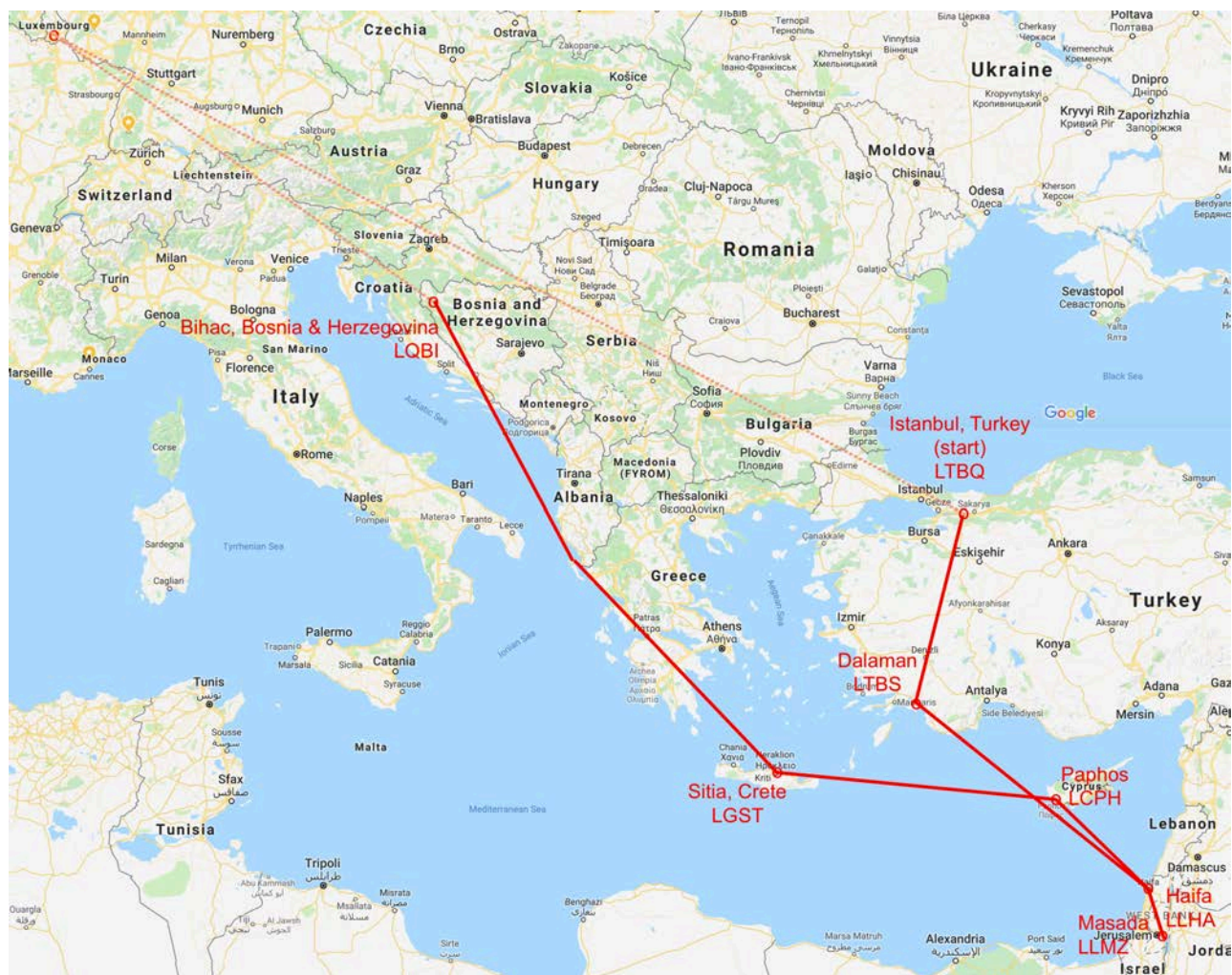
Official report by organizers





Introduction

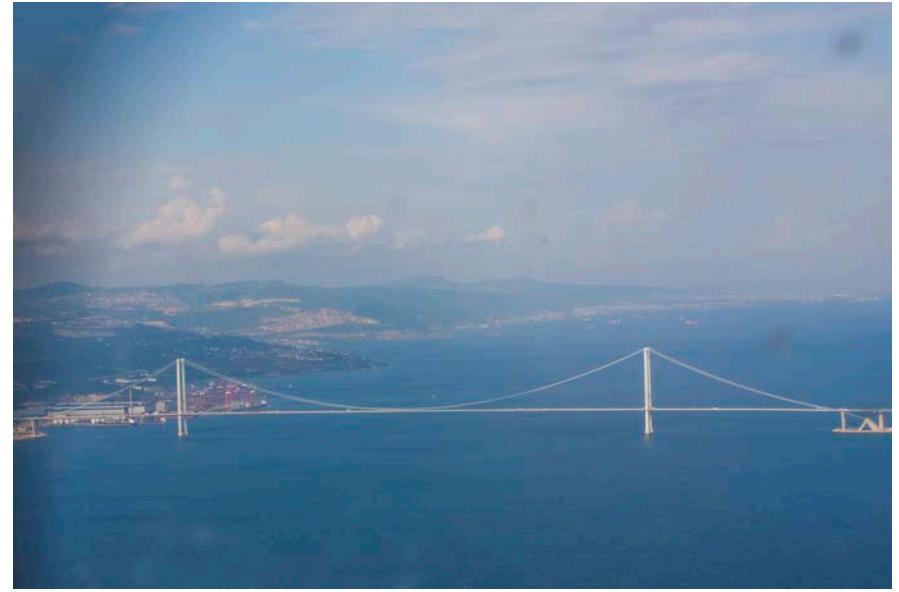
Memorial Hans Gutmann Tourist Rally is organized for the eighth time in memory of the world-famous Austrian aviator Johann (Hansi) Gutmann. He was a pioneer of recreational flying in small planes to many countries. He built his own plane with which he flew around the world and organized many international flights and long-range rallies. He passed away in an accident in June 2011 with his Cessna 172 on the edge of the Italian Alps. After organizing flyouts to Tbilisi, Georgia (2016), Saint Petersburg, Russia (2017), Kiev, Ukraine (2018) and following the invitation of AOPA Israel the Organizing Committee decided to go to Israel to keep on exploring new destinations for General Aviation.



Turkey, Cengiz Topel (LTBQ)

Rally start

For Luxembourgish crews, the rally started on the Luxembourg Findel on 13th June and went via Austria and Slovenia to Belgrade / Serbia. On day two, the Turkish airport Kocaeli-Cengiz Topel was reached. This was the official start of the rally and the meeting point with other participants: a total of 18 teams from Luxembourg, Germany, Slovenia, England, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Poland, Austria and Belarus took up the challenge of the over 5000 kilometres long flight.



Israel, Haifa (LLHA)

After a day of sightseeing in Istanbul, the route of day four led to Dalaman on the southern coast of Turkey. There, the tanks of the private aircraft were filled to full capacity in order to take on the leg to Haifa without further stopover.

Arriving in Israel, there was a warm welcome by a delegation of the AOPA Israel as well as by local private pilots. A joint dinner provided an opportunity for a lively exchange of flying experiences between the Europeans and the Israelis. On the fifth day the planes stayed on the ground and the group visited the Sea of Galilee. Anyone who wanted could then be baptized in the Jordan.



Israel, Masada (LLMZ)

The sixth day, a special highlight awaited the pilots of this air-rally: the flight from Haifa to Masada, the lowest runway on Earth: 378 m below sea level! After more than an hour of flight, all reached the airfield in Masada safely and observed the altimeter going below zero during the landing in the desert on the edge of the Dead Sea.

