



Aeronautica Militare Balloon Cup: over 52,000 spectators in San Damiano for the second edition

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The second edition of the **Aeronautica Militare Balloon Cup - from the balloon to the stratosphere**, the hot air balloon competition hosted from September 26 to 28 at the **San Damiano Military Airport** (PC), concluded with record numbers. Over three days, **over 52,000** people crowded the event area, enhanced by performances from the **Frecce Tricolori** and the **Aeronautica Militare Rhythmic Gymnastics Team**.

The event, promoted by the **Ministry of Defense** and organized by **Difesa Servizi** and **Aeronautica Militare** in collaboration with the Aero Club d'Italia and the Aero Club di Pavullo (technical support from **Aeronord Aerostati**), aims to highlight the history, values, and capabilities of the Arma Azzurra, celebrating the hot air balloon as the "ancestor" of modern aeronautical platforms.

Tradition, technology, and a young audience

The event combined **education and entertainment**, bringing a diverse audience—many young people and families—closer to the national aeronautical heritage: **static exhibitions**, **historical reenactments**, **tethered balloon flights**, **virtual reality**, thematic talks with AM and ANSA protagonists (media partner), and even a show for children with **Veronica Maya** and the group **Millenium Ensemble**.

The numbers of the Balloon Cup 2025

- **3** performances by the **Frecce Tricolori**
- **30** balloons in competition
- almost **2,000** tethered flights
- almost **3,000** works created by children in creative workshops
- over **200** accredited media operators
- **8.4 million** views on social channels
- over **50 hours** of show
- **19 hectares** of setup (17 for the public, 2 for competitions)
- **2** ceremonies and **4** talks
- **all activities free**, including balloon flights

Institutional voices

Tommaso Foti, Minister for European Affairs, Cohesion Policies, and the PNRR, described the Balloon Cup as “a **prestigious sporting event**” perfectly framed by the San Damiano airport, highlighting the role of the hot air balloon as a **forerunner** of modern Aeronautica means and

thanking Defense, AM, and Difesa Servizi for the teamwork.

For the **Undersecretary of State for Defense, Sen. Isabella Rauti**, the event strengthens the principles of the **Culture of Defense**, combining **historical identity** and **modern readiness**, offering citizens the opportunity to learn about the means, tasks, and missions of the Armed Forces up close.

The **Chief of Staff of the Aeronautica Militare, Gen. S.A. Antonio Conserva**, emphasized the value of initiatives that show the public the daily work of Defense. Balloons and aerostats thus become a **bridge between tradition and innovation**, in a nation “**fully aerospace**” capable of developing advanced technologies for surveillance, communications, and Earth observation.

Luca Andreoli, CEO of **Difesa Servizi**, highlighted the **international sporting appeal** (over 30 crews, 28 from abroad) and the ambition to make **San Damiano the capital of balloons**, with **economic, cultural, and social** benefits for the area.

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The territory as protagonist

“A **team effort** between institutions, partners, and volunteers” allowed the creation of a national-scale event, commented **Mayor of Piacenza Katia Tarasconi**, while **Mayor of San Giorgio Piacentino Donatella Alberoni** highlighted the **positive economic impact** for the community.

Among the institutional partners are the municipalities of **Piacenza, San Giorgio Piacentino, and Podenzano**; support from **Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano**, sponsorship from **CONI** and **Regione Emilia-Romagna**, active participation from **Fondazione Buzzi. ENIT**, Main Partner, promoted the project “**Valore Paese Italia**”, showcasing the beauty of the territories from above.

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Inclusion, solidarity, sport

The three-day event hosted initiatives with **Ospedale Bambino Gesù** and **Fondazione Buzzi**, services dedicated to people with disabilities, and the participation of athletes from the **Gruppo Sportivo Paralimpico della Difesa (GSPD)**. In the air, on the ground, and on stage, **music and tradition** with the **Fanfara della 1ª Regione Aerea** and live entertainment from **Radio Bruno** (media partner).

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Grand finale: the free flight at sunset

The closure was marked by a spectacular **free flight of balloons**, just before sunset and visible even from the highway, which turned the **sky of San Damiano** into a mosaic of colors: the perfect symbol of an event capable of **uniting the public, territories, and Armed Forces**.

Behind those images, a true team effort: **Aeronautica Militare** and **Difesa Servizi** coordinated structure and safety; **Aero Club d'Italia** and **Aero Club di Pavullo** ensured sports and operational standards, with technical support from **Aeronord Aerostati**.

The territory responded with **Piacenza, San Giorgio Piacentino, and Podenzano** alongside the organizational machine; the **Fondazione di Piacenza e Vigevano** supported the project, sponsored by **CONI** and **Regione Emilia-Romagna**.

The **Fondazione Buzzi** brought social and health content; **ENIT**, Main Partner, linked the event to the story of **“Valore Paese Italia”**. Information and audience grew together, with **ANSA** and **Radio Bruno** weaving the media narrative. If the numbers speak clearly, the message is even clearer: the **San Damiano airport** has become a **national showcase** where **entertainment, identity, and participation** met in a **single embrace**.

News link: <https://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/news/aeronautica-militare-balloon-cup-oltre-52-000-spettatori-a-san-damiano-pc-per-la-seconda-edizione-della-competizione-tra-mongolfiere-unica-in-europa/>