O Zboroňovu nôtu

26th International Competition of Bagpipers

Oravská Polhora, 19 September 2026

Competition rules

Proclaimer and Guarantor: Oravská Polhora Municipality
Co-organizers: The Guild of Slovak Bagpipers
Event date: Saturday 19 September 2026 at 13:00
Place of event: Oravská Polhora

Competition's Mission:
The mission of the competition is:

- to support and promote bagpipe playing, especially among the younger generation, and to help the intergenerational transfer of traditional cultural values
- to confront the musical interpretation of young instrumentalists with each other, as well as with the opinions of the expert jury
- to confront different bagpipe playing styles and current approaches to bagpipe playing
- to discover new musical talents and to stimulate the interest of the youngest bagpipers in preserving and developing traditional culture

Competition conditions (participation rules):
The international bagpipe soloist competition will take place as one of the programs of the 26th International Bagpipe Festival Gajdovačka 2026, which will take place on September 18-20, 2026, in Oravská Polhora (Slovakia).

The following contestants can participate in the competition:

- all instrumentalists bagpipe players of all types are eligible to participate
- each contestant will perform one competition block lasting up to 5 minutes, in which two songs will be played - bagpipe melodies, during which it is possible and is also evaluated the accompanying singing of the bagpipe or the accompanying singer. He/she participates in the competition at his/her own expense.
- only folklore material from a specific region can be used in the competition programs, which is close to the nature, temperament, peculiarities of that bagpiper and the age of the performer.

The order will be drawn or determined on the day of the competition.

Categories:
Competition categories for the 26th Edition (2026):

- **O Zboroňovu nôtu – under 15 years old**
- **O Zboroňovu nôtu – under 25 years old**
- **Gajdošská pasovačka – without restrictions**

A contestant may participate in only one category. If a contestant has previously won their category, they may apply for a higher category, or the organizer may decide to assign them to a higher category.

In the 'Gajdošská pasovačka' category, traditional performance is not mandatory; a free-form performance is also permitted.

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Expert Evaluation Jury:
Members of the expert jury are selected and appointed by the Director of the Gajdovačka Festival. The jury is international, consists of at least three members, and is composed of experts in bagpipe culture.

Application deadline:
The binding application for the international competition of young bagpipe players must be sent no later than **15 September 2026.** The application form can be found here. **O Zboroňovu nôtu ENG**

By sending a completed and accepted application form, the contestant is entitled to reimbursement of accommodation costs and reimbursement of a proportional part of transportation costs. For competitors up to 18 years of age, expenses are reimbursed only for one accompanying person.

Applications sent after 15 September 2026 may not be accepted. In the application form, all required data must be filled in CONSISTENTLY. In the case of the interest in registration after the deadline, please contact the festival director via email gajdovacka.oravskapolhora@gmail.com

Competition evaluation (evaluation criteria) and award:
An international jury will evaluate individual competition performances. After the competition concludes, the jury will rank the contestants in their respective categories (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place). The jury reserves the right to reallocate prizes or to withhold awards for certain places

All contestants will receive a certificate of participation and prizes. Top performers will receive valuable awards. The jury reserves the right to award the main prize to a contestant finishing in second or third place.

During the evaluation, primary emphasis will be placed on:

- Stylistic authenticity and regional interpretation corresponding to the specific type of bagpipes
- Repertoire selection, reflecting regional bagpipe traditions and the given instrument
- Overall artistic impression, balance, and performance maturity
- Instrumental mastery and playing technique
- Effective use of accompanying vocal performance
- Overall stage presence and aesthetics of the performer
- 'Gajdošská pasovačka' - Contribution to bagpipe culture in terms of reviving rare or lesser-played types of bagpipes, restoring extinct or forgotten playing styles, and other related elements.

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Competition results:

The public announcement of the competition results and the award ceremony will take place before the Gala Program on Saturday, September 19 at 18:30 at the Cultural Centre in Oravská Polhora.

By entering and participating in the competition, contestants consent to the audio and video recording of their performance by the organizer, as well as its non-commercial use for documentation purposes without entitlement to any fee or remuneration.

Event Coordinator:
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