

LIK@BTA.BG



BTA'S MAGAZINE FOR LITERATURE, ART, AND CULTURE, YEAR LX

APRIL 2025

ブルガリア BULGARIA

BULGARIA AT OSAKA 2025

LITERATURE  
ART  
CULTURE

BULGARIA AT OSAKA 1970



# BULGARIA AT THE WORLD EXPOS







In 2025, LIK magazine – the Bulgarian News Agency's publication dedicated to literature, art, and culture – celebrates 60 years since its first issue was published on January 8, 1965.

For several decades, LIK has been seen as a "window to the world", offering readers insights into the crowning achievements of Bulgarian and global culture.

After an almost nine-year pause, the magazine resumed monthly publication in March 2022.

Today, LIK has a modern design and thematic editions.

The magazine uses a custom typeface, named LIK, specially commissioned from BTA and developed by specialists from the National Academy of Art – the oldest Bulgarian university for professional artists.



ЛИК

APRIL 2025

SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE  
BULGARIAN NEWS AGENCY

DIRECTOR GENERAL:

Kiril Valchev

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Georgi Lozanov

MANAGING DIRECTOR:

Yanitsa Hristova

JUNIOR EDITOR:

Reneta Georgieva

PROOF READER:

Lilyana Nikolova

COVER DESIGN:

Leonora Konstantinova

Simona Koleva

PHOTOS USED IN THIS ISSUE:

BTA, the Bulgarian Small and  
Medium Enterprises Promotion  
Agency (BSMEPA)

DESIGN AND PREPRESS:

Leonora Konstantinova

Plamen Gerchev

TRANSLATORS:

Bistra Roushkova, Diana Dukovska,  
Dimitrina Solakova, Kaloyan Kirilov,  
Konstantin Karagyozov, Metodi  
Yordanov, Momchil Rusev, Nikolay  
Zabov, Risida Dimitrova, Tatiana  
Marinova, Veneta Litkova, Yoana  
Vodenicharova

The passages by Aleko Konstantinov  
featured in this issue have been  
translated by Neyko Genchev.

BASED ON DESIGN BY STUDENTS AT THE  
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ART:

Teodor Mirchev  
Elisaveta Dragomirova  
Viktoriya Dimitrova

PHOTOS USED IN THIS ISSUE:

Archive of BTA Press Photo,  
pressphoto@bta.bg  
ISSN 0324-0444

CONTACTS:

Bulgarian News Agency, 1124 Sofia,  
49 Tsarigradsko Shose Blvd

ADVERTISING:

marketing@bta.bg / 02 926 2296



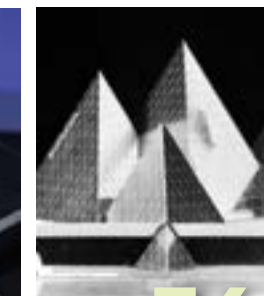
2



10



18



34



46



50



60



80

## CONTENTS

### Bulgaria at the world expos

2 | Aleko Konstantinov, the Adventurer,  
Ivelina Gabrovska

3 | From "To Chicago and Back"

10 | Bulgaria at the World Exhi-  
bition in Osaka in 2025

18 | Boyko Takov: At EXPO 2025, Bulgaria  
Will Be Where It  
Rightfully Belongs – Right beside the  
World Powers

24 | Concept Design Team behind Bulgaria's  
Pavilion at EXPO 2025: Touring Bulgaria's  
Pavilion Is Personal Experience That In-  
spires, Engages, and Leaves Mark

34 | Bulgaria at the 1970  
World Expo in Osaka –  
News from BTA's Archives

46 | Ivan Popyordanov:  
Cooperation between  
Bulgaria and Japan  
Reached New Dimensions  
after the World Expo  
in Osaka

50 | The Unforgettable Participation of  
the Children's Radio Choir at  
EXPO-70

56 | Bulgarian Yogurt –  
From the Thracians to Mars

58 | The Bulgarian Oil-Producing  
Rose

60 | From the BTA archive: Diplo-  
matic and Cultural Relations  
between Bulgaria and Japan

68 | Short History of World Expos

80 | World Expos Seen through the  
Lens of the BTA Archive

127 | Bulgarian News Agency's  
Archive



THE BULGARIAN MAN AT THE WORLD EXPOS IN  
PARIS (1889) AND CHICAGO (1893)

## ALEKO KONSTANTINOV, THE ADVENTURER

IVELINA GABROVSKA, DIRECTOR OF THE HISTORY MUSEUM  
IN SVISHTOV

Aleko Konstantinov was passionate about long-distance travel. In 1889 he visited the world's fair in Paris. The French capital captivated him. A few Bulgarian politicians who also visited that expo were inspired to organize a similar event in Bulgaria. In 1891, Konstantinov and the Jolly Bulgaria circle attended the expo in Prague. Later, he would detail his impressions in "Uncle Ganyo at the Prague Fair" (translation by Dimitar Dobrev).

By the end of the 19th century, exhibitions became the place where participating countries showcased their advancements in technology, new inventions, fashion, and more.

Aleko Konstantinov was among the few Bulgarians who crossed the pond for the World's Expo in Chicago. He left for the New World with Dr Stoyan Radoslavov and his dear friend Filaret Golovanov. They visited New York, Niagara Falls, the Chicago Exposition, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Boston. They explored museums, theatres, parks, libraries.

After his return from America Konstantinov wrote the travelogue *To Chicago and Back*, which was first published in the *Bulgarski Pregled* (Bulgarian review) magazine in late 1893. It is an account of the author's immediate impressions of his trip to America. He saw Bulgaria in the system of the modern world. He journeyed with the passion of a traveller, with curiosity, but also with the desire to compare what was Bulgarian with what was foreign. His enthusiasm for the advanced Western civilization was divided between the high material level, the technical

achievements and the inhumane manifestations of this otherwise orderly and wealthy society.

The travelogue reflects that moment in Bulgarian spiritual development when Bulgarians began to explore the world in order to find their place in it and the place of their homeland. The writer's attitude ranged from admiration and wonder at the spectacular beauty of Niagara Falls and the achievements of civilization to a sense of fear for the fate of man in this society.

A postcard from Chicago (Svishtov History Museum Photo)



## ALEKO KONSTANTINOV

# FROM "TO CHICAGO AND BACK"

Without stopping to rest, we set off toward the Exposition, determined not to pause until we found Mr. Shopov, our Bulgarian representative. The entrance fee to the Exposition was half a dollar. We passed row upon row of beautiful and richly appointed pavilions of individual states, cut across the galleries of Fine Arts to shorten our way, walked through the South American section, cut through the seafood restaurant, circled around the Administration Building, and finally entered the colossal Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building.

You must have been to the Plovdiv Exposition and seen the large pavilion there, haven't you? It was pretty big, right? Well, let me tell you – in the Manufactures Palace at the Chicago Exposition, not only could the entire first Bulgarian Exposition in Plovdiv fit comfortably inside, but so could all the residents of Bulgaria's second capital city, along with all their furniture, and even their livestock on top of that!

It measured 1,687 by 787 feet, or 1,327,669 square feet (if you prefer, you can calculate it in square meters – I haven't the time).

From the outside, the building appeared massive, with plastered white walls, colonnades along the sides, and ornamented facades.

The roof was an iron vault covered with glass.

Inside this giant edifice stood hundreds of pavilions – American, European, Asian, and others.

Now, you surely don't expect me to describe every single pavilion individually!



Aleko Konstantinov (1863 - 1897),  
Bulgarian writer and public figure  
(Photo reproduced at BTA by Zoya Penkova)

And even if I had the intention – did I even manage to glimpse all of them? We had promised ourselves not to stop. We walked straight down the center aisle to avoid getting lost in this labyrinth. Before our eyes paraded ever more splendid pavilions – Austria, Germany, England, France, Belgium, Russia; farther along, a moorish

colonnade with dark arches – an entire Alhambra; we spotted a flag bearing familiar tricolors – we ran toward it, only to find it was the Mexican pavilion.

We moved on – past Japan, China, Persia; further still, above a narrow, dim alleyway, we saw the Turkish flag hanging. We passed by – and there it was!

Before us stood a little shop, above which fluttered (or rather, just hanging there, for there was no wind indoors) the Bulgarian tricolor.

At the very front of the shop stood two lovely glass showcases filled with rose oil.

Down the middle, in glass cabinets running the length of the shop, were various types of cloth, mostly from Vratsa; among them, if you looked closely, you could spot a few bottles containing mysterious liquids – our famous wines and rakiyas, or brandies.

The entire space was nicely decorated with carpets and folk costume pieces.

One could see furniture manufactured by Ivan Brukha & Co. of Sofia.

At the back, on the right, in a glass cabinet poorly lit by the electric

lamps (for it was always dim inside our little shop), was crammed an assortment of tobacco and cigarette boxes – more noticeable by their smell than by their appearance.

There were wax figures too – a village bride, a peasant from Shopluk region, a major in full parade uniform. Behind Mr. Shopov's desk hung a map of Bulgaria.

And a good thing too, for without it, the curious American ladies could never guess where rose oil came from.

Ever the courteous host, Mr. Shopov constantly gave geography lessons, pointer in hand, starting from Constantinople (otherwise they could make no sense of it), guiding them to Adrianople, leaping to Sofia, and tracing the borders of Bulgaria before finally stopping at the Rose Valley – which, for dramatic effect, he had renamed "the so-called Earthly Paradise."

The eager American ladies, thirsty for knowledge, hung onto his every word, chiming in at every moment with:

**"Oh, yes! Oh, yes! All right!"**

Mr. Shopov showed great kindness to us as well.

He gave us general directions to the sights worth seeing at the Exposition and personally accompanied us throughout the entire Midway Plaisance, where he treated us to lunch in the Turkish Village.

But perhaps you don't know what the Midway Plaisance is!

Listen: as a continuation and necessary complement to the main World's Fair, a sort of grand fairground had been constructed, stretching about three kilometers in length.

Here you could see the whole world!

It was the most popular spot among the American visitors.

From early morning until eleven o'clock at night, when the Exposition closed, the place was swarming with people from every corner of the globe.

From the very entrance you saw a long street teeming with visitors, flanked on both sides by every kind of curiosity, amusement, and entire reconstructed villages from around the world.

There was noise, shouting, music, drums, trumpets, tambourines, zills, turbans, baggy trousers, top hats, crinolines, fustanellas, sashes; there were Americans, Africans, Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Dahomeyans, islanders, Lapps – and, among them, our own Sofia citizen, Mr. Ayvazyan, with his Turkish-Moorish style pavilion.

But wait.

Before we venture deeper into the Midway Plaisance, let us stop at Mr. Ayvazyan's.

Mr. Yovchev was there too –

knowing the weaknesses of the Americans, fluent in English, helping Mr. Ayvazyan advertise and sell "Bulgarian curiosities," as proudly announced on the sign above their booth.

At the entrance stood mannequins dressed in traditional Shopluk costumes – both male and female. On either side of the door were showcases filled with all kinds of coins, stamps, and postcards. On the other sides, every imaginable village trinket, which Ayvazyan was able to buy from our peasant women over several years, was laid out: embroidered towels, scarves, socks, felt slippers, earrings, belts, rings, and dozens of other ornaments beloved by the peasant women.

Inside, the booth was adorned with carpets, and hanging from them were bagpipes, flutes, tambouras, flasks, horns, powder flasks, and even a prisoner's pouch. At the back stood a wax figure of a village bride, decked out in an arsenal of coins and metallic ornaments, her face veiled by strands of hair, and an enormous boxwood fan framing her head. On either side of the bride hung portraits of the Bulgarian Prince, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of War.

Across from Ayvazyan's pavilion, on the opposite side, we spotted another booth bearing the sign:

**"40 Beauties from 40 Nations."**

In front of it, two musicians in theatrical costumes were enticing the admirers of beauty to step inside.

We paid twenty-five cents each and

entered a large hall, around which small stages had been erected; at each table sat a "beauty."

At the far end of the hall, under a grand canopy, sat Fatma – **the Queen of Beauty** – on a golden throne, surrounded by attendants.

Well, no denying it – Fatma was indeed beautiful, though personally I preferred one of her attendants.

We saw a beautiful Japanese girl, a stunning African beauty (God bless her!), and Filaret even greeted a supposed Russian beauty with a hearty:

**"Zdorovo, matushka!"**

She simply stared at him. How would she know Russian?

Lord knows where they had gathered her from!

We moved further into the Midway Plaisance.

To the left, they offered tours of Colorado's gold mines; to the right – an electric theater.

Where to go? In Colorado!

A cross-sectional miniature of a gigantic mine was displayed, and through the aid of a complex mechanical system, the entire mining process was re-enacted before your very eyes. Tiny workers dug away in the underground tunnels, loading the ore into miniature wagons; others transferred it into kettles and hoisted it up to the surface. Elevators continuously rose and descended. At the surface,

miniature factories buzzed with activity, and tiny trains ran back and forth between them.

An American guide was shouting himself hoarse, explaining something about the mines – but, honestly, who could understand him?

We moved on.

To the left, they invited us to see deep-sea divers; to the right, to witness the manufacture of glass objects.

Where to go? We decided to take a peek at how glass objects were made.

We entered a hall with galleries along the walls.

In the center stood a giant furnace, filled with molten, blazing mass of glass, glowing red-orange. Workers dipped the ends of long iron pipes into the mass, pulling out fiery blobs about the size of an apple. The worker blew into the pipe, inflating the molten ball, then reheated it, softening it again, and, while it spun, shaped it into a cylinder – the beginning of a glass cup. After reheating the piece to cut off the bottom, it was passed to the engravers for decoration. Before our eyes, dozens of cups and vases were made.

Above, on the galleries, we saw something even more fascinating: how thin glass threads were drawn out by flame, wound onto spindles, then woven into fabric! These threads were combined into shimmering textiles embroidered

with colorful patterns, which were cut and sewn into scarves, slippers, pillows, and decorative cloths. A wax figure was even dressed in a full evening gown made entirely of glass fabric!

We left.

To the right, they offered trained tigers and lions; to the left – an Irish village.

But we thought it better to visit the Japanese market.

Those clever Japanese!

It's no wonder they are called the "Englishmen of the East." A lively, industrious, intelligent nation, determined to astonish the world – and they certainly succeeded!

There was no department at the Fair where Japan did not have its own pavilion, always standing proudly alongside the foremost European powers.

Unlike others who displayed wines from the Bulgarian town Stanimaka, brandy essence from Bordeaux, bottles from Prague, and labels from Vienna, everything exhibited by the Japanese was truly their own craftsmanship: metalwork, silks, porcelain, straw goods, drugstore products, rice, teas – all genuine products of their industrious hands.

No, the Japanese weren't joking – they were marching firmly forward.

We moved on.

To the left, there was a Samoan

Islanders' Theater; to the right, a Javanese village – complete with its inhabitants.

We ventured into both.

Nearby, we were drawn by the theater of the South Sea Islanders. (Quick, someone tell me – where exactly is Samoa? I can't quite recall, and I don't have a map with me!) Next to their pavilion stood a little booth with a flat roof – the ticket office. In front of it, an American man was hoarsely shouting himself hoarse, warning fairgoers not to miss this once-in-a-lifetime theater experience – lest they regret it forever. Believe him or not, but according to his cries, this was the very heart of the Midway Plaisance – as if missing it would mean you hadn't truly seen the Chicago Fair.

Let us move on and at least take a passing look at the principal pavilions of the Exposition.

Upon exiting the Midway Plaisance, we were immediately struck by the sight of the **Woman's Building**, whose architect, as proudly noted, was a young lady from Boston. The Americans had raised quite a hullabaloo about this building, but to be honest, I couldn't quite grasp where the wonder lay.

At the entrance to the central hall, the visitor was greeted by works of sculpture and painting – but frankly, both were quite ordinary, nothing extraordinary to behold. There were exhibits on the history of women's clothing, starting from the fig leaf and progressing all the way to the most extravagant and ruinously expensive costumes.

One could see all manner of tailoring and sewing achievements, a multitude of children's toys and accessories, and endless exquisite handicrafts – products of leisurely lives, crafted without any regard for the time or labor involved.

Upstairs in the galleries, one could see many drawings – fine enough to make a schoolgirl proud, but hardly elevating the reputation of women worldwide.

There were also the salons where women's congresses were held.

The one aspect that truly and visibly spoke in favor of women's progress was **women's literature**. As far as I could tell, compared to women, very few men visited this otherwise interesting establishment.

We then entered the Horticultural Building.

Now, none of us were botanists or gardeners, so there was little point in lingering long here. We simply strolled from one end to the other, glancing left and right at the plants gathered from all over the world.

One display that caught my eye was that of **Australia's plant kingdom** – previously, I had only seen illustrations. It was curious – many things that I had only known from pictures seemed strangely familiar now that I saw them in real life. It felt as though I had already met them before.

Here we saw massive fruits and vegetables – but in this regard,

the **California pavilion** surpassed every expectation. (I will speak more about it later.)

In the center of the building, beneath a giant glass dome, stood a rocky mound planted with gigantic tropical plants, their leafy crowns nearly brushing the dome itself.

Inside the mound, there was a cave whose walls glittered with millions of crystals.

Imagine, if you can, the dazzling brilliance of those crystals reflecting the electric light!

Souvenirs made from these crystals were sold nearby.

Further on was the **Transportation Building**.

When I say "building," do not, I beg you, conjure up the modest scale of the Plovdiv Exposition.

No, this structure alone covered **245,760 square feet** – just like the **Horticultural Building** before it – and had an imposing, magnificent facade. An architect would have lingered long before its grand entrance.

Inside, you could see all the means of transport mankind had ever used: from primitive, barely functional carts to the most advanced locomotives and luxurious Wagner and Pullman cars, dazzling in their opulence and comfort; from prehistoric riverboats to the grandest passenger and warships. Trams, horse-drawn and electric; omnibuses, stagecoaches,

carriages, landaus, cabriolets, and thousands of wagons and fire engines of every shape and size filled the enormous space.

The upper galleries were crammed with bicycles and ship models.

We saw miniature trains running on a circular track, their tiny locomotives and wagons hanging on rails mounted sideways rather than beneath them – quite the toy!

And what a ridiculous little contraption the **first American locomotive** looked next to the giant, modern engines and the luxurious cars – masterpieces of walnut wood, silk, velvet, crystal, and electric illumination – satisfying even the most refined taste.

We did not linger in the **Mines Building**.

Had Mr. Zlatarski been with us, perhaps he could have kindled our interest in alluvial strata and diluvial deposits, but we were no geologists.

True, we did enter for a moment – we saw enormous blocks of coal, beautiful sculptures carved from nearly transparent salt, and gleaming displays of iron, copper, silver, and gold ores; marbles, granites, and a dazzling array of precious stones.

And that was that.

The **Electricity Building**, however – now, that was another matter entirely.

Even a cow, if led inside, would have

been stunned into admiration.

This magnificent building covered **238,050 square feet**, and at night it was nothing short of a **fairy-tale palace**.

And imagine this – even though I can recall tiny, insignificant things seen here and there throughout the Exposition, when it comes to this fantastic palace, I can scarcely remember a single separate exhibit.

I sit now, pen in hand, straining my memory, trying to single out just five objects among the thousands on display – and I cannot. This tells me that, upon entering this section, I was so overwhelmed, so dazzled by the brilliance and grandeur before me, that everything blurred into a single fantastical panorama.

The endless play of light and shadow, the swirling dance of all the colors of the rainbow and their countless variations, had blinded my senses and prevented me from focusing on anything specific. The entire building was adorned with tens of thousands of electric lights, arranged into all sorts of intricate patterns. At every moment, dazzling displays of illumination shifted and danced before our eyes – so much so that you forgot you were still in the real world.

How pale seem the tales of One Thousand and One Nights in comparison!

Neither in dream nor in waking fantasy had the fevered imagination of Eastern poets ever soared as high as the cold, rational mind of modern man had here achieved.

As we exited through the main entrance of the Electricity Building, we found ourselves looking across a vast kilometer-wide view: to our left, along the shore of the Lagoon, stretched the pavilions of Illinois, the Woman's Building, the Horticulture Building, the Transportation Building, and the Mines Building.

Across the right bank, skipping over hundreds of magnificent pavilions representing various American states and South American republics, we saw the Fish Building, the Government Building, and the colossal Palace of Manufacturing – a building not only enormous in size but stretching nearly half a kilometer in length. We turned right and followed the northern canal along the opposite bank, with the endless Manufactures Building stretching out beside us.

We found ourselves standing before **Columbian Fountain**: a delicate marble group depicting Columbus's ship, upon which he sat, surrounded by nymphs – some placing laurel wreaths upon his head, others proclaiming his fame, while still others steered the oars. Streams of water constantly flowed over the fountain's steps. On either side of the fountain were submerged electric fountains, illuminating the waters of a beautiful basin.

At the opposite side of the basin stood a giant golden statue symbolizing the Republic.

Behind us, facing Columbian Fountain, was the exquisite





*The Bulgarian pavilion  
at the Chicago World's Fair  
(Svishtov History Museum Photo)*

### Administration Building.

Its architecture was reminiscent of the Administration Building at the Paris Exposition, but while the Parisian building had been excessively ornate and overloaded with decorative flourishes, the Chicago building, much larger and more solid, charmed with its refined simplicity, attracting the admiration of all who beheld it. The Parisian building was like a coquettish belle, the Chicago building – like a classical beauty.

To our left rose the Electricity Building; to our right, the Machinery Building.

In front of us stretched the basin; on its right bank stood the facade of the Agriculture Building; on the left, the endless facade of the Manufactures Palace.

Behind the golden statue, across the peristyle, two beautiful, matching buildings flanked the view – one a concert hall, the other a casino. Beyond them, the shore of Lake Michigan stretched into the horizon.

Between the Machinery and Agriculture Buildings ran the southern canal, at the end of which rose a massive obelisk. The view was so grand that, truth be told,

when I recalled the Paris Exposition – apart from the Eiffel Tower – it seemed little more than a cluster of hastily whitewashed sheds.

The nighttime scene was even more astonishing: as all the grand palaces lit up with electric lights, especially the Administration Building, its walls and domes festooned with garlands of tiny bulbs, the shores of the basin glittered with a thousand points of light. And when they set the electric fountains into play, surrounded by hundreds of tiny electric boats and Venetian gondolas reflecting across the gilded surface of the water...

Well, I scarcely know how to describe it, but it seemed almost laughable and pitiful to recall the Neapolitan boast:

"Once you've seen Naples, then you can die."

To give you even the faintest idea of the overwhelming impression made upon me by this magnificent, fairy-tale scene, I will tell you this: as we floated in a silent electric launch, surrounded by gondolas and gazing at the fountains and the surrounding grandeur, I happened to glance toward the southern canal – and there, just above the obelisk, rose the full moon.

Poor thing! How pale and pitiful she looked!

I felt a strange mix of amusement and pity for that moon, which in our homeland inspires so many songs, so many whispered words of love.

Toward the southeastern end of the Exposition, near the shore of Lake Michigan, we came upon **the caravel "Santa Maria,"** the ship with which Columbus discovered America. We boarded it, feverishly exploring every part: we saw the steering room where Columbus had stood, his bed, his chair, the table where he charted his course.

The modest furnishings resembled a monastic cell, and there was even an icon hanging on the wall. This ship was a faithful replica of the original.

Likewise, a replica of the **La Rábida Monastery** had been built nearby, housing the Columbus Museum. There, visitors could view portraits of Columbus, scenes from his life, depictions of his journeys, drawings and maps made by his contemporaries, coins and household items from his era. In one simple box in one simple room, we saw – the ashes of **Christopher Columbus** himself.

And just steps away from this shrine, guarding the remains of the man whose genius and determination opened the New World to millions – stood, shamefully, **the Krupp Pavilion**, displaying monstrous instruments of war. Weapons designed to annihilate humanity, to shed rivers of tears and blood. And Krupp, no less, expected to be awarded a medal for these dreadful inventions!

If unleashed, those weapons could in mere hours have reduced the entire World's Columbian Exposition – the crowning glory of human progress – to nothing but

dust and ash.

Behind the Fine Arts Gallery were arranged the individual pavilions of the North American states.

Every American could step into the pavilion of his own state, rest in richly appointed salons, read newspapers, write letters, play the piano, and generally feel as if he were at home.

In the pavilion of New York State, on the upper floor, there was a salon that struck me as even more elegant and luxurious than the hall of the Palace of Versailles.

And when I say "pavilions," please do not imagine anything like the "pavilion" from Sofia at the Plovdiv Exposition. For example, the pavilion of Illinois covered **72,000 square feet**, and above it rose such an enormous dome that, as I joked, all the domes of Sofia's churches could dance a gallop inside it without bumping into each other.

In the Pennsylvania pavilion, we saw the famous **Liberty Bell**, with which, in **1776**, the independence of the United States had been proclaimed.

The pavilion of California was a vast, somewhat rough structure, reminding one of our large monastic buildings. But once inside, it was a true earthly paradise: never and nowhere had I seen such magnificent and abundant fruits and vegetables as I saw here.

Whole pyramids and intricate spheres built from oranges

towered over thousands of colorful fruits. I saw pears and apples the size of a human head (I have no more exact frame of reference)! Some friends had asked me whether there were peppers in America. Oh, there are – and such peppers that even the gardeners of Lyaskovets would shake their heads in awe. The grapes, I must say, did not impress me – yet they still managed to produce quite good wine in California.

Imagine what wonders they could achieve with our Bulgarian grapes! I do not know exactly why, but I had somehow formed the notion that we Bulgarians were among the very best gardeners in the world. Here at least, I thought to myself, no one can take the crown from us – nowhere else would you find onions like ours, peppers like ours, cabbages like ours!

Nonsense!

Step into the pavilion of California and see for yourself what true onions, peppers, cabbages, and tomatoes are like. I dare say, and I hope I am not mistaken, that some of their tomatoes weighed nearly three kilograms each.

And the potatoes, the cucumbers – absolute giants compared to ours! My God, what gigantic strawberries I saw there – each as big as a fist! And the bananas, the pineapples! No, the district of Kyustendil cannot compete with California in fruits (nor, for that matter, in gold, if I am not mistaken...).

Our Bulgarian representative, Mr. Shopov, was of the opinion that

we might find an opening for trade with the Americans – particularly with our wines. California's wines were slowly beginning to challenge those of France, though so gradually that the French could still rely on a strong market for a long while yet.

Moreover, an American merchant, having examined the Vratsa fabrics on display, found them quite original and well-suited for making curtains. He remarked to Mr. Shopov that American women had grown tired of their own factory-made goods, and even of the luxurious silks from Lyon; in order to capture their fancy nowadays, one must offer them something truly original.

And he found such originality in our Bulgarian textiles.

He even inquired where he might order two or three thousand meters.

Mr. Shopov, upon telling me this, asked my opinion – where could such an order be fulfilled?

"In Vratsa, I suppose," I said. "But who knows whether they can produce so much fabric of consistent quality..."

"Well then," he smiled, "perhaps we should ask the nuns in the Samokov or Kalofer monastery!"

IVAN LAZAROV, BTA SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BULGARIA AT THE WORLD EXHIBITION IN OSAKA IN 2025

We can follow how the Bulgarian participation at the World Expo in Osaka in 2025 looks like through the story of Ivan Lazarov – BTA's special correspondent for the official opening of the event.

He not only reflects the strong interest in the Bulgarian pavilion in the very first hours of the Expo, but also talks to some of the key protagonists of Bulgaria's presentation at the international forum.

LIK magazine features highlights from his reports:

BULGARIA ENJOYS MUCH INTEREST ON DAY ONE OF EXPO 2025 IN OSAKA

The Bulgarian pavilion at Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan welcomed its first visitors on April 13, when the six-month world exposition opened formally. The Bulgarian section already enjoys much interest. It is a meeting point of past, present and future, highlighting Bulgaria's history and tradition, on the one hand, and innovative and interactive technologies, on the other hand, owing to which Bulgaria holds a promising position on the map of the world.

The Bulgarian pavilion is situated next to one of the main entrances of the Expo, between the sections of Singapore and the Netherlands. The main purpose is to showcase the country's contribution to tackling global challenges, with a focus on the topic of "Saving Lives".

On Saturday, Japan kicked off this year's 2025 World Expo in Osaka in the presence of Japanese Emperor Naruhito and his wife Empress Masako.

The expo site, located on the artificial island of Yumeshimanaka, is surrounded by the Great Ring, a wooden structure 2 km long and up to 20 m high, which organisers say is the largest in the world. The imposing structure is intended to symbolise the overall concept of the exhibition – diversity and unity.

For six months, until 13 October, more than 160 countries, regions and international organisations will present their ideas in their pavilions under the central theme of "Designing the future society for our lives".

Organisers expect 28 million visitors over the entire Expo period.

The Bulgarian pavilion in Osaka welcomes its first visitors on April 13, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)



BULGARIAN EXPO 2025 PAVILION OFFICIALLY OPENED

The Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Japan, was officially opened on the first day of the exhibition on Sunday. The ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev, Ambassador of Bulgaria to Japan Marieta Arabadjieva and Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency Executive Director Boyko Takov. On the first day of the expo, architect Sou Fujimoto, who designed the large wooden ring around the expo grounds which has become one of its symbols, praised Bulgaria. In a post on the social network X he wrote "Simple and beautiful". His post was accompanied by a photo of the pavilion.

The Bulgarian pavilion was executed by one of the largest construction companies in Japan – DAIWA LEASE CO. LTD. designed by arch. Hiroto Kobayashi – Professor of Architecture at Keio University, who also attended Saturday's event.

The official opening of the Bulgarian pavilion in Osaka, Japan. In attendance: Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency Executive Director Boyko Takov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev, Ambassador of Bulgaria to Japan Marieta Arabadjieva, April 13, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)







## DEPUTY PM DONCHEV: BULGARIA RETURNING TRIUMPHANTLY TO OSAKA

Bulgaria is returning triumphantly to Osaka, the Bulgarian pavilion is the object of great interest, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev told BTA on Sunday. He took part in the opening of the Bulgarian pavilion at the EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Japan on Sunday.

"Despite the rain there is a very long queue, which says two things. First of all, the image of Bulgaria in Japan is associated only with good things and unique products, such as Bulgarian yogurt and rose oil. Next, it speaks of a job well done, both by the architect Kobayashi and by the Bulgarian team involved and supported

by the Executive Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises. This is not a trade fair. It is intended to ask big questions. Are we able to live in symbiosis with nature? Are we able to live in such a way that we do not destroy our children's future? Each country has a chance to try to find and provide the answers to these questions," Donchev said.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that the teams involved in the preparation of the Bulgarian pavilion have done well.

"We expect no less than 750 people to visit the Bulgarian pavilion on the first day alone. We expect no

less than 180,000 people to pass by here within the six months during Osaka EXPO 2025," Tomislav Donchev added.

According to him, the Bulgarian pavilion shows "elegantly and tastefully" the new image of the country. "Besides being a country of unique products such as rose oil and yoghurt, Bulgaria should show the capabilities of the Bulgarian economy and industry that go beyond these two products," Donchev stressed.

"The interest of Japanese entrepreneurs shows that we are on the right track," the Deputy Prime Minister further said.

Bulgarian pavilion's designer arch. Hiroto Kobayashi and Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Donchev, April 13, 2025, Osaka, Japan. (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)



## AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN ARABADJIEVA SAYS BULGARIAN PAVILION SHOWCASES COUNTRY'S HISTORY, PLACE IN MODERN DIGITAL WORLD

The Bulgarian pavilion at Osaka Expo 2025 showcases the history and place of this country in the modern digital world, Bulgarian Ambassador to Japan Marieta Arabadjieva told the Bulgarian News Agency on Sunday. She took part in the official opening of the Bulgarian pavilion at the world expo.

"The Bulgarian pavilion presents the history of our country through pictures-video and new technologies. Bulgarian culture, Bulgarian traditions, Bulgarian history will be voiced in our pavilion. Bulgaria's place in today's digital world as a country, a source of innovation, technology, artificial intelligence will also be showcased," she said.

"I do not want to reveal the secret, but in the inner part of the Bulgarian pavilion all visitors will be able to choose those values that they think are important for our time. Values like faith, hope, cooperation, love, gratitude. The Bulgarian pavilion is based on the widely popular story of the Bulgarian bacterium Lactobacillus Bulgaricus. For the first time, Bulgarian yoghurt was presented at the Osaka Expo in 1970. Fifty-five years later, Bulgaria returns to Osaka again. It is back with a story related to bacteria, but this year we will see an upgrade. We will see the story of Lacto-Chan, and this build-up will explain in a popular way, in a Japanese way, how all the elements in a society,



Ambassador of Bulgaria to Japan Marieta Arabadjieva, April 13, 2025 in Osaka, Japan (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

like all the bacteria in an organism, link together to fight challenges and solve problems. The problems in the organism, as well as the problems in our society," she said.

The Ambassador stressed that the Bulgarian pavilion at Osaka EXPO 2025 is the fruit of more than a year of cooperation between Japan and Bulgaria, in which the Bulgarian Government, the Executive Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises and the Bulgarian Embassy in Tokyo took part.

## SMALL, MEDIUM ENTERPRISES PROMOTION AGENCY CEO: BULGARIA HAS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ITS VISION TO JAPAN, WORLD

Organizing Bulgaria's participation in EXPO 2025 in Osaka was a challenge, but the country has the opportunity to present its vision to Japan and the world, said Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA) Executive Director Boyko Takov told BTA on Tuesday.

"We are very happy that on the very first day we received very high recognition from the world-famous architect Fujimoto," he said, recalling his words describing the pavilion as 'Clean and beautiful'. Its theme is how to evolve together with nature," emphasized Takov.

He pointed out that visitors give positive feedback after their visit to the Bulgarian pavilion, which is testimony to the good ideas and their good implementation.

"The messages are many - the theme of saving life, evolution together with nature, the search for balance. We have even taken an example from microorganisms, where bacteria are like societies and when there is a threat, they come together and overcome it. There are many messages, including the choices we make every day," he said of the Bulgarian concept of EXPO.



Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency Executive Director Boyko Takov, April 15, 2025 in Osaka, Japan (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

BSMEPA Executive Director pointed out that the organisation of the Bulgarian participation has been very intense and challenging, thanking all the teams that have worked on the project and its realisation - from the external appearance to the internal concept.



## BULGARIA IS AMONG MOST RECOGNIZED COUNTRIES IN JAPAN - DIRECTOR OF BULGARIAN PAVILION AT EXPO 2025 IN OSAKA

Bulgaria is one of the most recognized countries in Japan thanks to its yogurt, roses, and sports, the director of the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Georgi Kostov, has said, speaking with the Bulgarian News Agency.

Kostov said that this reputation was once again reinforced by Bulgaria's participation in this year's expo and the positive reception of the Bulgarian pavilion's concept.

He added that the pavilion had attracted a large number of Japanese and international visitors. "We also had quite a few Bulgarian visitors on the first day," he said.

The Bulgarian pavilion blends the country's traditions with the latest advancements in digital technology. "We aim to show the importance of evolving with nature and building a sustainable future for the generations to come," Kostov said, summarizing the concept of the Bulgarian pavilion.

"Thanks to the advancements in digital technology, visitors can enjoy an audio-visual experience on multiple screens. They can also learn about the development of Bulgarian-Japanese relations over the years and the latest achievements in Bulgarian industry and innovative companies," he added.



The director of the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Georgi Kostov, April 13, 2025, Osaka, Japan (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

Kostov said that the Bulgarian pavilion attracted more than 1,100 visitors on the first day of the expo. It also saw strong attendance on the second day, with people queued to see it. "The decisions we make today echo into the future. It is important to carefully consider everything we do now," he said, stressing that the area where that pavilion is located focuses on the crucial theme of saving lives.

Visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion in Osaka, Japan on April 13, 2025 with the pavilion's talisman Lacto-Chan (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)



## BULGARIAN PAVILION AT EXPO 2025 BLENDS TRADITION WITH MODERNITY, JAPANESE STUDIES STUDENT PETKOVA SAYS

The Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO 2025 blends tradition with modernity, also a fundamental aspect of Japanese culture that the Japanese appreciate and respect, said Desislava Petkova, a student in Japanese Studies and a representative at Bulgaria's pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka, Japan, on Tuesday.

"The opportunity to be at EXPO 2025 in Osaka as a Japanese Studies student, representing Bulgaria, is a unique experience for me. EXPO 2025 is an extremely important event. It can be compared to the 'Olympic Games' of world exhibitions," Petkova said.

Petkova is a master's student in Japanese Studies: Society and Culture at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, and her interest in Japanese culture started years ago. "I enrolled in Japanese Studies because I have had a deep interest in Japanese culture since I was young. It all began with their pop culture. I decided to turn that from a hobby and interest into a professional career," she said.

"The EXPO holds significant importance for both Bulgaria and Japan, strengthening the relationship between the two nations. At the 1970 edition, Bulgaria introduced its renowned elixir-Bulgarian yogurt-captivating



Desislava Petkova, a student in Japanese Studies and a representative at Bulgaria's pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka, Japan, April 15, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

not only the general Japanese public but also the Emperor [of Japan] himself. Now, 55 years later, we have the opportunity to present Bulgarian yogurt from a fresh perspective, through our mascot, Lacto-chan. This character delights visitors and represents the Bulgarian bacterium *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, named after our country. The Japanese are thrilled with both the Bulgarian pavilion and Lacto-chan. A group of children enthusiastically shouted "Burugaria Yogurto," which brought us great joy," Petkova said.



## BULGARIAN PAVILION AT OSAKA EXPO 2025 SHOWS BULGARIA'S POTENTIAL - CYBERSECURITY CONSULTANT

The Bulgarian pavilion presents the country's potential, cybersecurity consultant and visitor to the EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Japan, Elitsa Marinovska, told BTA on Monday. She shared that her friends from Slovakia were very impressed by Bulgaria's potential.

Marinovska said: "The two parts of the exhibition are well chosen, with an element of play. I had not seen this approach from the other pavilions before.

[...] The information was very well selected. It starts with facts about Bulgaria, about culture and traditions, but there are also elements related to the development of Bulgaria in the digital industry."

Marinovska pointed out that the pavilion presents national values and future development while also promoting the country's potential.



*Elitsa Marinovska, a cybersecurity consultant and visitor to the EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Japan, April 14, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)*

## VISITORS OF BULGARIAN PAVILION AT EXPO 2025 IN OSAKA MOST OFTEN ASSOCIATE BULGARIA WITH YOGHURT

The visitors of the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO 2025 in Osaka associate Bulgaria mainly with yoghurt, shows a Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) survey conducted among visitors of the pavilion during the first days of the world exposition. Some of them have heard of *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, the bacterium used for the production of yoghurt, which is named after Bulgaria.

"I have not heard anything

about Bulgaria, except for yogurt, but I would be happy to visit," one of the Japanese visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion said. The mascot of Bulgaria's national pavilion, Lacto-chan, a character that delights visitors, is also associated with yogurt.

