

## EBA New Talent Competition Banská Bystrica, Slovakia 2026



The 2026 EBA New Talent Competition was held in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, bringing together emerging bonsai artists from across Europe to compete at the highest level of developing talent.

Representing the UK through Federation of British Bonsai Societies (FoBBS), Andy Mook competed against a strong international field, demonstrating the continued strength and progression of UK bonsai on the European stage.

### **The Journey**

The trip began with early travel from the UK into Košice, followed by the drive into Banská Bystrica where the event was hosted. The setting provided a fitting backdrop for a competition focused on precision, creativity, and composure under pressure.

### **The Competition**

The New Talent Competition is designed to challenge competitors to transform raw material into a refined bonsai within a fixed time window. This competition format tests not only technical ability, but also decision-making, design clarity, and execution under scrutiny. Andy approached the competition with a clear design vision and delivered a strong performance across all stages of the process.

### **Results**

The final results were:

- **1st Place:** Netherlands (NBV): Pia Wolf
- **2nd Place:** Spain (AEB): Eric Rodríguez Carrillo
- **3rd Place:** United Kingdom (FoBBS): Andy Mook

Securing a podium finish for the UK is a significant achievement and reflects both Andy's ability and the strength of talent being developed within the UK bonsai community.

### **Wider Impact**

Beyond the competition itself, the event provided an important opportunity for collaboration and discussion between European organisations, including future development of the NTC structure and opportunities to expand participation. There is clear momentum behind growing the New Talent Competition, with increasing focus on structured national pathways and stronger visibility across Europe.

### **Looking Forward**

With continued support from organisations such as FoBBS and the UK Bonsai Association (UKBA), the UK is well positioned to strengthen its presence in future competitions and play a more active role in shaping the next generation of bonsai artists.