

Hans Gutmann Memorial Tourist Rally 2018

Official report by organizers





Introduction

After successful flyouts to Tbilisi, Georgia (2016) and Saint Petersburg, Russia (2017), the Rally Organizing Committee (ROC) decided to go to Moldova and Ukraine to keep on exploring new destinations for General Aviation.





Challenges & solutions

Challenges

- First plan was to go to Odessa, Ukraine but Odessa International airport turned out to be quite expensive
- Both Ukraine and Moldova require prior slot reservation in Kiev and Chişinău international airports
- Problems arranging parking in Kiev and Chişinău international airports
- Elevated security measures in Ukraine
- Difficulties with Avgas 100LL in Kiev and Chişinău international airports (and Romania in general)

Solutions

- ROC engaged local AOPA in Moldova and Ukraine, as well as non-AOPA contacts (Moldova flight club and Moldova CAA)
- Ukrainian AOPA arranged parking at Ukraine State Aviation Museum (adjacent to Kiev Int'l Airport)
- All permits and slots were negotiated for the entire group of 15 airplanes (40 pilots)
- Avgas delivery was arranged
- Quite a reasonable costs were negotiated



... so we made it happen!



Hungary, Jakabszállás

Rally start - Jakabszállás, Aero Hotel

12 crews joined the rally in Jakabszállás (LHJK), Hungary on 13th of July. Aero Hotel was chosen as a starting place. LHJK is already well known to Luxembourgish pilots; it's a nice hotel with concrete-grass runway and Avgas pump.

After a flight organizing briefing the team proceeded to the restaurant for a welcome dinner with Gipsy music.

Most of the crew accepted the Rally logos and stickers to be applied to the aircrafts, so the Rally was set for the first joint leg.



Moldova, Chişinău

Flying to Moldova

It was not possible to arrange Avgas delivery and overnight parking for our entire group at Chişinău International (LUKK), where great taxiways reconstruction works were in place. AOPA Moldova and owners of local aero club invited the Rally to their field, Vadul lui Vodă.

Having departed Jakabszállás, the Rally passed outbound customs check in Tököl (LHTL), crossed the Carpathians and landed at Chişinău for inbound customs and passport control.

It took a while for our big group to finish the paperwork and around 5pm local time all airplanes transitioned to Vadul lui Vodă.



Moldova, Vadul lui Vodă

Vadul lui Vodă is a former Soviet training base for parachute jumpers, situated ~10NM north-east from Chişinău. It went derelict and was later restored to the General Aviation airfield by the effort of local aviation club (Echipaj).

Now Vadul lui Vodă is a nice private airfield with two grass strips and comfortable clubhouse.

The club arranged Avgas delivery from the local fuel dealer. All airplanes were re-fuelled and parked at the paved apron. Local police secured the airfield zone for the night with periodic checks.

The welcome event at the clubhouse was perfectly organized. Local CAA and Moldova government members presented themselves and invited the Rally participants for the open air BBQ party. Some rally participants provided commentary for local TV.



Ukraine, Kiev

Transition to Kiev

Departing Vadul lui Vodă, the Rally had to make another stop at Chişinău for outbound customs and passport control. This time it was much faster; part of our group decided to stay in Moldova for another day having considered weather conditions:

UKKK 151030Z 03004MPS 360V090 9999 FEW033CB 24/15 Q1007 R08/CLRD70
TEMPO VRB10G18MPS 2100 -TSRAGR SQ BKN020CB=

First group landed at Kiev International where inbound customs and passport procedures were handled on ramp with minimum amount of paperwork.

After entry procedures we taxied to Ukraine State Aviation Museum and parked our airplanes next to Tu-160s and Tu-95. For two days, our airplanes became a part of museum's exhibitions.





Ukraine, Kiev

Next day morning the rest of our group departed Chişinău and reached Kiev without problems.

It was discovered that weather observation reports transmitted from Kiev have tendency to be more conservative than the current observed conditions. The reported METAR for UKKK was definitely “no go” for VFR General Aviation flight. First group made their flight decision based on the alternative airfields availability Russian language skills to communicate with local ATC.

In Kiev the Rally team has a city tour and a relaxed dinner in the city centre restaurant owned by amateur private pilot and aviation entrepreneur.

Our plan was to depart early morning.





Romania, Constanta

Leaving Kiev

The departure from Kiev was unfortunately delayed due to unexpected and extensive ramp security check. It put some additional pressure due to worsening weather. The airport ground services were unable to negotiate the procedure to bring airplanes back to the airfield ramp from the State Museum facility, which is effectively outside of the AP perimeter zone.