Other visitors described Bulgaria as "a hospitable country, part of the big European family." For most, the audio-visual presentation of the information and the interactivity were the

most impressive.

One of the Japanese visitors surprised the Bulgarian representatives at the stand by greeting them with "hello" in Bulgarian and introducing himself as Masato, a member of the Institute of the Slavic World in Tokyo. Masato said that he speaks Ukrainian, Russian and a little Bulgarian. He also explained that he was particularly interested in the pavilions of the countries of Eastern Europe.



*BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov*





## INTERVIEW BY DELIAN PETRISHKI

## Boyko Takov, PhD, Executive Director of BSMEPA: AT EXPO 2025, BULGARIA WILL BE WHERE IT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS – RIGHT BESIDE THE WORLD POWERS

*Bulgaria is not in a position to stand on the sidelines. We must become a key player, especially when it comes to tourism, investments, and scientific opportunities.*



Boyko Takov  
(BTA Photo/Hristo Kasabov)

*inter-institutional working group over the last three years. The aim is to represent Bulgaria in the best possible way at such an international forum.*

*The Bulgaria Pavilion stands in the most prestigious zone of EXPO 2025, a key location near one of the main entrances and close to the pavilions of countries such as the Netherlands and Singapore. Through its participation in the world expo, Bulgaria aims to regain its strongest positions and to reassert itself as a promising destination on the world map, so that investors may once again look to it.*

*The unstable political situation in Bulgaria did not affect preparation for the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan, as all state institutions showed responsibility towards the common goal – valuable presence alongside*

*global powers. This was stated in an interview for LIK magazine by Boyko Takov, PhD, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA), the institution that coordinated the*

*The national pavilion also highlights the traditionally strong relationship between Bulgaria and Japan, two nations that rediscovered themselves 55 years ago at EXPO 1970, also in Osaka.*

**Mr Takov, as the head of BSMEPA, you coordinated the work of an inter-agency working group during a time of political and institutional instability, with frequent personnel changes in Bulgaria's state institutions. This instability affected the country's preparation for other international forums, such as Sofia's hosting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee session. How did you manage to keep up the pace during this nearly three-year period to ensure that Bulgaria's national participation in EXPO 2025 remained on track?**

The Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency, under the Ministry of Innovation and Growth, undertook a massive amount of work for Bulgaria's participation in this world exposition. We managed to control and steer processes in a politically dynamic environment that involved many uncertainties. In my opinion, despite the ongoing changes, all representatives of state institutions (and not only) showed responsibility by ensuring that Bulgaria would be presented in a dignified way alongside the global powers at EXPO 2025.

Initially, a working group was formed, chaired by a Deputy Minister of Innovation and Growth, appointed by the respective Minister; the vice-chair was the Executive Director of BSMEPA. Members included experts from the ministries of

Innovation and Growth, Foreign Affairs, Economy and Industry, Tourism, Culture, Agriculture. Other members were from BSMEPA, InvestBulgaria Agency (IBA), the Japan - Bulgaria Business Association (JBBA), the Union of Architects in Bulgaria (UAB), and the Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria (CAB).

After the call for proposals for visual representation of Bulgaria at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, the working group was expanded to include experts from the Administration of the President; the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria in Tokyo, Japan; the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI); the National Academy of Art (NAA); the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA); the Bulgarian Entrepreneurial Association (BESCO); the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG); and Sofia Tech Park. They participated in the selection process of the conceptual design, which demonstrated a unified national vision and a strong commitment to reaching the millions of visitors.

Bulgaria cannot afford to stand on the sidelines. We must become a significant player, especially in tourism, investment, and science. Naturally, the final stage of preparation was the most intensive, in the months before EXPO's opening. During that time, the Ministry of Innovation and Growth played an active

role in building on the work already done. Throughout the process, we strictly monitored task execution and complied with the organizers' rigorous requirements. As a result, we were among the first five countries certified for completed pavilion construction by the Japanese Association organizing the World Expo in Osaka.

**At the beginning of the preparations for Bulgaria's participation at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Kansai, you announced that your agency had set an ambitious goal – to organize the best national representation at an international forum to date. Will that goal be achieved?**

Yes, that remains our daily objective. The agency team aim to present Bulgaria's remarkable contributions in line with the expo's theme – Saving Lives – in the national pavilion area, telling the story of our country's achievements in an innovative way. Bulgaria can be an example in various fields. Now, with the overall theme of the expo being "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," we intend to impress the global and especially Japanese audiences by presenting our history, culture, and traditions. We will showcase the achievements of our scientists and promote companies that are global leaders in their industries.

In this new era of digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI), the Bulgarian entrepreneurial

spirit can serve as an inspiration, demonstrating how our country successfully aligns with global themes like sustainable development, innovation, and international cooperation.

**With a Type A pavilion, Bulgaria is among the prominent participants at EXPO 2025. What is the concept behind the pavilion, and how does Bulgaria interpret the theme of Designing Future Society for Our Lives?**

The national pavilion is located in the most prestigious area, giving Bulgaria the chance to stand alongside world powers. It is close to one of the main entrances next to countries like the Netherlands and Singapore, which is both a responsibility and an incredible opportunity for Bulgaria.

Our country has the potential to be competitive and to highlight key advantages: a top destination for tourism with fantastic resorts, seaside and mountain sports, mineral springs, and the best spa offerings in the Balkans; our iconic oil-bearing rose, revered in Japan alongside our unique product, which is yogurt.

In terms of economic prosperity, Bulgaria needs to reclaim its top positions and attract investors with its strategic location in Southeast Europe.

Everyone knows that the unbreakable Bulgarian spirit is the reason we are innovators

and pioneers, and are known for our technological and scientific achievements. As I mentioned, our pavilion's zone is called "Saving Lives". It covers challenges threatening the planet and its population. It is related to healthcare, well-being, peace, human safety, and dignity. The national pavilion combines traditional elements with modern interactive technologies, creating not only a modern design and conceptually clean space but also a unique immersive digital experience.

The exterior is done by Japan's largest industrial leasing company, Daiwa Lease, and was designed and carried out with the architect Hiroto Kobayashi, a professor at Keio University and co-founder of Kobayashi Maki Design Workshop (KMDW). Hiroto Kobayashi visited Bulgaria multiple times for working meetings with us, the UAB and CAB. The exterior blends modern design with subtle nods to traditional weaving and nature motifs, drawing parallels between Bulgaria and Japan.

For the interior design and the visitor experience inside the national pavilion, a joint panel of 19 institutions selected a bold, innovative project by architect Mariya Gospodinova, Iskren Krusteff, and MP-STUDIO. Their ideas and out-of-the-box project earned the support of respected experts. They presented Bulgaria in an innovative way with a bold

vision of the future spanning from microscopic organisms that produce the oxygen we breathe to 3D visualizations intertwined with our culture, history, and achievements.

Bulgaria's motto for the expo is "Evolution with Nature". It holds a deep message – both for protecting the environment and for identifying the human role in the process, as we determine the world development through our actions and way of life. Our goal is to show that the Bulgarian pavilion is a space where nations can share visionary ideas, exchange experience, and jointly build a sustainable future.

**What message is Bulgaria conveying through its pavilion?**

The message is clear: to evolve, to grow, and to improve by adapting to new conditions and transforming ourselves to meet today's challenges. This involves many elements – our contribution to combating climate challenges, as well as social evolution. We aim to develop as a society, to be a dignified nation, economically strong and advanced, while showcasing an innovative face in terms of technological progress and investment potential.

Bulgaria's national pavilion sets the direction for the future, shows harmony with nature and exemplifies that together we can not only save lives but also build a sustainable world.

How does the



BSMEPA Executive Director Boyko Takov and Japan's Ambassador to Bulgaria, Hisashi Michigami (BTA Photo/Nikola Uzunov)

**national pavilion interact with visitors and attract attention to Bulgaria?**

This is particularly fascinating, as every element – from the facade to the tiniest interior detail – is symbolic. The past, present,

and future are interwoven through history, traditions, and tourist landmarks of Bulgaria. Interactive and innovative technology will 'transport' visitors into the future, positioning Bulgaria as a destination of possibilities on the world map.

Every visitor will have the opportunity to shape the future using AI. Since the majority of EXPO visitors are expected to be Japanese, we've included impressive and emotional moments that highlight the traditionally strong relations



between Bulgaria and Japan. These two nations rediscovered each other 55 years ago at EXPO Osaka 1970. Our unique product yogurt earned us recognition among Japanese people and Emperor Hirohito himself. To this day, the Japanese hold this product in high regard, believing that lactobacilli improve health and have healing properties. The Japanese company Meiji produces yogurt under the brand name Bulgaria.

This alone speaks volumes about the strong ties between the two countries, the economic relations established over the years, and the future potential in tourism, sports, and investments. It can be an example to other nations, encouraging them to rediscover Bulgaria as a tourist destination rich in history and tradition, a country with huge investment potential and business opportunities. History shows that Bulgarian people keep up with developments of the world, and as the saying goes – we have given to this world, and still have more to give.

**Have you planned any supporting events or opportunities for business networking during the six months of the exhibition?**

The national pavilion is a place of exceptional opportunity to shape a vision for the future. The organizers of the World Expo have scheduled

eight thematic weeks, each addressing a global issue related to sustainable development, technological advancement, human well-being, and more. Following our invitations, several ministries, employer organizations, and business associations are interested to actively participate in the EXPO thematic weeks. The Bulgarian Pavilion offers opportunities for presentations and exhibitions and serves as a strategic venue for establishing sustainable business partnerships.

The Bulgaria pavilion has an exhibition hall with 28 screens and a fully equipped presentation room in the centre that can host up to 50 people. Several institutions and organizations have already expressed interest in participating with informational events during the thematic weeks of the World Expo. Among them are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy through the National Social Security Institute (NSSI); the Ministry of Education and Science represented by universities that aim to promote Bulgarian higher education and establish international partnerships, knowledge exchange, and best practices; the INSAIT Institute, which collaborates with Toyota in the field of AI; the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Economy and Industry with their economic forum; the Ministry of Tourism, which plans to organize a business event for World Tourism Day on

September 27; the Ministry of Energy; the Big Data for Smart Society Institute (GATE), which has signed a memorandum with the University of Tsukuba, Japan in the fields of science and innovation; LB Bulgaricum, the global Endeavour network; and the CreaTech Bulgaria cluster, among others.

Through their participation, these institutions will contribute to Bulgaria's valuable representation and will also gain exposure at a global-scale event.

Since the Ministry of Tourism and 56 Bulgarian students are participating as well, Bulgaria will have the opportunity to affirm its image as an inspiring tourist destination with beautiful nature, winter and summer resorts, historical landmarks, and UNESCO heritage sites. I want to emphasize that we approach this with attention to detail – most of the students honoured to work at the Bulgarian Pavilion pursue a degree in Japanese Studies. This once again demonstrates our country's welcoming attitude toward the Japanese nation and visitors who will learn about our culture in their own language. This is the face of our country, and we have to contribute to the cooperation between nations. We should open new horizons in tourism, scientific progress, creating a sustainable investment environment, and, last but not least, show the world that Bulgaria can be a



home to high-tech industries.  
**May 18, 2025, is Bulgaria's National Day at EXPO 2025. What is the programme for this day?**

Yes, this is a special day at EXPO 2025, when all eyes will be on Bulgaria. The cultural programme is being developed jointly with the Ministry of Culture. The aim is to present our country's rich cultural heritage and achievements to a global audience. The events for Bulgaria's National Day are planned to be divided into two parts – one on the main EXPO stage, featuring Bulgarian and Japanese musical and dance performers, and the other within the national pavilion itself.

A business delegation led by President Rumen Radev will arrive in Osaka for this day, which also requires special preparation.

We will promote Bulgarian culture, history, traditions, and sports, with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sports playing key roles in shaping our programme. Renowned Bulgarian performers and athletes will appear on the main EXPO stage, but I will keep their names a surprise. Nina Nikolina and Georgi Toshev have also joined the organizational team with their experience and undeniable professionalism, making them a vital part of the group preparing our country's presentation on this special

day. The programme aims to highlight Bulgaria's contribution to the global cultural scene and to strengthen international relations and partnerships in this field.

**What would be considered a success regarding Bulgaria's participation in EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Kansai?**

Success has many dimensions. Bulgaria's participation incorporates bold ideas and concepts, and is already attracting interest as a prestigious presence under the Saving Lives theme. For us, it's important to showcase the image of Bulgaria in a way that contributes to attracting more tourists, expanding our trade and economic relations with other countries, and demonstrating our strength in areas such as innovation, culture, science, and sports.

Every day in the preparation and organization process, every task related to pavilion building, and the uncompromising requirements on the participating countries from the organizers – these were challenges we had to overcome. Here I recall a quote by Booker T. Washington: "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed." This applies perfectly to the BSMEPA team, all the institutions involved in this long process, architect Mariya

Gospodinova, Iskren Krusteff and MP-Studio, as well as our Japanese partners involved in building the Bulgarian Pavilion. Thanks to everyone's efforts, Bulgaria is exactly where it deserves to be – among the global powers at EXPO 2025.

*Boyko Takov, PhD, has been the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA) since November 2018. He has over 12 years of experience in corporate management. Between 2008 and 2012, he served as Executive Director and member of the board of directors at the Bulgarian office of a leading South Korean energy company.*

*He holds a Master's degree in Marketing and Economics from the University of National and World Economy. He earned his PhD in Economics, Industrial Engineering and Management from the Technical University of Sofia.*

*Takov is actively involved in academia as an Assistant Professor at the University of National and World Economy. He has been a board member of the International Network for Small and Medium Enterprises (INSME) since 2021.*



## INTERVIEW BY YANITSA HRISTOVA

## Concept Design Team behind Bulgaria's Pavilion at EXPO 2025: TOURING BULGARIA'S PAVILION IS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THAT INSPIRES, ENGAGES, AND LEAVES MARK



The exterior of the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka in 2025 (BSMEPA Photo)

"Walking through the Bulgarian pavilion is not merely moving through a space – it is a personal experience that inspires, engages, and leaves a lasting impression," Marin Petkov, founder and manager of MP-STUDIO, part of the concept design team working on Bulgaria's pavilion at EXPO 2025, said in an interview for LIK. Building the pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka is carried out under the Bulgarian Small and Medium

Enterprises Promotion Agency's coordination. The Agency is a key driver of Bulgaria's representation on the global stage.

The project brings together the efforts of one of Japan's largest construction companies – Daiwa Lease Co., Ltd., and the renowned architectural studios KOBAYASHI MAKI DESIGN WORKSHOP and Design Arc Ltd.

Bulgaria's creative contribution is led by a concept design team comprised of architect Mariya Gospodinova, MP-STUDIO, and Iskren Krusteff, who jointly crafted a space that blends innovation, cultural values, and a vision for the future. Project consultant is Prof. Mira Kalanova.

Gospodinova, Krusteff, and MP-STUDIO representatives Marin Petkov (founder, CEO and Visual Art Director), Strahil Jordanov (Creative Director), and Marin Dimitrov (Senior Operations Officer) shared with LIK the concept behind Bulgaria's participation in the Saving Lives sub-theme, the visitors' tour through the Bulgarian pavilion, and the challenges of implementing the project thousands of kilometres away from Bulgaria.

"It is precisely the challenges that teach us to evolve. That is why the motto of Bulgaria's pavilion is 'Evolving with Nature,'" the team says. They reveal that the concept interweaves the past, present, and future, and the project stands out for its innovative use of technology. Here's what else they told LIK:

**The Bulgarian team won the competition for the pavilion's interior design. What made the interior project stand out among the other proposals and win the attention of the interagency working group for the World Expo in Osaka?**

The interior and experience design project stood out with a clear concept, emotional depth, and an original approach under the motto Evolving with Nature. Instead of a standard exhibition, the Bulgarian team proposed an experience that engages the visitor on all levels –visually, intellectually, and emotionally. The space does not just present information, but it also tells a story in which the visitor becomes an active participant.

The concept weaves together past, present, and future through the idea of cooperation and active transformation of the environment – drawing inspiration from the microbial world. This may seem unexpected, but it is deeply connected to Bulgarian identity – from a scientific, cultural, and human perspective.

The project also stands out for its innovative use of technology: a 360-degree projection, an interactive installation powered by artificial intelligence – combined with handcrafted and traditional elements such as textiles, wood, and symbolism embedded in the architecture. The pavilion's narrative is centred around ideas of empathy and collaboration, which come to life not only through the content

but also through the team itself – a multidisciplinary group comprised of an architect, digital artists, an innovator, and a business representative, united by a common mission: to represent Bulgaria in an intelligent, modern, and inspiring way.

The team includes architect Mariya Gospodinova, Iskren Krusteff, and the digital artists from MP-STUDIO – all proven professionals in the fields of sustainable architecture, visual arts, and innovation, supported by Prof. Mira Kalanova, one of the leading scenographers (stage designers) in Bulgaria and Eastern Europe.

**The Bulgarian pavilion will be located in a key spot – right next to one of the main expo entrances, between the pavilions of Singapore and the Netherlands. What concept will Bulgaria use to join the global dialogue dedicated to the Saving Lives sub-theme?**

**ISKREN KRUSTEFF:** The sub-theme uniting the Bulgarian Pavilion and EXPO 2025 Osaka is Saving Lives. Billions of years ago, deep in the Earth's oceans, cyanobacteria saturated the atmosphere with oxygen and set the wheel of evolution in motion. This made our planet hospitable to life. Thanks to these processes, we humans appeared some 300,000 years ago. But bacteria have another remarkable feature. Much like humans, they live in communities, and each bacterium has its unique role and abilities. When facing

danger, they unite to overcome the threat. This microscopic lesson in cooperation could help humanity tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

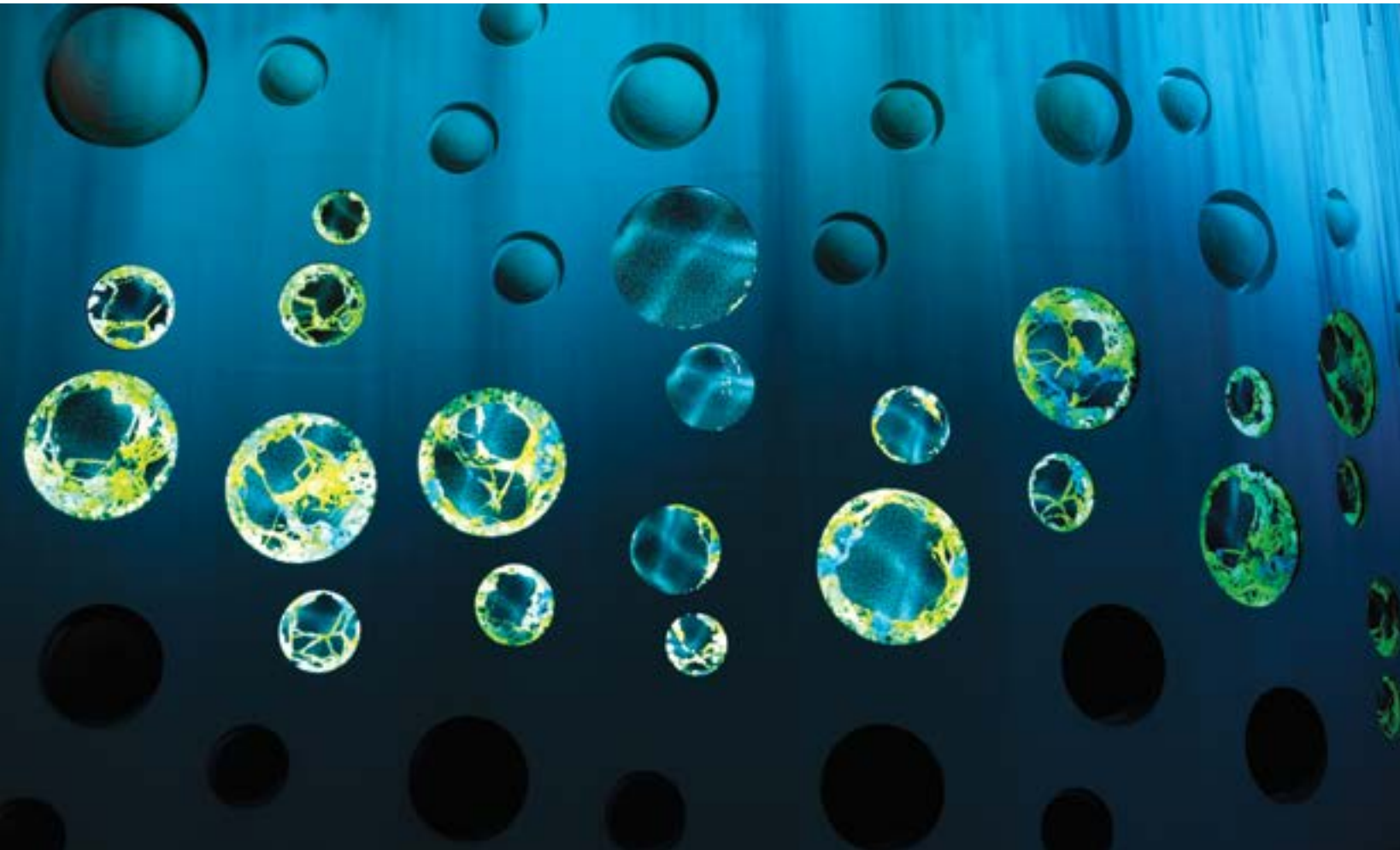
It is exactly the challenges that teach us to evolve. That is why the motto of the Bulgarian Pavilion is Evolving with Nature.

For generations, the Bulgarian bacterium *Lactobacillus Bulgaricus* has improved lives around the world. In 1970, once again at EXPO Osaka, one of the most memorable moments at the Bulgarian Pavilion was the tasting of traditional Bulgarian yogurt, which enchanted the Japanese public – including the Emperor's family. Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako personally visited the pavilion and highly praised the yogurt.

They offered such high praise that this moment marked the rise in popularity of Bulgarian yogurt in Japan. After the exhibition, the Japanese company Meiji began producing yogurt under the Bulgaria brand, which to this day remains a symbol of the country and is widely consumed in Japan.

In today's global mission to save lives, Bulgarian innovators help the world progress. As the sixth spacefaring nation and the third to create space food, Bulgaria proudly develops its nanosatellites. With their help, pollution of the air, soil, and oceans can be monitored almost in real time, enabling an unprecedentedly fast response to emergencies. A fire spanning just one square metre can be detected from space within five minutes.





Visual effects at the pavilion  
(BSMEPA Photo)

Pioneer engineer of Bulgarian descent John Atanasoff invented the first digital computer, so it is no surprise that today Bulgaria is one of the leading IT hubs in Europe and has one of the fastest internet connections in the world. Bulgaria is also one of the few countries developing its own artificial intelligence model, BgGPT, in its native language. In its pursuit of a world where technology is in harmony with nature, Bulgarian AI innovators analyse data and design new molecules so that humanity can evolve alongside nature.

drone airline and developing leading software solutions for autonomous and electric vehicles, Bulgaria is also among Europe's largest producers of bicycles and e-bikes.

With strong traditions in the pharmaceutical industry and advancements in health technologies, Bulgaria is also the largest producer of herbs, medicinal plants, and spices in the European Union. Holding 50% of the global market, Bulgaria is the undisputed world leader in the production of rose oil, a product renowned for its beauty and health benefits. But beyond innovation and business

opportunities, Bulgaria is a true masterpiece of nature and culture. Situated between the East and West, it carries deep civilizational roots and traditions.

***Could you tell us more about the visitors' tour through the Bulgarian Pavilion? What will visitors experience from the first step to the final moment?***

**STRAHIL JORDANOV, Creative Director at MP-STUDIO:**

The Bulgarian Pavilion at EXPO 2025 in Osaka, Kansai, is a living space that weaves together the past, present, and future in the name of collaboration and empathy.

Through a curated experience, visitors will immerse themselves in Bulgarian culture, history, and science. They will encounter the most picturesque corners of our homeland and discover the Bulgarian innovations – those tackling today's challenges and saving lives now.

One of the most exciting areas for guests will be the Zone of the Future, where the horizons of humanity will come to life in a visually stunning way – through a 360-degree projection. With an intense immersive show, we will suggest possible directions for the evolution of our society. And it is precisely at this point that the experience will become a vivid demonstration of how we, as humans, shape the future through our choices and actions.

**MP-STUDIO CEO and Visual Art Director MARIN PETKOV:**

Through their phones, each visitor will be able to interactively share their values of tomorrow. With the help of artificial intelligence, these messages will be transcribed and will form a dynamic work of art, visualized before the next guests.

Thus, we will not only initiate a six-month-long pass-it-on effect, but we'll also gain a comprehensive sense of how visitors to the Bulgarian Pavilion envision the future.

Another element will contribute to the dynamic visual environment – Bulgarian children will share their visions of a better world. Through a school campaign,

they will be able to express their dreams and thoughts, which will be transformed into colours and images.

The tour through the Bulgarian Pavilion is not simply a movement through space – it is a personal experience that inspires, engages, and leaves a mark.

**MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

Even as they approach the façade, visitors are greeted by a dynamic rope structure that bends light and perspective, creating a sense of discovery. Depending on the angle of approach, the façade reveals itself gradually – symbolically untangling the path to Bulgaria.

The first step inside takes guests to a place where the past meets the present – a corner inspired by nature, specifically by the forest. A space where trees with their roots woven into the past, bear fruit in the present. These fruits take the form of round monitors, showcasing Bulgaria as it is today – dynamic, inventive, and sustainable.

Next comes the future, which lies quite literally around the corner – a vibrant 360-degree space where an immersive projection unfolds a vision of tomorrow's world – a world shaped by cooperation between humans and nature. The future zone is also designed as a presentation space, aiming to foster new connections between Bulgarian and Japanese businesses.

***What are the main ideas and***

***symbols embedded in the exterior design of the pavilion, created by the Japanese architectural studio KMDW? How does their vision manage to reflect the spirit of Bulgaria in harmony with Japanese aesthetics?***

**MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

The exterior of the Bulgarian pavilion is designed by the Japanese architectural studio Kobayashi Maki Design Workshop (KMDW) in partnership with Daiwa Lease – one of the largest construction companies in Japan, specialising in sustainable and modular building.

Combining Bulgarian culture with Japanese architecture, the asymmetrical façade is defined by the positioning of the entrance and the shape of the roof. A key goal in the design is to create an open space that is accessible from the square and the surrounding EXPO environment. The open façade allows visitors to peek into the exhibition directly from the plaza, removing the boundary between inside and outside. This architectural solution carries powerful symbolism – it promotes openness, accessibility, and curiosity. This transparency is what sets the Bulgarian pavilion apart from many others that follow more closed-off concepts and limit visual connection with the outside world.

The rope façade maintains a consistent rhythm, even around the entrance, guiding visitors to transition from the Grand Ring into the world of Bulgaria. The rope creates two different



patterns, woven in opposite directions. Together, they form a unique visual motif that entirely changes the perception of the façade depending on the time of day and the angle of approach. At first, visitors might perceive it as completely enclosed, but as they move around it, the pattern gradually unravels to reveal the warm interior through the threads. The asymmetry of the façade reflects the philosophy of Japanese architecture – that despite the unpredictability and unevenness of nature, it maintains an inner balance and harmony that continue to inspire us as a society. The square space surrounding the pavilion will host events and serve as a gathering and relaxation area amid the dynamic atmosphere of EXPO Osaka.

The façade is made of lightweight yet durable materials that can be fully recycled after the exhibition concludes. The external structure is built in such a way that most of the elements – including panels, wooden frames, and textile surfaces, can be disassembled and reused in future projects. This makes the pavilion a temporary, yet forward-thinking piece of architecture, in full alignment with the principles of circular economy.

**Sustainable development is one of the key focuses of EXPO 2025. How is the principle of sustainability integrated into the architecture and design of the Bulgarian pavilion – from the choice of materials to the future**

**of the structure?**

**MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

In our pavilion, as in the others, circular policy and sustainability take centre stage. From the very beginning, these principles have been embedded in every decision we have made – from the materials used, their eco-friendliness, and the selection of natural resources. The pavilion is a temporary structure intended for an exhibition lasting six months, after which every part of it will be either recycled or reused. For its construction, we have selected environmentally friendly materials such as wood and textile, and every element of the installation has been carefully designed with its future application in mind.

**What is the architectural and aesthetic concept behind the interior space of the Bulgarian pavilion? What feeling does it aim to create for visitors?**

**MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

Our goal was to create a space that is both aesthetically pleasing, light, and inspiring. The interior is designed in the colours of Bulgaria, with white as the dominant colour, which evokes a sense of lightness, purity, and spaciousness. The white background allows visitors to feel calm and focused, while remaining open to absorbing the content. It also creates a natural visual bridge to the façade and the exterior.

Through the open glass façade, the outdoor space continues

inward – the boundary between inside and outside is blurred. This creates a sense of smooth transition where the visitor enters a bright, open, and breathing space.

From a compositional perspective, the pavilion combines traditional elements with innovative interactive technologies. This results in a modern design with a conceptually clean space, offering a unique digital experience that is both personal and communal.

The interior carefully incorporates references to Bulgarian artisanal traditions such as weaving, which is metaphorically present both in the structure of the exhibition and in the narrative threads we share. Natural symbols such as trees, roots, and fruits appear in the objects and forms, drawing parallels between Bulgaria and Japan, where respect for nature and craftsmanship is deeply valued.

**In March, among all 47 countries with top-tier Type A pavilions at the World Expo in Osaka, only eight, including Bulgaria, received certificates from the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, which is responsible for the event's preparation and management. How was this early success achieved even before the official start of the EXPO?**

**ISKREN KRUSTEFF:**

This success is the result of synchronized collaboration between Bulgarian and Japanese partners – institutions, architects, engineers, and contractors. The



The entrance to the Bulgarian pavilion (BSMEPA Photo)

Bulgarian pavilion was one of the first projects to fully meet the organizers' strict requirements regarding sustainability, safety, and technical documentation. This reflects a high level of professionalism, transparency, and strong international communication. The certificate placed Bulgaria among the elite of EXPO 2025 even before the official opening.

**What were the challenges of working on the project from Bulgaria, thousands of kilometres away?**

**ISKREN KRUSTEFF:**

Throughout the entire project, we maintained constant and close collaboration with the Japanese team for months. Every detail was thoroughly discussed – from architectural elements and material choices to the strict requirements of the EXPO itself, organizational matters, adherence to a precise timeline, and overall logistics.

Visually, the project went through several development phases in search of the most optimal solution, taking into account technical, cultural, and functional factors.

Among the most significant

challenges were Japan's specific construction, structural, and seismic requirements, which demand precision and adaptability. Every imported material had to be certified according to local standards. Logistics was also a complex process requiring meticulous planning and coordination.

**MARIN DIMITROV, Senior Operations Officer at MP-STUDIO:**

Of course, there were moments when we got lost in translation. But it was precisely the cultural differences and communication challenges that became the



foundation for deeper mutual understanding. The ultimately positive result is proof that empathy and collaboration are always the right path.

We succeeded in building strong trust between the teams and established solid partnerships with Japanese companies, which

peoples.

***You mentioned that some elements of the pavilion were produced in Bulgaria. Could you tell us more about them and how you involved Bulgarian manufacturers and artists in the process?***

and structural level.

We are extremely grateful to Assistant Professor Mihaela Kirilova PhD, consultant for the Bulgarian Pavilion in the field of molecular biology, part of the Faculty of Biology of Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski and researcher at the Clean&Circle



A view of the interior of the Bulgarian pavilion at Osaka Expo (BSMEPA Photo)

allowed us to navigate each phase of the project successfully.

Japan truly loves Bulgaria. And we believe that this cooperation should continue – not only on an architectural and cultural level but on all possible levels – because it is built on respect, trust, and genuine goodwill between our

#### **MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

First and foremost, it is important to mention the consultants involved in the project. We were fortunate to rely on the advice of Prof. Mira Kalanova, one of the leading scenographers in Bulgaria and Eastern Europe. Her input was valuable both on a conceptual

Centre of Competence. Her role in establishing the scientific foundation of the pavilion's messages was indispensable.

It was extremely important for us to involve Bulgarian producers and artists in the project. Despite the complex logistics and high international standards, we

managed to create a complete process – from concept to execution – with a distinctly Bulgarian touch.

We found many professional companies and talented artists in Bulgaria who helped us create unique elements for the pavilion.

In addition to the core Bulgarian team, we also worked with a Swedish artist living in Bulgaria – Filip Jacobson, who created the art installation with the trees.

We are especially proud of the custom designed benches shaped like bacteria – a boutique product created entirely for the pavilion.

Each element was carefully designed, technically refined, and produced using materials that meet the required international certifications. Additionally, all installations are modular and can be dismantled, making them easy to transport and assemble on-site in Japan.

For us, this was not just a logistical solution, it was an opportunity to showcase Bulgarian industry and craftsmanship at a global event. We are proud that Bulgaria is not just being represented but is actively shaping the pavilion's vision.

***What stories does the Bulgarian pavilion tell at the World Expo in Osaka?***

#### **STRAHIL JORDANOV:**

The Bulgarian pavilion encourages us to reflect. To look back and remember the lessons of the

past and the strength of our roots. To discover meaningful examples of how Bulgaria is solving global challenges and saving lives in the present. But also, to look inward and seek out our own role in shaping a more harmonious and sustainable society. And just like bacteria, to prioritize empathy, collaboration, and the active transformation of our environment in the broadest possible sense.

***Bulgaria also has its own mascot. What does Lacto-chan, the mascot of Bulgaria at EXPO 2025, symbolize?***

#### **MARIYA GOSPODINOVA:**

Lacto-chan is more than just a mascot – it is a symbol of friendship, science, and cultural connection between Bulgaria and Japan. Its name combines *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* – the unique bacterium discovered in our lands, foundation of the world-famous Bulgarian yogurt, with the Japanese suffix *-chan*, which expresses affection and endearment toward children, friends, or cute characters.

#### **STRAHIL JORDANOV:**

Lacto-chan is a smiling little character who symbolizes that which we often do not see, but on which life depends – communities and the invisible collaboration in nature. He is not just a single superhero bacterium – Lacto-chan is a community of bacteria who, together, possess the strength of a superhero – just like people when they work together.

#### **ISKREN KRUSTEFF:**

Lacto-chan wears the colours of Bulgaria, but speaks an international language – one of care, adaptability, and creativity. He was created especially for the Bulgarian pavilion in Osaka and became a team favourite even before meeting the public. We are confident he will be one of the most memorable characters at EXPO 2025 and will bring smiles to the faces of both young and old.

***What impression of Bulgaria might pavilion visitors – from Japan and around the world – take away? What will they remember from us?***

#### **MARIN PETKOV, CEO of MP-STUDIO and Visual Art Director:**

Visitors will discover Bulgaria as a country with deep cultural roots, yet with a future-oriented face, as a nation that not only preserves its traditions but evolves them through innovation. They will sense emotion, intelligent design, sustainability, and openness to dialogue. We hope that Bulgaria will be remembered as an inspiring partner – a country with soul, vision, and a contribution to solving global challenges.

#### **MARIN DIMITROV, Senior Operations Officer at MP-STUDIO:**

The technical implementation of the Bulgarian pavilion is impressive and fully in step with the latest technologies.

The building's façade features programmable lighting, which not only highlights the architectural profile but also creates a dynamic,

memorable visual identity.

In the Present zone, visitors are immersed in a unique multimedia experience. Fourteen synchronized monitors display content that is precisely coordinated with 30 professional lighting fixtures. These fixtures recreate the colour nuances of the video in real time, creating a captivating and dynamic atmosphere.

In the Future zone, we have built an innovative immersive space using fourteen Epson laser video projectors, together forming a 14K resolution image. Thanks to a specialized calibration system

by Vioso, we can make fine adjustments and recalibrate remotely, ensuring impeccable image quality.

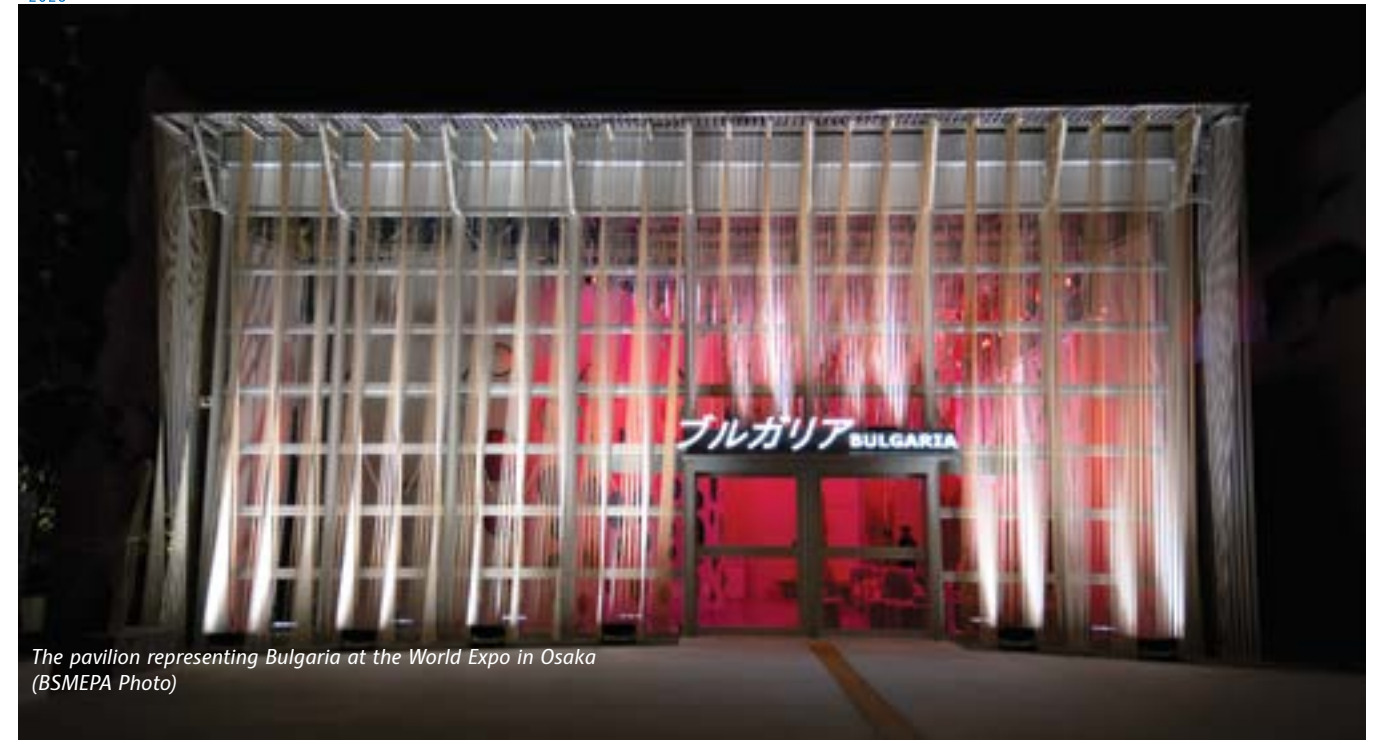
One of the pavilion's most innovative technologies is the AI system, which generates and renders content for the immersive space in real time. For this purpose, we developed custom media servers in-house and worked directly with the software developers to adapt the playback system to our specific needs.

