

After being stranded in Frydland in the far east of the Czech Republic in 2018 with a broken car (faulty clutch) and having to drive the rest of the competition in a small workshop car with Czech licence plates, this year's Euroglide was comparatively uneventful.

In any case, we were very happy that it was finally time again after two long years of waiting. Even the journey from Rosenheim, from the Austrian to the Dutch border, is a long way. Halfway there, however, we were able to spend the night with relatives, so all in all it was a comfortable journey.

We leave the trailer in Venlo, so the crew is more comfortable. We trust that the engine of the DG800 and the all-weather covers will take care of us on the road.

The weather on Monday was a bit dubious at first, but then it became clear that it would be enough for the departure from Venlo and the first few kilometres. Only how far it would go could not be predicted with the best will in the world. Because we know: "Meteorologists never lie, because lying presupposes knowledge". The soothsayers at least agreed: Maybe it would go as far as Hanover, at the most we would fly into bad weather from behind at the inner-German border. In reality, we were able to fly behind the front all the time; it dutifully moved off to the southeast. You just had to be careful not to get too close. That's why I had the only hang-up on Monday, because I had to fly around the south-east corner of the Hanover airspace and it was tough for half an hour. East of Neuruppin, the end of the flight was indeed reached with rain and hail showers. The airfield was accordingly crowded.

On Tuesday, too, the weathermen remained true to themselves. The private provider predicted good thermals from ten o'clock, the German weather service predicted a three o'clock start in the afternoon. Together with BV, I was lazy and was still sitting on the ground an hour after the last take-off. The lesson: dawdling in the morning can be made up for with sitting in the evening. I never thought I'd make it to Zwickau, but with Chinese pole-sitting in a 30cm/s climb, I managed another 80km in one and a half hours. At the very end I needed the engine, the last 50m of altitude were missing. But that's more of a blemish. Hopefully, the twelve free kilometres shouldn't matter for the classification.

Wednesday was actually easy to plan. We'd fly out and after two hours we'd be at the rain front anyway. But the decision of conscience: east or west around Nuremberg, made it more exciting than expected. The plan was west, Kitzingen. But then the weather looked so much better in the east. So I took the plunge between the airspaces of Nuremberg and Grafenwöhr and Hohenfels. Unfortunately, the front arrived earlier than expected, so it didn't go far. Neumarkt airfield is supposedly no more, Berching neither, so it got exciting at the end. With a last upwind "in the nothing" it was even possible to reach Beilngries without an engine. Whether the action in the east was smart in terms of the course - that remains to be seen.

It was probably not really clever. The teams that had positioned themselves further west had a better start on Thursday. Despite the best cloud optics, we had to wait until noon in Beilngries so that we could stay in the air at all. The path up to the Swabian Alb was also still very low and very slow. From the entrance to the Alb, it went all the

better for it. The traverse into the Black Forest and the rounding of the turning point were also quick and trouble-free. So in the evening in Aalen we were together again with many Eurogliders and our bad position in the morning didn't hurt much.

On Friday we lazed around and spent a very nice day in Nördlingen. That's why we were still standing in Aalen on Saturday morning. (Almost) everyone else had heroically shuffled a few kilometres east in the moderate weather. But in the end it was a question of who would make it to Venlo and who would not. For us (Aalen, Czech Republic, Venlo) it was very close to the limit of what the weather services thought was feasible. So fly off, don't dawdle, and see how far it goes.

A big advantage was that on Saturday in Aalen all the locals were at the start and it was easy to see when they were taking off. This meant that I was even able to get away just under half an hour before the planned start. Even with this early start, however, it went very well towards the Czech Republic, low, but with enough clouds at short intervals. At Regensburg it was clear: if you had no more kilometres, you were out. The turn itself was out of reach. So I flew as far as I felt was still "good". The kilometres I did well later turned out to be decisive.

After a good start, the crossing through Hesse was surprisingly tough. From Bad Kissingen to behind Gießen it didn't want to "run". But here I met some of the riders who had started further east. Our Nördlingen day seems to have made no difference. Anyway, it's the longest days of the year, so you can get further if you go slowly. Up to the Rhine everything unspectacular, but from there a thick cloud cover, no more useful clouds. Under a dark mass again up to almost 2000m. If it works again, I'll be home. But it doesn't work again. All the groping and searching was useless, I gave up before I reached the control zone of Nörvenich and started the engine to fly to Aachen. At this point, according to my calculations, I still have 30km to go to reach my destination.

But in flight you can't do the exact geometry, you can only roughly estimate how big the displacement is according to the gliding computer. In the morning in the hotel, with the exact rules and laptop and geometry triangle, it turned out that the Czech turn had cost me 30km less than expected. Then it depended on how far before Venlo I had given up. So I re-calculated and re-measured everything three times, but it remained the same: It was sufficient and there are even 30km left. Of course, it's still possible that I miscalculated or overlooked some special rule in the small print, so we'll have to wait for the official evaluation.

Sunday unfortunately gave no gliding weather at all in the west, so we just motored the plane over to Venlo. With that, the 10km/h rule fully caught me. Those in the north-west were in a better position.

On Monday, however, the message came: "Hello, jullie zijn volgens de berekening officieel gefinish op 26-6 om 15.12. Mooi gedaan. Tot vrijdag." Hooray! We actually made it and successfully rounded it. There was still plenty of time until the prize-giving ceremony, which we spent on a nice holiday in the Netherlands with canoe paddling, a trip to the North Sea island and lots of lazing around.