SOLARSTRATOS SEDUCES CANADA

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Swiss eco-explorer and the man behind the SolarStratos project, Raphael Domjan, and his team took Quebec by storm in June as honorary guests at the Northern Solar Festival in Montreal and the City of Montreal.

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Raphael Domjan and the SolarStratos team were guests of honour at the Northern Solar Festival in Montreal, Quebec, and the Metropolis World Congress that gathers 140 mayors from the world's largest cities, last week and with the stratospheric aircraft at the heart of the show, they quickly became the talk of the town.

During the week-long event, the Swiss eco-explorer and initiator of the SolarStratos project, raised awareness of the mission through a series of lectures to political representatives, the media and the public.

The stratospheric solar aircraft proved to be a show stopper attracting an illustrious audience that included the mayor of Montreal, Denis Coderre, the Lausanne and Neuchatel city trustees and the deputy trustee of Yverdon-les-Bains as well as other guests from all over the world.

Denis Coderre also took part in a Swiss evening organised on 18 June with the Consulate General of Switzerland in Quebec that was attended by representatives from the Mohawk tribe, indigenous to Quebec, by Julie Payette, a Canadian astronaut and current director of the Montreal Science Centre, by Marie-Michele Limoges from the Cosmodome de Laval and 200 other guests.

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At the end of a highly successful week destined to raise awareness of the SolarStratos project, the aircraft was dismantled and shipped to Mirabel airport for onward journey while Raphael and the Swiss delegation continued with engagements. These included the official opening of the Metropolis World Congress, a visit to the new ABB development centre in Quebec organised by the Canadian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce, and an evening organised by the Swiss Consulate General in Montreal.

The only thing missing from the trip was an exhibition flight, however weather conditions prohibited any attempt with rain and 30-40 knot winds buffeting the festival. Though disappointed, Raphael Domjan is upbeat about the trip which was a huge success and greatly enhanced the credibility of the SolarStratos project. It raised awareness of future eco-exploration and allowed the team to successfully test the logistics and communications capacity required for such a mission.

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27 JUNE 2017

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