An Israeli air force exercise took place at the same time and we had to follow special rules.

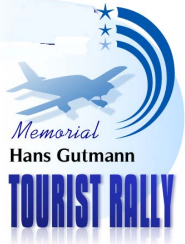


Flying in Israeli Airspace

We were split into three groups and the first plane of each group was accompanied by an Israeli co-pilot. Under the code names "Tiger", "Lion" and "Jaguar", the formations had to scrupulously comply with the prescribed route at the appropriate altitude. Halfway through, the GPS reception was disturbed for navigation and we were glad to have maps and a local aviator on board.

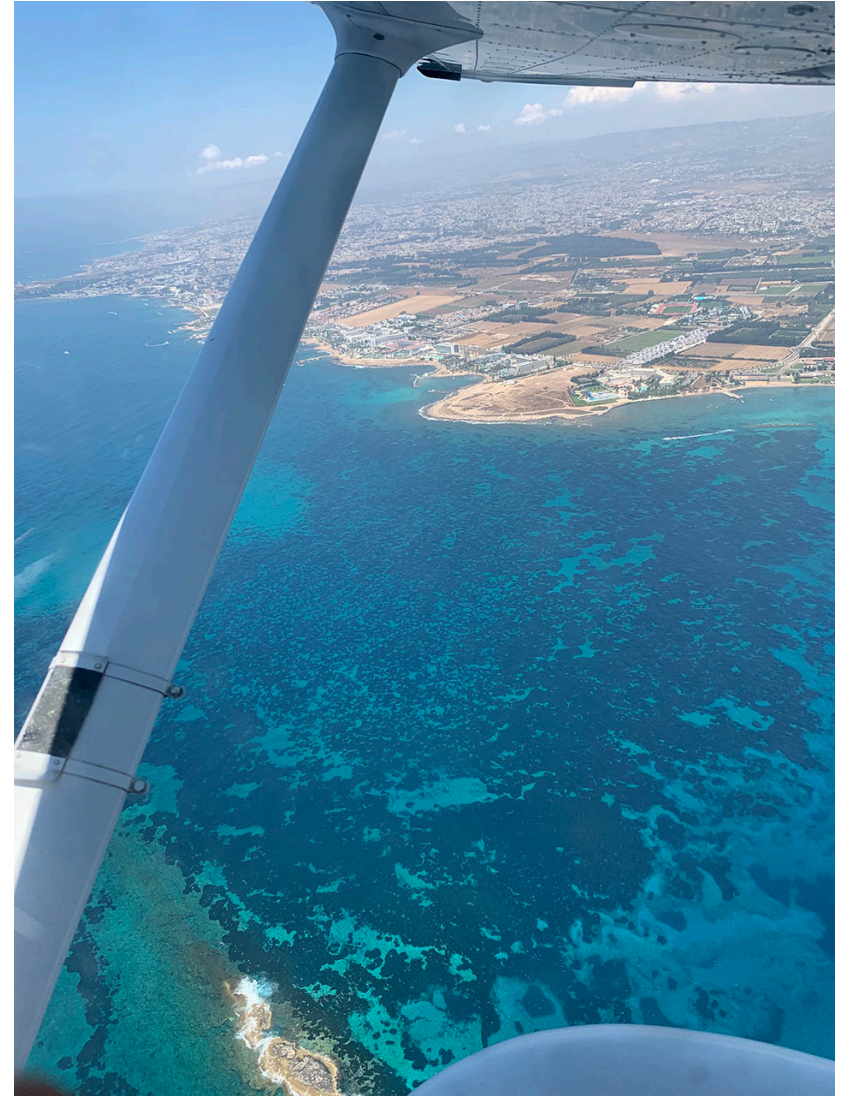
Before lunch, the group visited the nearby ruins of the Temple of Herod. Then, a bus took them to the hotel in Jerusalem and on the way to the hotel we stopped to take a dip in the Dead Sea. The Old City of Jerusalem was visited the following morning. The bus brought the participants back to their aircrafts, which were already sweltering in the midday heat. The return flight to Haifa was again following the procedures of the day before and went without incident.