Having navigated around the weather, the Rally landed at Constanta (LRCK). After procedures, we had to fly to Tuzla (LRTZ) for re-fuelling. Romania has refinery disruptions; the only alternative for Avgas in Romania was Bucharest International.

The entire team stayed at Constanta for two nights. Good weather and beaches helped everyone to relax.





Serbia, Niš

Serbia

Departed Constanta the Rally proceeded across Bulgaria and Romania border to Serbian city - Niš. The entire group has arrived within 2 hour interval. Fast changing weather and proximity to the mountains made some additional challenges on approach.

Niš Constantine the Great airport is noted for it's Avgas prices (it is a little bit cheaper than automotive gasoline).

The city itself is a representative mix of magnificent ancient historical buildings and brutalistic urban late-Soviet concrete blocks.

After a brief bus city tour, the team gathered again for a Serbian cuisine dinner.

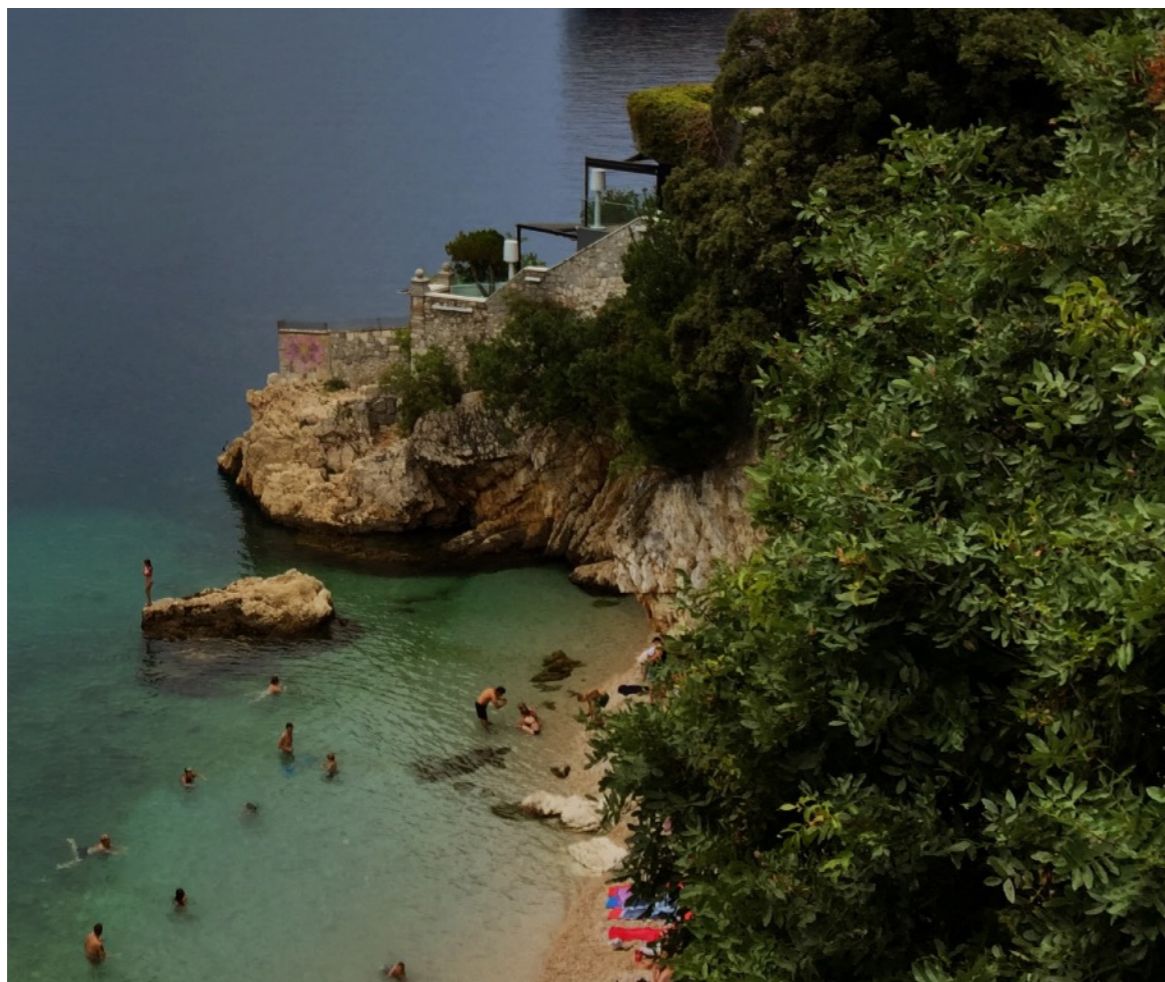


Croatia, Rijeka

The weather was much better!