A finishing touch to the experience is the high-end audio system by Fohhn, installed in both

zones of the pavilion. It adds depth and emotional resonance, drawing visitors deeper into the audiovisual content.

Despite the high complexity of the entire system, it is extremely intuitive to manage. We developed a custom touch interface on a tablet, allowing easy and convenient control over all technologies.

The Bulgarian pavilion does not simply showcase technology – it offers an experience that blends innovation, art, and the future of the digital world.



The pavilion representing Bulgaria at the World Expo in Osaka (BSMEPA Photo)

## TEAM INFORMATION:

**Mariya Gospodinova** is the lead architect of the interior design of the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka. She is an established professional with international experience and a member of the Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria and the Federal Chamber of German Architects. She has specialized in sustainable, energy-efficient projects and is a certified passive house designer. Gospodinova brings extensive expertise in architectural design, spatial planning, and the development of conceptual architectural and interior solutions for public and civic spaces. She is a partner at Scalator Ltd.

In her current role, Gospodinova is responsible for the overall architectural vision, technical implementation, and coordination with all stakeholders, including

Bulgarian institutions, Japanese partners, and manufacturers.

**Iskren Krusteff** is an entrepreneur and ecosystem builder who has mentored over 500 Bulgarian and international companies. As the CEO of Integrator JSC, he leads the implementation of AI in highly regulated environments. He is the founder of the first science and innovation park in the UAE, co-founder and Chair of INCREDA and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Bulgaria, as well as the Entrepreneurs in Class initiative. He served on the board of Power of BG until 2023 and is a co-initiator of The Bridge event. He is also a partner at Scalator Ltd.

**MP-STUDIO** is among the pioneers in the field of light art in Europe, with 17 years of experience and over 700 global projects. The studio has received numerous international awards and has

created projections on some of the world's most iconic buildings. These include Al Wasl Plaza at Expo City Dubai, the Brandenburg Gate, the Bolshoi Theatre, the TV Tower in Berlin, Bayan Palace, Jeita Grotto, the City Council of Rome, Maraya in Saudi Arabia, Brussels Stock Exchange, Noorderkerk Church in Amsterdam, the Mimara Museum in Zagreb, among others.

The MP-STUDIO team are also the founders and organizers of the LUNAR Festival of Lights.

**Kobayashi Maki Design Workshop (KMDW)**, together with its subsidiary Veneer House Inc., has implemented projects in a dozen countries, promoting community building and the development of sustainable relationships. These projects vary in scale – from children's playhouses (e.g., Denenchofu Playhouse), to disaster response centres

(Maeamihamma Veneer House), and larger architectural structures such as the Keio SFC Student Build Campus Building (SBC).

**Daiwa Lease Co., Ltd.** is one of the largest construction companies in Japan and a leader in prefabricated and recyclable construction. With a strong focus on sustainability, the company offers comprehensive solutions – from design to construction and leasing of temporary buildings. Daiwa Lease, together with Design Arc, is responsible for the entire construction process of the Bulgarian Pavilion for EXPO 2025 in Osaka.

**Prof. Mira Kalanova** is a consultant, scenographer with international experience and a professor of scenography at the Krastyo Sarafov National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts. She graduated from the National Academy of Art in Sofia, majoring in Scenography, and holds

a PhD in Film Studies and Cinema Arts. A recipient of four Askeer Awards and one Icarus Award, she has completed impressive theatrical projects in collaboration with leading directors. As a consultant to the Bulgarian Pavilion team at EXPO 2025, she brings together expertise in scenography and the emotional power of space.

**Filip Jacobson** is a creator of artistic installations and sculptures. He has extensive experience and has participated in numerous festivals and events around the world, ranging from the LUNAR Light Festival in Sofia to the Rainbow Serpent Festival in Australia. Jacobson skilfully combines traditional craftsmanship with innovative approaches. He is the maker of key elements for the Bulgarian Pavilion at EXPO 2025, contributing significantly to its unique visual identity.

## PROJECT PARTNERS:

Client: Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA)

Architect: Kobayashi Maki Design Workshop (KMDW)

General Contractor: Daiwa Lease (part of Daiwa House Group)

Interior Contractor: Design Arc (part of Daiwa House Group)

Interior Team: Arch. Mariya Gospodinova, Iskren Krusteff

Digital Experience: MP-STUDIO  
Promotional videos: SPACE DIVE PRODUCTIONS

Art Installation Production: Filip Jacobson

Sculptures: The Japan Stone Industry Association, Ivan Stoyanov  
Consultants: Nikken Sekkei Research Institute, Shinji Yamamura, Lidia Vitanova, Prof. Mira Kalanova, Dr Mihaela Kirilova

The video experience includes footage by Alexander Kostov and Kalin Iliev.





## BULGARIA AT THE 1970 WORLD EXPO IN OSAKA – NEWS FROM BTA'S ARCHIVES

Bulgaria's participation in the World Expo in Osaka in 1970 became an event that received wide media coverage in the country. The Bulgarian News Agency was no exception – it even assigned a special correspondent, Dimitri Ivanov, to cover the events directly from Japan. LIK magazine features excerpts from the news items published in BTA's bulletins at the time.

1970

### EXPO '70 in Osaka, Japan

On March 9, BTA's special correspondent Dimitri Ivanov reported from Osaka, recounting an article in *The Japan Times* about Bulgaria's participation in the Japan World EXPO '70, which was set to open on March 15 in that Japanese city and would run for 183 days.

The daily, one of the most influential and relatively widely read English-language morning newspapers, informed readers that the People's Republic of Bulgaria, having celebrated its 25th anniversary, was participating officially in a world exposition for the first time.

A preview of the Bulgarian pavilion suggests that Bulgaria's presence at EXPO '70 will be a pleasant surprise for visitors, *The*

*Japan Times* wrote. The Bulgarian pavilion is shaping up to be one of the must-see attractions at EXPO '70. To catch the eye of the uninformed visitor, the Bulgarians have opted for an unusual but successful idea – the architectural silhouette of the pavilion is an abstract replica of the Balkan Mountains range.

The pavilion consists of four pyramids made of bluish glass and aluminium, symbolizing the proud peaks of the Balkan Mountains, which cut across the Balkan Peninsula and reach the shores of the Black Sea. The four-peaked structure symbolizes Bulgaria's aspiration for progress and peaceful relations with the Balkan peoples and the world. At the same time, its soaring silhouette reflects the independent spirit of a small country, which has resisted oppressors and invaders, the newspaper said.

Inside the pavilion, four main themes are presented in the same spirit: Bulgaria as a land of ancient culture that was founded as a state 1,300 years ago; the struggles of the Bulgarian people for national and social liberation; industrial and social development over the 23 years since Bulgaria embarked on the path of socialism; and finally, Bulgaria as a land of natural beauty and growing international tourism.

The pavilion is brought to life by 15 Bulgarian girls and five boys dressed in folk costumes, who, together with ten young Japanese women, guide and inform the visitors, said *The Japan Times*.



Bulgaria's Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov is seen off at Sofia Airport as he departs for Osaka Expo, Sofia, May 15, 1970 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)

The article described and interpreted some of the exhibits, briefly outlined the historical journey of the Thracians and the Proto-Bulgarians, described the scale model of the Thracian tomb at Kazanlak, and explained where and how the Slavic alphabet was created.

\*\*\*

"The World Exposition was officially inaugurated today and will open its doors to visitors tomorrow. EXPO '70, in which 77

countries including Bulgaria are participating, along with several dozen international organizations – including the United Nations – and major companies and enterprises, will run for six months until September 13.

"More than 10,000 people attended the opening ceremony. The honoured guests included the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, Crown Prince Akihito, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and members of the government, heads of foreign diplomatic missions and many guests," BTA's correspondent



A stamp issued for Expo 1970  
(Photo reproduced by BTA/Evgenia Malezanova)

Dimitri Ivanov reported from Osaka on March 14.

Eisaku Sato said at the opening ceremony that international exhibitions have always contributed to the progress of civilization. Now more than ever, there is a growing need for deep understanding and trust among the different peoples and regions of the world, he said, wishing EXPO '70 to become a centre of international dialogue.

At the opening ceremony, greetings were also delivered on behalf of the host country by T. Ishizaka, Chairman of the Japan Association responsible for organizing EXPO '70, and G. Sato, Governor of Osaka Prefecture. They expressed confidence that the exceptionally rich pavilions of the exposition would give visitors the chance to see for themselves the achievements of global civilization and would contribute to humanity's progress. After that, Emperor Hirohito conveyed his heartfelt wishes for the success of EXPO '70.

The formal opening—a blend of official speeches, cannon salutes, fanfares, colours and even perfumes—was broadcast via satellite to the other continents. For its lengthy visual transitions between segments, Japanese television used a shot of the four-peaked bluish pavilion symbolizing the Balkan Mountains, which had been completed the day before the opening with the installation of the inscription "Bulgaria" in Bulgarian, Japanese and English.

"Incidentally, the 80 million TV viewers in Japan, a country of 100 million, learned quite a bit about our country from the film about Bulgaria that aired yesterday, from the 14 articles and reports published in the Japanese press over the past week, and from Saturday's Festival of Nations. On the concert stage of this televised festival, Europe was represented by Bulgarian performers, America by Mexicans, and Africa and Asia by Indonesians. The remaining 74 countries participating in EXPO '70 provided a spectacular backdrop with a multinational group of pavilion hostesses," Dimitri Ivanov reported.

The grand opening of the EXPO took place in the Symbol Zone, in the centre of the exhibition grounds under the world's largest transparent roof, covering an area of 30,000 square metres. The dominant architectural feature in the one-kilometre-long zone is the Tower of the Sun, flanked by the Tower of Youth and the Tower of the Mother.

"While the real sun refused to shine on the freezing audience, the symbol of the sun became the subject of various interpretations during the hour-long ceremony. Some saw it as an emblem of the Japanese emperor, traditionally believed to be a direct descendant of the sun. Others interpreted it as a symbol of Japan's rising economic power, which, having surpassed West Germany in production volume, now ranks second among the capitalist countries after the United States, and third in the world when

the Soviet Union is taken into account," BTA's correspondent said.

The impression of the host nation's technical prowess grew stronger when two 10-metre-tall robots stepped onto the 100-metre stage, filling the air with the sounds of Japanese songbirds, flashing countless lights and illuminators, and saturating the air with a fragrant mist. Perfumed confetti and slips of paper bearing wishes for the future, written by people of various nationalities, rained down from the sky.

One wishing slip read: "How hard it is to progress towards peace, and without peace, there is no progress. – Shimatsu-san, 18, Japan"(...)

The Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia are the socialist countries officially participating in the exhibition. Cuba is also present. This is the first time Bulgaria has officially participated in a world exposition, reflecting the country's expanding economic ties with nations near and far, both geographically and in terms of their socio-political systems. Our participation also comes in response to the growing economic, tourist and cultural interest in Bulgaria.

Shortly after the hour-long opening ceremony, hundreds of guests flooded into the Bulgarian pavilion. The four aluminium-and-glass pyramids, rising like mountain peaks and recently described by journalists as being



Bulgaria's Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov before his flight to Japan, Sofia, May 15, 1970  
(BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)

"surprisingly spacious inside," now all of a sudden felt small, and the Bulgarian restaurant did not have enough tables. In just two hours after the opening, 14,000 people passed through the Bulgarian pavilion

\*\*\*

Just after the official opening of EXPO '70 in Osaka (Japan), American television showcased the Bulgarian pavilion on the National Broadcasting Company channels. Also, in a live broadcast from Osaka via satellite, Columbia Broadcasting System special correspondent Charles Kuralt highlighted the popularity of

\*\*\*

the Bulgarian restaurant at the exposition and the appeal of Bulgarian cuisine, BTA said, citing a report from the agency's correspondent in New York.

"Following yesterday's official opening, today the World



Exposition EXPO '70 opened its five gates to a quarter of a million visitors. The estimated number of expected guests was revised up again and it is now projected that 60 million Japanese and foreigners will arrive in Osaka during the six months until the end of the exposition on September 13," BTA's special correspondent in Osaka, Dimitri Ivanov, wrote on March 15.

He sent for publication a greeting to EXPO '70 from United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, addressing the 21st World Exposition. The first one was held in 1851 in the first capitalist country, England, where the technical revolution had first taken place. There is a major difference between then and now, not only in the level of technology being displayed, but also in the unifying theme: over a century ago, England, known as the Workshop of the World at the time, was demonstrating its superiority over the rest of the world. The logo of EXPO '70 is a five-petal cherry blossom, symbolizing the five continents' aspiration for unity, and the motto is "Progress and Harmony for Mankind." That is why Bulgaria is taking part in the exposition along with 76 other nations, plus Hong Kong, four international organizations including the United Nations and the European Economic Community, as well as six Canadian and American provinces and states, and three American and European cities participating independently from their national pavilions, alongside major individual companies and

corporations. Bulgaria's pavilion is located within the grounds of EXPO '70, known as the City of the Future with an area of 330 hectares, 20 kilometres from Osaka, Japan's second largest city with its 7.7 million inhabitants.

In the morning, when the pavilion opens its doors to the crowds, the first visitor is greeted ceremonially. A traditional ritual – spilling some water from a copper vessel – is performed, and although slightly delayed, *martenitsi* (red-and-white good luck charms Bulgarians give one another on March 1) are handed out in the presence of radio, print and television journalists, including Japanese national broadcaster NHK and Kansai Television, which have aired footage of the charming ritual in their programmes.

What is the Bulgarian pavilion like? The media have broadcast and written extensively on the topic. But the first visitor, Akiko Ikeda, answered: "Kini iri mashita," which means "I liked it a lot." These were the first words of 21-year-old Akiko. Last year, she visited Sofia and enrolled to study Balkan History at Sofia University. She said she was planning to return to Bulgaria in a month, which is why she came early to the Bulgarian pavilion. "The four blue pyramids really do resemble the peaks of the Balkan Mountains," she also said. "As you approach the entrance and pass by the sculpture of doves mid-flight, you feel as if you can smell the scent of roses. Then you realize it

is not a trick of the senses – the aroma comes from the scented water gently flowing over the four ledges of the little pond. That's the impression if you have already been to Bulgaria. If you haven't, what dominates is the curiosity to meet the unknown. That curiosity is rewarded the moment you step inside: you are welcomed by smiling Bulgarian girls in folk dress, standing in front of a projection screen where the recorded voices of a children's choir amplify the cheerful and optimistic mood both visually and audibly.

"Then comes what is truly interesting for me as a history student – the model of the Thracian tomb in Kazanlak, Bulgaria's 1,300-year-old past, the gold treasures from the 9th to the 4th century BC, the frescoes of the Boyana Church, old icons. (...) On the first floor, present-day Bulgaria is showcased – a country of flourishing agriculture, developing industry, and finally – though from a foreigner's perspective this could just as easily come first – a land of natural beauty and international tourism. The pavilion also features modern equipment like the ELKA electronic calculator, which is of particular interest to specialists in that field. Meanwhile, the non-specialist, nearing the exit, is tempted by the Bulgarian restaurant which offers national specialties and wines," concluded Tokyo-born Akiko.

\*\*\*

"Today, the 500,000th visitor

Bulgaria at EXPO 1970



Bulgaria at EXPO 1970



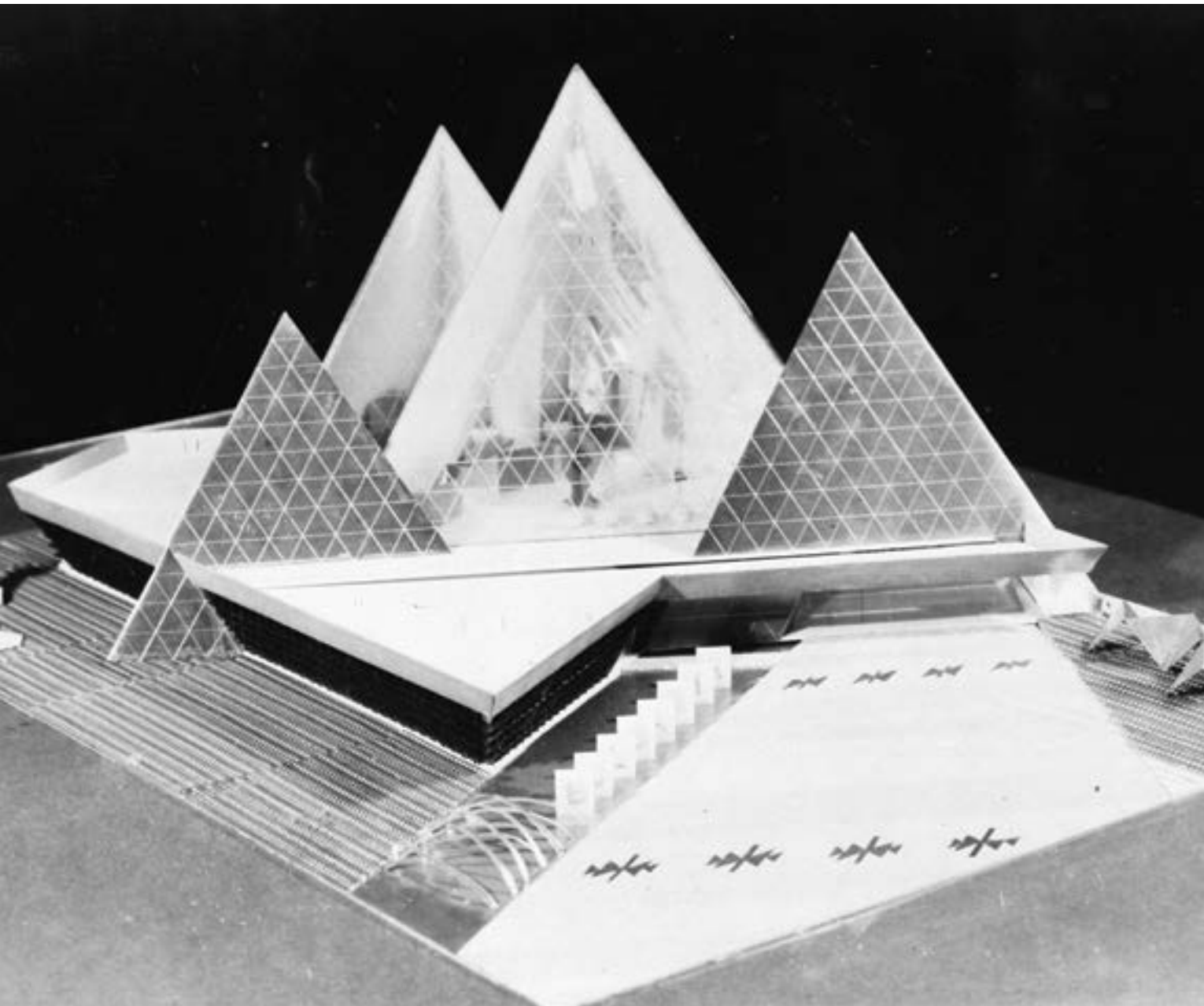
Bulgaria's Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov leaves for Osaka, Sofia, May 15, 1970  
(BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)

entered the pavilion representing Bulgaria at the World Expo in Osaka. Half a million visitors on the 12th day since the opening – this is an indisputable success for our country's first official participation in a world exposition," BTA's Dimitri Ivanov reported on March 26. According to him, Bulgaria's success at EXPO '70 is confirmed by data from the mechanical counters, which show this pavilion as one of the most visited places at the exposition. "It is impossible not to notice it," the Mainichi newspaper said. This opinion, along with detailed descriptions of the interior and the atmosphere of the pavilion, is shared by the morning editions of newspapers including the

*Kyoto Shimbun, Sankei Shimbun, Yomiuri, The Japan Times, Chunichi Shimbun, Fukushima Minpo and Shin Kansai.* This assessment is confirmed not only by the press but also by other mass media (television companies NHK and Kansai broadcast programmes about the Bulgarian pavilion and Bulgaria), by personal conversations with visitors, by filled guest books, and – to complete the picture – even by the fact that Japanese companies are releasing postcards with views of the Bulgarian pavilion at the exposition. These companies only print images of landmarks which are in demand by the public.

\*\*\*

On April 4, the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Exposition in Osaka was visited by Czechoslovakia's President Ludvik Svoboda, Foreign Minister Jan Marko and their accompanying party. The Czechoslovak guests were in Osaka to celebrate the National Day of Czechoslovakia at EXPO '70. After the ceremony, the guests visited the Soviet and Bulgarian pavilions. They were welcomed by the Government Commissioner for Bulgaria's participation in EXPO '70, Avakum Branichev, and young women in national costumes presented them with flowers and a pavilion pin. Having seen the exhibition, the President said: "Your pavilion



*A model of the Bulgarian pavilion for Expo 1970, Sofia, January 10, 1969 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)*

vividly demonstrates the achievements of the people of your beautiful country during the years of socialist construction. I sincerely congratulate you on your success."

There is another celebration in the afternoon – the welcoming of the millionth visitor. As the counters showed 999,990, with only ten visitors left until the

millionth one, those waiting in line at the entrance eagerly looked around to see who would be the lucky one to enter the Bulgarian pavilion. It was Masako Watanabe, a 50-year-old Japanese woman from Miyoshi, Hiroshima Prefecture. She and her grandson were ushered into the pavilion by the Government's Commissioner who presented them with gifts.

Mrs Watanabe said the Bulgarian pavilion was the first one she had visited at EXPO '70. She had headed straight for it after seeing three television programmes about Bulgaria, which piqued her interest. Photojournalists and video reporters took many pictures of the millionth visitor, and journalists from Japanese newspapers asked her questions,



microphones in hand, while the first few hundred of the second million visitors were passing through the gates.

\* \* \*

"The idea of world expositions has evolved over the decades," Dimitri Ivanov, BTA's special correspondent to the Osaka exhibition, reported on April 6, 1970. "At the first World Exposition in London held under the auspices of Queen Victoria a century and a half ago there were exhibits that would astonish today's visitor – artillery guns that were ultra-modern for their era. The 9th World Expo in Paris in 1889 no longer had a military feel – France showcased its engineering and technical achievements, with the Eiffel Tower built specifically for the exposition, and added a cultural flair to the tradition of expositions with new art galleries and theatre performances. The American hosts in St. Louis proclaimed the dawn of the automotive era..."

\* \* \*

On April 13, United Nations Day was observed at the World Expo in Osaka. UN Secretary-General U Thant stated at the Festival Plaza that the exhibition's goals coincide with the essence of the UN, as it fosters international understanding. Noting that this is the first world exposition to be held in Asia and that it involves a record number of participating countries, U Thant expressed satisfaction that the blue UN flag was flying at EXPO '70 and that

the sounds of the Peace Bell could be heard as far as the Festival Plaza. The bell, cast from small coins collected by thousands of children from the region where the atomic bomb was first used, was gifted to the UN but before the opening of the exposition, the Japanese hosts asked to display it among the exhibits.

\* \* \*

On May 18, a formal dinner was held in Osaka in honour of Todor Zhivkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. During the event, Japan's Prime Minister Eisaku Sato gave a speech. "The exposition in Japan is your country's first ever participation in such an event. You made the decision to participate much earlier than other East European countries," he noted, adding that the relations between the two countries and economic and cultural exchanges had deepened in recent years. "We know that your pavilion at EXPO '70 is appreciated and highly praised by many Japanese and other visitors to the exposition. It showcases your country's history and economic and cultural development, and displays artistic exhibits that highlight the brilliant cultural traditions of the country where the Slavic alphabet originated. We wholeheartedly wish your country a successful participation in EXPO '70," he said.

Todor Zhivkov also made a speech, expressing heartfelt thanks for the kind invitation from the Japanese government to visit the

country and the World Exposition. He said he was confident that Bulgaria's participation in Osaka would promote the development and deepening of Bulgarian-Japanese ties and cooperation. "Bulgaria and Japan are far from each other. But neither the great distance nor the difference in our political systems is an obstacle to building good political, economic and cultural relations between the two countries, based on the principles of peaceful coexistence," said Zhivkov.

\* \* \*

"Bulgaria's National Day at EXPO '70 was celebrated today in the presence of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Todor Zhivkov," BTA's special correspondent Dimitri Ivanov reported on May 20.

In the hall for official guests, the Bulgarian Prime Minister was greeted and welcomed by Mr Hagiwara, Commissioner General of the Japanese government for EXPO '70, and Mr Kano, Vice President of the Japan Association for the EXPO.

At 10:00 am, the ceremony opened with the national anthems of Bulgaria and the host country, Japan. Bulgaria's tricolour flag and Japan's flag with a red sun disc on a white background were raised on the steel pylons in the Festival Plaza. Mr Hagiwara and Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov delivered speeches.

After the national anthems, the sounds of the popular Japanese song *Sakura* (Cherry Blossoms)



filled the covered amphitheatre. At that moment, a Japanese girl climbed the stairs to the official stand and gave flowers to Lyudmila Zhivkova, the Prime Minister's daughter. A Bulgarian girl headed towards the 10-metre-high robot Deme, which had emerged in the middle of the plaza. Deme symbolizes the future—it can speak, transmit orchestral performances and scent the air, and has devices for remotely controlling the floating stages, dancing water fountains and other features of the Festival Plaza, the central architectural element of EXPO '70.

\*\*\*

"Today, Bulgaria dominates the Japanese press, which provides extensive coverage and photos of our country in connection with Bulgaria's National Day at EXPO '70 and Prime Minister Todor Zhivkov's visit to Japan. *The Daily Yomiuri* has devoted to Bulgaria five pages in its 12-page English edition," BTA's special correspondent Dimitri Ivanov reported from Osaka on May 20.

"Bulgaria features on two pages in *the Mainichi Daily News*. *The Japan Times* also has comprehensive articles about Bulgaria, and news about our country is found in dozens of other Japanese- and English-language dailies.

"Of course, Japanese radio and television got ahead of the newspapers with fresher information, broadcasting reports on Bulgaria's National Day at EXPO '70," Dimitri Ivanov

reported. In his words, all Japanese radio stations covered the event in their newscasts and carried discussions, interviews and other stories about Bulgaria. "The Asahi Broadcasting Corporation Television, together with Kansai Television and the largest television corporation, NHK, had special broadcasts from the celebration at the Festival Plaza."

\*\*\*

Today, June 15, Japanese newspapers note that the 180 days of the World Exposition in Osaka are halfway through under the headline "Expo Reaches Halfway Mark."

The newspapers say that so far 27 million people have visited the Expo, and that this number exceeds the figures for the same period of the previous exposition in Montreal. As of today, 3,968,000 people have visited the Bulgarian pavilion, which confirms the success of Bulgaria's first official participation in a World Exposition.

\*\*\*

One of the results of Bulgaria's first official participation in a World Exposition is that the foundation was laid for organized tourism: according to a June 22 report, Japanese groups will start visiting our country.

Japan's five major travel agencies have announced that they are ready to send Japanese tourists to Bulgaria. Our country has

gained recognition in global tourism, and the recent increase in imports of Bulgarian tinned fruits and other products has made it popular in Japan.

Bulgaria's successful participation in EXPO '70 has also contributed to the growing interest in our country among the Japanese.

Y. Karashev, representative of the Committee for Tourism, is finalizing agreements with Japanese travel organizations, and Tokyo Maruichi Shoji, which does brisk business with Bulgaria, is setting up—at its own expense—a representative office of the Bulgarian Committee for Tourism in Japan.

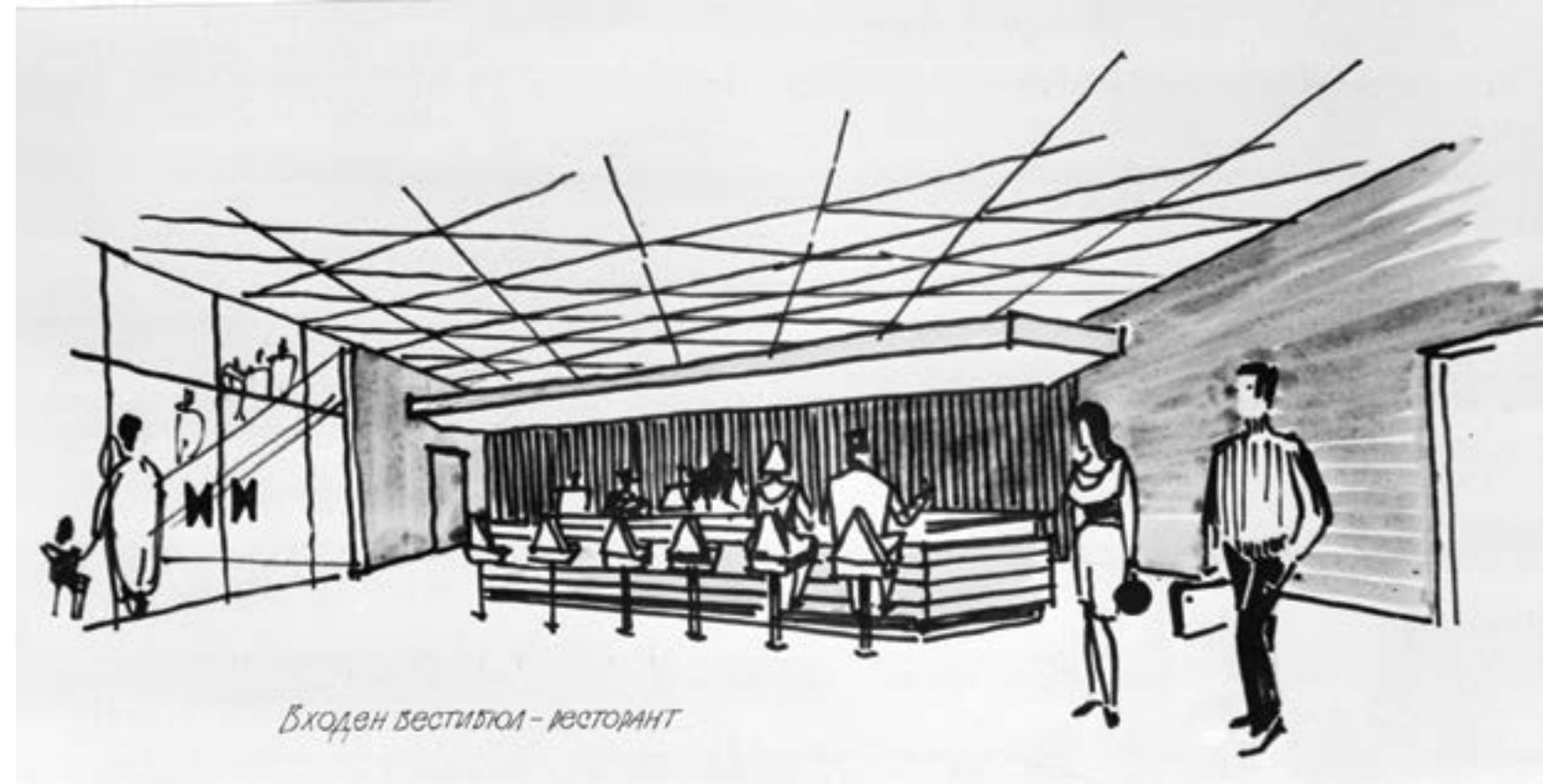
The first Japanese arrivals to Bulgaria are expected in 1971.

\*\*\*

On June 29, Japan celebrated its National Day at EXPO '70 with a vibrant programme featuring traditional dances and a parade of children's orchestras, symbols of the youthful vitality of an ancient country.

So far, EXPO '70 boasts 32 million visitors within three months—significantly more than previous expositions and more than initially expected—which is proof of the excellent organization by the host country and the popularity of the EXPO's motto, "Progress and Harmony for Mankind."

Proportionally speaking, Bulgaria accounts for a significant share in this overall success. This is



A sketch of the entrance vestibule/restaurant of the Bulgarian pavilion planned for the World Expo in Osaka, Sofia, January 10, 1969 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)

evident both from the number of visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion and from a series of events in the daily life of the exposition over the past three months, the most recent being the Bulgarian Wedding celebrated on June 28. Hiroshige Ozuka, a dentist from Tokyo, and his girlfriend Kazuko, an information guide at the Electricity Pavilion of EXPO '70, decided to have a Bulgarian-style wedding in the restaurant of our pavilion. In keeping with Bulgarian tradition, they received gifts from the leadership of our participation in the EXPO, and then, true to Japanese tradition, they read verses improvised for the occasion: "May our love fly to your country!"

\*\*\*

On July 16, the Bulgarian exposition at the World Expo was visited by the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, who travelled from his residence in Tokyo to view some of the 112 national pavilions at EXPO '70.

The Emperor was welcomed by Bulgarian female guides in national costume, by the leadership of the pavilion and its director A. Angelov who introduced the distinguished guest to the theme of our exhibition, including the history of our land and the new socialist Bulgaria, its industry, agriculture

and international tourism, and its achievements in various areas of economic and cultural life.

This is the highest-level visit so far to the Bulgarian pavilion, which in recent weeks has also welcomed the Crown Prince and other members of the imperial family, as well as prominent public and political figures.

The Bulgarian pavilion has been visited by 5,405,000 Japanese and foreign guests since the exposition opened on March 14. To date, it is among the dozen foreign exhibitions included in the list of sites the Japanese Emperor will visit.

The number of visitors to





the Bulgarian pavilion so far represents a significant proportion of the total number of guests: in the early months of the exposition, this share ranged between 12% and 14%, and more recently between 13% and 15%.

The public interest has been reflected in the coverage and broadcasts of the mass media: in the past week alone, three weekly and two monthly magazines published stories about Bulgaria and its participation. The ABC television network broadcast one programme, and the Yomiuri television network aired two segments on Bulgaria. Several national radio stations have included reports about Bulgaria in their programming.

\*\*\*

On July 23, Japanese print,

*A stamp issued for Expo 1970, Sofia, July 21, 1970  
(Photo reproduced by BTA/Evgenia Malezanova)*



radio and television journalists showed great interest in a news conference on a children's drawing competition "Bulgaria Through the Eyes of Japanese Children" and "Japan Through the Eyes of Bulgarian Children."

The director of the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO '70, A. Angelov, presented details about the competition and its purpose reflected in its title "Drawings for Friendship." Replying to dozens of questions, he noted that the name of our country had gained popularity in Japan through Bulgaria's successful participation in EXPO '70, that a large portion of the nearly six million people who have passed through our pavilion so far are children, and that the idea behind the competition is to leave a lasting impression on the youngest visitors—one that

will outlive the six-month World Exposition in Osaka.

In Japan, the competition is held under the auspices of Mr Sato, Governor of Osaka Prefecture, and the local Education Board.

\*\*\*

Bulgaria Week organized by the Bulgarian EXPO '70 team has started in the Umeda Chika underground shopping centre of the multi-million Japanese city of Osaka, BTA's correspondent reported on August 4.

The Umeda Chika Center is a kind of underground city, an intersection of underground and above-ground traffic, where the pulse of the big city is felt until midnight. Around one million people pass through this place



daily.

Now, Bulgarian goods are being sold in Umeda, leaflets about Bulgaria are being distributed, and Bulgarian music and messages about our country are playing over the sound system. A special EXPO corner arranged by the organizers of the exposition is decorated with Bulgarian and Japanese flags. Although over six million people have already visited the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO '70, hundreds of thousands of passers-by get their first direct impressions of Bulgaria at the underground Umeda Chika Center.

\*\*\*

On August 15, the exhibition "Drawings for Friendship" by Japanese and Bulgarian children opened officially at the Bulgarian pavilion.

A hundred drawings were created by the winners of the competitions "Bulgaria through the Eyes of Japanese Children" and "Japan through Our Eyes" in which children from each country drew how they imagined the other country. Half the drawings were made by Bulgarian children under 12, while the other half were made by their Japanese peers.

The opening ceremony took place in the presence of Mr Gisen Sato, Governor of Osaka Prefecture, and his wife Yukiko Sato, an artist and chair of the local jury. Also present were the commissioners-general of the

governments of the 70 countries participating in the World Exposition, representatives of the Japan Association for the Expo, the 50 Japanese children whose drawings were selected, their parents, and journalists from all major Japanese newspapers and radio and television networks.

A. Angelov, Director of the Bulgarian Pavilion, and Governor Sato cut the tricolour ribbon and invited the guests to view the exhibition. Then, the young participants in the art competition were presented with awards and certificates, while guests and journalists were welcomed at a reception.

In his speech following the awards ceremony, the Governor of Osaka Prefecture noted that Bulgaria's debut at a world exposition was a stunning success, that the Bulgarian pavilion was among the most popular ones at EXPO '70, and that the children's art competition was one more Bulgarian contribution to the fulfilment of the exposition's theme of Progress and Harmony for Mankind.

After the close of the World Expo, the exhibition is scheduled to be shown in Osaka and Tokyo.

\*\*\*

On September 13, the World Exposition officially came to a close. It was the first world exposition to take place outside Europe and the Americas. The number of participating countries, over 70, along with

individual provinces, states, cities, international organizations and industrial groups, set a new record, as did the number of visitors. Roughly one in seven of them—over nine million people—visited the pavilion of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, which made its debut at a world exposition. Bulgaria and Japan are separated by 14,000 kilometres, or seven meridians. At noon Bulgarian time—early evening local time—the tricolour flags were lowered to the strains of the national anthem, and the Bulgarian exhibition was officially declared closed.

A. Angelov, Deputy Commissioner-General for Bulgaria's participation, remarked that the 183 days of EXPO '70 had confirmed the success of Bulgaria's first participation in a world exposition. He stressed that this was a major political event, as Bulgaria's harmonious development and progress were showcased to more than nine million Japanese and other international visitors, who outnumber the population of Bulgaria itself.

Bulgaria's Ambassador to Japan, Ilcho Papazov, thanked the numerous Japanese and foreign visitors who showed strong interest in the Bulgarian pavilion, praised it highly, and in doing so, helped build a living bridge between Bulgaria and Japan, and between Bulgaria and the world. He thanked the Bulgarian and Japanese organizers of the pavilion.





## INTERVIEW BY YANITSA HRISTOVA

Ivan Popyordanov, designer of the audiovisual component of the exposition in Bulgaria's pavilion at EXPO-70:

## COOPERATION BETWEEN BULGARIA AND JAPAN REACHED NEW DIMENSIONS AFTER THE WORLD EXPO IN OSAKA



Ivan Popyordanov at the Apollonia Festival of Arts in 2008  
(BTA Photo/Elena Dikova)

over half a century ago. According to him, our presentation then had followed "the desire to show a little-known country as a modern developing one with its own past, present and future". Popyordanov also stressed that the Bulgarian pavilion with its architecture in Osaka was "undoubtedly the most impressive against the background of all those heaps and heaps of pavilions representing more than 80 countries across all continents".

