



## THE WINGED LION TAKES OFF

**TOČNÁ, 25 July** - Several months of preparation have come to an end. An attempt at the first-ever flight around the world by a Czech-Slovak pilot is ready to start. There are three oceans and regions with monsoon rains, as well as the cold of Alaska and the warmth of the Far East waiting for the pilot, Roman Kramařík, a partner of JŠK Law Firm. The route has a total of some 22 thousand nautical miles.

The route is planned to go to the east since primarily western winds prevail and the airplane registered as "OK-TGM" does not have any sufficiently strong engine to overcome them. Therefore, there is the necessity to use the characteristics of the air flow. All of the journeys undertaken as part of this mission are to lead to the east. There is also one purely practical reason behind it. Throughout the flight, there will be an international referee to oversee who will formally confirm the validity of the journey after it is completed.

Professionals at ABS Jets decided to take responsibility for planning each of the landings, refuelling and seeking all of the necessary permits. *"Planning the route presented a great deal of work that was initiated a couple of weeks before the departure. All started with discussions and analysing different options of how the flight should be executed with regard to weather and prevailing winds, as well as legislation requirements. This was followed by intense communication with the airports and double-checking the availability of services and fuel,"* says Michal Pazourek, Director of Ground Operations at ABS Jets.

The stage of preparation involved a team counting around ten people; in doing so, it was exploiting its lessons learned in similar expeditions and delivery flights. *"Any of such missions is different and has different limitations, but yet everything has been going as planned. It is possible that the schedule will need to be adjusted as necessary. This entails the need of updating services in the destinations and amending the permits or requesting new ones,"* details Pazourek, adding that his colleagues will monitor the Mission Winged Lion on the 24/7 basis and - where necessary - will be ready to respond to these changes.

Roman Kramařík considers areas with monsoon rains to be the most difficult places to fly over since there are storms that are impossible to cross over and - often - even pass around. Then there are also flights over the areas of water. To become prepared for any

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complication, Kramařík found himself in the swimming pool of Czech University of Life Sciences last week to train how to board a rescue boat. *“Should such an emergency occur, circumstances will of course be far harder; but I feel happy that I could have a try in a relatively warm and totally calm water,”* Kramařík said.

When departing from Točná, the pilot will be accompanied by a group of aircrafts, including the restored *Elektra* once used by Jan Antonín Baťa. It was exactly Baťa’s book on his business trip which was one of the inspirations for Kramařík to head for his trip around the globe too. In addition, he had scheduled his project for this year when we commemorate the 100th anniversary of founding Czechoslovakia. Years ago, when he - along with his colleagues - bought Cessna with which he is now going to fly, there was the need to ensure the aircraft registration, i.e., to get the “number plate” used for checking in with the air traffic controllers. Czech aircrafts have a country code of “OK” allocated. There was still the need to devise the three letters coming after the prefix. *“You can use three letters that are available and do not mean any international codes in airline terminology. Well, so we checked if TGM was available and it was. It feels more than symbolic to me this year of the 100th anniversary of Czechoslovakia,”* says Kramařík who intends to search for Czech traces abroad - not only traces of the work of the clan of Baťas, but also those of other emigrants who left their indelible mark in the history of the local communities.

*“I would like to thank our partners who have supported the project and whose emblems are placed on the plane. I also thank all the supporters as part of the campaign run on HitHit. Names of all those who chose their reward in the form of placing their name on the plane are already there as are the names of children from children’s homes who sent me their pictures. The names of those who may provide any last-minute support and wish to be listed on the aircraft will be added by us when in the U.S.A. Most of all, however, I would like to say thanks to my family,”* added Roman Kramařík.

The return to Prague from Great Britain - following the route used by RAF pilots to turn back into liberated Czechoslovakia - is scheduled for 8 September with the airport in Letňany being the venue.

Roman Kramařík’s photographs from the journey, videos and notes will be available for download at [www.okridlenylev.cz/press](http://www.okridlenylev.cz/press)

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The project progress can be tracked via the website and social networks:

<https://www.facebook.com/okridlenylev>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhdvZNBhz8w>

<https://www.hithit.com/cs/project/5071/okridleny-lev>

<https://twitter.com/OkridlenyLev>

<https://www.instagram.com/miseokridlenylev>

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