



LÉLIO, NEW 100% FRENCH ELECTRIC-POWERED AIRSHIP COMPLETED ITS MAIDEN FLIGHT

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In development since 2012, Léo airship, the fruit of the Koesio-Kinetic project, made its very first test flight on Wednesday 7 June 2023. This revolutionary aircraft, a real concentrate of technology, was then presented on Thursday in its finalised version to all the partners in the project and the companies involved in the research and development of the various components that make up this extraordinary airship.

Two men at the lead

Pierre Chabert, a famous aeronaut and all-rounder in the aerial world, dreamt up this ultra-high-performance airship in 2012. The founder of Airstar, a company specialising in illuminated balloons for film sets, construction sites and large-scale events, is no novice. In 2014, he crossed the English Channel in a lenticular airship that looked like a flying saucer and was already powered by electric motors. A remarkable feat at the time.

The Léo project gathered pace and benefited from the meeting in 2017 between Pierre, the pilot, and Pieric, the entrepreneur. At the head of the Koesio group, with 3,500 employees, 180 local

branches and a turnover of €1 billion, the French leader in digital services for SMEs and local authorities, Pieric Brenier is an entrepreneur from Valence who is committed to innovation and passionate about adventure. Pieric loves flying, sailing and going fast. At the age of 22, he crossed Africa in a 2-horsepower car, before tackling the Raid Gauloise. He became world jet-ski champion in 1997, and flies both planes and helicopters. Seduced by this revolutionary airship project, Pieric Brenier embarked on this new adventure alongside Pierre Chabert. The Koesio-Kinetic project was launched to create the Léo airship. It was together, side by side at the controls, concentrated and moved, that the two pilots took Léo into the air for the first time on 7 June 2023.



Aiming World Speed record

This airship is the result of several years of research and development, and has benefited from major innovations developed by several partner companies in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, in a number of areas: envelope textiles, engines, energy storage, aerodynamics, structural alloys, etc. The craft's first objective is to break the world speed record, held since September 2004 by the late Steve Fossett. On that day, aboard his 75-metre-long combustion-engined zeppelin, the American flew at 115 km/h thanks to the 600 horsepower of his engines.

The Léo team is confident that their airship has what it takes to succeed. Its electric motors develop "only" 100 horsepower, but the innovative design of the French airship makes it extremely light and perfectly streamlined, as Pierre Chabert explains: "The idea behind this record is above all to show that we can go relatively fast with little energy and no CO2 emissions. And we can go faster than the airship that has held the record for the last 20 years, because we have a very streamlined, highly studied shape, and because electric horses are always good horses. The CX of our airship, its coefficient of penetration in the air, is 0.055. That's equivalent to a rifle bullet, which also has very little air resistance. We drew inspiration for the shape of the airship from the tuna, which is an extremely efficient animal in this respect.



Bringing airship back to life

Beyond the world speed record, a barrier that is ultimately highly symbolic, the aim is to demonstrate the incredible capabilities of the airship today and, ultimately, to rehabilitate it. After all, this type of aircraft, which was gradually abandoned during the 20th century, is now capable of great things.

The technologies developed for this airship and the mastery today of the use of helium, which is non-flammable, combined with the development of highly efficient electric motors, make the airship once again a relevant response to the problems of freight transport and soft mobility for passengers. This is the mission entrusted to Lélío, a true technological demonstrator, through this world speed record attempt which will take place during the winter of 2023 / 2024. Before tackling other ambitious objectives, such as crossing the Mediterranean.

Pieric Brenier, Chairman of Koesio, said: "Pierre Chabert and I were particularly moved to be able to take the controls of Lélío for its maiden flight yesterday, and we were delighted to present our airship today to all our long-standing partners in this project. Together, we were able to contemplate the results of our collective efforts. For the first time, everyone has been able to admire the final version of Lélío, in flight condition. I'm very proud to be one of the people involved in this project, which is so close to our values at Koesio. First and foremost, it's an innovative and eco-responsible project that fits in with Koesio's commitments and DNA. We have always supported innovation to develop real solutions to environmental and social problems. It's also a human project, a crazy human story. It's with great pride that we see the Koesio name emblazoned on this appliance."

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