Ivan Popyordanov was born in Sofia on August 14, 1938. In 1956, after graduating from high school, he was enrolled in the State Polytechnic in Sofia. At that time, it was announced that it is possible to study at higher education institutions abroad. Popyordanov went to the Czech Technical University in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He graduated in 1962 with a degree in Film and Television Technology.

Popyordanov spent 17 years of his 45-year career in cinema. In 1963, after his return from Prague, he joined the Boyana Feature Film Studios (SIF) as an engineer in the Sound Recording Department. He took a break for a year to work on the project that Bulgaria

presented at the 1970 World Expo. Upon his return, Popyordanov was appointed Chief Engineer at SIF. He was promoted to director by the end of May 1972.

Between 1984 and 1988, he was again in Prague, where he headed the Bulgarian Cultural Centre.

Popyordanov's other positions included Chief Specialist at the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, Deputy Director in Chief at the Bulgarian Cinematography Artistic and Economic Association, as well as Group Head at the Ministry of Culture.

Popyordanov's career also involved work at the Bulgarian National Television (BNT), where he held the positions of deputy director general, executive director and director general. He was also Manager of the Aleko Konstantinov Satirical Theatre.

Talking to LIK magazine, Popyordanov shared memories about his journey to Osaka and the excitement that accompanied the Bulgarian presentation at the World Expo in 1970: how he ended up in the team that developed the concept directed by Vulo Radev, what impression the Bulgarian pavilion had made and why it is important for Bulgaria to participate in such international fora.

**Mr Popyordanov, you were the engineer of the audiovisual part of the exposition in the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka in 1970. How did you become part of the team that represented Bulgaria?**

When I recently read in the media that this year Japan will host a world expo once again, my memory involuntarily returned to EXPO 70 in Osaka – an event, which I was fortunate enough to be a part of as a member of the team that organized the Bulgarian participation.

Sometime at the end of May 1969, I was approached by Vulo Radev's team at the Film Studios, where I had already been working as an engineer for six years. I was told that he had asked to see me.

At that time, Vulo Radev already had an established reputation as one of the most successful Bulgarian film directors after *The Peach Thief*, *The King and the General* and *The Longest Night*. When I looked him up, I was surprised by the offer he made me. He proposed that I leave my job at the Cinema Centre for a year in order to be included in the team behind the Bulgarian Pavilion at Expo 70 in Osaka. This offer came out of left field. I was responsible for the audiovisual part of the future pavilion. Admittedly, it was about me taking on a project that was entirely related to my profession as an engineer in this field, but my fears were whether I would be able to handle this responsibility in distant Japan. Vulo Radev had

the rare talent of convincing people on his team of anything he undertook. He possessed not only charisma but also the ability to motivate those around him to treat each project with the utmost professionalism.

**You mentioned in an online interview that you spent an entire year in Japan because of your work on the pavilion. What did that involve?**

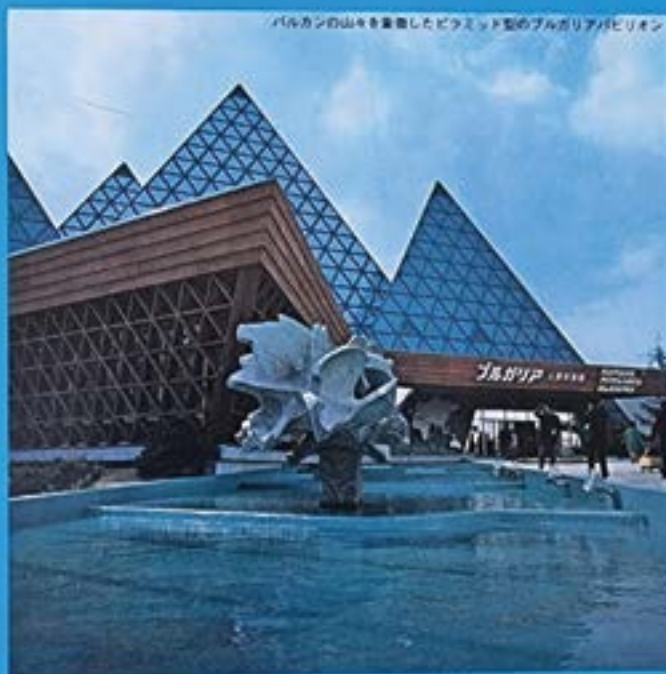
At the beginning of August 1969, I went to Japan as part of the Bulgarian team responsible for constructing the national pavilion in Osaka. There was a big delay with the construction as well as with hiring the subcontractors working on the audiovisual equipment. Over the first two weeks in Tokyo, talks were held with a number of Japanese companies that had applied as potential contractors for the project, such as Sharp, Sony, and Toshiba, among others. At the end of August, we finally approved Toshiba as the main contractor for the audiovisual part, consisting mainly of film screenings at the individual sites of the exposition. The difficulty of bringing the exhibition to life came from the established architecture of the pavilion being 'interpenetrating pyramids'. The only way of ensuring the necessary distance to achieve the intended size of the screens was to rely on the principle of rear projection.

While the technical issues surrounding the overall



# ブルガリアでシャープのテレコがNo.1

— 万国博ブルガリア館でもシャープ製品が大活躍 —



A pamphlet from EXPO 1970 featuring the Bulgarian pavilion on the cover (Ivan Popyordanov's Personal Archive Photo)

equipment of the individual locations in the exposition were being clarified, back in Bulgaria Vulo Radev's team was shooting and editing films on the individual topics of the approved concept. If today, 55 years after EXPO 70, I had to define the accents of the concept set out in our exposition, while taking into account certain ideological encumbrances and without being idealistic, I'd say it was an effort to show a little-known country as a modern developing country defined by its past, present and future.

I would like to note that the architecture of the Bulgarian pavilion designed by architects Todor Kozhuharov and Evlogi Tsvetkov was undoubtedly the most impressive against the background of all those heaps and heaps of pavilions representing more than 80 countries across all continents. Today, 55 years later, I realize how many people were involved in the process of Bulgaria's participation in this world exhibition. Starting from the investor, the Bulgarian Chamber

Bulgaria at EXPO 1970



of Commerce, headed by Avakum Branichev, as well as architects Todor Kozhuharov and Evlogi Tsvetkov, artists Ivan Radev, Boris Kitanov, Ivan Bogdanov, Dimitre Mehandjiysky, and the teams of the individual thematic films, headed by director Ivan Halachev and cameraman Boris Yanakiev. The list is long and is a testimony of a successful cooperation.

In a nutshell, many people did their jobs well.

I spent about eight months in Japan with two breaks, and this was an extraordinary experience for me. The country was impressive with its achievements. In a relatively short time after World War II, in just less than 20 years, Japan had become a super-modern country with an established infrastructure and impressive cutting-edge technology. Japanese goods flooded markets around the world. But above all, Japan was also impressive for combining the ultra-modern with the traditional features of the country and its people, with their inimitable discipline and order.

## What turn did your career take upon your return to Bulgaria?

I returned to Bulgaria after its National Day at EXPO 70 at the end of May. In September I was appointed Chief Engineer of Boyana Film Studios and two years later, as its Director, which rounded up my years in Bulgarian cinema to 17.

If I have to characterize EXPO



Bulgaria at EXPO 1970

70 in Osaka briefly, this world exhibition was a manifestation of the achievements of audiovisual technology of its time.

In this regard, the experience gained from the Bulgarian participation at EXPO 70 provided an opportunity to reconsider the approaches to the design and implementation of museum expositions and various other forms of promotion of cultural sites and historical landmarks. Vulo Radev and his team definitely made a considerable contribution there. In 1981, a large-scale exhibition titled "1,300 Years of Bulgarian Culture" celebrating the anniversary of the foundation of the Bulgarian state was set up in Festivalna Hall, presenting Bulgaria's cultural heritage with state-of-the-art audiovisual devices.

The implementation of the Sound and Light project in cooperation with our Czech colleagues from the Art Centrum Centre for Fine Arts in Prague was launched in 1985. To this day it continues to be one of the attractions in the medieval Bulgarian capital of Veliko Tarnovo.

## Why is it important for Bulgaria to participate in events of the world exhibition level?

The question of what the point is of a country's participation in events of World Expo calibre always reminds me of satirist Aleko Konstantinov's ironic remark "so, we have exposed ourselves too" on the occasion



Ivan Popyordanov, former director of the Aleko Konstantinov State Satirical Theatre in Sofia, facing the bust of Aleko Konstantinov at the opening of the renovated theatre building, Sofia, September 5, 2012 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Shokov)

of Bulgaria's participation in a similar event in Chicago in 1893. In today's globalized world, failure to participate in dynamic changes and technological trends condemns countries to self-isolation and missing chances for development and real self-assessment. Without any political speculation or undue

form of nostalgia for what it was like 55 years ago, for me it is an undeniable fact that the economic cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan reached completely different dimensions after our participation at the EXPO-70 in Osaka.





# THE UNFORGETTABLE PARTICIPATION OF THE CHILDREN'S RADIO CHOIR AT EXPO-70

*The Children's Choir with the Bulgarian Radio and Television under the baton of Hristo Nedyalkov performed at the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka. The singing talent, the vocal palette and the high professional skill of the young performers left an unforgettable mark on the Japanese audience. In LIK Magazine, we present highlights from the Children's Choir's tour of the exotic country as it was presented by the media and as its contemporaries remember it.*

## THE CHOIR DOCKS IN THE PORT OF YOKOHAMA

"The Soviet vessel Khabarovsk docked in Yokohama harbour today with the arrival of the 40 young favourites of the Japanese public, the Children's Choir with the Bulgarian Radio and Television," reads a BTA news item dated August 14, 1970. The article mentions that the first visit of the Children's Radio Choir to Japan was in 1957. After a success that, according to Japanese journalists, "defies description", the young singers went back to Japan in 1969. Less than 24 hours after the audience had given the Bulgarian children a heartfelt send-off, the press was already asking if—and when—they would return to Japan.

Weeks before the choir was due to arrive in Yokohama in 1970, representatives of Japan's first TV news agency Nihon Denpa News received numerous telephone calls and letters asking when the concerts will take place. The agency

had invited the Children's Radio Choir to Japan and was organizing the upcoming tour.

Now in their third tour, the young performers were scheduled to sing in over 20 concerts in various venues around the country, the first

of which was in Tokyo. A long-playing record featuring 21 performances by the Children's Radio Choir, along with two live albums from the choir's previous tours, were being distributed in Japan and were in high demand.

*The cover and the page dedicated to the Bulgarian pavilion from the official guidebook for the World Expo in Osaka in 1970 (Ivan Popyordanov's Personal Archive Photo)*



## BULGARIA SINGS AT EXPO-70

"... Motherland, Motherland, how you've gathered so much sun! ..." A captivating children's song grabs the millions of visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-70 in Osaka as soon as they enter. Children's faces beaming with joy smile from wide colour screen. The Bulgarian Radio and Television Children's Choir is singing! With these words begins a full-page article in the August 1970 issue 34 of the *Paraleli* magazine, a BTA publication.

People pause, listen long and attentively to the song, or shake their heads entranced. Others point the microphones of their tape recorders closer to record the magical voices. Some question the kind guide, herself a former member of the choir, about its performances, insistently asking to get a phonograph record of the song. Many of them know the young Bulgarian singers and fell in love with their music from the 1967 and 1969 concert tours in Japan. Japan knows about the upcoming third tour and is looking forward to it...

And the Bulgarian nightingales are back in Japan!

This time they are in for an extraordinary experience, perhaps more exciting than the grand premiere in Tokyo. Along with a number of other world-renowned performing ensembles and artists, they have been invited to perform a solo concert in the Expo-70 exhibition city. From the



*Hristo Nedyalkov and members of the Children's Radio Choir, Sofia, January 31, 1986 (BTA Photo/Zhivko Angelov)*

concert stage of the world expo, our young singers will have the opportunity to showcase their performance prowess.

The Bulgarian Radio and Television Children's Choir is visiting Japan from August 14 to September 26. During this time, the choir is scheduled to perform 25 solo concerts under the baton of Hristo Nedyalkov in major cities across the country—from the northernmost to the southernmost regions.

Stereo recordings for a long-playing gramophone record are planned to be made in Tokyo. Some musical and creative circles in Japan show great interest in that record. They will organize a showcase rehearsal-concert of the choir in the city of Shizuoka in front of choral conductors from Japan. Along with the films made during previous tours, this effort aims to explore the creative experience of our renowned children's choir.





## BILIANA STANOYLOVICH, PART OF THE CHOIR VISITING JAPAN: I HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF VISITING THE PAVILION

For our current issue of *LIK Magazine*, we reached out to Biliana Stanoylovich and asked her to look back at her memories when she herself was part of the Children's Radio Choir that visited the Land of the Rising Sun 55 years ago.

"The Bulgarian Pavilion at Expo-70 in Osaka welcomed its guests from early morning till the end of the day with a performance by the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) Children's Choir of the song *Rodino* (Motherland) by Peter Stupel, projected nonstop on a large screen above the entrance to the pavilion. It had become popular with hundreds of staff serving EXPO-70, and while our choir was touring the many pavilions at the exhibition on September 1, everyone recognized us and wanted to hear us live... I was one of the 36 choir members and have fond memories of visiting the pavilion," she said. Stanoylovich

said that after graduating from 22nd High School in Sofia, she continued her studies in Japan in 1974 with a scholarship from Tokai University. The scholarship was awarded specifically to a member of the BNR Children's Choir. "After that, my whole life path was somehow connected with Japan. From 1994 to 2018, I was assistant to nine Japanese ambassadors at the Embassy of Japan in Sofia," she said.

Biliana Stanoylovich recalled that the 1970 tour, which coincided with Expo-70 in Osaka, was one of the Children's Radio Choir's three major impresario tours of Japan, which took place from 1969 to 1972. According to her, each concert of the Children's Radio Choir was a kind of triumph and confirmation of its high singing art under the conducting mastery of Maestro Hristo Nedyalkov. The applause at the end of each concert was unceasing, and the choir



Biliana Stanoylovich  
(Personal Archive Photo)

performed at least three songs in an encore. At the end of the concert the performers were showered with bouquets and baskets of flowers.

"The Japanese are renowned masters of flower arranging. It's no coincidence that the traditional Japanese art of



A concert by the Children's Radio Choir conducted by Hristo Nedyalkov, Sofia, May 12, 1988  
(BTA Photo/Georgi Kazakov)

flower arranging, ikebana, literally means to bring flowers to life," Stanoylovich said.

"After the concerts we were greeted by numerous fans, most of them around our age, outside the dressing rooms. We exchanged souvenirs, as well as contact addresses and correspondence. These contacts remain active to this day," she said. She added that some of their most ardent fans followed them from city to city, from concert to concert. "Our Japanese peers impressed us with their casualness and friendliness in communication. At first glance, they seemed a bit naïve, but upon longer contact, they proved to be very kind and forthcoming, showing

extreme inquisitiveness. Most had heard almost nothing about Bulgaria. We told them about our country, about Sofia, about our families and our schools, which brought us closer and closer," Biliana Stanoylovich shared.

According to her, now that the Bulgarian National Radio Children's Choir has been on a total of 18 concert tours in Japan from 1967 to 2007, we can confidently say that it has played a significant role in promoting mutual understanding and ongoing musical and cultural exchange between the two countries. "That is why when a Japanese hears the name of Bulgaria, his first association is with

the Bulgarian National Radio Children's Choir, Bulgarian yogurt and the Bulgarian wrestler in the Japanese professional sumo league Kaloyan Mahlyanov known by his Japanese nickname Kotooshu," she pointed out.

"The Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-70 in Osaka contributed to the fame of the Children's Choir, including with the choir's song, which was played on a huge screen on the pavilion's walls," said Ms Stanoylovich, adding that even today the Bulgarian National Radio Children's Choir under the baton of Maestra Venecia Karamanova continues to build on the Japanese-Bulgarian ties in the field of musical and cultural exchange.

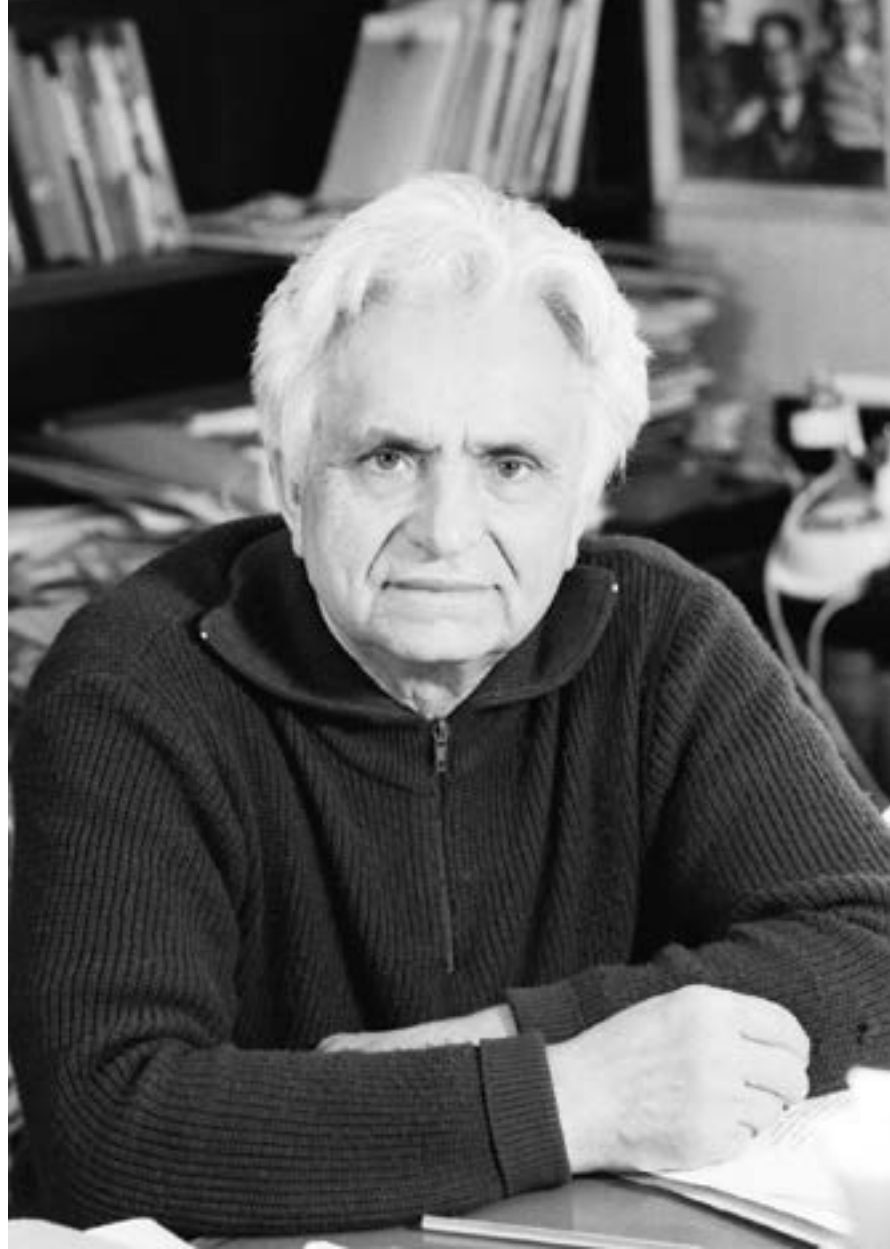
The Children's Radio Choir under the baton of Hristo Nedyalkov performs Ivan Vazov's "I Am Bulgarian" at a concert celebrating amateur artistic talent in the capital, Sofia, July 11, 1974  
(BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)







## WRITER ASSEN BOSSEV IN 1986: CHILDREN'S RADIO CHOIR IS A WORLD WONDER



Writer, children's literature author, journalist, and translator Assen Bossev, Sofia, April 4, 1988  
(BTA Photo/Bozhidar Todorov)

During the tour to Japan in 1970 the Children's Radio Choir was accompanied by writer Assen Bossev. In March 1986, at a celebration of the choir's anniversary, the artist

gave a speech preserved in the archives of the Bulgarian National Radio. The media provided the recording to LIK Magazine. Published below are excerpts from Bossev's speech.

"For me the Children's Radio Choir is a world wonder. I have witnessed how its songs and concerts are welcomed as a Bulgarian miracle abroad, around the world," said Assen Bossev and added that with their songs the young artists have popularized Bulgaria.

The writer said he was lucky enough to be with them on their tour of Japan in 1970. "That tour was not only unforgettable for me, it left an indelible impression on my life. We toured Japan from the northern islands to the southernmost islands of that country. A concert followed another concert, followed another concert. I listened to those concerts, and I could not get enough. I listened, I listened, I listened, and when we came back to Bulgaria, I got a ticket for the next concert that the radio choir had planned, I sat down and listened one more time. The longing, my desire to hear your songs has never faded," he stressed.

"I witnessed how the songs of the Children's Radio Choir were received in Japan. The Radio Choir took over that country," the writer recalled. According to him, the whole of Japan talked about the Children's Radio Choir



Assen Bossev surrounded by schoolchildren during a celebration of International Children's Book Day, Sofia, April 15, 1988  
(BTA Photo/Dimitar Altankov)

whose work was promoted by the country's radio and television. "Children sing, Japan listens. Academics, professors, composers, teachers – they all are listening... They accepted the Children's Radio Choir as a school of children's singing. A school that the Japanese felt they should learn from," he recalled.

According to Assen Bossev, Japan leaves the impression that it is a super country in terms of technology. "But this super country came to learn from the super singing, from the super choir that came from Bulgaria. I remember that 500 teachers from various Japanese cities gathered in one night to

listen to lectures by comrade Hristo Nedyalkov. He was to show them how is it that this wondrous conductor gets such voices out of these children. And they sat and listened and learned..." In Bossev's words, it is a great source of pride that a country so advanced in precision technology and mechanics-electronics comes to learn from none other but the Children's Radio Choir.

The writer said that he witnessed how the Japanese children welcomed the Bulgarian choristers. "Japanese children came from hundreds of kilometres away without even being able to enter the hall to listen, because even the big

halls were filled with listeners. And if they could not get in, they waited outside to act as a guard of honour when the Children's Radio Choir comes out – to greet them, to give them a present, to give them a flower as they board the bus for departure... I remember how children would come from another town, 200-300 kilometres away. They would come by train just to say hello to a friend of theirs they knew from a previous visit of the choir, to see them, to give them a flower or a present," the writer said. Assen Bossev described this as "an astonishing success for Bulgarian singing art and Bulgarian culture".



BULGARIAN YOGURT – FROM THE THRACIANS TO MARS



LB Bulgaricum Photo

Across all continents, yogurt is synonymous with Bulgaria, and Bulgarian yogurt is associated with health and strength. From Germany and Norway to Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, and even distant Guatemala, millions of people know and enjoy its exceptional qualities, thanks to the starter cultures exported by the state-owned dairy company LB Bulgaricum.

Bulgarian yogurt is a favourite of many well-known figures, past and present. The late Pope Francis once shared that he was raised on it by his Argentine grandmother who

used to buy yogurt cultures from a local pharmacy. As far back as the 15th century, French King Louis XI reportedly cured his severe stomach pains with Bulgarian yogurt. Just last year, NASA conducted research into whether Bulgarian yogurt could be produced on Mars as part of future astronauts' diets. In other words, the past, present, and future belong to it!

According to various studies, Bulgarian yogurt was made as far back as Thracian times, by the ancient people who inhabited the region centuries before the birth of Christ.

However, it became world-famous in the early 20th century, when Russian Nobel laureate and biologist Ilya Mechnikov [also spelled Élie Metchnikoff] discovered that Bulgaria had the highest number of centenarians out of 36 countries he studied. He linked this to the beneficial effects of the bacteria found in Bulgarian yogurt.

During this research, the question arose: what exactly causes milk to ferment into yogurt? The answer came from Bulgarian microbiologist Dr Stamen Grigorov who, after thousands of experiments, isolated the

bacterium responsible for this transformation. He presented his findings at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. In honour of Bulgaria, the bacterium was later named *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*.

Bulgarians have been making yogurt at home for centuries and still do, but it was not until the 1960s that industrial production began. In 1960, the state-owned Dairy Industry company was founded, now known as LB Bulgaricum. The company became a guardian of tradition, preserving and improving the recipes for original Bulgarian dairy

products. Nowadays, it licenses the production of authentic Bulgarian yogurt with original cultures both at home and abroad. LB Bulgaricum is the only dairy company with its own research centre, where scientists develop new, health-beneficial cultures. It also holds one of the world's largest collections of dairy bacteria and starter cultures – a true treasure trove. In recent months, the company has focused on preserving traditions while modernizing its operations. The results speak for themselves – sales are up, and revenue is growing. CEO Zhivko Zhivkov recently shared with pride that more and more

young people are choosing LB Bulgaricum as their preferred employer.

Bulgaria is also considered the birthplace of yogurt for another reason: its territory hosts the highest concentration of high-quality bacteria needed for fermentation. Unlike Greek or Turkish yogurt, Bulgarian yogurt is made using strains and methods that preserve calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, water-soluble vitamins, and other nutrients. It also contains a higher amount of *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, making it truly unique – and invaluable.

LB Bulgaricum Photo



## THE BULGARIAN OIL-PRODUCING ROSE

Kazanlak Municipality Mayor Galina Stoyanova  
(Kazanlak Municipality Photo)

*"Rose is the only thing you can take when you leave this world,  
simply because it does not belong to this world."*

– Ancient Persian Proverb

The Bulgarian oil-producing rose is one of our national treasures that has been known worldwide for centuries. Whenever someone asks where it grows, we immediately think of Kazanlak (Central Bulgaria) and the Valley of Roses.

Kazanlak is a cultural and historical destination that unites two of Bulgaria's great riches: the beautiful and fragrant rose, and the ancient Thracian heritage. A visit to the Valley of Roses reveals endless fields of oil-producing roses used to produce the famous rose oil and offers a journey through the cultural, historical, and archaeological legacy of the Thracians.

The genus *Rosa* originates from small, evergreen, tree-like roses that once thrived in the humid woodlands of India, China, East Africa, and America. Thanks to its decorative qualities and pleasant fragrance, the rose has captivated

humans since ancient times. Its widespread use dates back to the flourishing slave-owning societies thousands of years ago, particularly in the fertile river valleys of the Indus, Amu Darya, Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates. In Assyria, Babylon, India, China, Persia, and Egypt, rose petals and fruits were used to produce aromatic oils, wine, tea, medicines, and more.

The later years of the Roman Empire were marked by the development of perfumery with Capua as its main centre. The scent of roses, lavender, camphor, and mint accompanied wealthy Romans everywhere. Many ancient peoples believed in the divine origin of the rose and created

various legends about it. Anacreon writes that the ancient Greeks associated the birth of the rose with the birth of Aphrodite, the most beautiful of the goddesses, born from the foam of the sea. The Romans believed that roses were born from the passionate kisses of Venus, the goddess of flowers, spring, and love, showered upon her beloved hunter Adonis.

Legend has it that a young dervish visiting the Kazanlak region fell in love with a beautiful Bulgarian maiden, but fate separated them forever. As a memento and a token of his love, he took the Kazanlak rose back to his homeland. Locals say the oil-producing rose was brought to the Kazanlak area from

Kazanlak Municipality Photo



Asia Minor at the beginning of the Ottoman era and was first planted near the modern town of Shipka.

Over centuries of practice, Bulgarian rose growers drawing from their experience in distilling rakia (a double-distilled fruit brandy) developed and introduced numerous improvements to the process of rose oil production through double distillation. Thanks to this technology, Bulgarian rose oil boasts the highest quality and is the most long-lasting rose oil in the world.

The celebration of the queen of flowers – the rose – has a long and fascinating history. In ancient times, grand festivals were organized, with roses celebrated above all else for their beauty and scent. This tradition persisted through the Middle Ages and the Bulgarian National Revival. Perhaps that is why Bulgarian rose growers established a special week and day dedicated to the rose's beauty, to youth, and to joy.

In 1903, the citizens of Kazanlak organized the first ever Rose Festival to celebrate beauty, flowers, and charity. They held exhibitions and sold the rose harvest, traditional rose oil, postcards with images of the Rose Valley.

The festival evolved further during the 1930s, when special discounted train tickets were issued for the Bulgarian railways, inviting people from across the country to visit the Rose Valley during the so-called Rose Week.

In 1971, the government decreed

the Kazanlak Rose Festival a national event, thus helping the Queen of Roses to turn into a national symbol.

From the early days of the festival until today, the crown of the Queen of Roses has remained an enduring symbol of her authority in the Valley of the Thracian Kings. Despite the changes the festival and the selection process have undergone, the crown has consistently adorned the queen's head.

Thanks to the rose-growing industry and the one-of-a-kind Rose Festival, interest in Kazanlak has grown worldwide. Bulgarian rose oil has gained incredible popularity, and Kazanlak has formed sister-city relationships with cities across three continents. In 1995, the city of Fukuyama, Japan, joined Kazanlak's international family, followed 15 years later by the city of Munakata. To celebrate its bond with Fukuyama, the people of Kazanlak created a statue called The Japanese Woman and erected it in the town centre. In Japan, where the scent of the damascene rose is greatly revered, June 2 is

celebrated as Rose Day.

The close relationship between the two countries fostered by the mayors of the sister cities is further strengthened by the Japanese love for Bulgarian rose oil and yogurt. Curiously, Empress Masako of Japan uses cosmetics containing Bulgarian rose oil. Prior to this, the company producing her cosmetics, Kotobuki, conducted research on different types of rose oils from around the world. The study revealed that Bulgarian rose oil's ingredients have the most beneficial effect on human skin. Every year during the Rose Festival, Kazanlak welcomes an increasing number of tourists from Japan. Some have even brought the damascene rose to their hometowns, but so far, there is only one known garden that has managed to preserve the plant, which is extremely difficult to grow outside the Valley of Roses.

And so the years go by...

The excitement lives on...

Until today's Rose Festival, whose grand finale always takes place on the first weekend of June!



Kazanlak Municipality Photo



FROM THE BTA ARCHIVE:  
DIPLOMATIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
BULGARIA AND JAPAN

*Diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Japan were established on October 12, 1939. After a temporary break between 1944 and 1959, Bulgaria opened its Embassy in Tokyo in 1964, and Japan opened its Embassy in Sofia in 1966, according to the Reference department of the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA). Over the decades, relations between the two countries have developed in various fields – diplomacy, economy, trade, and investment, as well as in tourism, culture, exploration of traditions and folklore, and understanding the daily life of both peoples.*

*News about visits of Bulgarian political leaders to Japan, reports on visits by members of the Japanese Imperial family to Bulgaria, and information on various initiatives and cooperation between the two countries hold a worthy place in the news stream of BTA. In LIK magazine, we present highlights from just a small portion of them, to illustrate the deep spiritual connection between Japan and Bulgaria no matter the geographical distance.*

1939

"The Bulgarian government has approved the appointment of Mr Teruo Hashiya, former counsellor at the Japanese Embassy in Warsaw, as Minister Plenipotentiary of Japan in Sofia," reads a news article published in the BTA Bulletin on October 17, 1939.

Later, on December 28, a BTA publication reports on the solemn audience where His Majesty King of the Bulgarians receives Japan's Minister Plenipotentiary – His Excellency Mr Teruo Hashiya, who presents his credentials.

"I am very happy to be the first chosen by my government to establish relations and heartfelt friendship between our two nations," Mr. Hashiya says in his speech.

The Bulgarian monarch accepts the credentials. "I accept with

sincere pleasure your assurances that you will dedicate your efforts to maintaining and further developing the relations between our two countries. [...] I am happy to welcome today, in your person, the first diplomatic envoy of Japan and to warmly greet you, Minister, with a heartfelt welcome among us," the King responds.

1942

A news report from February 11 tells of the treaty of friendship and cultural cooperation between Japan and Bulgaria. It is ceremoniously signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Masayuki Tani and the Bulgarian Minister Plenipotentiary Mr Yanko Peev.

Mr Tani delivers a speech praising the bravery of the Bulgarians, "who are valiantly fighting for the new world order".

In response, Mr Peev emphasizes the brilliant successes achieved

by the Japanese, successes that strongly encourage his compatriots.

1959

In September, a BTA issue announces that the governments of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Japan, wishing to restore diplomatic relations, have instructed the Bulgarian Ambassador in Warsaw, Hristo Boev, and the Japanese Ambassador in Warsaw, Saburo Ohta, to negotiate toward this goal. As a result, the governments reach full agreement, and on September 12, in Warsaw, Ambassadors Boev and Ohta exchange letters restoring diplomatic relations between the two countries.

1977

On March 29, at Park Hotel Moskva in Sofia, a meeting is held between a 60-member

Japanese trade delegation and representatives of Bulgarian business circles. The delegations are led by the chairman of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Penko Penkov, and Yugoro Kotsu, advisor at Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Representatives of major Japanese industrial companies, specialized trading corporations, the import-export bank, ministries, and organizations are introduced to Bulgaria's economic achievements.

They discuss opportunities for developing trade and technical-industrial cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan.

1978

"A fruitful collaboration has begun between Bulgarian and Japanese scientists in the field of essential oil crop breeding. At the Institute of Roses, Essential and Medical Cultures, the experience of the Institute for Breeding Research at Tokyo University of Agriculture will be applied in radiation-induced selection. In recent years, work has been done in Bulgaria on a new method that alters plant qualities through radiation or chemical substances," says a report from Kazanlak dated March 14.

It is also mentioned that contacts with the Tokyo-based company Masahisa Aoki continue through exchange of literature on the breeding and cultivation of decorative roses.

1979

On October 10, at the invitation of the Chairman of the State Council Todor Zhivkov, His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akihito (as the Emperor's representative) and his wife, Her Imperial Highness Princess Michiko, arrive in Bulgaria for an official visit. They stay at the Boyana Residence, where comrade Zhivkov hosts a formal dinner in their honour.

Crown Prince Akihito gives a toast: "Nine years ago, you visited the international exhibition in Osaka as Prime Minister of Bulgaria. Your country participated with a pavilion depicting the native Balkan Mountains. That participation at the EXPO and Your Excellency's visit laid the foundation for friendship between the two countries and left a lasting impression in the hearts of the Japanese people." He adds that Todor Zhivkov's visit to Japan the previous year further contributed to mutual understanding and friendly relations.

1981

The Japanese public marks the 1,300th anniversary of the Bulgarian state with numerous initiatives. Exhibitions, concerts, and evenings organized in various cities enjoy great interest. These events significantly contribute to the cultural exchange between the two countries, reads a report from September 14.

On the occasion of the outstanding anniversary, Deputy

Chairman of the Committee for Culture Todor Ribarov visits Japan. In an interview with a BTA reporter, he notes that his meetings with prominent figures in political, social, and cultural life are further proof of Bulgaria's growing international prestige and the deepening of relations between the two nations.

1987

On June 11, at the invitation of Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Council for Spiritual Development Georgi Yordanov, Prince Takahito Mikasa, a member of the Japanese Imperial Family, and his wife, Princess Yuriko Mikasa, arrive in Bulgaria.

On June 12, at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Prince Takahito Mikasa is awarded the Honorary Doctor title, recognizing both his academic achievements in history and archaeology and his contribution to strengthening spiritual relations between the two nations.

1990

On November 11, BTA's special correspondent in Tokyo, Georgi Apostolov, reports on the upcoming coronation ceremony of the new Japanese Emperor Akihito, scheduled for the following day, which will be attended by 3,500 official guests. At the invitation of the Japanese side, the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Zhelyu Zhelev, also arrives in the city to attend the coronation.



Prince Mikasa, a member of the Japanese Imperial Family, arrives on a visit to Bulgaria, Sofia, June 11, 1987 (BTA Photo/Stefan Tihov)

During his five-day visit, the Bulgarian President is scheduled to meet with the Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, to hold talks with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and

Industry, Taro Nakayama and Kabun Muto, with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Yoshio Sakurauchi, and with representatives of the Japanese business circles.

On November 13, the news covers the meeting with the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Kabun Muto. He states that Japan can assist Bulgaria in its transition to a market economy by sharing its experience in economic management, increasing labour productivity, and the efficient use of energy resources.

## 1995

On November 24, the conductor Prof. Hristo Nedyalkov announces that the Children's Radio Choir will depart on its 11th tour across Japan on July 12, 1996, before a ceremony to award him with the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Rosette by the Japanese Ambassador Yoshihiro Jibiki.

President Zhelyu Zhelev and Princess Sayako, Sofia, October 3, 1996 (BTA Photo/Ruslan Donev)



The Japanese government awards Prof. Nedyalkov with the imperial order for his outstanding contribution to the development of Bulgarian-Japanese cultural relations over 30 years, stated Mr Jibiki.

## 1996

On September 29, Japanese Princess Sayako arrives in Bulgaria at the invitation of the Bulgarian government for the opening of the Days of Japanese Culture in Bulgaria. During her stay, the Princess is received by President Zhelyu Zhelev and holds talks with Prime Minister Zhan Videnov. Her visit includes trips to Veliko Tarnovo and the Rila Monastery.

"I am very pleased to visit your country and to attend the tea ceremony that will mark the opening of the seventh consecutive Days of Japanese Culture forum here," said Her Imperial Highness Princess Sayako on September 30. She shares that her interest in Bulgaria was sparked mainly by the lasting cultural values built over time, known not only in Japan but also around the world.

## 1997

At the beginning of November, by decree No. 459, the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Petar Stoyanov, awards the Emperor of Japan His Majesty Akihito the Stara Planina Order with ribbon. He also awards Her Majesty Empress Michiko with the golden Order of the Rose for her contribution to the development



President Petar Stoyanov presents Japan's Ambassador to Bulgaria, Akira Matsui, with the Order of Stara Planina, First Class, Sofia, October 17, 2001 (BTA Photo/Tihomir Penov)

of friendly relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and Japan.

Among the recipients is Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto, Prime Minister of Japan. He is awarded the Stara Planina Order with ribbon.

\*\*\*

On November 16, Bulgarian President Petar Stoyanov is greeted with a 21-gun salute at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. He joined by his wife leads an official delegation.

Stoyanov meets with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who describes the high-level visit as a signal that Japan fully supports Bulgaria's reforms, which, in Hashimoto's words, began with the election of Petar Stoyanov as president.

Their Imperial Majesties – Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko – welcome Petar Stoyanov and Antonina Stoyanova in the presence of all members of the Japanese cabinet.

They also host a dinner at the Akasaka Imperial Palace. "The historical paths of our two countries are different, but they are similar in their efforts to preserve culture and art," notes His Imperial Majesty Akihito.

## 2004

On December 13, Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha arrives on a five-day visit to Japan. He and his wife Margarita are received by Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. He is the first prime minister to be invited for tea after an audience by Emperor Akihito – an act





Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and his Japanese counterpart, Junichiro Koizumi, sign a joint declaration to strengthen bilateral ties, Tokyo, December 15, 2004 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Shokov)

considered a gesture of great respect and honour.

will lift visa requirements for Bulgarian citizens for short stays.

