

Swiss solar plane returns after European flights

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Pioneering Swiss solar-powered aircraft Solar Impulse piloted by German test pilot Markus Scherdel takes off for its unique flying display at the Paris International Air Show at Le Bourget airport near Paris in June 2011 on the last day of the show. Solar Impulse returned to Switzerland, the plane's team said.

Swiss solar-powered aircraft Solar Impulse returned to Switzerland Sunday from Paris' Le Bourget airport, where it been on show, the plane's team said.

"The [Solar Impulse](#) HB-SIA prototype, piloted by Andre Borschberg, touched down this evening in Payerne at 7:42 pm (1742GMT) after a 12:31 hour flight powered by [solar energy](#) alone," said the team in a statement on its website.

The arrival marked the end of the aircraft's European flight campaign. Solar Impulse had flown to Brussels on May 13, where it stopped for about a month before flying to Le Bourget on June 14.

"With a round the world flight scheduled for 2014, these flights have provided good learning opportunities in terms of slotting the solar aircraft into international air space and landing at [international airports](#)," said the plane's team.

Borschberg, who piloted the European flights, said that the plane demonstrated what could be done with solar energy alone.

"The welcome we received in Brussels and Paris was highly motivating for the team as we enter phase two of the project which is building a second plane to fly around the world," he added.

The ultimate goal of the Swiss-based team is to attempt a round the world tour in five stages.

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