The Rally landed at Rijeka airport and re-fuelled. Our group stayed here for two nights, enjoying beaches and local cuisine.

Croatia's riviera is certainly worth coming back! Airport procedures for General Aviation are streamlined and super friendly. Smooth weather, clear and warm sea, good infrastructure - everything is set for another relax. The summer city festival in Opatija (western suburban of Rijeka) took place this weekend. Streets were closed for public transport turned into old times promenades full of music and dancing.





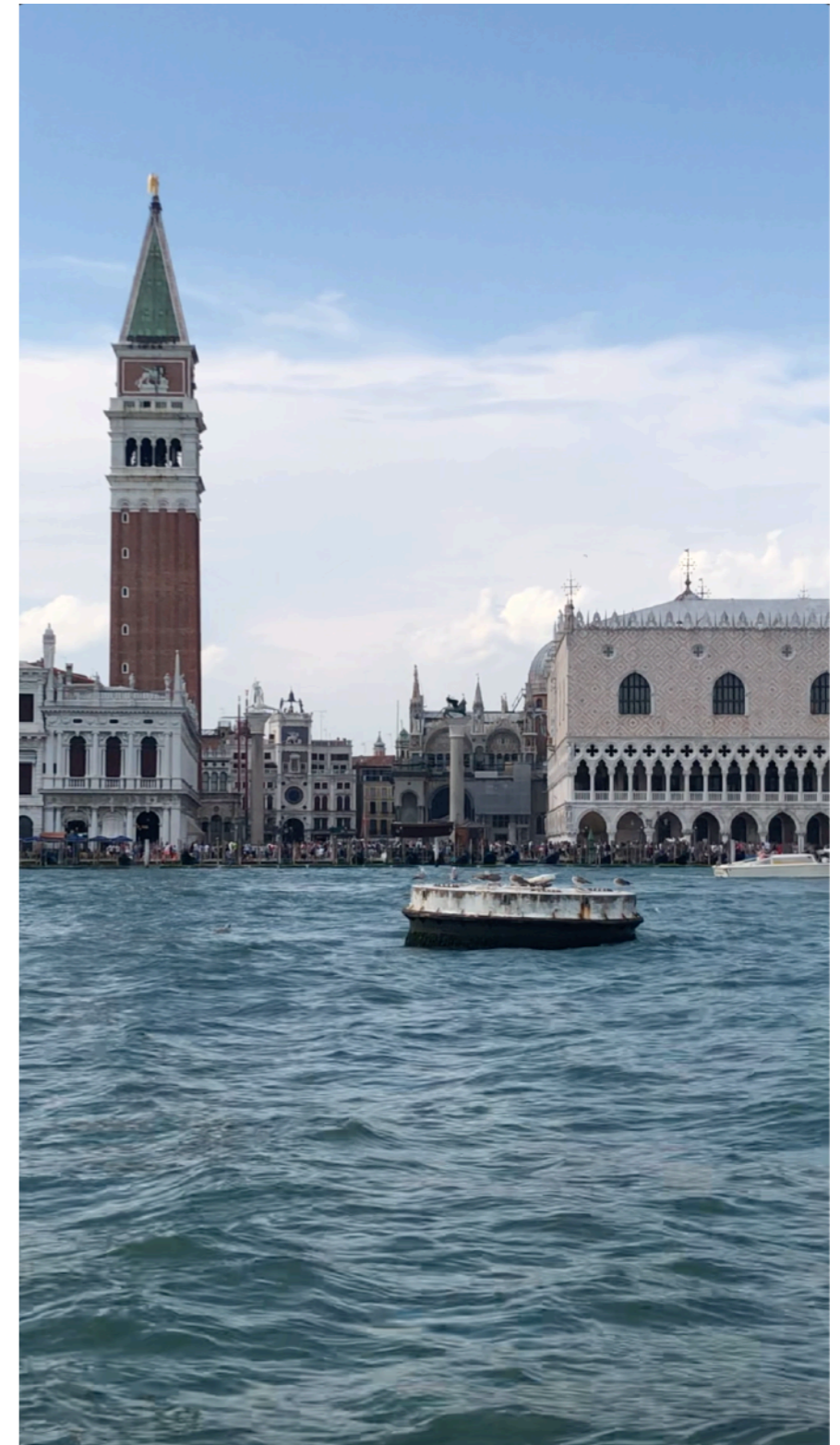
Venice-Lido, Italy

Venice-Lido airport, also known as Giovanni Nicelli, is a grass field with buildings. It was restored and turned into nice General Aviation landing spot next to Venice.

