

“FLYING SLOVENIAN ” - FOR NATURE

Slovenian pilot **Matevž Lenarčič** keeps flying for the nature. Sounds absurd.

Spring 2012, he astonished the world with his record flight of nearly 100-thousand kilometers in about 100 days. He flew west from **Ljubljana** and crossed 7 continents, 60 countries and 3 oceans and photographed the earth from above, especially water sources, the topic of his next book and did measurements for climate change research. This spring, he is flying in the arctic.

The last of April he flew over the **North Pole**, from one continent to another as the first pilot with an ultralight airplane. He flew from Ljubljana to Tromsø, to **Svalbard and** over the North Pole from **Europe to Canada**. His flightplan is to complete the long distance flights by passing the **North Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland**, following the **Lindbergh's** record flight **New York-Paris**.

He uses **Virus SW**, the fastest aircraft in its category, but using less fuel per distance flown. It is specially equipped for these long flights with larger gasoline tanks, rescue equipment, storage space and so. Its flight distance is 4000+ kilometers, altitude 9000 meters and can be operated from +50 to -50 degrees Celsius.

The bird`s eye view

Matevž Lenarčič has earlier flown **WorldTransSiberia 2002, Around the Only World 2004, Africa-Valley of Life 2005, Around the world 2012**.. Climbing expeditions have taken him to **Patagonia, Greenland and Himalaja**.

He is also a biologist and professional photographer and takes aerial photos during his aviation expeditions. He enjoys flying, and, because of his long experience, can easily combine camera work with that. Camera has revealed him the beauty of our world, he wants to protect.

He likes extreme and high places. Air is his element?

-Yes, we have these two dimensions. Not many people are lucky to enjoy the third.

The bird`s eye view, Matevž Lenarčič says. - I like to take photos of landscapes. Up there I get order to all this chaos.

Many of these photos are published in his books. The last of them is **The Alps-A Bird`s Eye View(2009)**. He spent three years, and took 100-thousand photos in all Alpien countries, and that was a rehearsal for the **2012 flight- GreenLightWorldFlight**. The massive book has about 500 pages, the articles written by 19 experts, and it was published under the patronage of **Unesco**.

The Next book deals with water. *- Although earth is 70 percently covered with water, about one third of people have limited or no access to drinkable water, and this needs to be effected, Lenarčič says.*

- During these flights I have experienced that absolute laws become relative. Life values become clearer. We are not aware enough, that we live only in a tiny part of the universe, which is also our only possible solution. If we destroy it, we have nowhere to go, he says.

Ultralight plane serving science

High above he saw what effects man and nature have done to this unique Alpien area in **Europe**.

During the last 150 years half of the ice cover there has melted, and it seems that the speed of the melting is getting faster. The Alps is an important generator of the weather and very important fresh water area for europeans.

*-Beside Alpien area, **the Arctic** is facing the same phenomenon and it is even more sensitive to environmental threats, Matevž Lenarčič says.*

Beside photographing he carries an aerosol inlet and a prototype **Aethalometer** in the plane. They collect data of black carbon. Measurements collect emissions also of shipping trade.

-The Arctic is a very important generator of the weather. Changes in the ice shell can have a decisive impact on the speed and direction of ocean currents and thus the lives of the entire world, says **Dr.Griša Močnik(Aerosol)**, the scientific head of the project.

-The Arctic has seen unprecedented melting this year and also in the past years, potentially opening new shipping routes. Ship engines emit large amounts of BC and the deposition of BC has a positive feedback – as more ice melts, more ships will use the new lanes, he says.

-Black carbon, according to the latest research, seems to be the second important cause of global warming. Using back trajectories, the results will therefore be not only the concentrations of black carbon at the elevation of the flight but also the source locations, **Dr. Močnik** continues

Extreme experiences

Slovenian people like nature and outside life. Many of them are alpinists. So is Matevž Lenarčič. He has climbed mountains in **Greenland, Patagonia and Himalaya**, and has also paraglided from Himalayan mountain tops. Now he is devoted to flying and photography.

Slovenian industry has produced many innovations. Airplane producer **Pipistrel** has got many international prizes for that. Their production saves energy and is green, because the factory in Ajdovščina uses solar energy and geothermal, to produce its energy. The planes minimize consumption, because they are energy efficient, have low drag and high lift and they can soar without engine power.

During these world flights **Matevž Lenarčič** has faced many dangerous situations like flying in storms, winds, low temperatures, over even endless forests or seas.

-Flying alone at night, in tcloudy, bad weather in such a light aircraft is very demanding. The aircraft is well equipped, has also autopilot, but almost no redundancy if something goes wrong. And normally you have to switch autopilot off, when you really need it. Average 10 hours flying per day, awful bureaucracy in the airports, finding right fuel, filtering 300 litres, preparing the next flight, having weather diversities in mind, so, not much time for rest. Yoga and meditations help me a lot, Matevž Lenarčič says.

But, what has been important for him during these flights, is the huge support he has got from his team and audience. People all over the world have sent a lot of messages during the flight.

-The people never cease to surprise me. We are coming from different environments and cultures, but we have same conclusions regarding life, universe, everything. So, I wonder: what is wrong with the rest of our only world, why is it turning to the opposite direction?