On December 15, the Bulgarian Prime Minister meets with his counterpart Junichiro Koizumi. The two government leaders sign a Joint Declaration of Partnership between Bulgaria and Japan. The declaration states that Japan

In November, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivalyo Kalfin pays an official visit to Japan. He is received by the country's Prime

## 2007

Minister Yasuo Fukuda. The Bulgarian Foreign Minister expresses gratitude for Japan's support of Bulgaria's reforms in the form of preferential loans, non-repayable aid, and technical cooperation in both the economic and social spheres.

On November 5, Ivalyo Kalfin inaugurates Bulgaria's second honorary consulate in the Land of the Rising Sun. Shinichi Munemasa is appointed as Honorary Consul in the city of Fukuoka. The consular district covers 12 prefectures across the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku.

Bulgaria's first honorary consulate in Japan was opened in December 2003, with Hisashi Nakayama appointed as Honorary Consul based in the city of Yokohama.

During an official visit to Japan, President Georgi Parvanov and his spouse, Zorka Parvanova, are received in audience by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, Tokyo, January 29, 2009 (BTA Photo/Valentin Nikolov)



## 2009

On January 25, President Georgi Parvanov arrives on an official visit to Japan. The visit marks the beginning of the Year of Bulgaria in Japan, commemorating 50 years since the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Head of State and his wife, Zorka Parvanova, are received by Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. The President also meets with Prime Minister Taro Aso and the speakers of both chambers of the Japanese Parliament.

In Sofia, the anniversary celebrations begin on February 3 with a concert of traditional Japanese music performed by the band Yosoro (taiko drums, shamisen, and shinobue flute).

In May, Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino make an official visit to Bulgaria at the invitation of President Georgi Parvanov. On May 15, the President and Prince Akishino inaugurate the Thracian Art Museum Centre in the Eastern Rhodopes near the village of Aleksandrovo. The cultural institution's building is funded by the Japanese government and houses a precise replica of the Thracian tomb.

On December 2, the anniversary celebrations officially conclude with the Living National Treasures performance from Japan – a puppet theatre production for adults presented at the Ivan Vazov National Theatre. Bulgarian

audiences witness for the first time the rare form of Japanese puppet theatre *Hachioji Kuruma Ningyo* and the ancient narrative art *Shinnai joruri*.

## 2011

On January 22, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov arrives on a work visit to Japan. During his stay, the Prime Minister attends the final of the January sumo tournament and presents the Bulgarian Government Cup. Bulgarian sumo wrestler Kaloyan Mahlyanov Kotooshu participates in the competition as well.

On the third day of the visit, Borissov has an audience with Prince Naruhito. Later, the Bulgarian Premier meets Prime Minister Naoto Kan and holds talks with Hiromasa Yonekura, Chairman of the Japan Business Federation Nippon Keidanren. Borissov also meets with the President of the House of Representatives (Lower House) of the Japanese Parliament, Takahiro Yokomichi, and the President of the House of Councillors (Upper House), Takeo Nishioka.

## 2012

The official visit of the President of the National Assembly Tsetska Tsacheva to Japan begins in April with the unveiling of a bas-relief of Vasil Levski at the Bulgarian Embassy in Tokyo and meetings with Bulgarian students and Japanese scholars of Bulgarian studies. The Bulgarian parliamentary delegation led by Tsacheva visits the Land of

the Rising Sun at the invitation of Kenji Hirata, President of the Upper House of the Japanese Parliament.

The bas-relief is a replica of the Levski's monument in downtown Sofia. The sculpture is donated by the 41st National Assembly and the Vasil Levski Foundation to commemorate the 175th anniversary of Levski's birth.

## 2014

The Japanese officially declare June 2 as Rose Day in their country at the initiative of Hiroshi Harada, a long-time importer of Bulgarian rose oil to Japan.

During the 15th Rose Festival charity reception organized by the Bulgarian Embassy in Tokyo in May, Harada explains that the date is chosen because in his language, "June 2" sounds like *ro zu*, which closely resembles the name of the beautiful flower.

"When we started marking this celebration, I never imagined we'd last 15 years, but I hope we'll celebrate the 25th edition as well," Harada added.

The Rose Queen Yulia Popova presents an honorary certificate from the Kazanlak mayor to Hiroshi Harada for his exceptional contributions to promoting Bulgarian culture and the Bulgarian rose.

## 2015

Every morning, more than half of Japanese households have





President Rosen Plevneliev presents Japan's Ambassador to Bulgaria, Takashi Koizumi, with the Order of Stara Planina, First Class, Sofia, July 11, 2016 (BTA Photo/Asen Tonev)

breakfast with Bulgarian yogurt, a study by the Japanese company Meiji Corporation reveals. It is presented on April 8 during a meeting between Bulgarian Minister of Economy Bozhidar Lukarski and the company's president Kazuo Kawamura, who is visiting Bulgaria with a delegation.

Since 1972, Meiji has been producing Bulgarian yogurt under license from the Bulgarian state-owned company LB Bulgaricum. Currently, Meiji Bulgaria yogurt is more well-known in Japan than brands like Coca-Cola and Danone, and 57.5% of Japanese people associate Bulgaria with yogurt, according to the study.

Kawamura expresses his gratitude for the excellent partnership with the Bulgarian government and notes that since 2013, Meiji has

also been producing Bulgarian yogurt for markets in China, Thailand, and Singapore.

Prime Minister Boyko Borissov meets with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Sofia, January 14, 2018 (BTA Photo/Hristo Kasabov)



## 2017

On May 11, during a working meeting at Dondukov 2, Vice President Iliana Iotova and Akiko Igaya, Executive Director of the Japan-Bulgaria Friendship and Cultural Exchange Association, discuss bilateral economic and cultural cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan. According to Ms Igaya, Bulgaria serves as a gateway to Europe for small and medium-sized enterprises from Japan.

The meeting also covers the establishment of a Japanese centre named Kizuna in Sofia. Igaya notes that the Japanese centre is to be completed in 2019, a year of three important anniversaries: 110 years of relations between the Bulgarian royal and Japanese imperial families, 80 years of diplomatic relations between Japan and Bulgaria, and 60 years since their restoration.

## 2018

"We are extremely happy to welcome you to our country. We highly value this first-ever visit to Bulgaria by a Japanese Prime Minister, especially in this significant year when we are holding the rotating presidency of the EU Council for the first time," says President Rumen Radev during his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Sofia on January 15.

Radev emphasizes that Japan is a traditional friend and priority partner of Bulgaria, sharing common values and similar positions on topics of international importance.

\*\*\*

In December, the Council of Ministers adopts a decision to open an honorary consulate in the Japanese city of Fukuoka, with a consular district covering Kyushu-Okinawa and Shikoku. Hiroshi Munemasa is appointed as Honorary Consul.

The consular district includes 12 prefectures with a population of nearly 17 million people. There are over 40 universities in the region, with many hosting Bulgarian students.

## 2019

President Rumen Radev visits Japan from October 21 to 24 for the inauguration of the new Emperor Naruhito. During the visit, he holds a working meeting with the leadership of the Japanese

corporation Meiji. "The long-standing successful partnership between Bulgaria and the Meiji Corporation strengthens trust and serves as an example for Japanese investors to implement their projects in our country," says President Rumen Radev during the meeting.

On October 23, President Radev speaks to students at Toyo University in Tokyo and is awarded Doctor Honoris Causa by the university.

## 2023

The Japanese Minister of Economy Yasutoshi Nishimura visits the Institute for Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence, and Technology (INSAIT) in Sofia at the beginning of May. The opportunities for cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan

in science and technology are among the topics of the meeting. It is the first visit of a Japanese Minister of Economy to Bulgaria in 50 years, and the visit to INSAIT is the first stop of his programme.

\*\*\*

At the end of July, a bas-relief of the Japanese samurai Seigo Yamazawa, who participated in the 1878-1879 Russo-Turkish War of liberation and advocated for the Bulgarian national cause, is unveiled in the Sveti Vlas resort.

The bas-relief is sponsored by the Ambassador of Japan in Sofia Narahira Hiroshi and the brothers Dinko and Yordan Dinev, co-chairs of the Bulgarian Memory – Dinevi Brothers Foundation. The Seigo Yamazawa monument is placed on the Alley of Nations at the yacht marina in the resort.

President Rumen Radev meets with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is visiting Bulgaria, Sofia, January 15, 2018 (BTA Photo/Hristo Kasabov)



## SHORT HISTORY OF WORLD EXPOS



*Ceremonies and folklore performances before the opening of the World Hunting Exposition in Bulgaria, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981 (BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)*

The tradition of world expositions, or Expos, organized to present the achievements of industrialization and economy, and support trade relations between countries, was established more than a century and a half ago, in 1851. The first event of such a rank, the Great Exhibition of 1851, was organized in London. Even today, decades later, holding an Expo in any part of the world turns the host country into an attractive destination not only for traders, businesspersons and political leaders but also for many tourists. World exhibitions are sometimes defined as a mirror of the time, because they provide a reflection of the world at the time of the

Expo, showcasing its highest achievements to date in various spheres of life, not only in economy but also in science, architecture and even art. According to researchers, world exhibitions can be classified into three categories according to the time they were held and the topics they addressed. The industrialization period (1851-1938), the cultural exchange period (1939-1987), and the national branding period when participating countries build their image and show their national identity to the world (1988-present).

The cities where the exhibitors' pavilions are located change their

appearance forever sometimes because of the renovation and modernization that the area dedicated to the respective exhibition undergoes, but often the change is also due to the special buildings, towers or thematic structures that are built especially for it and then remain part of the city. One example is the Eiffel Tower, built for the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889, which has since turned into the emblem of the French capital. Many technological discoveries or even everyday conveniences, such as the zippers we fasten our jackets with, are first introduced to the general public at world exhibitions.

## THE GREAT EXHIBITION

The first world fair was held from May 1 to October 11, 1851, in London's Hyde Park, with participants from over 25 countries. The full name of the event was the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, but it became popularly known simply as the Great Exhibition. It was also called the Crystal Palace Exhibition in reference to the temporary glass structure in which it was held.

A Royal Commission established a year earlier by Queen Victoria

was responsible for the event. The principal organizer was her husband, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, supported by Sir Henry Cole, a businessman both familiar with industry and fond of art.

The Great Exhibition was held in an era marked by the Industrial Revolution. Its focus was on human and technological progress. Its theme – Industry of all Nations. Over the entire period it was open, the event was visited by over 6 million people. Among them, celebrities

such as scientist Charles Darwin and writer Charlotte Brontë. Visitors could see the newest inventions: an early version of a fax machine, a printing press that could make several thousand copies per hour. The British Great Western Railway company displayed its latest locomotive models. A special ink that helped blind people read writing by touch was also exhibited.

## WORLD EXPOS TO THE PRESENT

At the beginning, the interval between two exhibitions would vary.

**In 1855, the second world expo, Exposition Universelle, was held in Paris, France.**

It was organized at the initiative of French Emperor Napoleon III who dreamed that the exhibition in his country would be on a larger scale compared to the previous expo in England. The Crimean War (1853-1856) delayed it for a while, but the Expo opened on May 15 and continued until November 15, 1855. Agriculture, Industry and Fine Arts was the theme that united the 28 participating countries. Along with agriculture and industry

presented at the exhibition, rich French art was also on display. The first lawn mower and the first practical sewing machine Singer were among the inventions presented at the show.

**From May 1 to November 1, 1862,** the third International Exhibition was held back in London. Its theme was Industry and Art. There were 39 participating countries.

**From April 1 to November 3, 1867,** the next Exposition Universelle was organized in Paris with 42 participating countries. Its theme was Agriculture, Industry and Fine Arts. It saw 15 million visitors.

**In 1873, from May 1 to October 31,** the World's Fair was held in Vienna. Participants from 35 countries took part. The theme was Culture and Education.

**From May 10 to November 10, 1876,** the Centennial Exposition was held in Philadelphia, USA, under the name Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine. Participants from 35 countries took part.

**The Exposition Universelle in 1878** was organized in Paris from May 20 to November 10 under the name New Technologies. There were representatives from 35 countries.

**From October 1, 1880, to April**



**30, 1881**, the International Exhibition was held in the Australian city of Melbourne with representatives from 33 countries. Its theme was Arts, Manufactures and Agricultural and Industrial Products of all Nations.

**From April 8 to December 10, 1888**, Barcelona hosted the Universal Exhibition. Thirty countries presented their pavilions. The theme was Fine and Industrial Art.

**From May 6 to October 31, 1889**, France organized its fourth Exposition Universelle on the occasion of the centenary of the French Revolution. More than 61,000 exhibitors from 35 countries participated in the event, which was visited by over 32 million people. The Eiffel Tower, which was built for its opening and took two years, two months and five days to complete, became the symbol of the fair. This Expo was organized at the pinnacle of the Second Industrial Revolution and demonstrated the latest technological possibilities. Thomas Edison himself arrived in Paris to show his strip coiled lamp to the people in the French capital. Armand Peugeot and Leon Serpollet demonstrated an early version of the automobile – the first steam-powered tricycle.

**From May 1 to October 30, 1893**, the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago, USA. Its theme was the Fourth Centenary of the Discovery of

America. Over 27 million people visited this exhibit, including Bulgarian writer and public figure Aleko Konstantinov.

**From May 10 to November 8, 1897**, 27 countries took part in the International Exposition in Brussels. The theme of the forum was Modern Life.

**From April 15 to November 12, 1890**, the Exposition Universelle was held in Paris. Representatives of 40 countries exhibited at the fair whose theme was The 19th Century: An Overview. Almost 51 million people visited the exhibit in the French capital, which changed as a result of this event. One of the changes was the first metro line opening. Scientific progress was at the focus of this Expo. The possibilities of astronomy were demonstrated through powerful telescopes that allowed detailed observation of the Moon surface. The event also showed the progress of cinema and photography. One of the first cinemas was established. Films by the Lumière brothers were shown on a large screen.

**From April 30 to December 1, 1904**, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was held in St. Louis, USA. The theme of the fair was the Celebration of the Centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. There were participants from 60 countries.

**From April 27 to November 6, 1905**, the International Exposition was held in the

city of Liege to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Belgium's independence.

**From April 28 to November 11, 1906**, the first World Expo in Italy was hosted by Milan. Its theme was Innovation in Transportation. The exhibitors came from 40 countries.

**From April 23 to November 7, 1910**, the Universal and International Exposition was held in Brussels. Its theme was Works of Art and Science, Agricultural and Industrial Products of All Nations. Representatives from 26 countries took part.

**From April 26 to November 3, 1913**, the International Universal Exhibition was held in the Belgian city of Ghent under the theme Peace, Industry and Art. Twenty-four countries joined the fair.

**In 1915, from February 20 to December 4**, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was held in San Francisco with 41 participating countries. The event celebrated the successful completion of the Panama Canal designated as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.

**From May 20, 1929, to January 15, 1930**, the International Exposition was held in Barcelona. Its theme was Industry, Art and Sport. The participants were from 29 countries.

**After a short interruption,**

**from May 27 to November 12, 1933, and from July 1 to October 31, 1934**, A Century of Progress International Exposition was held in Chicago. Its theme was The Independence among Industry and Scientific Research. It included participants from 21 countries. The event had over 38 million visitors.

**From April 27 to November 6, 1935**, the Universal and International Exposition was held in Brussels. It was the first under the auspices of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) and was designated as a first category General International Exposition. Its theme was related to Transport and was inspired by the celebration of the centenary of the construction of the first railway line in continental Europe, connecting Brussels and Mechelen.

**From May 25 to November 25, 1937**, a second category world fair called International Exposition of Arts and Technology in Modern Life was organized in Paris with 35 participating countries. The Spanish Civil War was raging at the time, signs of which could be seen on the country's pavilion. The works of avant-garde artists, including Pablo Picasso, were presented inside. Commissioned by the government of the Spanish Republic, Picasso created the painting *Guernica*, 3.5 metres high and 7.8 metres wide,

depicting the horrors of a war.

**The next second category General International Exposition was New York World's Fair held from April 30 to October 31, 1939, and from May 11 to October 27, 1940.**

The interruption was necessary due to the heated political situation in the world and the looming shadow of World War II. The motto of the Expo was Building the World of Tomorrow, and 54 countries participated.

**From December 8, 1949, to July 8, 1950**, the Bicentennial International Exhibition was organized in Port-au-Prince, the largest city in Haiti. It went under the theme The Festival of Peace. The event helped attract the attention of international tourists to Haiti.

**In 1958, from April 17 to October 19**, the World's Fair was held in Brussels. Its theme was A World View: A New Humanism. The forum attracted representatives from 39 participating countries. Emblematic for the exhibition was its centrepiece, the Atomium, which depicts a composition of nine stainless steel-clad spheres connected in the shape of a unit cell, the model of an iron crystal, magnified 165 billion times. It is one of the attractions of the Belgian capital to this day.

**From April 21 to October 21, 1962**, the Century 21 Exposition was organized in Seattle, USA. Its motto was Man in the Space Age, and 49 countries participated.

**In 1967, from April 28 to October 29**, the International and Universal Exposition was held in Montreal, Canada. It was entitled Man and his World. The event featured exhibitors from 62 countries and saw over 50 million visitors.

**From March 15 to September 13, 1970**, the World Exposition was held in Osaka, Japan. The theme, Progress and Harmony for Mankind, brought together 77 countries, including Bulgaria. The exhibition attracted 64 million visitors.

**In 1992, from April 20 to October 12**, the Universal Exhibition was held in the southern Spanish city of Seville with 108 participating countries. Its slogan was The Age of Discovery. The event was dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus.

**From June 1 to October 31, 2000**, the first world expo of the new millennium, was held in the German city of Hannover under the motto Humankind – Nature – Technology, and 174 countries participated. The event supported the establishment of a global dialogue for sustainable development and a balance

between humanity, nature and technology.

**In 2005, from March 25 to September 25,** 121 countries participated in the World Expo in Aichi, Japan. Its theme was Nature's Wisdom inspired by the Kyoto Protocol, an international document that was adopted in December 1997 in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep global warming under control. This Expo set the beginning of various initiatives that motivated citizens to behave more responsibly towards the planet.

**From May 1 to October 31,**

**2010,** the Expo Shanghai (China) was held under the motto Better City, Better Life. It set several records by covering the largest area, specifically 523 hectares, by having the largest international participation with 246 countries, and by welcoming the largest number of visitors – 73 million people.

**In 2015, from May 1 to October 31,** Italy hosted the International Registered Exhibition Expo 2015 Milan under the theme Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life, and 139 countries joined the event.

**The next World Expo was scheduled to be held in Dubai**

**in 2020** but was postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Eventually it took place from October 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022. Its theme was Connecting Minds, Creating the Future. There were 200 participating countries.

**When you hold the LIK issue in your hands, the Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, which takes place from April 13 to October 13, 2025, in Japan will already be a fact.**

A shot of the Italian pavilion at the World Expo, Milan, May 13, 2015  
(BTA Photo/Gabriela Golemanska)



## SPECIALIZED EXPOS

Specialized expos differ from general expositions in several aspects. They are limited in duration, between three weeks and three months; they take less space, and the pavilions are built by the organizers rather than by the participants. The latter may customize them according to their own interpretation. Specialized exhibitions present a precise subject of international interest as their theme.

The conditions for holding these exhibitions have also changed over the years.

The 1972 protocol sets the minimum interval between editions to be two years, with exceptions allowed by the BIE. The increased number of exhibitions in the following decades imposed the need for a moratorium, and in 1988 it was decided that their frequency would be once every 5 years, with only one specialized exhibition being held between two world exhibitions.

**In 1936, from May 15 to June 1,** the first specialized expo, The International Aerospace Exhibition, was held in the Swedish capital Stockholm. It was dedicated to aviation.

Eight countries participated in it.

**From May 14 to 22, 1938,** the Second International Aerospace Exhibition was organized in Finland, in the city of Helsinki. Representatives from 25 countries participated.

**In 1939, from May 20 to September 2,** the Belgian city of Liege hosted the special expo International Exhibition of the Art of Water on the occasion of the completion of the 122-kilometre Albert Canal in northeastern Belgium. Representatives from eight countries participated in the forum.

**In 1947, from July 10 to August 15,** a special expo under the theme of Urbanism and Housing was held in Paris, with the participation of 14 countries.

**From July 27 to August 13, 1949,** a special expo was held in Stockholm, Sweden. The theme was Sport and Physical Culture.

**Later in 1949, from September 24 to October 9,** a special expo, under the theme Rural Habitat was held in the French city of Lyon.

**From April 28 to May 20, 1951,** a special expo under the theme Textile was organized in the French city of Lille with 24 countries participating. The event was visited by over one and a half million people.

**The theme of the special expo in Rome from July 26 to October 31, 1953,** was Agriculture. It had over 1,700,000 visitors.

**From September 22 to October 14, 1953,** a special expo was held in Jerusalem, Israel. Its theme was the Conquest of the Desert, and 13 countries participated.

**In 1954, from May 15 to October 15,** a special expo was held in Naples, Italy, under the theme Navigation, and 25 countries participated.

**From May 25 to June 19, 1955,** a special expo was held in Turin, Italy. The theme was Sport, and 11 countries were represented.

**From June 10 to August 28, 1955,** a special expo was organized in the Swedish city of Helsingborg. Representatives from 10 countries participated in presenting the theme Modern Man in the Environment.



**In 1956, from May 21 to June 20**, a special expo was held in the Israeli city of Beit Dagan under the theme Citrus.

**From July 6 to September 29, 1957**, a special expo was organized in Berlin, Germany. Thirteen countries exhibited under the theme Reconstruction of Hansa District. The event was visited by one million people.

**From May 1 to October 31, 1961**, a special expo was held in the Italian city of Turin. Its theme was Man and his Work – A Century of Technological and Social Developments: Achievements and Prospects. Representatives from 19 countries participated, and about 5 million people visited.

**In 1965, from June 25 to October 3**, a special exposition under the name Transport was organized in the German city of Munich with 31 countries taking part.

**From April 6 to October 6, 1968**, a special exposition under the theme The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas was held in San Antonio, USA. Representatives from 23 countries participated, and the event was visited by over six million people.

**In 1971, from August 27 to September 30**, a special expo under the theme The Hunt through the World was organized in the capital of

Hungary, Budapest, with the participation of 35 countries.

**From May 4 to November 2, 1974**, the International Exposition on the Environment was held in Spokane, USA. Its theme was Celebrating Tomorrow's Fresh New Environment. Representatives from 10 countries participated. The event was visited by over five and a half million people.

**From July 20, 1975, to January 18, 1976**, a special exposition was held on the island of Okinawa, Japan, under the theme The Sea We Would Like to See. Representatives of 35 countries participated, and over three million people visited.

**In 1981, from June 14 to July 12**, an international specialized expo was organized in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv under the theme Earth – Planet of Life. Representatives from 70 countries participated.

**From May 1 to October 31, 1982**, the International Energy Exposition was held in Knoxville, USA. Its theme was Energy turns the World. Participants from 16 countries came. It had over 11 million visitors.

**In 1984, from May 12 to November 11**, the Louisiana World Exposition was organized in New Orleans, USA. Its theme was The World of Rivers – Fresh Water as a Source of Life. Participants

from 15 countries came. There were over seven million visitors.

**From March 17 to September 16, 1985**, an international specialized expo under the theme Dwellings and Surroundings – Science and Technology for Man at Home was held in the Japanese city of Tsukuba. Representatives from 48 countries participated. The event was visited by over 20 million people.

**From November 4 to 30, 1985**, an international specialized expo under the theme Inventions was organized in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Participants from 54 countries participated, and one million people visited the event.

**In 1986, from May 2 to October 13**, an international specialized expo under the theme Transportation and Communication: World in Motion – World in Touch was held in Vancouver, Canada, and 55 countries participated. There were over 22 million visitors.

**From April 30 to October 30, 1988**, an international specialized expo under the theme Leisure in the Age of Technology was organized in Brisbane, Australia. Representatives of 36 countries took part. Visitors numbered over 18 million.

**In 1991, from June 7 to July 7**, an international specialized

expo was held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Its theme was The Activity of Young People in the Service of a World of Peace. Nine countries had representatives at the forum.

**From May 15 to August 15, 1992**, an international specialized expo was organized in Genoa, Italy. Its theme was Christopher Columbus: The Ship and the Sea, and 52 countries took part in the exhibit.

**In 1993, from August 7 to November 7**, an international specialized expo was held in the South Korean city of Daejeon. Its theme was The Challenge of a New Road of Development, and 141 countries were represented.

The event had over 14 million visitors.

**From May 22 to September 30, 1998**, an international specialized expo was organized in the capital of Portugal, Lisbon. Its theme was The Oceans: A Heritage for the Future. The event saw 160 countries represented and over 10 million visitors.

**In 2008, from June 14 to September 14**, an international recognized exhibition under the topic of Water and Sustainable Development was held in the Spanish city of Zaragoza with 108 countries participating. Over five and a half million people visited.

**From May 12 to August**

**12, 2012**, an international recognized exhibition, under the theme The Living Ocean and Coast, was organized in the coastal town of Yeosu, South Korea. Over 8 million visitors saw the pavilions of 103 participating countries.

**In 2017**, the last specialized world exposition, so far, was held. From June 10 to September 10, representatives from 137 countries gathered in the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana. The theme that united them was Future Energy.

*The next specialized expo is planned for 2027. The host will be Belgrade, Serbia.*

## HORTICULTURAL EXPOS

International horticultural exhibitions can last up to six months. Currently, there must be a gap of at least two years between two separate editions, and at least a decade between events of this rank held in the same country.

International horticultural exhibitions under the auspices of the International Bureau of Expositions must also be approved by the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH). These events aim to promote the sharing

of experience and knowledge between countries in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, sustainable healthy lifestyles and to promote the green economy.

Like universal and specialized expositions, they are also united around a certain theme, different for each edition.

**The first horticultural exhibition was held in Rotterdam from March 25 to September 25, 1960.** Its theme was International Horticulture.

**So far, 23 world horticultural exhibitions have been held in different cities around the world**, under different themes.

**The last was in the capital of Qatar, Doha, from October 2, 2023, to March 28, 2024.** Its theme was Green Desert, Better Environment. This was the first horticultural exhibition organized in such a dry climate. One of its goals was to raise awareness of life in such regions and expand the public's environmental awareness.

INTERNATIONAL FAIR PLOVDIV

Inspired by similar exhibitions around the world, the first Bulgarian Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition opened in Plovdiv on August 15, 1892.

Its primary objectives were to stimulate economic growth and support the country's early industrial development. The exhibition brought together exhibitors from 25 countries across Europe, Asia and America, creating opportunities for Bulgarian producers to establish fruitful international connections.

Over the course of 75 days, the exhibition welcomed more than 167,000 visitors.

A demonstration of electric lighting and a live telephone call to Sofia were among the most

impressive moments during the exhibition.

Originally intended as a one-time event, the Plovdiv exhibition inspired the idea of creating an annual fair in the city. In 1933, the first sample fair was held.

A year later, the Plovdiv Fair had become a fixture in Bulgaria's economic calendar. In December 1936, it became a member of the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry and received international status.

The first international sample fair was held in May 1937.

In the late 1930s, exhibitions began to specialize by industry. The Plovdiv Fair was developing through a strategy focused on

presenting the leading trends in global science and technology – a tradition that continues into the 21st century.

Construction of the fair facilities on the left bank of the Maritsa River began in 1974. Over the years, the fairgrounds expanded and evolved into the largest exhibition centre in Southeast Europe, with its modern form taking shape by the end of the 20th century.

In the 1960s, the Plovdiv Fair adopted its logo and the slogan "We create new opportunities". Today, the Plovdiv Fair continues to adapt to emerging trends and works to improve in line with global standards.

A shot of the Italian pavilion at the World Expo, Milan, May 13, 2015 (BTA Photo/Gabriela Golemanska)



EXPOS HOSTED BY BULGARIA



Inside the pavilion of nations at the World Hunting Exposition, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981 (BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)

So far, the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv has hosted three specialized expositions, which adds boosts its prestige as a location suitable for events of such a high rank.

The first of the specialized expos was held in 1981. The Hunting World Exposition was held then. It was the second under a similar theme after Budapest in 1971. The event was organized for a record fast time – one year. It was part of the celebrations for the 1300th anniversary of the establishment of the Bulgarian state.

The theme of the exhibition was Earth – Planet of Life, and its goal was to present the development of hunting and fishing around the world, as well as to illustrate the connections between hunting, fishing and modern man.

LIK magazine contacted well-known Plovdiv journalist Evgeniy Todorov, who was part of the media coverage of the hunting exhibition. His memories take us back in time – when, in his words, hunting was a luxury mostly affordable

to the elite. "You have heard that Comrade Zhivkov's hunting party was, almost, part of the government. 'Hunter Number 1 of the Republic', as they called him, was Politburo member Pencho Kubadinski, and it was he who initiated, of course with the support of Comrade Zhivkov and the Politburo, the organizing of this hunting world expo," Todorov says and adds that it was "a very large-scale event", with pavilions and exhibits from dozens of countries. The journalist says that through the exhibition, the hunters of the republic managed





*The Bulgarian trophy pavilion at the World Hunting Exposition, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981 (BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)*

to show their achievements and to receive gold medals for the best hunting trophies. "Our leaders were great hunters," he says. Evgeniy Todorov also recalls the words of writer Georgi Markov. "Before he died, he wrote a very interesting commentary about hunting being part of communism and how the elite in all communist countries were hunters, but we beat them by organizing this hunting exhibition," Todorov says.

In 1985, proclaimed International Youth Year by the UN, for almost a month – from November 4 to 30, the International Fair in Plovdiv hosted the international exposition under the motto The Achievements of Young Inventors. The idea to hold it in Bulgaria appeared three years earlier, when the Deputy Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Prof. Lev Kostikov visited the 12th National Exhibition of Technical and Scientific Creativity of Bulgarian Youth, which was also held in Plovdiv. The forum impressed him so much that he insisted on having a similar event but on an international level.

The choice of Bulgaria was not accidental for yet another reason, as 18 years earlier, in 1967, the Movement for Technical and

Scientific Creativity of Youth (TNTM) was launched among Bulgarian youth. It turned into an organized public-state system with a long-term strategic programme aimed at scientific and technical progress. The movement inspired young people and provoked their interest in the spirit of invention.

Within the framework of the world Expo of Young Inventors in 1985 in Plovdiv, 4,202 inventions from 73 countries were presented. In addition, dozens of meetings, discussions and round tables on modern day problems were held.

Young Bulgarian inventors showcased their ideas in seven halls at the fair complex. The thematic focus of their developments showed that they were interested in the

problem of their time – the automation and mechanization of production.

In 1991, from June 7 to July 7, the second international specialized expo on the achievements of young inventors was held in Plovdiv. Among the goals it set was to stimulate young inventors from around the world, to encourage technological, scientific and cultural exchange, to demonstrate achievements in the field of invention and innovation. Thirty-three countries participated in the specialized exhibition supported by 16 organizations. Some 3150 exhibits were shown, with more than 2,000 of them being Bulgarian. The inventions were thematically grouped in all areas of science, engineering and technology.

The accompanying programme included over 150 conferences and symposia, the most significant being the International Symposium on Young Inventors and Innovators in Economic and Technological Development. The two-day event was organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Bulgarian government.

The Plovdiv Expo managed to fulfil the organizers' intention to turn it into a centre of ideas and experience, of establishing contacts and partnerships.

## THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EXPOSITIONS

The strong interest that world expositions provoked, led to the need to create common rules for their organization and conduct. Thus, 31 countries signed an International Convention in Paris in November 1928. To monitor its implementation, a governing body was created – the International Bureau of Expositions (Bureau International des Expositions or BIE).

The headquarters of the bureau is in Paris. Today the organization

is comprised of 184 member states including Bulgaria.

In 1928, the Paris Convention defined two groups of exhibitions – first and second category. Participants in the second category may not build their own pavilions. At that time, the convention stated that there must be a minimum of six years between the holding of two world expositions of the same category.

Over the years, the Paris Convention has been supplemented and amended by various protocols. The 1988 protocol, for example, sets the current five-year interval that exists between world expositions.

To date, four types of expositions are organized under the auspices of the International Bureau of Expositions: universal expos, specialized expos, horticultural expos, and the Milan Triennale.

*A large part of the statistics in this text is based on information published on the official site of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).*

# WORLD EXPOS SEEN THROUGH THE LENS OF THE BTA ARCHIVE

*In 1851, London's Hyde Park hosted the first World Expo (EXPO), officially called The Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations – known simply as The Great Exhibition. This event began a tradition that continues to this day. Held at sites across the world, these major international gatherings bring together delegations from dozens of countries, encourage commercial connections, and remain lasting symbols of economic and industrial progress.*

*The coverage and organization of World Expos have consistently held a significant place in BTA's news reporting. Mentions of World Expos date back to the agency's earliest handwritten bulletins. Over the years, BTA has regularly sent special correspondents to the host countries of the Expos to report directly from the event, even when Bulgaria was not participating as an exhibitor.*

*In LIK magazine, we present selected moments from Expo-related articles preserved in the BTA archive. Since the agency was established in 1898, our collection does not include original reports from the earliest editions of this international event. However, we can share the reflections of our special correspondent at the 1970 Osaka Expo, Dimitri Ivanov, who wrote: "The idea of world expositions has evolved over the decades. At the first World Exposition in London held under the auspices of Queen Victoria a century and a half ago, there were exhibits that would astonish today's visitor – artillery guns that were ultra-modern for their era. The 9th World Expo in Paris in 1889 no longer had a military feel – France showcased its engineering and technical achievements, with the Eiffel Tower built specifically for the exposition, and added a cultural flair to the tradition of expositions with new art galleries and theatre performances. The American hosts in St. Louis proclaimed the dawn of the automotive era..."*

*On the following pages, you will find a timeline featuring selected World Expos, and two of their offshoots – the Specialized World Expos and the Horticultural World Expos.*

*Happy reading!*

1900

World Expo  
Paris, France

In one of the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency's earliest handwritten bulletins, we read the events of April in Paris: "On the occasion of the opening of the World Expo, the President of the Republic, Mr

Loubet, receives congratulatory telegrams from the President of the United States, Mr McKinley, and from the Serbian King Alexander. The Prime Minister, Mr Waldeck-Rousseau, likewise receives numerous addresses from the provinces and from abroad. The Expo opens to the public this morning at eight o'clock amid a vast throng. The weather is magnificent."

\*\*\*

A dispatch dated August 9 reports: "The Commissioner of the Bulgarian pavilion at the Expo, Mr Dimitrov, has been appointed *Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur*."

1904

World Expo,  
St. Louis, United States of  
America

A brief notice in the bulletin of April 18 states simply that in St. Louis "the World Expo opened today."

1905

World Expo,  
Liège, Belgium

According to a story from April 15, "The opening of the international Expo took place yesterday afternoon with a splendid ceremony."

\*\*\*

A dispatch of July 21 says that the Political Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is also the chief Bulgarian Commissioner to the Liège Expo, departs "by train for Liège".

\*\*\*

A report from July 15, 1975 notes that the Liege Expo is proof that the reputation of Berkovitsa marble has already spread beyond Bulgaria's borders. The Ivan Vazov Museum in Berkovitsa preserves a certificate for a bronze medal awarded to Todor Iliev for his participation in the 1905 World Expo. His marble works are exhibited in the Bulgarian pavilion, group 11-a, serial number 63.

1906

World Expo,  
Milan, Italy

A Milan item of April 15 notes that the Italian royal couple arrives in the city. "They were greeted with rapturous ovations by the crowd gathered at the station to welcome the King and Queen despite torrential rain." The weather forced the sovereigns to postpone their tour of the Expo: "Only the King proceeded to the Pavilion of Fine Arts to present himself to the chief commissioners of the various nations. The French, Belgian and Hungarian pavilions are already complete, as is the pavilion of the Italian Navy. The remaining pavilions are not yet ready."

1910

World Expo,  
Brussels, Belgium

A news item from 10 April reports: "This afternoon the World International Expo was consecrated in the presence of the King, the Queen, the Diplomatic Corps, the ministers and the members of parliament."

\*\*\*

May 11: "His Majesty the King of the Bulgarians, accompanied by His Majesty King Albert, today visited the German section of the World Expo. Their Majesties were received by Privy Councillor and Imperial Commissioner Mr Albert."

\*\*\*

The Chair of the German committee and members of the Association of German Merchants and Industrialists are introduced to the King, who remarks that he took genuine pleasure in visiting the German section, after he heard many favourable reviews. His Majesty shows particular interest in the exhibits from the German railway industry.

On June 19, the Bulgarian ministers Mr Malinov and Mr Mushanov, accompanied by the Chief of the General Staff General Fichev and the Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Milchev, arrive in Brussels and also visit the Expo.

1913

World Expo,  
Ghent, Belgium

The BTA archive preserves just a single report on the Belgian Expo city of Ghent. Dated August 8, 1913, it reports of a fire that damaged one of the national pavilions taking part in the event.

1929

World Expo,  
Barcelona, Spain

On May 20, 1929, BTA, quoting Agence Havas, notes that Mr Bonnefous, the French Minister of Commerce, together with General Gouraud and Mr Serouille, had arrived in Barcelona to preside over the opening of the French section of the Expo.



\*\*\*

Two days later, a dispatch of May 22, 1929, reports: "Yesterday the French Ministers of Commerce and Agriculture, joined by General Gouraud, inaugurated the French section of the Barcelona Exhibition in the presence of the Royal Couple and General Primo de Rivera. France occupies 22,000 sq. m with 1,650 exhibitors. Germany ranks third with 17,000 sq. m and 800 exhibitors, while Italy covers 8,000 sq. m with 300 exhibitors."

1935

World Expo,  
Brussels, Belgium

In his address of April 27, 1935, marking the opening of the World Expo, the King of the Belgians stresses the profound contradiction between the growing isolation of nations and their simultaneous desire to expand trade. The Expo itself, he says, bore witness to that latter aspiration: "Economic revival will not be possible until commercial relations are normalized and freedom of trade restored. Time is pressing: a fresh current can reinvigorate the world economy."

The King expresses satisfaction that 36 countries participate and notes that Brussels would host 200 international congresses during the Expo. He finishes by expressing hope that the exhibition would strengthen solidarity among nations.

\*\*\*

The Bulgarian pavilion is formally opened on May 29, 1935. The exhibition Commissioner-General, Mr Wauters, receives the press.

On June 1, BTA relays an Agence Havas story on the ceremony. Speeches are delivered by Mr Konstantin Batolov, Bulgarian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris and Brussels; by Mr Wauters himself; and by Mr Van Isacker, the Belgian Minister of Economic Affairs.

\*\*\*

A brief note dated November 4, 1935, announces the closure of the international fair.