Some crews decided to make one day loop to Venice, while the others stayed another daytime in Rijeka warm beaches.

The Rally team got united again in Rijeka for the closing dinner and celebration. Our Rally came to the end.

It was a nice time to share salutations and regards to everyone and enjoy the great individuals seating next to each other and smiling.



Going back home

Crews from Luxembourg have flown back to ELLX.

We've landed at Portoroz, Slovenia (a nice small airport) for EU entry passport and customs control.

Due to SIGMETs (towering CB's) in Alps, we had to navigate around, flying along the Côte d'Azur coastline over Genoa, Monaco, Nice and Orange.

Another re-fuel stop was made at Aérodrôme de Bourg-en-Bresse, France making overall journey from Rijeka to Luxembourg almost 7 hours.





Final comments

Participation and organization

15 crews. Luxembourg, Germany, Poland, Israel, UK, Finland, Turkey, USA, Russia, Belgium, Estonia, Ukraine.

A tourist program (including sightseeing, cultural and/or gastronomy events) was organized in every city.

Distance traveled: ca. 3100NM, >30 hours on a Cessna 172SP

Support

Our main sponsor and partner was the Ministry of Sport and Economy of Luxembourg (Let's Make It Happen!)

We would like to thank the Embassy of Luxembourg in Czech republic for support which they provided.

Quite a lot of effort was provided by AOPA Ukraine, AOPA Moldova and Aeroclub Ecipaj.

Ukraine and Moldova as destinations for GA

Airspace in both countries contain active restricted/prohibited zones, have to respect. No problems with military.

There are no restrictions on VFR in both countries. Insurance hasn't been an issue.

Ground services are generally OK, except long ramp check in UA and general lack of personnel. Group of airplanes should plan arrival with appropriate spacing to avoid queues and delays.

For international flyouts, it's always a good idea to contact Aeronautical Federation, IAOPA organizations, local aeroclubs, government officials (and friends!) to get assistance and special authorizations for overflight and landing.



Plans for 2019

Tourist rally to Turkey, Israel, Egypt

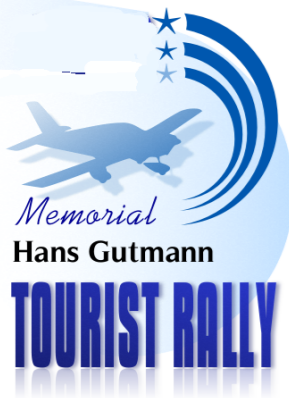
Pilots from AOPA Israel invited us to visit Haifa and Masada and proposed a tourist program.

Our friends from Istanbul Aviation Club also proposed to make Turkey a part of this rally.

General Ahmed Maher (AOPA Egypt and Aeroclub Egypt) invited us and organized a tourist program in Egypt, including a flight around the Egyptian Pyramids.

Total distance from Nis to Portoroz ~ 2800 NM





Organizers



Jean Birgen, FAI-GAC adviser

President

An experienced private pilot rally organizer since many decades.



Pierre Lorang

Hospitality Manager

An amateur private pilot from Luxembourg



Artem Kirillov

Flight coordinator, project manager

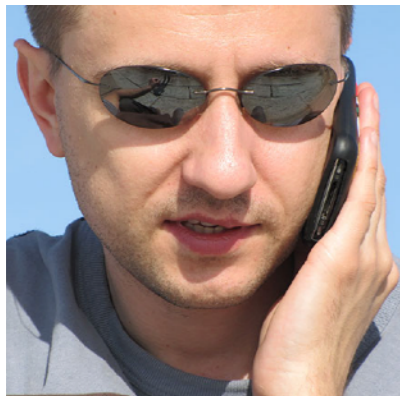
Happy to be a pilot and operate the most inspiring way of transportation.



Yigal Merav

AOPA Israel

Spec Ops



Mikhail Kornev

Secretary General, Treasurer

Telecom entrepreneur with a passion for flying and adventure.



General Ahmed Maher

AOPA Egypt

Chairman