



The 2019 European Astronaut Reunion in Sopot/Poland

- 12 flyers from 8 countries meet at the Baltic Sea coast of Poland
- Reinhold Ewald succeeds Michel Tognini for the ASE Europe Presidency
- Host Miroslaw Hermaszewski leads through a programme full of friendly encounters and Polish history

Twelve astronauts and cosmonauts from eight European countries assembled for the annual European Astronaut Reunion in Sopot/Poland at the coast of the Baltic Sea by invitation of Miroslaw Hermaszewski, one of the first non-Soviet, non-Russian cosmonauts to launch on a Soyuz rocket back in 1978 in the Intercosmos programme. After the arrival of the participants on Thursday, the reunion started with a regional assembly of ASE Europe, the European chapter of the global Association of Space Explorers. Outreach and other STEM related activities were discussed as well as ASE Europe's attitude towards the newly developing push to return to the Moon in international cooperation. Outgoing President Michel Tognini (France) looked back on successful years where the professional interaction and the personal friendships between the European astronauts have steadily grown.

By unanimous vote Reinhold Ewald now follows Michel as President ASE Europe, Andreas Mogensen from Denmark replaces him in the Secretary function. Jean-Pierre Haigneré from France continues as ASE Europe Treasurer.

Matching the sea resort character of Sopot, all participants and their partners were taken on a fishing trip in the Bay of Gdansk. The fish won the competition by elegantly ignoring the numerous rods with bait.

The Saturday was devoted to the history and present of the lively town of Gdansk, which had been rebuilt from the total damage it suffered in World War II. The local museum gives a moving impression how the war had destroyed hundreds of years of culture heritage and uprooted millions of people. The more encouraging is the mix of languages and people visiting Gdansk from all countries on the main street today.

The wharfs in Gdansk also played a forerunner role in the tumbling of the communist systems in the 1980ies when a strike of wharf workers started a change process that under the lead of charismatic figures like Lech Walesa led to the Poland of today, a member of European Union in the heart of Europe.



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PARC D' INNOVATON | 1 RUE JEAN DOMINQUE CASSINI | F-67400 | ILLKIRCH GRAFFENSTADEN | FRANCE



European flyers assembled in front of the Hotel Sopot: left to right P. Nespoli, E. Messerschmid, F. Viehboeck, Host M. Hermaszewski, H. Sharman, J-P. Haigneré, R. Ewald, K-D. Flade, D. Prunariu, U. Merbold, M. Tognini (C. Nicollier missing due to late arrival)



Planting trees at a Natural Reserve near Gdansk



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All 12 Space flyers plus a space cadet at the backdrop of the beautifully rebuilt city center of Gdansk:



21 postulations that made history: with this manifest, hand written on wooden panels, the workers of the Gdansk Wharf demanded political and social rights in 1980 (UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in the Solidarnosc exhibition, Gdansk)



No animals were harmed in the course of the European Astronaut Reunion – despite futile attempts by veritable spacemen and –women.