1937

World Expo,  
Paris, France

At Opening Day on May 24, after the inaugural ceremony Paul Bastid, the Minister of Commerce and overall head of the Expo administration, told Agence Havas (as quoted by BTA): "In my role as the exhibition's senior administrator and as Minister of Commerce, I wish to express my great satisfaction with the successful opening we have just witnessed. The Expo brings credit to every industrialist who contributed to this important event, to France, and to all international participants."

\*\*\*

A publication dated June 12 shows that this is the date marking the start of the

*Festivals of Nations*, a series of celebrations featuring European folklore delegations who had come to Paris for the Expo.

\*\*\*

At the Independence Day opening of the United States pavilion on July 4, the US Ambassador says: "Today, on the anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, 130 million Americans remember that when we were but three million struggling for freedom, the French came to our aid and helped us get our freedom. The friendship between the United States and France has stood firm as a rock through the storms of the past 160 years, and it remains rock-solid today."

\*\*\*

On July 5, President Albert Lebrun presides over the laying of the cornerstone for the building of the Paris International Expo in 1937, where two Fine Arts halls that would survive the Expo to house the future Museum of Modern Art would be built. Multiple members of the diplomatic corps attend the event. The Minister of Commerce stresses that the success of this exhibition would help restore the balance that stems from international free trade.

\*\*\*

The Expo's General Commission hosts a reception for 300 Bulgarian geography teachers. They are greeted by Mr Mortier

and Ministry of Public Instruction representative Mr Rousset, together with the Bulgarian plenipotentiary minister, the staff of the legation and Professors Ato and Boileau.

\*\*\*

The International Pavilion, featuring pavilions from 13 countries and two Jewish organizations, opens its doors on July 27. It complements the other foreign pavilions at the event.

By 2 p.m., the Expo has welcomed a total of 20 million visitors, a report later the same day says.

\*\*\*

On July 31, BTA reports that at 3 p.m. the Bulgarian pavilion at the Paris Expo formally opens with due ceremony in the presence of State Undersecretary Mr Himans; Commissioner-General Jean Labbé; Deputy Commissioner Mr Portier; Senator Justin Godart; plenipotentiary minister Mr Carré; Professors Millet, Boyer and Boileau; Ambassadors Picot and Darre; numerous officials, journalists, members of the Bulgarian colony and the entire legation staff.

A little later the same day BTA carries a Havas dispatch on the opening of the pavilion. In his address the Commissioner General, Jean Labbé, praises Bulgaria's participation and the excellent impression made by the pavilion: "What strikes the eye above all," he says, "is the sense of a material and spiritual

culture spreading rapidly, embracing more and more of the population each day, right down to the remotest villages. One gains the impression of a country advancing at speed—building schools everywhere, laying new roads, weaving a dense railway network, opening ports on the Black Sea and the Danube, and encouraging the growth of the arts, both painting and sculpture." Offering his gratitude to everyone attending the pavilion's inauguration, the Bulgarian Commissioner to the Expo—Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary Konstantin Batolov—spells out his homeland's ambition: "to bring together everything created by the artists, craftsmen, farmers, and the Bulgarian land". Then Mr Batolov goes on to pay tribute to France, remarking that Bulgaria had always provided fertile ground for French culture to take root and flourish.

\*\*\*

On November 3, BTA's bulletin reports that the Expo's Committee for Welcoming Foreign Guests hosts a luncheon in honour of the Mayor of Sofia, Mr Ivanov, and a delegation from Sofia Municipality that had travelled to Paris to visit the exhibition; Bulgaria's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Mr Konstantin Batolov, Minister Ristelhueber, the Expo's Deputy Commissioner, Mr Mortier, and the staff of the Bulgarian legation are among the present. That evening the

Paris municipal council also hosts a dinner in honour of the Sofia delegation.

\*\*\*

On November 12, BTA relays a Havas dispatch reporting the arrival in Paris of the Bulgarian sovereigns – King Boris III and Queen Giovanna – who travelled on the Golden Arrow and reached the Gare du Nord at 5:50 p.m. A company of the Republican Guard salutes them and, on behalf of the government, they are received by Mr Rosé, Director of Protocol, and Colonel de Bellefonds, the President's representative. Others present were Batolov, Marinov and Stamenov, Princess Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma and Prefect Langeron.

On behalf of the Bulgarian colony, Mrs Batolova presents Queen Giovanna with a magnificent bouquet, after which a small procession formed to the sovereign's car, which conveys them to their hotel.

\*\*\*

On November 13, King Boris III and Queen Giovanna pay an official visit to the exhibition at 10 a.m. At the entrance to the Bulgarian pavilion, where the national flag is displayed, their Majesties are welcomed by First Legation Secretary Ivan Stamenov, who accompanies them through the rose water scented pavilion. The royal couple spends some time on the ground floor, viewing the frescoes by Mr

Uzunov and visiting the Bulgarian rural house. They then continue to the first floor, where they visit the honour hall; the hall of folk arts, which features embroidery, silks, pottery, and faïence; and the hall of industry, where carpets, tobacco, fruit, and rose oil from various sectors of Bulgarian industry are presented.

\*\*\*

On the following day, November 14, Bulgarian King Boris III leaves his suite early in the morning to visit the exhibition again. The King, accompanied by Queen Giovanna and guided by Mr Paul Léon, assistant to the Commissioner General, tours the pavilions representing the Paris region. After that, he visits the railway department, where, as an expert in the field, he spends a significant amount of time inspecting the locomotives featuring the latest advancements. Later, while Queen Giovanna visits the crafts section and the Italian pavilion, King Boris III, accompanied by Professor Perren, proceeds to the hall of discoveries.

\*\*\*

On November 15, another update from Agence Havas is published in BTA's bulletin. The article describes the visit of the President of the French Republic and Madame Lebrun to the Bulgarian leaders in the Bulgarian pavilion at the exhibition. "Lunch was served at separate tables in the pavilion's honour hall, which was decorated with beautiful frescoes by the artist Uzunov and filled with the

gentle scent of roses, a symbol of Bulgarian production. Rose water was also flowing at the entrance to the pavilion," the daily news report says.

\*\*\*

On the evening of November 18, the Bulgarian rulers depart from Paris and travel to Switzerland, where they remain briefly. On November 25, the Paris International Exhibition concludes in the afternoon, Agence Havas reports quoted by BTA.



"The King, accompanied by the royal princes, inaugurated the international exhibition in Liège in the afternoon," an Agence Havas report from May 20 quoted by BTA says.

\*\*\*

On July 19, the President of the French Republic, Mr Lebrun, departs from Gare du Nord in Paris at 7:30 a.m. for Liège, where he is to pay an official visit to the Liège Exhibition, according to a news item of the day. He will also visit the Water Exhibition and the French pavilion.

Mr Lebrun arrives in the city at 11:30 a.m. and proceeds directly to the French section of the exhibition. He is also invited to a luncheon hosted by King Leopold of Belgium at the Provincial Palace in Liège.



"The New York Expo will open tomorrow, Sunday, at 11 a.m. Today, 50,000 workers tried hard to get all the grounds and buildings ready for visitors. Hotels in the city are filling up quickly, and the roads nearby are already crowded with cars, as tourists make their way to New York," a news report dated April 29 says.

\*\*\*

In his opening speech at the international exhibition, Mr Roosevelt expresses hope that the coming years will remove many of the barriers that have developed between European nations. He then gives a brief overview of the history of the United States and officially opens the exhibition, dedicating it to humanity.

\*\*\*

"The League of Nations pavilion was inaugurated at the New York Exhibition in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Wallace. In his address, he expresses his conviction that 'the true principles of democracy would ultimately triumph throughout the world.' He further affirms that the League of Nations would become an enduring reality that would

establish fraternity among all people," a publication of May 3 reports.

\*\*\*

On May 10, in the presence of the Italian Ambassador, the official opening of the Italian pavilion at the New York Fair takes place. The Mayor of New York, Mr La Guardia, delivers a speech in Italian, highlighting the immense contribution of Italy to American civilization, noting that one of its sons, Christopher Columbus, had discovered America.

\*\*\*

Japan Day at the New York Expo is celebrated on June 2 in the Palace of Peace. The Japanese Ambassador, Mr Horinouchi, delivers an address emphasizing the friendly relations between the United States and Japan. In his response, the Mayor of New York, Mr La Guardia, highlights the rapid progress achieved by the Japanese people in recent years. He notes that the greater a nation's power, the heavier its burden of responsibility. He concludes by stating that it is the duty of strong nations to exercise conciliation towards weaker nations.

\*\*\*

A news report dated June 11 recounts the visit of the British monarchs to the World Expo, where they attended "an illumination in broad daylight", after which they proceeded to the British and Irish pavilions.

When leaving the Expo, the procession crosses Triborough Bridge, one of the largest bridges in the world. After a 45-minute travel, the King and Queen arrive at Columbia University, where they are welcomed by a large audience.

\*\*\*

"The World Expo in New York will conclude this evening, a news item from October 31 reports. Plans have been made for it to reopen next year on May 25; however, "it is likely that some exhibitors will be absent." In their commentary on the closing of the Expo, newspapers broadly associate the event with democracy and goodwill among nations.



"The World Expo-1958 officially opens in Brussels. The occasion was marked by a grand ceremony attended by the King of Belgium, members of the Belgian government, representatives of the participating countries, the diplomatic corps, members of Belgian society, and thousands of citizens. Brussels is also hosting 3,000 journalists from around the world," BTA's Special Correspondent in Brussels reports on April 17.

At the ceremony, King Baudouin and Prime Minister Van Acker

deliver addresses.

Emphasizing that in recent years, humanity has exercised control over extremely powerful natural forces, the King says: "Two paths lie before us – the path of rivalry and the arms race, which threaten to turn scientific discoveries against humankind, and the path that, regardless of differences in social and political views, should allow us to move towards understanding, which alone can lead us to lasting peace. The purpose of this exhibition is to foster the spirit of cooperation and peace."

Fifty countries and international organizations from all parts of the world are participating in the World Expo, among them the socialist countries – the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia. In addition to the individual pavilions of each country and organization, there are also two major collective pavilions: the International Palace of Science, where scientists from 15 countries have joined their efforts to present the current state of science, with particular emphasis on atomic physics, chemistry and biology; and the International Palace of Fine Arts, which hosts the exhibition *Fifty Years of Modern Art* featuring the world's foremost museums, and the exhibition *Man and Art*, devoted to the historical evolution of art.

The entire exhibition is represented by the striking Atomium, a 100-metre-tall metal



structure shaped like an iron atom enlarged 150 billion times. The Atomium reflects the spirit of our time and as intended by its creators, stands as a call for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the most powerful form of energy.

\*\*\*

On April 19, the BTA Correspondent reports on the pavilion of the Soviet Union. According to the report, the pavilion is a vast structure spanning 25,000 sq. metres. It is 150 metres long, 72 metres wide, and 22 metres high. The pavilion has a rectangular shape, constructed from metal frameworks and glass. The walls do not support the roof; rather, they are suspended from it, as they are made of glass and aluminium and are exceptionally lightweight. The exposition also features the latest models of Soviet passenger cars, including ZIL, Chaika, and Moskvitch, which are notable for "their strikingly attractive modern design and spacious comfortable interiors".

The correspondent also stops in front of the United States pavilion, which he describes as "quite large". Built in a circular shape similar to the ancient Colosseum in Rome, the American pavilion is made primarily of metal and glass and has a diameter of 116 metres. According to the BTA correspondent, however, it is not possible to fully understand the largest and most powerful capitalist country—its economic, social, and cultural life, or the daily lives of its people—through

the exhibit alone. Among the most notable features, he points to the displays showing how electronic calculating machines work. Visitors are also drawn to the stand demonstrating automated arms used for handling radioisotopes.

\*\*\*

On April 22, the BTA correspondent describes the atmosphere in two additional pavilions – those of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. "The Czechoslovak Republic's pavilion is spacious and impressive in its architectural solution. What is most striking, however, is its exceptional arrangement," the correspondent writes. In his view, the creators of the pavilion have demonstrated great taste and ingenuity, allowing visitors to move through the hall with fascination, discovering every few metres some original exhibit or decorative feature. He adds that, alongside the presentation of vibrant contemporary cultural life, the Czechoslovak pavilion devotes considerable space to cultural heritage and to the efforts made for its preservation.

"The pavilion of the People's Republic of Hungary is considerably smaller but also distinguished by its original arrangement and content," the BTA correspondent says.

\*\*\*

"Although the World Expo in Brussels has already been open for a week, it is still yet to present itself in its complete

form. A number of pavilions, including those of France, Italy, Spain, and others, are not yet finished, and their opening is anticipated in early May," reads a report by the BTA correspondent dated April 23.

The pavilion of the United Kingdom also draws significant attention among those of the major countries. It is presented under the theme of recent advances in British science and technology. Using interactive models and visual displays, the pavilion showcases new research and discoveries in medicine, aviation, archaeology, radio astronomy, and other fields. Visitors can see equipment in use that allows blood circulation to be temporarily stopped during delicate heart surgeries while still supplying the body with oxygen.

Among Bulgaria's neighbouring countries, only Yugoslavia and Türkiye are taking part in the Expo. The pavilion of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia displays photographs showing the country's achievements.

The pavilion of Türkiye is not fully completed yet, but visitors can already explore most of its areas. It will mainly feature folk crafts along with archaeological and historical exhibits.

\*\*\*

The Director General of the International Labour Organization, Morse, officially opens the United Nations

pavilion at the World Expo in Brussels on April 26. At the heart of the pavilion stands a large model of an atom. The nucleus is shown as a globe, surrounded by smaller spheres of different sizes representing both large and small countries, arranged like electrons. The entire model expresses the pavilion's main idea: that all nations should be as closely connected on Earth as the parts of an atom are to each other.

\*\*\*

At midnight on October 19, the World Expo in Brussels concludes with a grand fireworks display and an official ceremony featuring the lowering of the Belgian flag and the national flags of the participating countries. The torch, which had burned for six months, is extinguished at the central square of the Expo site.

### 1961 Specialized International Exposition on Labour, Turin, Italy

"Yesterday in Turin, an international labour exhibition was officially opened as part of the celebrations marking the centenary of the unification of the Italian people into a single state. The theme of the exhibition, *Man and His Work – A Century of Technological and Social Developments: Achievements and Prospects*, is presented in the national pavilions of 18 countries in accordance with a programme developed by the Italian Government in cooperation

with the International Labour Organization," a news item dated May 8 reads.

Each country presents an exhibition display that illustrates a specific aspect of the shared theme. For example, the pavilion of France explores the development of research methods, the pavilion of Denmark focuses on residential construction, the pavilion of Argentina presents the mechanization of agriculture, and the pavilion of Japan features innovations in fishing technology.

At the heart of the exhibitions from the socialist countries is the individual, with their aspirations and needs. The Polish pavilion, for example, presents the social security system for workers, where the working class is in power. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's pavilion showcases the significant changes in rural life brought about by the cooperative movement. "Everything for the Welfare of the Individual" is the motto of the USSR pavilion, which highlights safety, hygiene, and working conditions.

### 1962 World Exhibition in Seattle, United States of America

On May 7, BTA quotes a news report from TASS covering the Soviet Union cosmonaut Gherman S. Titov, who is on a tour of the United States and

has arrived in Seattle, the capital of the state of Washington. An international exhibition featuring 15 countries is being held there. They include the United States, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, England, India, Japan, the United Arab Republic, and Mexico. The exhibition opens on April 25 and will run for six months. Its main theme is *Man's Life in the Space Age*. The numerous exhibition halls showcase the latest achievements in science and technology from the age of atomic energy and space exploration.

Residents of Seattle, together with thousands of tourists from across the United States, give the Soviet cosmonaut a very warm and sincere welcome. Gherman Titov spends most of his first day in the city at the World Expo. He takes time to look over the exhibits and talk with specialists from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration who guide him through their pavilion. At times, it becomes almost impossible to move around the expo grounds because of the large crowds that constantly gather around the cosmonaut.

### 1964 International Garden Show, Vienna, Austria

"The President of the Federal Republic of Austria, Dr Adolf Scharf, officially opens the Vienna International Garden Show. The exhibition, situated on an area of 100 hectares on the left bank of the Danube River and running until October 15, 1964, features the participation

of 28 countries, including the People's Republic of Bulgaria," according to a publication dated April 16.

1964/1965  
World Fair in New York, USA

"Today, several of Goya's most celebrated paintings are arriving here from Spain. The works will be displayed in the Spain Pavilion at the World Expo, which opens here in two days. The pavilions of various countries will also showcase renowned pieces by Michelangelo, El Greco and Picasso," a BTA Correspondent reports from New York on April 17.

\*\*\*

"At 9 a.m., the 1964-1965 World Expo, dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the founding of New York, opened its doors to visitors," reads a news report from April 22.

Fifty-nine countries and almost half of the US states are taking part in the Expo. However, the event is mainly dominated by large pavilions from US private companies, including major car manufacturers.

1965  
Specialized World Expo in Munich, Germany

Between June 25 and October 3, the First World Exhibition on Transport and Communications is held in Munich (Federal Republic of

Germany), where a Bulgarian pavilion is also present. Various photographs and diagrams show the progress of railway transport and communications in Bulgaria. Artistic panels by Balkantourist display the growth of resort construction and present the country's achievements as a destination for international tourism.

1967  
World's Fair, Montreal, Canada

"Tomorrow, one of the most unique world expos will open. It marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Federation (the predecessor of modern Canada) and the 325th anniversary of its largest city, Montreal, which is also the host of the expo. Most importantly, the event celebrates human progress and the development of modern technology," BTA correspondent G. Naydenov wrote on April 26.

A total of 70 countries are represented in Montreal. Several African countries share one pavilion, while the Scandinavian countries are also grouped together in a single space.

The architecture of nearly all the halls is clearly futuristic, featuring bold, open designs that show how modern materials and building techniques can make any architectural idea possible.

The host country has achieved significant construction and architectural accomplishments, building entirely artificial islands in the middle of the river for the exposition. These islands have a total area several times greater than that of the previous World Expo in Brussels. Among the Canadian pavilions, the most notable is a unique residential complex – Habitat 67 (Village 67). This modern development consists of apartments that seem to rest along an imaginary mountain slope, with each flat's roof serving as a terrace for the one above. The overall appearance is similar to a part of Veliko Tarnovo, though there is no actual mountain under the structure. All apartments offer excellent sunlight, are linked by covered walkways and promenades, and the lowest level contains passages for cars and trucks, keeping vehicles separate from pedestrians.

"As of tomorrow, EXPO-67 will attract the attention of the world for six months. The general theme of the exhibition, Man and His World, is linked to a book by the French aviator and writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, which bears this title in its English translation. The sub-themes are: man as explorer, producer, creator, farmer, and man in society," writes the BTA correspondent.

\*\*\*

At the official opening of Expo 67 in Montreal on April 27, Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson describes the world exhibition

as a monument to humanity, emphasizing that it showcases some of the most important achievements and ideas of humankind.

Over the six months of the Expo, National Days will be organized for each participating country, attended by senior officials from these and other nations. The programme will also feature performances by some of the world's leading theatres, such as the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre Ballet and La Scala from Milan, among others.

Along with leading technological advancements from different countries, many works of art from ancient times to today are also exhibited.

Although commercial transactions are not carried out at the Montreal World Expo in line with international regulations, there is a dedicated centre where business representatives can meet to share information and experiences.

\*\*\*

"From the earliest hours of the morning, the stream of people heads toward the World Expo. Enthusiastic cheers can be heard from all directions, cameras click, and film cameras whir. The multilingual crowds never fall silent, even for a moment. Tourists from multiple countries have come to see EXPO-67," BTA reports, quoting TASS correspondents on April 30. According to the correspondents,

the number of visitors to the Expo has exceeded even the most optimistic forecasts. On the first day, 335,000 people visit the pavilions, while electronic calculators had predicted that the number of visitors for that day would be 120,000. However, another forecast made both by the press and by electronic devices has been proven true: the Soviet pavilion has become the most popular at the Expo, the journalists note and add that the pavilions of the United States, Canada, Czechoslovakia, and the African countries have also seen a significant influx of visitors.

\*\*\*

En route from New York to Sofia, taking advantage of the invitation extended by the Canadian government to visit the World Expo, Todor Zhivkov arrives in Montreal. On June 26, accompanied by the Ambassador of Bulgaria to Washington, Lyuben Gerasimov, by the head of the Bulgarian Embassy in Ottawa, Kiril Shterev, and by Bulgarian journalists, Zhivkov visits EXPO-67. Warmly welcomed by the Ambassador of the USSR to Canada, the Bulgarian guests tour the Soviet pavilion, organized under the motto "Everything for the sake of man, everything for the good of man".

The Bulgarian guests also visit the pavilions of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Cuba and Canada, where they hold cordial discussions.

On the following day, before leaving for Bulgaria, the Chair of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov, visit several more pavilions at the Montreal Expo.

He and his delegation visit the pavilions of France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States. At each pavilion, they are warmly welcomed by the staff.

In honour of Todor Zhivkov and his delegation, the Canadian government is hosting a luncheon at the Eskimo Restaurant at the World Expo. Afterwards, the Bulgarian guests will visit the Habitat-67 experimental residential complex, tour the pavilion dedicated to radiotelephone communications, and attend a film screening at the Labyrinth Cinema Theatre.

Todor Zhivkov also meets with Montreal's Mayor, Mr Drapeau, and the World Expo Commissioner General, Mr Dupuis.

In the evening, Zhivkov left for Sofia attended by an official farewell ceremony.

\*\*\*

On October 28, BTA correspondent G. Todorchev reports on the conclusion of EXPO-67. He also interviews the Bulgarian Commercial Representative in Canada, Ivan Golomeev, who says that the exhibition gave Bulgaria important experience and



helped establish new scientific, technical, economic, commercial, and cultural connections. He also notes that the internationally acclaimed Bulgarian singer Nicolai Ghiaurov was a key figure and achieved great success during La Scala's performances at the Montreal World Festival, which took place alongside the exhibition.

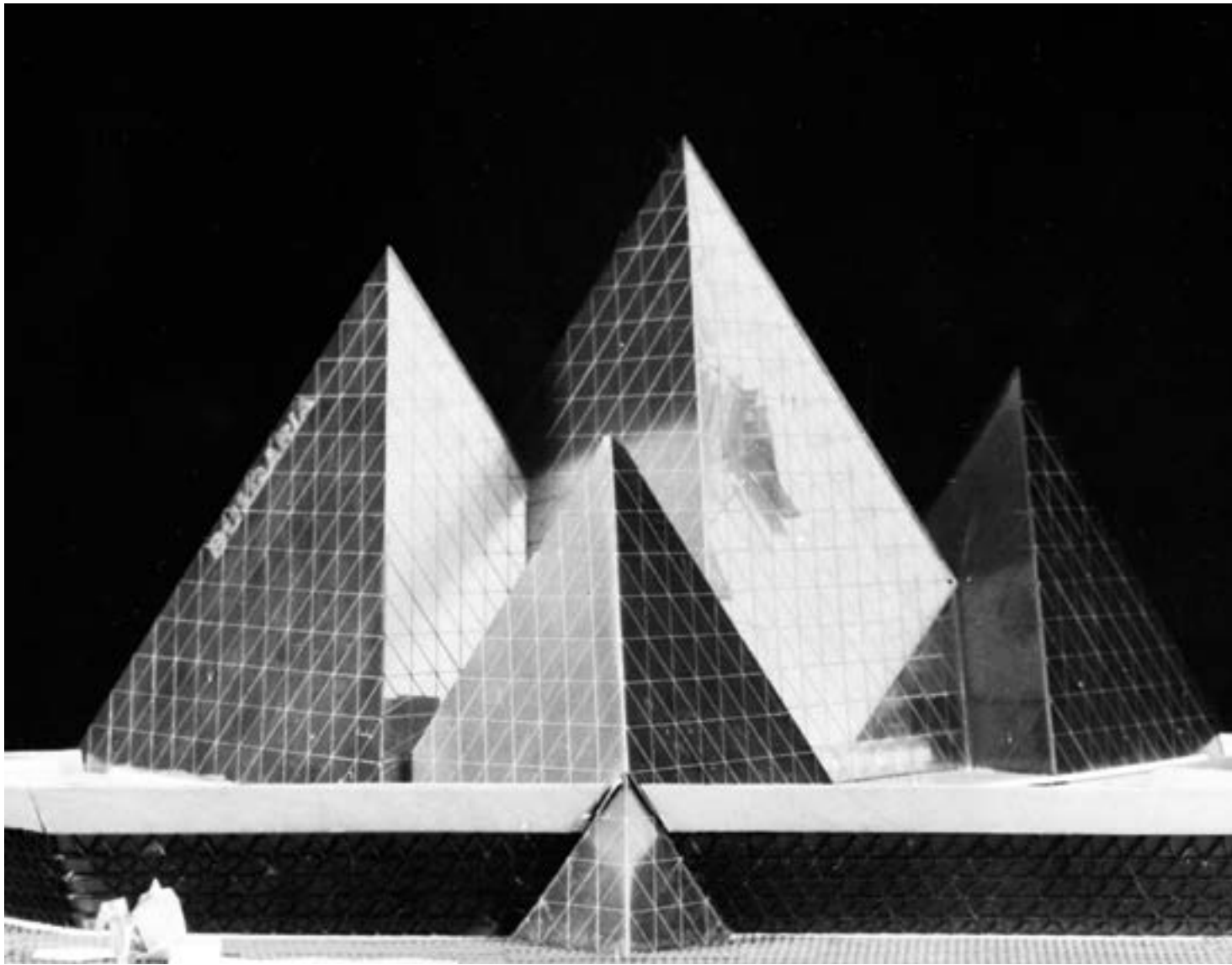
The journalist reports that on Sunday, October 29, EXPO-67 will end with a variety

of festivities, ceremonies, concerts, competitions, and entertainment. At the *Place des Nations*, the flags of the participating countries will be lowered, signalling the close of one of the year's most notable and lively international events. Based on current information, the scenic exhibition complex located on an island in the St. Lawrence River welcomed a record 50 million visitors.



You can read about the World Exposition in Osaka and Bulgaria's participation in it in the first part of this issue of LIK.

A model of the Bulgarian pavilion for Expo 1970 in Osaka, Sofia, January 10, 1969 (BTA Photo/Vladimir Ivanov)



The photography exhibition Human and Nature opens on August 29 in Budapest during the international hunting exhibition in the Hungarian capital. The exhibition showcases photographs by artists from 26 countries. Over 1,500 works are displayed, including landscapes and rare images of animals and flowers.

\*\*\*

BTA Correspondent, S. Stamov, reports from Budapest on the National Day of Bulgaria at the First World Hunting Exhibition held on September 13. Stamov says that the Bulgarian pavilion is among the most visited. Of the approximately 600,000 people who attended the exhibition, 500,000 visited the Bulgarian exhibition display. The guest book contains 800 positive reviews. Of the 500 items displayed, 300 are hunting trophies, 290 of which are awarded various medals at the Budapest exhibition. Five exhibits receive the Budapest-71 Grand Prize, while 116 are awarded gold medals. The collections of deer antlers alone receive a score of 242.58 points, placing Bulgaria sixth in the global ranking.

Overall, it is widely recognized

that the Bulgarian pavilion aligns most closely with the World Expo theme Man and Nature. The displayed game animal pelts, including those of martens, stone martens, polecats, foxes, jackals, wolves, and bears, have attracted significant interest. Experts have shown particular appreciation for the taxidermied golden eagles, great bustards, bears, and ring-necked pheasants, which are now endangered in Europe and are currently found only in Bulgaria.

As is well known, 52 countries participated in the First World Hunting Exhibition. Forty-two of these countries, including Bulgaria, had their own separate national pavilions.

\*\*\*

On September 30, the First World Hunting Exhibition is brought to a close. For more than a month, it would showcase the wildlife of our planet to almost two million visitors and would inspire many to take an interest in hunting.

The Budapest exhibition stood out for its diverse representation. Organizations and delegations from over 50 countries presented their exhibits across an exhibition space of 80,000 sq. metres. The equestrian competitions and dog shows held during the event drew significant attention. Exhibits related to the hunting and fishing industries, along with equipment for environmental pollution prevention, sparked active discussions. Hundreds of

gold, silver, and bronze medals engraved with the Budapest-1971 inscription were awarded to the most outstanding hunting trophies on display.

We are happy to report that Bulgaria was recognized as one of the countries with the most successful participation at the World Hunting Exhibition. Visitors showed strong interest in our pavilion, which presented a wide collection of hunting trophies.

It is clear from recent news reports that the Budapest World Hunting Exhibition has achieved its main goals. By focusing on the relationship between people and nature, the exhibition helped raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation in mountains, plains, and oceans. It also drew attention to the urgent need to protect the environment from pollution. The event attracted visits from heads of state, government officials, and notable public and cultural figures. Besides encouraging the growth of hunting tourism, the exhibition also provided a platform for sharing ideas beyond the usual scope of international cooperation in hunting and fishing.



"A hunting horn can be heard

around the fairground complex. A lively crowd of young men and women fill the area in front of the Bulgarian trophy hall. Their original and spirited performance marks the beginning of the official opening ritual for the World Hunting Exhibition EXPO-81. The chariot of Diana passes by accompanied by riders in hunting attire. A young woman with a bow releases an arrow for good fortune. A Proto-Bulgarian cavalry appears, followed by gamekeepers, hunters, and fishermen proceeding to a hunting march," the report of BTA's Special Correspondents in Plovdiv – Simeon Simeonov and Liliya Todorova says on June 14.

Thousands of citizens have gathered to watch this impressive event. Set against

ancient hunting scenes, it shows the long-standing connection between people and nature, and the continuing hope for living in harmony under the laws of nature.

On the official platform are Todor Zhivkov, Peko Takov, Pencho Kubadinski, and other public officials, and numerous foreign guests. Heads and members of diplomatic missions accredited to Bulgaria are also present, together with many foreign journalists.

After the hunters' procession, dancers in bright national costumes gather in the square. The music of a hundred kaba gaida fills the air as traditional circle dances begin. The crowd applauds the participants in

the official ceremony for a long time, and everyone looks towards the official stage.

The State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of Hungary, Gabor Sos, presents a stylized deer figure – the symbol of the First World Hunting Exhibition in Budapest – to the Commissioner General of EXPO-81, Pencho Kubadinski. He wishes the exhibition success.

Pencho Kubadinski gives a speech on the aims and goals of the World Hunting Exhibition, which, under the motto Earth – Planet of Life, has drawn participation from more than 60 countries across all continents.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the World Hunting Exhibition EXPO-81, and with its authorization, he warmly welcomes all guests and exhibitors to Plovdiv, one of the oldest cities in Bulgaria. He notes that holding this exhibition under the auspices of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and the International Confederation of Sport Fishing, and under the auspices of the Chair of the State Council, Todor Zhivkov, reflects its importance and recognition.

The purpose of the World Hunting Exhibition is to introduce visitors to the practices and progress of hunting and fishing management in various countries. The exhibition shows how hunting, fishing, and people are connected in modern society. The expansion of industry, transport, and major cities has led to environmental pollution. As a result, this pollution often causes a decline, and sometimes even the disappearance, of wildlife and fish populations. Because of this, nature conservation is a key focus of the exhibition.

Pencho Kubadinski expresses his belief that this international event will help people value the Earth's beautiful and diverse natural environment. He also notes that it will show the efforts of the participating countries in protecting and breeding wildlife, truly reflecting the Expo's motto: Earth – Planet of Life.

The selection of Bulgaria as host reflects the country's continued dedication to conserving wildlife and supporting the development of hunting and fishing. It also recognizes Bulgaria's efforts to protect its natural environment and its rich wildlife.

Visitors to EXPO-81 can see more than 11,500 trophies, showing the variety of wildlife around the world. Many of the best trophies collected in recent years from different countries are on display for the first time at this exhibition. These exhibits are sure to make a strong impression on everyone, whether they are hunters or nature lovers, the speaker concludes.

The exhibition features dedicated halls that present the achievements of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in areas such as environmental protection, land conservation and soil fertility, forestry management, hunting and fishing, and the natural beauty of Bulgaria.

In addition, guests have the chance to take part in a range of other programmes that are directly or indirectly connected to the main theme of the Expo. Another important goal will also be achieved: encouraging understanding and bringing together participants from various countries and continents. This will help expand cooperation in this field and, ultimately, strengthen and protect humanity's most valuable asset – peace.

Amid enthusiastic applause, Chair of the State Council Todor Zhivkov cuts the tricolour ribbon and officially opens the World Hunting Exhibition EXPO-81.

\*\*\*

On June 15, the Commissioner General of the World Hunting Exhibition, Pencho Kubadinski, meets with the official representatives of the organizations supporting EXPO-81: Baron Alfons Richter von Wunschheim, Deputy Chair of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, and Joachim Diez, Deputy Chair of the International Sport Fishing Confederation (ISFC).

Senator Enzo Mingozzi, Deputy Chair of the Italian hunting organization, also participates in the discussion.

In conversations with journalists, representatives from the two leading international organizations note that the impressive official opening ceremony matches the high standard of the exhibition. With more participating countries, a wider range of hunting trophies, and new world records, the event clearly exceeds all previous international exhibitions of this kind, including the First World Hunting Exhibition in Budapest.

\*\*\*

On June 15, the main event at the World Hunting Exhibition is the first-ever canine show and competition. This event aims to

Officials inside the pavilion of nations during the opening of the World Hunting Exposition in Bulgaria, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981 (BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)







Inside the Soviet pavilion, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981  
(BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)

present the progress made in dog breeding worldwide. Around 600 dogs from over 25 breeds are judged by international panels.

For four days in a row, dog lovers can watch the hunting skills of the dogs. The field trials take place near the villages of Voyvodinovo and Trud.

\* \* \*

On June 18, the Commissioner General of the World Hunting Exhibition, Pencho Kubadinski, will present the awards for the best design and print production, as part of the

International Book Exhibition focused on Hunting, Fishing, and Nature Conservation.

The First Prize and Gold Medal are awarded to the Italian publishing house *Arnoldo Mondadori Editore* for its richly illustrated handbook, *Photography in Nature*. The Silver Medal goes to the German publishing house Paul Parey for its series *Red Deer, Roe Deer* and *Conservation*.

Nearly 700 books from 34 publishers across 23 countries are featured in the competition. In the Bulgarian section of the exhibition, Zemizdat, with about 80 titles, and the Bulgarian

Academy of Sciences Publishing House have the largest presence. The publishing house Otechestvo is showcasing popular children's books about animals.

\* \* \*

On June 22, with a plenary session focused on topics from the Agriculture – Forest – Game section of the two-day symposium "Game and the Environment" held at Novotel Plovdiv the scientific programme of EXPO-81 commences.

The comprehensive discussion of major conservation issues will offer new contribution to the advancement of global

game management science, says Professor Tacho Iliev, Rector of the Higher Institute of Forestry, in his address to the symposium participants – nearly 250 scientists and professionals in the fields of game management and nature conservation from 13 countries. The symposium programme includes over 100 presentations.

\* \* \*

The motto of the World Hunting Exhibition, *Earth – Planet of Life*, is the central theme of the International Film Festival on Hunting, Fishing, and Nature Conservation, which begins on June 22 at the Balkan cinema. Around 120 scientific, popular science, documentary, and educational films from 20 countries are shown.

"The most important aspect of this film festival is the authenticity of the films and the sincere commitment of their creators," says jury member Professor Jan Jakobi of Poland, President of Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique in Brussels.

Films from Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Zimbabwe, Canada, Ireland, and the Philippines are shown. As part of the programme outside of the scope of the competition, audiences viewed the three-hour film *Serengeti Shall Not Die* by Professor Bernhard Grzimek.

\* \* \*

On June 23, the *Wildlife and the Environment* symposium continues with a session of

the section *Conservation and Reproduction of Game Fauna*. Papers addressing various game management issues, including the impact of industry on free-ranging game, hunting and conservation of rare animal species, and the use of game as an indicator of environmental pollution are presented.

Bulgarian experts present findings on artificial breeding of capercaillies in Bulgaria, the current status and protection of birds of prey, and the behaviour of brown bears in relation to livestock and wild game.

\* \* \*

On June 24, the scientific conference on red deer management under current environmental conditions draws considerable interest. The event is organized with the participation of the Big Game Commission of the International Council for Game & Wildlife Conservation. Exhibitors' focus on the presentations is understandable, since red deer trophies feature prominently in almost every pavilion.

\* \* \*

With the seminar held on June 25 on the topic *The Dog in Modern Hunting*, the scientific programme of EXPO-81 is increasingly addressing the specific issues related to contemporary hunting practices.

Specialists from the Soviet

Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Romania, and Bulgaria are discussing ways to improve the traits of hunting dogs to help reduce losses from wounded or missed game during hunts.

\* \* \*

The scientific programme of EXPO-81 concludes on June 26 with an international seminar on Fish Farming and Sport Fishing. The sessions led by fisheries experts and ichthyologists focus on new methods to increase the productivity of water bodies, such as the use of mesh cages, Weiss apparatuses, tanks with different stocking densities, and other techniques. The opportunities for developing intensive warm-water, basin-type fish farming in Bulgaria are also discussed.

\* \* \*

On July 12, the sound of hunting horns once again echoes through the expo village, just as it did during the official opening of EXPO-81 a month earlier. The flags of the 64 participating countries are slowly lowered. The World Hunting Exhibition ends. It is the first to be held in Bulgaria and only the third event of its kind in the history of organized hunting.

The exhibitors and guests make their way to the fairground lake, which is lit up in bright colours. Musicians and dancers who are taking part in the grand ball – organized by the committee as a



The Bulgarian trophy pavilion, Plovdiv,  
June 15, 1981  
(BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)

thank-you to visitors, exhibitors, participants in the shooting and fishing competitions, and everyone who helped make the wide range of cultural, scientific, and sporting events in the EXPO-81 programme a success—have already taken their places.

The official closing ceremony of the World Hunting Exhibition is brief. Ivan Gruev, Director of the exhibition and First Deputy Minister of Forests and the Forestry Industry, delivers a speech. Then, Lieutenant General Hristo Ruskov, Chair of the Central Council of the Bulgarian Union of Hunters and Anglers, presents the grand prizes to the distinguished exhibitors.

The Commissioner General of EXPO-81, Pencho Kubadinski, extends his congratulations

to the award recipients and congratulates all guests.

The subdued atmosphere that continues into the evening mirrors the tone and mood seen throughout the day around the competition areas in Voyvodinovo, Trud, and Chetiridesette Izvora. This feeling is also present before the impressive hunting trophies in the pavilions and during the awards ceremonies for the various competitions – films, photographs, numismatic and philatelic collections, and books related to the exhibition. All these events and displays are united under its motto: Earth – Planet of Life.

The organizers, who have worked hard over the past month, are still unable to estimate the final results of their efforts. However, one thing is clear: everyone who visited the impressive exhibition—featuring over 11,000 exhibits showing the world's plant and animal diversity—will leave with lasting memories.

