



PRESS RELEASE
For 18 March 2025

60 years ago, Alexei Leonov made the first ever spacewalk

Lausanne, Switzerland, 26 February 2025 – **FAI, The World Air Sports Federation, is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the first spacewalk performed on 18 March 1965 by Alexei Leonov, and the FAI World Record he set for his historic endeavour.**

During the Voskhod 2 mission, Leonov exited his spacecraft (tethered by a long cord) to experience floating in space, thus making the history books for the first ever spacewalk. His courageous accomplishment has had a colossal impact on human space exploration.

The achievement was ratified by FAI as an Astronautics Absolute World Record for Extravehicular Duration in Space: 12 minutes and 9 seconds.

Greg Principato, FAI President, states, *“What has been learned through spacewalks has enabled the construction of the International Space Station, and the possibility of long-range space exploration. Leonov’s path breaking spacewalk opened up a new era of possibilities in space and it is appropriate to celebrate that accomplishment, and all that it led to.”*

About Leonov’s spacewalk

Alexei Arkhipovich Leonov was selected to perform a spacewalk from the Voskhod-3KD No.4 spacecraft during the 1965 Voskhod 2 mission with Commander Pavel Ivanovich Beliaev.

In an interview with FAI in 2015, Leonov recalls exiting the airlock hatch, tethered by a 5.5-metre-long cord to see, *“The Black Sea and the Crimea Peninsula ... Romania, Bulgaria and ... the boot of Italy... Stars were to my left, right, above and below me. The light of the sun, was very intense, and I felt its warmth on the part of my face... The sky was black and the silence was extraordinary.”*

Although not mentioned in the original record application documentation supplied to FAI, in the interview, Leonov recalls the life-or-death situation in which he found himself, as he prepared to re-enter the hatch. His suit had inflated significantly, severely restricting his movement. Despite the risk to his life, he decreased the pressure in the suit, and successfully re-entered the airlock, sweating profusely.

Legacy of Leonov’s achievement

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the first spacewalk, FAI celebrates the incredible legacy of Leonov’s bravery and expertise that has inspired and enabled so many future space missions.

The FAI records archive holds reports by both cosmonauts as well as photographs taken by Leonov and still images from the external video camera which captured the remarkable scenes of him emerging from the spacecraft.

Leonov’s own report makes the following conclusions about the importance of the first spacewalk:

- *Leaving the spacecraft into outer space is quite possible and is no longer mysterious to a man;*
- *A man in a special space suit with a self-contained life support system may not only exist in space but also perform certain aimed and coordinated operations;*
- *It is possible to carry out some physical work, to make scientific observations in outer space.”*

Notes for editors

- Alexei Leonov: 30 May 1934 – 11 October 2019
- [Leonov spacewalk FAI record file](#)
- [2015 FAI interview](#) (available in 5 languages)

- [FAI logo](#)
- [FAI media corner](#)

About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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