Leaving Israel

Early morning of the 8th day we've departed Haifa. Some crews went back to the Turkish south coast to Dalaman for refueling and overnight stay, others flew to Sitia (Crete) via Paphos (Cyprus) and stayed there overnight.





Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bihać (LQBI)

The following morning crews lifted off early to Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the afternoon, the pilots were already expected by customs officers on the grass airfield of Bihać to complete formalities. The representatives of the local aviation club, Aero klub UNA, also welcomed the rally participants.

The next morning another highlight of the tour was on the agenda: a visit to the underground aviation site of Željava on the Bosnian-Croatian border.



Željava Air Base

Members of the Bihać flying club expertly guided through the former Yugoslav military facility, Europe's largest 3.5 km long aircraft tunnel, with space for up to 80 MiG-21 fighter jets. With a total of 3 take-off- and 2 landing runways, always several planes could take off and land at the same time.

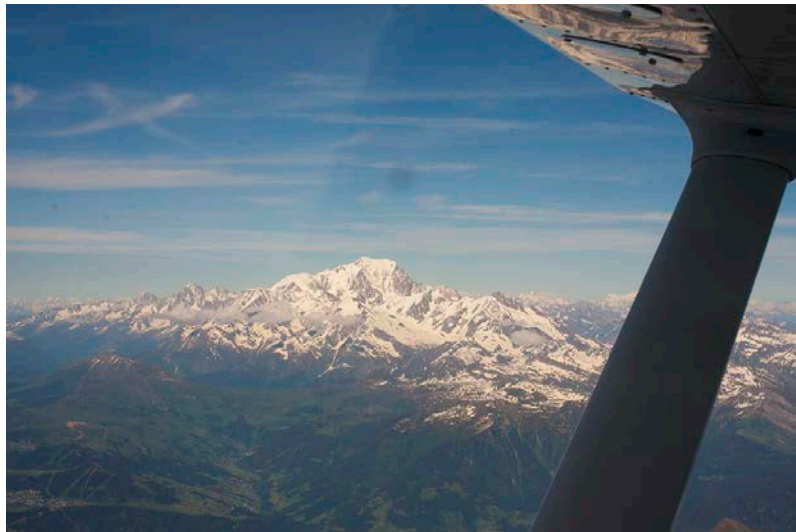
The rally participants were finally driven over two of the five star-shaped former runways and taxiways. Unfortunately these are no longer usable today, since the runways were made unusable in 1991 by the Yugoslav army. Today, it would certainly be an attraction for any pilot to visit this historic site with their own plane. Part of the runways run cross-border. Since neither Croatia nor Bosnia and Herzegovina are subject to the Schengen Agreement, the group of visitors had to wait accordingly at the border crossing for the necessary passport controls.

Maybe this dream will come true someday, especially as the European Union and Croatia were conducting a mine clearance project from July 2017 to March 2018. In addition, the pilot club in Bihać has already started initial negotiations to leave at



Going home

After 10 days, again, an unforgettable flight rally came to an end. The impressions and experiences of the last days will remain in the memory for a long time.



Final comments

Participation

18 crews from Luxembourg, Germany, Slovenia, England, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Poland, Austria and Belarus

Organization and support

The rally was organized by Fun Travel (Luxembourg)

The Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs promoted this year's rally, which was launched by the FAI ("Fédération Aéronautique Internationale") and the GAC ("General Aviation Commission").

The Organizing Committee would like to thank:

AOPA Israel and personally Yigal Merav, our Israeli host

Turgut Kulacoglu, our Turkish organizer

Tour companies in Turkey (Istanbul Credo Tours) and Israel (Unique Travels)

And of course all our participants!