"This focused and thoughtful exhibition once again demonstrates our country's capacity to contribute to the resolution of major global challenges, such as ecological balance, preservation of natural resources, conservation of rare and endangered species, and maintenance of wildlife populations.

We appreciate the interest shown by foreign scholars who engaged with the topics presented in

the scientific programme of the exhibition. We are also pleased with the quality of the exhibition itself, as it features a unique collection of rare and valuable hunting trophies gathered in one place for the first time," Pencho Kubadinski says. He adds that closing the World Hunting Exhibition marks not only the achievement of



A view of the new park hotel near the exhibition grounds, Plovdiv, June 15, 1981  
(BTA Photo/Dimitar Viktorov)

mutual understanding among representatives from many countries across all continents but also supports Bulgaria's commitment to peace and helps meet the main goals of EXPO-81.



On March 16, BTA correspondent Ivan Gaytandzhiev reports that the World Expo (EXPO-85) is officially opened at the Tsukuba Science Centre in Japan. For the next six months, the exhibition will attract the attention of scientists, experts, and the general public.

The central theme of this major international event is Home and the Environment – Science and Technology in the Service of Humankind.

With their own exhibition displays and pavilions, situated across 200,000 sq. metres, 47 countries and 37 international organizations are represented, along with dozens of Japanese companies such as Fujitsu, Mitsubishi, Toshiba, Hitachi, and others.

Participants in EXPO-85 in Tsukuba will present to visitors from Japan and all corners of the world the role of science and technology in the modern world, illustrating the directions and prospects of civilization in the coming century.

Bulgaria views World Expos as a valuable way to promote progress and encourage understanding between nations. The country is taking part with its own pavilion. It has already participated successfully in the

past two World Expos in Japan: Osaka in 1970 and Kobe in 1981.

The theme of Bulgaria's current participation is Life and Children. The organizers affirm that the concept is not only urgent and significant but also exceptionally well developed, particularly since 1985 is designated as the International Youth Year. Furthermore, the exhibition display presented using state-of-the-art expressive means will acquaint the Expo's guests with modern Bulgaria and its historical and cultural landmarks.

There is strong interest in EXPO-85. Over 20 million visitors are expected, and most people agree that the event will be very successful.

Takao Nagata, Chair of the Japanese section of the Bulgaria-Japan Committee for Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation and a leading figure in the Japanese business community, shares that Bulgaria's participation in EXPO-85 will not only help promote the country in Japan but also contribute to building stronger mutual understanding.

\* \* \*

On April 4, the correspondent covers the Days of Bulgarian Science, which took place at the World Expo in the Tsukuba Science Centre in Japan.

On the occasion of this important event, a delegation of respected Bulgarian scholars is here led by

Professor Marin Petrov, Deputy Chair of the State Committee for Science and Technological Progress.

After a series of productive meetings in Tsukuba, the head of the Bulgarian scientific delegation gives a presentation at a press conference in the main hall of the EXPO-85 press service. The presentation covers key achievements in Bulgarian science, its organizational structure, and the goals of Bulgaria's scientific and technical cooperation with both socialist countries and select Western states. Print media and specialist scientific publications journalists attend the presentation.

Important meetings are also being held at the Agency of Science and Technology and the Supreme Council of Japanese Scientists. As part of the discussions, the positive progress of scientific and technical cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan is recognized, while it is also noted that there are opportunities which should be utilized more actively and efficiently to further develop scientific and technical relations and to broaden the exchange of information.

\* \* \*

On April 24, a meeting takes place at the press centre of EXPO-85 between members of the Organizing Committee for the *World Young Inventors Exhibition Bulgaria 85*, and representatives of the Japanese



media. The exhibition is planned for November in Plovdiv and is organized in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations. The goal is to give young inventors and innovators from around the world an opportunity to present their work, share experiences and ideas, and help build understanding, friendship, and cooperation among nations. At the meeting, it is mentioned that global public interest will be important in supporting youth creative work.

The World Expo in Bulgaria will offer a wide-ranging scientific and cultural programme. Through symposia, seminars, discussions, and conferences, young people will be able to present their research, ideas, and suggestions on topics related to innovation and youth creativity, with a special focus on the role and contributions of young people to scientific and technological progress.

The Japanese participants in the meeting show strong interest in the regulations and goals of the World Expo and welcome Bulgaria's decision to host this important event, especially during the year designated by the United Nations as the International Youth Year. They note that the exhibition will give participants the chance to gain new ideas for their creative and innovative work.

\* \* \*

On May 12, the successful Bulgarian events within the framework of EXPO-85 continue. The day is dedicated to the International Children's Assembly Banner of Peace. The strong interest is boosted by the Banner of Peace movement, which has many supporters in Japan.

\* \* \*

"Since the official opening of EXPO-86 in Tsukuba, the Bulgarian pavilion has rightfully gained a reputation as one of the most interesting and well-attended venues. A key factor contributing to this is that the theme Life through the Eyes of Children greatly appeals to the broad Japanese public. Evidence of this is the fact that, to date, over 700,000 people have visited the Bulgarian pavilion, while the visitors' book is filled with complimentary and enthusiastic comments regarding our exhibition display," a BTA correspondent reports on May 15.

\* \* \*

On May 27, Ivan Gaytandzhiev reports on the second day of Todor Zhivkov's visit to Japan. As Chair of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Zhivkov takes part in several "key and productive meetings."

The Bulgarian head of State is visiting Emperor Hirohito. During their meeting at the Imperial Palace, both sides express wishes for the continued

progress of Bulgaria and Japan. They agree that the positive atmosphere in their bilateral relations helps to strengthen mutual understanding.

Crown Prince Akihito of Japan and his wife, Princess Michiko, join the discussions soon after.

Todor Zhivkov also visits the official residence of Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. During this visit, the Prime Minister hosts an official luncheon in honour of his guest.

\* \* \*

On May 28, the main event at the World Expo in Tsukuba is the celebration of Bulgaria's National Day. The ceremony attended by thousands of spectators begins at 10:30 a.m. at Expo Plaza, the central square of the Expo. Todor Zhivkov and the officials from the Bulgarian and Japanese delegations take their places in the official stands. After the national anthems of Bulgaria and Japan are played, the Bulgarian tricolour and the flag of the host country are raised on the festival square's flagpoles, officially opening this important international event.

The Commissioner General of the exhibition, Katsuichi Ikawa, welcomes Todor Zhivkov, Chair of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Ikawa says the aim of EXPO-85 is to attempt to demonstrate what science and technology ought to be like in the 21st

century in order to genuinely contribute to human happiness. The 21st century is, of course, the century of today's children, and for this reason the theme of the Bulgarian pavilion is particularly appropriate. To further enhance the appeal of the exhibition, Bulgaria has sent to EXPO-85 an excellent children's delegation, comprising the Children's Radio Choir, a children's dance group and the rhythmic gymnastics champions.

Todor Zhivkov also gives a speech, after which a diverse music and arts programme begins. The performers include the Children's Choir of Bulgarian National Television and Radio, well-known in Japan and led by People's Artist Hristo Nedyalkov, and the children's folk dance ensemble Severnyache. Bulgaria's leading rhythmic gymnasts—Lili Ignatova, Bianka Panova, Maya Taskova, and the six gymnasts from the group routine—also participate. The audience gives each Bulgarian gymnast a warm round of applause after their performance.

The first site visited by Todor Zhivkov is the Bulgarian pavilion. He is welcomed by Petar Rusev, Commissioner General of the People's Republic of Bulgaria at the exhibition. Following a local tradition, young women in traditional attire welcome him with bread and salt. Afterwards, the Bulgarian leader tours the exhibition, which is organized around the theme of Childhood.

He watches a special video

presentation showing joyful meetings in Sofia between children from around the world brought together by the ideals of the International Children's Assembly Banner of Peace. He also reviews the main performance created with the latest expressive techniques, focused on the theme of peace and friendship.

Later, Zhivkov and his accompanying delegation visit the Japanese thematic pavilion, which serves as the government's main exhibition display. The pavilion is divided into two large sections: Our Land and Our Life. Numerous exhibits illustrate the distinctive features of Japan's land and natural environment, its industry, and the achievements of science and technology in harmony with human existence.

\* \* \*

The Day of Bulgarian Tourism is celebrated on July 18. Several hundred people gather in the main hall of the exposition, including many young attendees. Aleksandar Spasov, Deputy Director General of Balkantourist, presents Bulgaria's rich tourism potential to the audience. Two documentary films featuring the country's most popular seaside and mountain resorts are shown. Guests are pleasantly surprised by a performance of Bulgarian folk dances by the Tokyo-based ensemble Horos. The young dancers impress everyone with their energetic and skilful renditions of Northern, Thracian, and Shopsko *horo* dance, and

also *rachenitsa*.

A quiz competition entitled *Do You Know Bulgaria* is organized. Due to the large number of correct answers, the prizes have to be allocated by drawing lots. The grand prize is a complimentary one-week holiday in Bulgaria.

\* \* \*

On September 16, the World Expo in Tsukuba is brought to a close. For 184 days, this major international event drew the attention of scientists, experts, and the general public. The number of visitors alone, 20.3 million in total, attests to the scale of interest in the exposition, BTA Correspondent Ivan Gaytandzhiev writes. Gaytandzhiev says there was much to see and to learn at EXPO-85. Above all, it demonstrated the immense potential and power of human intellect when dedicated to addressing scientific, technological, and economic challenges for the benefit of peaceful life, the journalist writes.



The World Young Inventors Exhibition – Bulgaria 85, will take place from November 4 to 30 in Plovdiv. It will be among the largest events organized as

part of the International Youth Year, serving as a unique festival of the creative minds of young people from around the globe, as reported in a news item dated October 28.

The exhibition is held under the auspices of the Chair of the State Council, Todor Zhivkov, and the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, Arpad Bogsch. Bulgaria is chosen as the host of the exhibition because of its long-standing experience in promoting youth scientific creativity over the past 17 years, and the high technical quality of inventions presented at the previous twelve national exhibitions on the Technical and Scientific Creativity of Youth.

Representatives from nearly 70 countries will participate in the *World Young Inventors* Exhibition Bulgaria '85, presenting 3,300 inventions across various fields of human activity. The Bulgarian exhibition display will be the most prominent, featuring more than 850 inventions selected for presentation. This event, named the Thirteenth National Exhibition of Technical and Scientific Creativity of Youth, reflects two years of creative work and shows the innovative spirit of young Bulgarian inventors.

\* \* \*

The World Young Inventors Exhibition Bulgaria '85 is officially opened on November 4. "Driven by a profound

aspiration for creativity and innovation, the most distinguished representatives of youthful scientific and technical thought from around the world gathered in Plovdiv," BTA Special Correspondents Petar Kochanov and Georgi Naydenov report.

Official representatives, including national political leaders and international guests, attend the opening ceremony. The event begins with the Bulgarian national anthem. Young women bring in the flags of the participating countries.

In his address, Chudomir Aleksandrov, Chair of the Organizing Committee for the exhibition and First Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers, says he is pleased that thousands of young innovators accepted the invitation to take part in the exhibition.

The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, Arpad Bogsch, also gives a speech. He states that inventions are the basis of economic development. They make manufacturing more efficient and improve our safety and comfort. Inventions have significant social value and are essential for social progress.

Todor Zhivkov also delivers an address. "The People's Republic of Bulgaria actively supports all initiatives aimed at promoting international economic, scientific and technical, and cultural cooperation," he says.

\* \* \*

"The long journeys undertaken by the inventions of young researchers, specialists, students, and schoolchildren to reach Plovdiv originated in Moscow and Tokyo, Berlin and Prague—from dozens of large and small countries, from every corner of the world. The thousands of exhibits, which have been highly commended, now arranged at the expo site, begin a new chapter in their existence at the World Young Inventors Exhibition Bulgaria-85," BTA's Petar Kochanov writes on November 6. He further notes that the business programme of EXPO-85 commenced with the opening of the USSR National Day and the Technical and Scientific Creativity of Youth at the exhibition.

After visiting the Soviet pavilion with great interest, the officials then move on to explore the Bulgarian section of the exhibition.

A variety of events will take place as part of the exhibition programme during the month-long event in Plovdiv. These include the international Inventiveness for Development seminar, the Youth for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space creative discussion, the Youth and Scientific and Technological Progress international youth film festival, and more.

"Bulgaria should be proud of this exhibition," Arpad Bogsch tells Bulgarian and foreign journalists. He says he is confident that the exhibition in Plovdiv would receive

international attention and help enhance Bulgaria's reputation.

\* \* \*

"This evening in the City of Youth, the flag of the World Young Inventors Exhibition Bulgaria-85 is taken down. The international gathering of young innovators in science and technology has come to an end after nearly a month. During this time, participants from around the world showed their commitment to using their skills and efforts for a peaceful present and a better future for humanity," BTA correspondents in Plovdiv write on November 30.

At the closing ceremony of the exhibition, Vasil Nedev, Deputy Chair of the Exhibition's Organizing Committee, gives a speech. He says that the exhibition's message — Let us move forward through creativity and the pursuit of new achievements in science and technology, not through conflict and destruction — will encourage young innovators to promote peace and contribute to a better future.



"The first International Exhibition of Flowers and Trees dedicated

to the theme of environmental conservation opened today in the city of Osaka. During its six-month run, Flower EXPO-90 is expected to attract over 20 million visitors," BTA Correspondent Georgi Apostolov says on March 31.

Fifty-four international organizations and eighty countries, including Bulgaria, are taking part in the Expo. The event features 2,500,000 different flowers, including some rare species from the Himalayas, East Africa, and South America.

This is the fourth World Expo hosted by Japan in the past 20 years, and the second one to be held in Osaka since EXPO-70.

\* \* \*

On April 23, the Bulgarian exhibit at the World Flower Expo receives the top award alongside Ireland in the first competition of the event.

In the first round of the garden design competition, the team led by architect Rashko Robev is awarded a gold medal for their project.

In the second round of the competition, which features only gold medal winners chosen by 80 participating countries and 54 international organizations, the Bulgarian and Irish gardens receive the top prize.

World Expo 90, which is quite

\* \* \*

popular, welcomes over 2 million visitors in its first 20 days.

On March 21, Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan visits the World Flower Expo. During his visit, he tours exhibitions from several of the 80 participating countries, including Bulgaria's pavilion.

Crown Prince Naruhito views the entire Bulgarian exhibition, which has already won 14 awards. The Bulgarian pavilion is represented by Chargé d'Affaires Stanislav Baev, together with the presidents of Japanese sponsor companies who finance Bulgaria's participation, and the Commissioner General of EXPO-90, Seiya Nishida. The Crown Prince takes special interest in the national motifs featured in the pavilion's architecture and in the garden design, which shares the Expo's first prize with Ireland's garden. The Bulgarian exhibition includes a traditional wooden pavilion and a courtyard fountain.

\* \* \*

On September 6, Dr Petar Beron, the official Bulgarian representative at World Expo Osaka-90, holds meetings in Tokyo with leading members of the Japanese parliament and other political figures. The discussion focuses on strengthening bilateral cooperation as Bulgaria moves forward with its democratization process. In honour of the Bulgarian visitor, Hikosaburo Okonogi, Chair of



the Parliamentary Friendship Association with Bulgaria in the House of Representatives of the National Diet of Japan, hosts an official luncheon.



"The Second World Young Inventors Exhibition EXPO-91 will take place in Plovdiv from June 7 to July 7, 1991. It is formally approved by the 104th General Assembly of the *Bureau International des Expositions*. The exhibition is organized under the auspices of the Chairman of the State Council Todor Zhivkov and the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr Arpad Bogsch, as reported in a news item dated January 27. On that occasion, the first meeting of the Organizing Committee for EXPO-91 is held in the capital. The preparations for the World Expo dedicated to young creators are presented to Bulgarian and international journalists by the Chair of the Organizing Committee, Stoyan Ovcharov, who is also the Minister of Economy and Planning.

\* \* \*

"Six years after EXPO-85, Bulgaria is once again hosting the World Young Inventors Exhibition. Whereas the previous exhibition focused on demonstrating the organizational abilities and self-

assurance of the ruling regime—with aims that were more ideological than practical—the current economic situation and political pluralism in the country bring new meaning to this year's event." These words mark the opening of EXPO-91 on June 8.

"Today we are here to learn about the achievements of young inventors. Supporting and encouraging them is both valuable and an investment in the future," says Deputy Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization Shahid Alikhan in his opening address.

President of Bulgaria Zhelyu Zhelev officially opens the exhibition. He attends the folk concert, which entertains the many official guests, and tours the exhibition display. The exhibition covers 32,000 sq. m of indoor space and 4,000 sq. m of outdoor space, featuring over 3,000 exhibits. So far, representatives from 25 countries have arrived at the expo village. By the end of the exhibition on July 7, businesses and individual participants from a total of 32 countries will have taken part. Official participants include Belgium, China, Korea, Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Japan, the Soviet Union and Bulgaria. An international jury will recognize the most interesting exhibits. The organizers have prepared approximately 300 medals. Awards will be presented on behalf of President Zhelev and on behalf of Dr Arpad Bogsch, Director General of

the World Intellectual Property Organization.

\* \* \*

On June 21, a Japanese delegation headed by Ietatsu Ohno, Director of the Tokyo branch of the Institute of Innovation and Invention, visits the expo village. Representatives from NTT Data, Nippon Steel, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, Komatsu, Sapporo Breweries, and 14 other companies and patent law offices view the youth inventions and innovations showcased at EXPO-91. The delegation also meets with Bulgarian entrepreneurs and patent specialists.

\* \* \*

On July 6, the World Expo 91 awards are presented in a formal ceremony. Out of 3,493 candidates, the international jury selected 189 recipients, who are awarded the gold medal at the Exhibition of Young Inventors and Innovators.

The title of Best Bulgarian Inventor is awarded to a team of specialists led by Kondyu Andonov, who developed a livestock farm with controlled natural ventilation and a set of technological equipment for processing, dosing and distributing animal feed. Wonyong Choi of the Republic of Korea is recognized as the Best Foreign Inventor for his development of an industrial robot safety system.



"The oldest gold objects on Earth were not discovered in Sumer or Egypt, cradles of ancient civilizations. Nor were they found in pre-Columbian America, famed for the gold of Peru or Colombia. The most ancient gold treasure, over 6,000 years old, was unearthed near Varna. The brilliance of this earliest agricultural and pastoral civilization will captivate the attention of thousands of visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-92," Yosif Davidov writes in a special report for BTA on April 9 from Seville.

The first visitors to the pavilion are journalists. During this week, the leadership of World Expo in Seville is organizing presentation days for Expo 92 for the media. More than 900 journalists from around the world have the opportunity to become acquainted with the exhibition, which will officially open its doors on April 20 and will run until October 12.

In the Bulgarian pavilion, journalists are welcomed by its Director, Kostadin Vladov, who presents the original ancient gold artefacts from the Varna and Valchitran treasures. The guests also take a keen interest in the remaining sections of the exhibition display, which include the work of Cyril and Methodius, exquisite icons, and the remarkable paintings by

Vladimir Dimitrov - The Master.

\* \* \*

A news report from April 10 says that the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-92 in Seville is now fully completed.

Vladimir Lambrev, Commissioner General of the Bulgarian pavilion, says Bulgaria's participation will be respectful, though modest. The main goal of the national exhibit is to show Bulgaria as a historical meeting point of different cultures—a country moving forward while keeping the memory of its long history.

Guests at the pavilion will also have the opportunity to sample Bulgarian national cuisine at the restaurant located on the second floor.

\* \* \*

"Few cities in the world are as well suited to host a World Expo as Seville: Seville of the Romans, Seville of the Arabs, the Jews, the Christians, the indigenous peoples—this city has created a cultural heritage that we Spaniards now present to our guests arriving from all over the world. The World Expo seeks to convey to its visitors the idea of the diversity and richness of cultures created by humanity, the idea of the human individual's constant striving for renewal, and the concept of tolerance, respect for diversity, and international solidarity." With these words, on April 20, King Juan Carlos, head of the

State of Spain, officially opens the World Expo in Seville, the capital of Andalusia.

In the presence of the entire royal family, the Spanish government, the leaders of Spain's 17 autonomous regions, and thousands of guests, the first of the 176 days during which Seville will serve as the symbolic capital of the world has begun.

As Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez remarks, the creative spirit of humankind throughout the past five centuries is being honoured here, alongside the anticipation of a new era of discovery in the forthcoming millennium.

\* \* \*

Lech Wałęsa is the first foreign head of state to visit the World Expo in the capital of Andalusia. The distinguished Polish statesman, who enjoys broad recognition in Spain, participates in the festivities organized for Poland's National Day on May 3. The event is marked by a diverse programme of cultural activities held both within the exhibition site and across Seville.

In response to a question from a BTA correspondent, President Wałęsa presents the Polish message for EXPO-92 as global solidarity among people in Europe and across the world.

Lech Wałęsa visits the national pavilions of Spain, Russia, Germany, the United States, and Bulgaria.

\*\*\*

To the numerous definitions of the World Expo, the British Prince Charles contributes yet another, which immediately finds resonance among journalists: the Expo reflects change. The heir to the throne and his wife, Lady Diana, are guests of honour at the United Kingdom's National Day, commemorated with appropriate ceremony at Cartuja on May 21.

The theme of change is addressed before a select audience of political analysts and business representatives at the Netherlands Pavilion by the former United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. During the A Glimpse of Europe seminar, the Nobel Peace Prize winner discusses the changes taking place in the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries.

On May 22, members of the Norwegian royal family attend EXPO-92 as guests and participate in Norway's National Day. President of Germany Richard von Weizsacker also arrives in Seville.

\*\*\*

On May 24, President of the Republic of Bulgaria Dr Zhelyu Zhelev inaugurates Bulgaria's National Day at the World Expo in Seville, marked by an official military ceremony and the raising of the national flag to the accompaniment of the national anthem.

In the ultra-modern El Palenque Hall, the cultural hub of EXPO-92, before hundreds of guests of the exhibition, the Bulgarian President emphasizes that at this gathering here in Seville, Bulgaria stands with the dignity of a nation with a millennia-long history and the resolve to build a new future.

Zhelyu Zhelev and his delegation visit part of the World Expo. At the Bulgarian pavilion, they are greeted with bread and salt and shown the exhibits.

The President also visits the pavilions of Spain, Poland, the European Community, and Germany. In the evening, the Mayor of Seville, Alejandro Rojas Marcos, hosts a reception at city hall in honour of the Bulgarian Head of State.

The ABC newspaper devotes three full pages to Bulgaria's National Day, noting that Bulgaria also participated in the Chicago Exhibition in 1893.

\*\*\*

"Even after welcoming its millionth visitor, the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo continues to draw attention, not only with its exhibition display but also through a variety of other initiatives," a news report from September 17 notes.

A two-day scientific conference has been organized under the theme The Magic of Ancient Gold. Twenty-five specialists

and museum professionals from Spain, Russia, Turkiye, Ecuador, and Chile, currently present in Seville, are taking part with reports and presentations.

The scientific conference is held among the artefacts themselves: the gold of the Incas, displayed in the pavilion that represents most Latin American countries; the El Carambolo treasure, located in one of Seville's palaces; and the Varna and Valchitran treasures, featured in the central part of the Bulgarian exhibition.



AP, quoted by BTA, reports on August 6 that the latest World Expo (EXPO-93) is inaugurated in the South Korean city of Daejeon. The event features banners, marching bands, and dance performances. More than 130 countries and international organizations are taking part, with a full schedule of cultural events and attractions for guests. Most of the permanent pavilions, spread across 41 hectares, are sponsored by major South Korean companies like Hyundai, Samsung, and Daewoo. About 10 million visitors are expected during the three months of the exhibition.

Unlike the tourism boom during last year's World Expo in Seville, Daejeon—a city about 140 km south of Seoul—is expecting

fewer foreign visitors. Still, for many South Koreans, this is a significant chance to learn about the latest advances in science and technology. About 20 pavilions feature new technologies, space research, and efforts to protect the environment. Visitors should be prepared to spend 20 to 30 hours if they want to see everything.

The organizers of the exhibition are pleased to have attracted a record number of participants. They hope that EXPO-93 will draw global attention to South Korea's scientific and technological achievements and help stimulate the economy.

President Kim Young-sam, in his speech at the opening ceremony, states: "The world has come together at EXPO-93 in Daejeon to seek new directions for progress. When it comes to science and technology, which are vital for the well-being of all countries, we should not think in terms of ours and theirs."

\*\*\*

On November 7, EXPO-93 in Daejeon, South Korea, concludes with a surplus of KRW 254 billion (USD 314 million), following visits by 14 million people, including approximately 500,000 foreign nationals. The exhibition, which lasts 93 days, features participation from 108 countries and 33 international organizations.

South Korea once again impresses the world with

EXPO 93 in Daejeon, following the success of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. "The people of South Korea now have every reason to be proud," says Ted Allan, President of the *Bureau International des Expositions*. "Through EXPO 93, we have shown our strong confidence and our ability to take the next step toward becoming an advanced nation," says Hwang In Sung, Prime Minister of South Korea, at the exhibition's closing ceremony.



On May 22, the World Expo in Lisbon will officially open its doors to the public, who will fill the 98 hectares along the banks of the Tagus in the eastern part of the Portuguese capital.

The first visitor to enter through one of the four entrances of the Expo, Porta do Sol, is a 54-year-old Swiss citizen. He heads straight to the main attraction of EXPO-98, the large Oceanarium aquarium.

The organizers expect the Expo pavilions to welcome between 100,000 and 150,000 visitors each day. By the time the event ends on September 30, EXPO-98 is projected to have drawn a total of 15 million visitors.

The Portuguese press reports the opening day of EXPO-98 with a

sense of pride and excitement.

King Juan Carlos of Spain, who visits his country's pavilion, says that the World Expo in Lisbon is truly impressive.

\*\*\*

On May 24, Emperor Hirohito of Japan and his wife, Empress Michiko, arrive in Portugal for a three-day state visit. This visit marks the start of their two-week tour of Europe. While in Portugal, they will visit the World Expo in Lisbon.

\*\*\*

"President Petar Stoyanov officially opened Bulgaria's National Day at EXPO 98 in Lisbon today. Precisely at 11 a.m. local time, the Bulgarian national flag was raised above the EXPO's Ceremony Plaza to the sound of the Bulgarian anthem, in the presence of the President of Bulgaria, Portugal's Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Antonio Costa, and the Commissioner General of the exposition, Torres Campos," BTA Special Correspondent Evgenia Drumeva reports on September 6.

The final World Expo of the century in Lisbon is dedicated to the 500th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's journey, which created a link between Europe and Asia through the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. The main theme of the event is Oceans: A Heritage for the Future.



"If today we speak of globalization, we may trace its origins to the journeys that commenced on the banks of the River Tagus in Lisbon. Over these five centuries, humanity has achieved remarkable progress; yet even after another five centuries, the pioneering work of those who established the world's first communication corridors will not be forgotten," President Stoyanov says in his address upon being welcomed at the pavilion of Portugal. Stoyanov says that the theme of oceans and seas as a connection between people from different parts of the world is very suitable for Portugal and especially timely, as we approach the new millennium, a period characterized by economic globalization and the start of major infrastructure projects.

Later, Petar Stoyanov and the delegation visit the Bulgarian pavilion at the exhibition. The Trakia Ensemble performs dances in front of the pavilion, which quickly draw the attention of the visitors.

The central theme of the Bulgarian pavilion is From Past to Future. The exhibit presents 136 items and 968 displays. Key exhibits include a replica of the world's oldest processed gold from the Varna Museum, scale models of ships built at the Varna shipyard, and models of marine research vessels created by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The exhibition also explores Bulgaria's relationship with the Black Sea.



"It is often said that Hanover does not immediately capture the hearts of visitors. Known primarily as an exhibition centre, the main city of Lower Saxony in northern Germany is not a global metropolis like New York, an artistic centre like Paris, or a technology hub like Bangalore, India. Yet, on June 1, Hanover will host EXPO-2000, the World Expo marking the start of a new millennium. For the first time in the 150-year history of the World Expos, Germany will have the honour of hosting this international event," BTA's Iskra Borisova wrote on May 20.

People can shape the future only by working together – this is the official message of the exhibition. Experiencing the culture and traditions of nearly 200 countries from every continent along with the opportunity to learn from different aspects of life make the last exhibition of the millennium unique. Even in the digital age of multimedia and the Internet, meeting people from different backgrounds is still a valuable experience, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder says. This is the true message of EXPO-2000.

The Expo is organized under the motto Human-Nature-

Technology, and over the next 153 days it will aim to provide a platform for new perspectives, ideas, and solutions to the question of how humanity can meet future challenges.

It is not just a collection of advanced technologies; it is an effort to find a new balance between people and nature by using technology.

On the evening of May 31, Chancellor Gerhard Schroder officially opens World Expo 2000 in Hanover during a gala dinner attended by 3,000 notable guests from various fields.

"It is a great opportunity for us that the international community has chosen Germany to host EXPO-2000," Gerhard Schroder says in his speech. "We must make it a habit to think, plan, and act globally. No one can solve the challenges of the future alone. EXPO-2000 offers an excellent platform for people from around the world to share their experiences, ideas, and views."

On June 1, German President Johannes Rau welcomes visitors to the first World Expo held in Germany, EXPO-2000. He says that visitors should find a Germany that is welcoming, tolerant, and open to the world. He believes that learning about different cultures and lifestyles

can enrich people's lives.

More than 170 countries and international organizations are represented within the 170-hectare exhibition area in Hanover.

On the opening day alone, the World Expo welcomes 150,000 visitors. The Bulgarian exhibition located in the European Nations pavilion reflects the overall theme of the Expo. Titled Nature's Gifts for Human Health and Recreation, the display showcases Bulgaria's natural, architectural, and cultural heritage. A key feature of the Bulgarian participation is a specially created model of a Thracian tomb that represents our centuries-old history.

Contemporary Bulgaria is showcased through products in biotechnology, multimedia, and laser technology. For the first time, the Space Food Systems Laboratory at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences is displaying its products at a general exhibition. Visitors to the Bulgarian pavilion can see examples of food prepared for cosmonauts. Folklore music is played in the pavilion every hour.

On July 2, representatives from 100 countries attending the World Expo in Hanover welcome United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

to EXPO 2000. Buddhist monks, Arab Bedouins, and United Nations peacekeepers greet the Secretary-General and his wife as they walk along the United Nations Avenue at the Expo site during United Nations Day, which is observed at the exhibition.

"The theme of EXPO-2000, Human-Nature-Technology, is especially relevant today," says Kofi Annan. He notes that the challenges humanity faces are complex and can only be addressed through collective action. Kofi Annan hopes that EXPO-2000 will encourage us all to do what we can to make the world a better place.

The National Day of Bulgaria is celebrated on October 7. The ceremony begins with the raising of the Bulgarian flag in the central square of the Expo site. In his speech, Deputy Prime Minister Petar Zhottev says that the National Day of Bulgaria is an opportunity for the world to see Bulgaria as a country with a rich history, unique culture, and beautiful nature, moving forward with confidence in the modern world. Zhottev also says that Bulgaria has an important place in world history and will continue to strengthen its role in the future global community.

Folk ensemble Sredets, the Bissarov Sisters, and Detksa Kitka choir help represent Bulgarian culture at EXPO-

2000. The artists of the Albena Theatre, under the direction of Bonyo Lungov, entertain the audience with their puppet mini-performances.

On October 31, before several thousand guests, the President of the German Parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, officially announces the closing of the first World Expo held in Germany, as reported by DPA and quoted by BTA.

During the ceremony, the EXPO flag is handed over to the governor of Aichi Prefecture, Japan, the host of the next World Expo in 2005.



On May 24, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mehmed Dikme, and his Deputy, Nihad Kabil, visit the Dutch city of Haarlem to attend the Fifth International Floriade 2002 Exhibition. The event, which began in April and will end in October, has already attracted more than one million visitors. The Bulgarian pavilion, which has drawn significant attention, is presented under the theme Bulgaria: A Land of Ancient Culture and Unspoiled Nature.

At the ceremony celebrating

Bulgarian Culture and Slavic Script, recognized as Bulgaria's National Day, the Minister welcomes the 20 Bulgarian companies taking part in the World Expo and says that agriculture is a key sector for Bulgaria's economic development.

The President of the World Expo, Mr Duisburg, also attends the ceremony. Afterwards, he joins members of the organizing committee to tour the wide selection of Bulgarian products, wines, rakia, cheeses, fruits, roses, geraniums, and more, displayed over a total area of 500 sq. m.



"More than 120 countries are taking part in EXPO-2005, which opens in Nagoya," ITAR-TASS reports on March 24, quoted by BTA.

Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko, and Japan's Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, attend the opening ceremony.

The exposition, lasting 185 days, covers 173 hectares in the Nagoya region, Japan's third-largest industrial centre after Tokyo and Osaka.

The purpose of EXPO-2005 is to

show how modern technologies can exist alongside responsible care for the environment. The main attractions include various robots that clean, interact with children, and offer information to visitors. The Expo site also has eco-friendly buses powered by hydrogen and oxygen, along with self-driving smart vehicles.

On March 27, French President Jacques Chirac visits the World Expo in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. He begins with a visit to the Japanese pavilion, followed by a visit to the French pavilion.

For the first time since World Expos began in 1851, France and Germany have a joint pavilion described as a shared home,

according to Agence Havas, quoted by BTA.

President Chirac is accompanied by his wife Bernadette and Finance Minister Thierry Breton.

On May 13, the official ceremony for Bulgaria's National Day at the World Expo is held in the presence of the Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Angel Marin.

On behalf of the Japanese Government, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shuzen Tanigawa gives a welcome address.

In his speech to the hosts and guests of the gala, the Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Angel Marin, thanks the Japanese Government and the organizers of the World Expo for their hospitality. He expresses his appreciation for the well-organized event, which focuses on the harmonious relationship between people and nature.

The National Day of Bulgaria is celebrated with a gala concert featuring the State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances Philip Koutev, the Theodosii Spassov Trio, the National Art Company led by Artistic Director Neshka Robeva, vocalist Nina-Nikolina, and bagpiper Krasimira Churtova.

On May 19, Chinese Vice Premier

Wu Yi visits the World Expo. During her visit, she remarks that she has seen the ingenuity and creativity of the Japanese people.

Later, Wu Yi also meets with young Japanese people and tells them that Japan's experience could help make the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai better.

"The Bulgarian pavilion is among the most visited at World Expo 2005 in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. Bulgaria attracts thousands of visitors to the exhibition with its traditional products, such as rose oil, yogurt, wine, mineral water, honey and herbs. The theme of Bulgaria's participation at the World Expo is Bulgaria: The Wisdom and Gifts of Nature for Health, a Fulfilling Life, and Harmonious Coexistence," BTA Special Correspondent Milko Hristov reports on June 5.

Our national pavilion covers 324 sq. m. It is located in the central area of the exhibition, next to the pavilions of Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Turkiye, and Greece.

"In the initial days following the opening of the exhibition on March 24, we receive approximately 2,000 visitors per day," Viktor Nalbantov, Deputy Director of the Bulgarian pavilion, tells BTA. Today, however, the number of visitors exceeded 10,000. Viktor Nalbantov serves as Deputy Director of International Fair

– Plovdiv, the organizer of Bulgaria's participation in EXPO-2005.

Each morning, visitors line up at the Bulgarian pavilion to taste Bulgarian yogurt with rose petal jam. The yogurt is topped with a fresh Bulgarian rose. In addition to yogurt, which is the most popular Bulgarian product in Japan, guests can also enjoy free Bulgarian rose-flavoured ice cream.

Bulgarian music plays in Bulgaria's national pavilion from morning to evening, and dancers from the Bulgare ensemble welcome guests. All visitors receive a brochure about Bulgaria, information about the displayed products, and small gifts.

His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan visits the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-2005 on June 6.

"I am truly proud that today I have the opportunity to welcome you to the Bulgarian pavilion. Your visit is a great honour for Bulgaria and will provide renewed impetus to our ongoing efforts to maintain and develop the traditionally strong relations and cooperation with Japan," Minister of Economy Milko Kovachev, who also serves as Commissioner General of the Bulgarian participation in the World Expo (EXPO), expresses this sentiment in his welcome address to Crown Prince

Economy Minister Milko Kovachev and Bulgarian Ambassador to Japan Blagovest Sendov officially open Bulgaria's pavilion at Expo 2005, Aichi, March 25, 2005 (BTA Photo/Milko Hristov)





Naruhito.

"Thirty years ago, at the previous Expo, His Majesty Emperor Akihito tried Bulgarian yogurt for the first time. Today, this product is known and appreciated by people all over Japan," the Minister says.

\*\*\*

The final day of EXPO 2005 in Aichi is September 25. The World Expo lasts six months and draws 22 million visitors, almost 7 million more than expected.

"I hope that the idea of conserving the planet's resources will spread throughout the world, so that we may build a society in which people and nature coexist in harmony," Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi says during the closing of the Expo.



The official opening of the Expo in Zaragoza, Spain, is held on June 13. The Expo's theme is Water and Sustainable Development. Bulgaria is one of the participating countries. The focus of the Bulgarian exhibit is Water for Life. The presentation includes the role of water in Christian rituals, water in sports and recreation. Visitors can try traditional Bulgarian dishes at the pavilion's restaurant and buy souvenirs.

The aim of the World Expo is to provide a platform for participants to exchange information on new technologies for the management of this resource, which are compatible with the sustainable development of society.

Zaragoza is expected to welcome 6.5 million visitors during the Expo, which will run until September 14.

EXPO 2008 covers 25 hectares and includes 102 pavilions from the participating countries.

\*\*\*

The country fully supports the view that access to water is a basic human right and a common responsibility of all countries and governments. Vice President Angel Marin says at Bulgaria's National Day at the World Expo in Zaragoza on June 21.

He hopes that investors visiting the Bulgarian pavilion will find many ideas for conserving and using water resources.

Bulgaria's stand occupies an area of 383 sq. m. At the Bulgarian pavilion at World Expo – Zaragoza, visitors can see the Panagyurishte Gold Treasure. The National Day programme includes two concerts called The Magic of Bulgarian Folklore, featuring traditional Bulgarian music and dance, and modern arrangements that offer a new take on classic songs and dances.

There is also a music and dance performance titled Bulgarian Folklore: From Its Origins to the Contemporary Sound.



On April 30, the Associated Press, quoted by BTA, reports: "Today, proud Shanghai officially marked the opening of World Expo-2010 with a lavish ceremony featuring fireworks, moving fountains, and laser lights, rivalling the impressive opening of the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008."

At a toast during the gala dinner held in honour of distinguished guests attending the ceremony, Chinese President Hu Jintao expresses his confidence that people from around the world will experience an impressive, successful, and memorable exhibition.

Among the 2,300 participants in the indoor programme are notable individuals from different countries and areas of culture. Special guests include the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, and his wife, Carla Bruni.

The Expo will welcome the public starting May 1. Nearly 200 countries, including Bulgaria, will present their pavilions, and around 70 million visitors are

expected over the six months of the event. The theme of this major global technology gathering is Better City, Better Life.

\*\*\*

The National Day of Bulgaria at the World Expo in Shanghai begins on June 14 with a ceremony to raise the national flags of China and Bulgaria.

Attending the event are Traycho Traykov, Economy, Energy and Tourism Minister and Bulgaria's National Commissioner General, and Zhao Wen, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai.

The world's largest fair, often called the Economic Olympics by the media, brings together the achievements of 192 countries and 50 international organizations in industry, science, technology, and culture. This year's World Expo is the biggest exhibition ever held. Its area is twice the size of Monaco and 20 times larger than the previous Expo in Zaragoza, Spain. The exhibition site covers 5.3 sq. km on both sides of the Huangpu River. After the Expo, the area will be converted into Shanghai's first major green space, serving as a park and afforested zone.

For the first time, the exhibition focuses on environmental protection and is presented as the first ecological and green World Expo. Among the new facilities is the largest solar power plant in China, and all transport

within the Expo uses zero-emission vehicles. Topics such as energy efficiency, resource and water conservation, reducing environmental pollution, smart homes, wind and solar panels, and electric vehicles are an important part of Bulgaria's economic and energy priorities, according to Minister Traykov. In his discussions with Deputy Mayor Zhao Wen, the main topic is tourism and how it can help strengthen bilateral relations.

The Bulgarian pavilion, covering an area of 324 sq. m, is located in Zone C of the shared European pavilion. The theme of Bulgaria's participation is City with Shared Heritage. The design features streets, bay windows, and wooden verandas inspired by the National Revival-era Lyutova House, combined with elements reflecting 12 layers of Bulgaria's cultural history. A visual presentation of the modern city and contemporary lifestyle is also included. Greenery at the base of the façade reflects a focus on environmental themes, while the upper part displays the national tricolour to represent Bulgaria's identity.

\*\*\*

On October 31, China will close the World Expo in Shanghai, which has broken new records and showcased national pride. The organizers of the event have committed to continuing their efforts for sustainable and balanced development.

The number of visitors exceeded

the previous record of 64.21 million, which was set at the World Expo in Osaka, Japan, in 1970. The exhibition area, covering 5.2 sq. km, hosted an average of 370,000 guests per day. On October 16, a daily record of 1.03 million visitors is reached.

The next World Expo (EXPO) will be held in South Korea under the theme Green Growth, Blue Economy. In 2015, the event will take place in the Italian city of Milan.



On April 4, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands opens the World Expo for Agriculture, Horticulture, and Floriculture, Floriade, in Venlo, Limburg province. The exhibition held every ten years also features participation from Bulgaria.

The exhibition area covers 66 hectares, or about 130 football fields. For the event, 1.8 million bulb flowers, 5,000 roses, 18,000 shrubs, 190,000 perennials, and 3,000 trees have been planted. This variety of colours and scents is combined with green lawns, ponds, gazebos, sculptures, fountains, and modern pavilion structures. Part of the area also includes a natural forest.

Visitors can experience the full scope of the Expo and



travel quickly across its 1.1 km length with a cable car. The panoramic cabins, each holding six people, provide great photo opportunities from a height of 30 metres.

More than 100 companies are participating in the Expo, with 35 national pavilions on display. One of the largest pavilions belongs to China. Centuries-old traditions and modern trends in Chinese horticulture are presented over an area of 1,500 sq. m.

Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Russia, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, and several other countries have their own pavilions at Floriade 2012.

The Bulgarian National Garden and exhibition at this year's Floriade align with the main theme of the exposition: Become Part of the Theatre of Nature. Nature and culture are deeply connected. Folk art, traditions, and entertainment influence horticulture, and horticulture also inspires culture. For this reason, Bulgaria's participation in the World Horticultural Expo is presented under the motto: Bulgaria: A country of ancient culture and pristine nature, a place for relaxation and healing.

The Bulgarian participation highlights Bulgaria's roses, both oil-bearing and ornamental; the country's herbs, which reflect the vitality of the Bulgarian land; aromatherapy, used for both healing and enjoyment; and eco-friendly, natural products.

Special attention is given to children's programmes in Floriade this year. Interactive games, playgrounds, and cooking competitions designed especially for kids are available. A dedicated pavilion offers practical demonstrations, showing how strawberries, mushrooms, vegetables, and fruits are grown, and how honey is made.

The expo organized around five thematic sections will continue until October 7. Throughout the entire six-month period, an extensive cultural programme will be offered.



World Expo 2015 will open its doors in Milan on May 1. The event will take place under the theme Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. This will be the largest event ever organized that is dedicated to food, the Italian hosts say. The organizers aim to address a range of questions related not only to the nourishment of the world's population but also to the conservation of the Earth's natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Representatives of 135 countries, excluding Bulgaria, and representatives of the United Nations and the European Union, are present at EXPO 2015 in Milan. A number of non-governmental and humanitarian organizations, such as Oxfam,

Caritas, and the foundation of the Italian singer Andrea Bocelli, will also attend the exhibition in Milan this year. The participants include a range of companies from the food industry sector.

All of them are showcased in individual pavilions, some of which are outstanding examples of architecture, featuring impressive creativity and inspired by innovative construction techniques. Nine thematic zones have been organized based on the main crops grown in each country or adapted to specific climate conditions.

The Expo site covers a total area of 1.1 million sq. m and is located to the west of Milan.

The preceding two Expos – held in Shanghai, China, and Yeosu, South Korea – featured themes centred on urban life, the ocean, and coastal areas. The forthcoming Expo in Astana, Kazakhstan, scheduled for 2017, will focus on energy and energy sources.

The theme of the Expo in Milan gives every country the chance to take part, unlike the themes of previous exhibitions. Some countries use the event to show their strengths in agriculture and food production. Others use it to promote their food, culture, traditions, biodiversity, and climate in order to attract more tourists. For another group, the Expo is an opportunity to look for partnerships with potential investors or other countries.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi officially opens the World Expo in Milan. "It feels like Italy is embracing the world now," he



Walking around Expo 2015, Milan, May 13, 2015  
(BTA Photo/Gabriela Golemanska)

says.

In a video address, Pope Francis calls upon the exhibition, dedicated to the theme of food, to serve as an opportunity to globalize solidarity.

\* \* \*

BTA's Gabriela Golemanska guides us through the World

Expo on May 13. She reports that at the Milan Expo many countries have set up striking exhibits to complement the impressive Italy and United Nations pavilions. Nepal's pavilion is designed like a traditional Nepalese pagoda. Romania's pavilion looks like a wooden village house. Turkiye's pavilion is styled as a farmhouse decorated with colourful

bougainvillea and mosaics.

The pavilions of Belgium and Spain are designed to look like traditional Italian farmhouses, called cascina. The Belgian pavilion also features a glass dome similar to the one at the Royal Greenhouses in Laeken. The Mexico pavilion is shaped like a corn husk, while the



Malaysia pavilion resembles a grain of wheat.

The Oman Pavilion resembles a pink Omani mansion set in the desert, while the United Arab Emirates Pavilion features a wavy pink design inspired by rippled sand dunes. The Qatar Pavilion is also shaped like an Arab mansion but has a large woven basket at its centre. Poland, Angola, Estonia, Japan, Chile, Slovenia, and Slovakia have built wooden structures characterized by interlaced strips of timber.

The Thailand Pavilion is shaped like a large wooden Thai hat, similar to those worn by rice field workers. A small rice paddy featuring figures of workers and animals is at the base of the pavilion. Inside, visitors will find three cinema halls showing films and light-and-sound presentations about Thai cuisine, agriculture, and the King's projects related to environmental protection, farming, and water management. In one hall, the screen follows the curved form of the Thai hat, while in another, the screen is set at the bottom of a mirrored well. At a certain time, words such as "delicious" and "delightful", describing the quality of Thai food, appear on the screen.

A small forest is located in front of the Austria Pavilion, while the Azerbaijan Pavilion features a large glass sphere filled with plants. The Belarus Pavilion is designed like a mill

wheel set between two green hills. The Kazakhstan Pavilion stands out with its shiny, silver, curved walls that resemble armour. Turkmenistan's Pavilion is colourful, with a façade that includes a screen inspired by a Turkmen carpet. The Ecuador Pavilion is decorated with a string of multicoloured beads, similar to traditional necklaces. The Argentina Pavilion is shaped like a grain silo, and the Monaco Pavilion is built from stacked, differently coloured freight containers.

Several pavilions are designed to resemble ships. Dhow sails are intertwined at the front of the Kuwait pavilion. Desert sand is spread out underneath, with the entrance to the exhibition area found behind the sails. A water curtain falls in front of the entrance at regular intervals. With carefully directed lights on the water, the words *Water is the key to life* appear in blue letters.

Hungary's pavilion looks like a wooden ship from one side, while from the other it resembles an exposed animal skeleton. The Russian pavilion has the shape of a large Noah's ark, with the bottom of its bow made as a huge mirror. The United States pavilion looks like a giant wooden barn; to see its architecture fully, visitors need to go up to the rooftop terrace. On May 9, in front of the Russian pavilion, a young woman dressed in a Red Army uniform is giving each visitor a Saint George ribbon to commemorate the victory over Nazi Germany.

In some of the pavilions, visitors are reminded of their childhood. The German pavilion can be exited by sliding down a chute, while the Dutch pavilion is designed like a funfair. In the long wooden hall of the Brazilian pavilion, instead of walking on a solid floor, visitors balance on a large hammock. In the Estonian pavilion, swings bring to mind the local sport of kiiking, where participants swing on a giant swing and try to rotate over the top.

France is represented at EXPO Milan by a wooden pavilion shaped like a cave set in front of a lush, fragrant orchard where various vegetables grow. Inside the cave, bottles of wine, copper cookware, and large jars filled with grains and pasta hang from the ceiling. French cheeses are displayed in alcoves.

The pavilion of the United Kingdom is designed to resemble a white swarm of bees. In the green garden in front of it, one can hear bees buzzing and crickets chirping.

China is represented by three pavilions. The first is the national pavilion, the second belongs to the real estate holding company Vanke, and the third showcases Chinese corporations. The national pavilion designed by Chinese architects reminds visitors of either a rippling wheat field or a house with a wavy roof. In front of it, there is a field of fragrant yellow flowers. The Vanke pavilion designed

by architect Daniel Libeskind has a spiral shape. The pavilion for the corporations is bright white, similar to the pavilions of Czechia, South Korea, and Lithuania.

Greenery is present throughout the Expo site. The walls of the United States and Israel pavilions have vertical gardens with many types of crops, expected to be harvested during the six months of the EXPO. In the United States pavilion, the ceiling lamps also function as planters with different plants. The Vietnam pavilion features large bamboo funnels planted with trees. Behind the white structures of the Colombia pavilion, visitors can see plant species from the country's five climate zones, which differ according to altitude.

The theme of the Milan World Expo focuses on food and feeding the planet. However, this does not mean that the pavilions of the participating countries are full of food products. Topics such as food, production, nourishment, and shortages are presented in different ways. In Spain's pavilion, for example, these subjects are shown on large screens with footage of crop growing, natural landscapes, and traditional dish preparation. In one of the halls, the walls and floor are made of plates covered with transparent panels, reminding visitors of nourishment and shared meals.

Perhaps the most striking impression comes from the

Vatican Pavilion: white and yellow, reflecting the colours of the Holy See, and simple, mirroring the lifestyle of Pope Francis. In a niche at the back, visitors can spot the branches of a tree. Inside, the original painting *The Last Supper* by Tintoretto, brought from the Church of San Trovaso in Venice, is on display. This masterpiece reminds visitors of the spiritual nourishment that art can provide.

At the centre of the pavilion is an interactive table made up of squares. As visitors approach, human hands appear in each square, performing different actions—kneading dough, holding a sandwich, writing, or gently touching the face of a loved one in a photograph. When visitors move away, the images fade and the table returns to a plain white surface. The installation conveys that the table serves not only for eating but also as a space for connection, sharing both happiness and difficulties, where people feel a sense of belonging and remember that everything on Earth is a gift from God. The Vatican pavilion stands out as the only one without a commercial section, while the other pavilions offer restaurants and shops with traditional foods and products from their countries.

Smaller or less affluent countries at the EXPO are organized into island clusters according to their geographic area or main agricultural products.

There are nine clusters: cocoa, rice, cereals and root crops, coffee, arid zones, islands and sea, Mediterranean, fruits and vegetables, and spices.

Each cluster has a unique design. The coffee cluster uses mostly dark brown wood, resembling the colour of coffee. In the cocoa cluster, tall wooden poles represent the trees that provide shade on cocoa plantations. The Mediterranean cluster features white and blue colours, reflecting the bright sun and deep blue sea of the region. In the rice cluster, the exhibition spaces are inside glass pavilions that look like the water around rice fields. The spice, cereal, and root crop clusters have small plots of land where crops will be grown in the next few months.

\* \* \*

"The expo site in Milan spans 1.1 million sq. m. and brings together 135 countries, a range of international organizations, companies, and non-governmental organizations. Over 50 countries and companies have built their own standalone pavilions. Seen from above, the site has a fish-like shape. Its layout is inspired by traditional settlements—a cross shape formed by two intersecting main streets. The longer street, the Decumano, is 1,600 metres long, with country pavilions lined up on both sides. The Cardo, which crosses the Decumano, features pavilions from various Italian regions, along with Italy's impressive

pavilion located opposite the European Union's more modest pavilion. The intersection of these main streets forms Piazza Italia. Large canopies are installed to shield visitors from the sun and rain," BTA's Gabriela Golemanska writes on May 14.

At the eastern end of the Expo site is the Mediterranean Hill, offering a panoramic view of all the pavilions. The open-air theatre sits at the southernmost point, while directly opposite, at the northern end, is the Lake Zone, a major attraction for visitors. At its centre is a circular lake with a large wooden structure called the Tree of Life. The Lake Zone covers 28,000 sq. m and can hold up to 20,000 people. The lake has a diameter of 90 metres, with water supplied by the nearby Villoreasi Canal, which also serves other Expo facilities. At certain times of the day, music plays across the lake area, and large artificial flowers open on the Tree of Life.

Another point of interest for visitors to the Expo site is the 4-metre-tall statue of the Virgin Mary, made of bronze with a gold finish. This statue is an exact replica of the gilded copper Madonna created by Giuseppe Perego in 1774, which stands atop the Milan Cathedral and serves as a symbol of the city. The replica is placed at the main entrance to the Expo site, in the westernmost area.

LIK 2025 The pavilions at the expo village are built using environmentally friendly materials, mainly wood

and glass. After the Expo ends, the pavilions will be taken apart, and the materials will be recycled. The pavilions have impressive architecture. In terms of design and impact, the Italian pavilion and the United Nations pavilion are especially notable. The United Nations pavilion, called Pavilion Zero, is the starting point for visitors at Milan Expo.

The Italy Pavilion covers 12,000 sq. m and was built by several companies. It has four levels, with a panoramic terrace on the top floor. The pavilion's white structure is designed to look like a network of interwoven branches and is fitted with photovoltaic panels. The cement, developed by Italcementi, has special photocatalytic properties and can capture air pollutants when exposed to light, turning them into harmless salts. As the pavilion is a model of construction innovation, it will remain after the Expo and will become a centre for new technologies.

The Zero Pavilion is designed by director and set designer Davide Rampello and architect Michele De Lucchi. Located at the western entrance of the expo village, its exterior is inspired by the Euganean Hills—volcanic formations southwest of Padua that rise above the flat landscape of Veneto. Inside the pavilion, the space is dark, creating the feeling of being at the centre of the Earth. Under each hill shaped structure, there is a separate hall with a

unique theme. One hall displays figures of animals that humans have domesticated and used in agriculture. Another shows the evolution of human settlements over time. A third features the trunk of a huge tree. A fourth contains a large pile of artificial fruit and vegetables, serving as a reminder that, even as hundreds of millions of people suffer from hunger, around 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year. One of the halls has walls lined with a series of colourful panels. These are not made of marble, terracotta, or painted glass but of real cereal grains and crops of various colours, arranged between two sheets of glass. After leaving the halls, visitors arrive at the pavilion's inner courtyard, where the Italian furniture maker Riva 1920 has placed a large wooden table named Pangea after the ancient supercontinent that once connected all the Earth's land, symbolizing unity and suggesting that the world should exist free of borders and divisions. The table top consists of 19 sections made from kauri, a tree native to New Zealand that is over 1,000 years old. The legs are made from briccola, the chestnut posts that can be found in the Venetian Lagoon.

After visiting this must-see attraction, the tour of the Expo site begins. Exploring the site takes at least a full day, as some pavilions offer special programmes and screenings, while others have limited capacity, because their structures are lightweight and

easy to dismantle. Long lines often form in front of certain pavilions, so visitors should be patient if they want to see the exhibits from the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Ecuador, China, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Colombia, Thailand, or the United Arab Emirates. Interestingly, the pavilions of countries often seen as global leaders, the United States and Russia, are not the focus of attention. The pavilion of Nepal, which was badly hit by the earthquake on April 25 and continued tremors, is still empty, as the organizers have not been able to finish it. However, volunteers work every day to complete the construction, and once it is ready, it will open to visitors.

\*\*\*

Over 90 companies from Bulgaria and Italy are seeking opportunities for cooperation, trade, and investment in Bulgaria. They are participating in the national presentation of Bulgaria on September 8, as part of the programme at World Expo (EXPO) Milan.

Bulgaria's greatest potential lies in mechanical engineering, the production of automotive components, electronics and electrical engineering, information technology, the food and beverage industry, and the pharmaceutical industry, Deputy Minister of Economy Lyuben Petrov points out at the official opening of the forum. The event is organized by the Milan Chamber of Commerce,

the Agency for the Promotion of the Internationalisation of Italian Enterprises Promos Milano, and the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria.

"Bulgaria is regarded as one of the most promising destinations for doing business," Ambassador of Italy to Bulgaria Marco Conticelli remarks during the forum.

\*\*\*

The World Expo in Milan will end on October 31. The next World Expo is scheduled to take place in two years in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. Its theme will be Future Energy, focusing on Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions, Energy Efficiency, and Energy for All. So far, 100 countries have been invited to participate.

The logo of the World Expo in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana. (BTA Photo)



LIK 2025



The specialized World Expo in Kazakhstan takes place from June 10 to September 10, 2017.

"Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic met in Astana with Kazakhstan Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev. Vucic, who is in Astana for the opening of World Expo 2017, discussed bilateral relations and ways to expand cooperation with Sagintayev," a news report dated June 9 says.

In a publication dated July 12, the German President, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, refers to Kazakhstan as a key source of stability in Central Asia. Steinmeier's visit is connected to an international exhibition in Astana focused on the future of the energy sector. At the event, the German pavilion showcases the shift toward





A snapshot from Expo 2020 Dubai  
(BTA Photo)

cleaner and more sustainable energy sources.



On March 30, 2020, the organizers of World Expo 2020 announce their intention to postpone the event due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Expo is originally set to run from October 20, 2020, to April 10, 2021 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). In early May, the organizers suggest new dates for the event, from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

\*\*\*

September 30, 2021, Dubai launches World Expo 2020, featuring participation from over 190 countries and representing the largest international event since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The modern exhibition site resembles a city of its own, built on land that was formerly just sand dunes in the southern outskirts of Dubai.

The event is held under the theme Connecting Minds, Creating the Future.

A cast and professional crew of 1,000 deliver a 90-minute show, using the latest technology and an impressive light display, all projected onto the 70-metre lattice dome of Al Wasl Plaza—the world's largest 360-degree projection surface. This allows for panoramic images and videos to be seen, creating a unique effect: the visuals are

clearly visible from both inside and outside the dome.

Among the performers at the gala concert for the official opening are world-famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, Golden Globe-winning actress, singer, and songwriter Andra Day, British singer Ellie Goulding, acclaimed Chinese pianist Lang Lang, Beninese singer Angelique Kidjo, and other artists well-known in the Arab world.

\*\*\*

Bulgaria is participating in World

Bulgaria's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai  
(BTA Photo)



A shot of the interior of the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo hosted in Dubai in 2021-2022  
(BTA Photo)

Expo (EXPO-2020) with its own pavilion. The Bulgarian pavilion, called Bulgaria: A Centre of Connectivity, the Engine of the Future, presents an interactive concept that demonstrates Bulgaria's perspective on the sub-theme of Mobility. The pavilion also reflects the main theme of EXPO 2020 in Dubai – Connecting Minds, Creating the Future.

Among the exhibits at the Bulgarian pavilion, which will be seen by visitors from around the world, are replicas of the Panagyurishte gold treasure and the gold artefacts from the Varna Necropolis. Experts from

the National Historical Museum are also present.

A video installation designed for EXPO-2020 spans the floor and walls of the pavilion. The set-up uses a multi-projection system that turns the space into a large-scale exhibition. The video pieces *Traditions, Art and Science*, and *Achievements* are shown on a display made up of six vertically arranged monitors, reaching a total height of 350 cm and a width of 180 cm.

The pavilion, its logo, and the associated programme showcase Bulgaria's role as a hub of connectivity for the

Balkans, Europe, and the Middle East. This hub supports the movement of people and goods and strengthens links between the East and West, different religions and cultures, the past and future, nature and tourism, economy and society, and people and technology.

The concept shows how our country has been a leading force in innovation throughout its 1,300-year history.

The five main topics of the Mobility sub-theme, along with the overall theme of EXPO-2020, are integrated as key concepts in the architectural



design of the pavilion, its logo, the six-month programme, special events for Bulgaria's National Day, and all related activities – including souvenirs, promotional materials, and the management of the Bulgarian pavilion's social media and website.

\*\*\*

On February 9, 2022, although there is no official visit from a representative of Bulgarian institutions, Bulgaria's National Day is marked in a meaningful and heartfelt way at the World Expo in Dubai.

The pavilion is a meeting place for Bulgarians from different parts of the United Arab Emirates, many of whom come with their families. Everyone has the chance to try traditional bread with colourful salt and dairy products from Lakrima.

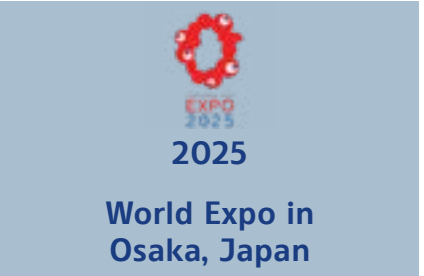
The informal celebration features Bulgaria's Olympic rhythmic gymnastics champions, showcases the country's intangible cultural heritage, and includes Bulgarian folklore and cuisine.

The Diamond Team of Bulgaria, the rhythmic gymnastics ensemble that won gold at the XXXII Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo, has become a real sensation. The girls draw a lot of attention, with many fans visiting the Bulgarian pavilion just to meet Simona, Erika, and Stefi, who are members of the team.

\*\*\*

"After 182 days filled with a wide range of activities and events attended by millions of visitors from around the world, EXPO-2020 in Dubai officially closed yesterday under the iconic dome at Al Wasl Square. This event marked the end of the first World Expo held in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia region, and the first hosted by an Arab country," Director General of WAM Mohamed Jalal Al Rayesi says, quoted by BTA on April 1.

"By hosting the world's largest expo under such challenging conditions, the United Arab Emirates showed that nothing is impossible, delivering an exceptional edition in the event's long history," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai says in an audio message at the closing ceremony, the author notes.



On May 5, 2022, the government approves Bulgaria's participation in World Expo 2025, which would be held in Osaka, Kansai, Japan, from April 13 to October 13, 2025.

\*\*\*

On May 17, 2024, the Chief Executive Officer of the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA), Boyko Takov, meets with the Ambassador of Japan to Bulgaria, Hisashi Michigami, to discuss Bulgaria's preparations for participation in the World Expo in Osaka. They share their perspectives on the vision and organization of Bulgaria's involvement in Expo 2025. During the meeting, it is confirmed that preparations are proceeding on schedule.

At the meeting, Boyko Takov and Hisashi Michigami agree that, just as the Japanese developed an interest in Bulgaria after World Expo 1970, in 2025 Bulgaria should showcase the elements that continue to connect the two nations: ancient culture and history, respect for traditions, achievements, and Bulgaria's innovations.

\*\*\*

In May 2024, Boyko Takov is interviewed by BTA's Delyan Petrishki. "There has been no change to the original budget allocated for Bulgaria's participation in the World Expo (EXPO-2025) in Osaka, except for fluctuations in the exchange rate between the US dollar and the Bulgarian lev over the past three years. Any future changes will depend on developments in the economic environment.



Bulgaria participates in Expo 2025, Osaka, April 13, 2025  
(BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

The budget set for the pavilion rental also remains the same, with only potential differences due to exchange rates," the CEO of BSMEPA says. He clarifies that as early as 2022, the Council of Ministers sequentially chose pavilion type B, yet, due to its unavailability, opted for type A. In view of the negotiations held, Boyko Takov notes that, at present, a more favourable rental price has been secured

for type A, compared to that for a pavilion of the lower class, type B. Bulgaria has a contract signed with the Japanese company leasing the Bulgarian pavilion, Daiwa Lease Co. Ltd. The next step involves the development of the design for both the interior and exterior exhibition areas, followed by the practical representation of Bulgaria. The procedures for conceptual proposals regarding

Bulgaria's visual presentation in Osaka in 2025 also remain to be finalized. Members of nationally represented employers' and industry organizations will participate in refining Bulgaria's participation plan, with invitations to be sent to these organizations. "I perceive a sense of fatigue among our compatriots when it comes to presenting ourselves in the same manner time and again, without



naming it explicitly. Personally, I am convinced that the face of Bulgaria is diverse, modern, and there is much we can display to the world, especially in the context of the Expo's theme and our designated area," Boyko Takov comments on his vision on the pavilion concept.

\*\*\*

With a formal ceremony in Osaka, construction began on the Bulgarian pavilion, with which Bulgaria will participate in the World Expo. This is announced by the team of

Bulgaria's diplomatic mission in Tokyo through a post on its Facebook page. According to the information provided, the ceremony took place on June 24, 2024, and was conducted in accordance with the traditions and culture of the host country.

Special participation in the ceremony will include Marieta Arabadjieva, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to Japan; Krasimir Ivanov, Head of the Bulgarian Commercial and Economic Affairs Service in Tokyo; Boyko Takov, Chief

Executive Officer of the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency (BSMEPA); and representatives from the Japan-Bulgaria Business Association, the Honorary Consulate of Bulgaria in Izumiotsu, the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, and the Bulgarian community in Japan.

\*\*\*

Bulgaria will take part in the World Expo with a national pavilion, which will be staffed by Bulgarian students.

*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev, Bulgarian Ambassador to Japan Marieta Arabadjieva, and Prof. Hiroto Kobayashi, designer of the Bulgarian pavilion and professor of architecture, at the official opening of Bulgaria's pavilion, Osaka, April 13, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)*



*Thousands flock to Expo 2025 to visit the exhibition after its opening, Osaka, April 14, 2025 (BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)*

This initiative comes at the suggestion of the Ministry of Tourism, as announced by the ministry on March 3, 2025.

The Ministry of Tourism is part of the interdepartmental working group that handles all decisions related to Bulgaria's participation. This topic is also the main point of discussion at the meeting between Tourism Minister Miroslav Borshosh and the CEO of BSMEPA Boyko Takov.

"The Bulgarian State has the chance to give our students a unique opportunity to represent the country at the World Expo (EXPO) in Osaka. Universities nationwide will nominate students who major in Tourism and Japanese Studies. From these nominations, 60 young Bulgarians will be chosen to work at the Bulgarian pavilion for six months during the exhibition. This period allows both younger and more experienced participants to join on a rotating schedule, gaining

important experience and practical skills," Minister Miroslav Borshosh says.

Bulgaria's Pavilion covers 376 sq. m on a 900 sq. m plot located on a newly built island created especially for the Expo, between the Singapore and Netherlands pavilions. Its main concept brings together the past, present, and future in a single space and time.

\*\*\*

Of the 47 countries that will have standalone Type A pavilions at the World Expo in Osaka, only eight – including Bulgaria – have already received certificates from the Japan Association for the World Expo 2025, which is responsible for organizing and managing the event. Kyodo reports this on March 13 as part of its coverage on the preparations for the World Expo in Osaka.

The Expo is projected to attract

28.2 million visitors from around the world. It will take place on the artificial island of Yumeshima, located in Osaka Bay.

\*\*\*

The return of Japanese business to Bulgaria, together with the positive relationship between the two countries, could mark the beginning of a new period of increased cooperation and exchange between Japan and Bulgaria. The upcoming World Expo 2025 in Osaka may serve as a starting point for this development. Hisashi Michigami, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Bulgaria, says this during a business breakfast held on March 24. The event is organized by the Japan-Bulgaria Business Association (JBBA), in partnership with the Embassy of Japan in Bulgaria and BSMEPA, at the Hilton Hotel in Sofia.

World Expo 2025 in Osaka is





Girls in traditional Bulgarian costumes welcome guests to the Bulgarian pavilion on the first day of the World Expo, Osaka, April 13, 2025  
(BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)

dedicated to the future and advanced technologies, the diplomat recalls.

"You all know that the Olympic Games are held every four years, while the World Expo is organized every five years. (...) I think we could say that the Expo might actually be more important for the progress of human life and technology," Michigami says, even though the Olympic Games have a longer history.

In his view, the Japanese people and people around the world clearly recognize that advanced technologies and humanity hold equal significance. Technology alone is not sufficient; rather, it should serve as an instrument that supports and assists human endeavours.

Hisashi Michigami recalls that in 1970, when he was just 11 years old, he visited the Expo in Osaka six times. He remembers that lunar rocks had been shown in the United States and the USSR pavilions, which drew millions of visitors. Michigami points out that the Expo always attracts large crowds, noting that the previous Expo in Osaka had 64 million attendees.

The Ambassador notes Bulgaria's participation with its own pavilion at the EXPO-1970, mentioning that he personally remembers the triangular design of the Bulgarian pavilion. He explains that during the event, the Emperor of Japan visited the Bulgarian pavilion, which led to the start of Meiji Bulgaria yogurt. Both the Emperor and

Empress tasted the yogurt and liked it very much. This sparked the company's interest, and it later began developing the yogurt in Japan.

The Ambassador says Bulgarian leaders who have visited Japan have been impressed by the country's progress, which has led to an interest in educational exchange.

"This was the starting point of our close cooperation, including in business and other areas. It marked the beginning of a golden era between the two countries," Michigami says.

He believes that just as the previous World Expo in Osaka marked the beginning of strong ties and business cooperation between Bulgaria and Japan,

this year's Expo could play a similar role and become the starting point "for our next golden era".

The business breakfast is attended by the President of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev, the Minister of Tourism, Miroslav Borshosh, and the Minister of Economy, Peter Dilov.

"Bulgaria can serve as a genuine strategic partner to Japan in the region of Eastern and Central Europe, not only through its strategic geographic location, but also by virtue of its high-quality human capital, stability, socio-economic environment, and the favourable conditions for investment and business operations in Bulgaria," President Rumen Radev remarks as he addresses the participants in the business breakfast.

The head of State notes that Bulgaria's participation in the

World Expo in Osaka will give countries a chance to present what connects them: their long-standing cultures, ancient traditions, and achievements in science, economy, and state-of-the-art technologies.

"The Expo in Osaka in 1970 was mentioned several times. Half a century ago, the economic relations between Bulgaria and Japan entered a new phase as a result of that event. It is often claimed that history never repeats itself, yet I hope that, following the Expo this year, we shall truly open a new chapter and enter a new phase," says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev. Donchev adds that all the signs point to this: alongside excellent political relations and friendly sentiments between the two peoples, Japanese business is making a return to Bulgaria.

"Bulgaria is well-known in Japan for its yogurt, rose oil, and strong, powerful men—something we do not deny. However, I am convinced that Bulgaria should be repositioned. In addition to these, Bulgaria should also be recognized for its favourable business environment and its unique achievements in fields such as science, information technology, mechanical engineering, and artificial intelligence. This will open new opportunities for development," Donchev says.

"Bulgaria sees Japan as a key partner in Asia," says Minister

of Economy and Industry Peter Dilov. He adds that the Ministry of Economy and Industry plans to take an active role in EXPO-2025 by organizing a business event with the participation of companies at the venue. The Minister congratulates Japan on hosting the upcoming World Expo in Osaka and expresses his confidence that the country, with its strong potential, will organize a successful exhibition.

"Beyond business, which is the main goal of the Expo, it is important for us at the Ministry of Tourism to build connections between our countries and to share Bulgaria's story in Japan," Minister of Tourism Miroslav Borshosh says. "I hope that, more and more, we will move away from referring to our country as unfamiliar, and I believe that Osaka will be the place where this happens," he adds.

"In business, sustainable partnerships are built through perseverance, hard work, and a long-term vision," affirms Todor Kesimov, Chair of the Japan-Bulgaria Business Association (JBBA). He emphasizes that participation in the World Expo (EXPO) in Osaka is of strategic importance for Bulgaria, as it provides an opportunity to showcase the country's potential. "The Bulgarian pavilion will serve as a focal point where technology and tradition converge, offering Bulgaria the chance to present its culture and history alongside opportunities for business, investment, and collaboration



Lacto-chan - the mascot of the Bulgarian pavilion at the World Expo, Osaka, April 13, 2025  
(BTA Photo/Ivan Lazarov)



with Bulgarian producers and companies," Kesimov adds.

CEO of BSMEPA Boyko Takov notes that at present World Expo events serve as a forum for dialogue and the exchange of ideas that help shape humanity's response to the most significant challenges of our time. He explains that the Expo sub-theme, which Bulgarian pavilion is a part of, is Saving Lives. This sub-theme addresses challenges that threaten both people and life on the planet and is linked to areas such as healthcare, well-being, peace, human security, and dignity.

For Bulgaria's participation, the country works with authorized Japanese companies to secure a custom-designed pavilion for rent. After reviewing proposals, conducting a technical assessment, holding online meetings, and making a decision through the working group, Daiwa Lease Co. Ltd., part of Daiwa Group and Japan's largest industrial property leasing company, is selected. The pavilion is designed and built with the involvement of architect Hiroto Kobayashi, a professor at Keio University. Architect Kobayashi visits Bulgaria several times for meetings with the BSMEPA, the Union, and the Chamber of Architects. Takov says the pavilion combines traditional features with interactive modern technologies, offering a contemporary design, a clear concept, and an immersive digital experience. Subtle references to traditional crafts

like weaving and natural symbols draw connections between Bulgaria and Japan. Both the Bulgarian pavilion and the entire EXPO focus on the circular economy and sustainability. After the event, all parts of the pavilion will be recycled or repurposed. The construction uses environmentally friendly materials such as wood and textiles, with each element selected for its potential future use, Takov explains.

During the selection process for the pavilion concept, a public call is issued, inviting ideas and proposals for presenting our country visually. To ensure broader participation, the working group is expanded. After a series of meetings and discussions, 19 institutions, including ministries, agencies, and associations, review five shortlisted concepts. Following a vote, the proposal by architect Mariya Gospodinova, Iskren Krusteff, and MP-Studio is chosen.

"The motto of the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-2025 is Evolving with Nature," Iskren Krusteff says. As a visionary entrepreneur and mentor to hundreds of companies, he builds innovation ecosystems and leads the adoption of AI technologies in regulated industries. Krusteff points out that for generations, the Bulgarian bacterium *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* has improved lives around the world. Fifty-five years ago, at the Osaka Expo, Emperor Hirohito and his wife enjoyed yogurt,

which helped introduce this tradition to Japanese cuisine and health culture, bringing recognition to Bulgaria. Today, Bulgarian innovators continue to contribute to global progress, working to improve and save lives. As the sixth nation to enter space and the third to create space food, Bulgaria remains committed to developing nanosatellites and advancing scientific achievements, Krusteff adds.

Strahil Jordanov, MP-Studio Creative Director, shares that the Bulgarian pavilion at EXPO-2025 will be a lively space bringing together the past, present, and future, and will promote cooperation and solidarity.

We believe that one of the public's favourites will be the Bulgarian mascot Lacto-chan. The name symbolizes the connection between Bulgaria and Japan, blending science, culture and friendship. Lacto is inspired by *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, the unique Bulgarian bacterium which is the foundation of the world-famous yogurt. Chan is a Japanese suffix used to express affection, typically added to the names of children or endearing characters to make them sound more lovable and friendly, Jordanov explains. He clarifies that Lacto-chan is not a superhero bacterium, but rather a community of bacteria working together as superheroes.

## BULGARIAN NEWS AGENCY'S ARCHIVE



On February 16, 2025, marking 127 years since the publication of its first bulletin, the Bulgarian News Agency inaugurates its modernized archive storage facilities (BTA Photo)

In 2021, a separate Archives and References Directorate was set up at the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA). The newly formed Directorate includes the Historical Archives, References, Photo and Video Archives departments as well as the BTA Library.

Each of these departments preserves invaluable pieces of history.

In June 1934, a Documentation Office was established at BTA headed by one person, a Press Attaché, whose task was to collect Bulgarian and foreign newspapers and magazines and to make clippings of articles about Bulgaria, to prepare

reports for the Press Director. Today, the BTA References department has a solid stock of knowledge: 5,000 boxes of newspaper and magazine clippings, about 250,000 file slips, and 90,000 volumes of books in the Library.

The Historical Archives department holds BTA's bulletins written over the years, along with the first bulletin of February 16, 1898, hand-written and signed by the first director, Oskar Iskander. For 127 years, BTA has been the memory keeper for Bulgaria and the world. Among the millions of pages that are preserved, there is information that is part of Bulgarian and world history;

these pages tell of human lives, they are like a time machine that takes you back to each of these 127 years.

Over the years, in addition to the main bulletins, the Agency issued the so-called special bulletins, which contained information distributed with restricted access, i.e. to a limited circle of people: the Palace, the Prime Minister, the Press Director and the archives. In 1935, the confidential Hors Bulletin was published, which contained materials unfavourable to Bulgaria. In the 1975-1989 period, the Special Bulletin, Annexes C, C-2, C-3 (scroll 1, 2, 3) was published. The Annexes had different levels of secrecy



*BTA's modern digitization centre has been digitizing bulletins and photos from the archive since 2023 (BTA Photo)*

with G3 having the highest level of secrecy (for members of the Political Bureau of the Bulgarian Communist Party). From the pages of the bulletins, BTA recounted not only the events during the Revival Process but it also reported on people's lives through the eyes of journalists. In 1964, BTA received permission to publish weekly magazines. Then BTA director Lozan Strelkov commissioned artist Boris Angelushev to design their titles under the condition that the Agency's logo would appear in each chapter. Thus, in January 1965, the four magazines published by BTA – Po Sveta [Around the World], Nauka i Tehnika [Science and Technology], LUK, and Paraleli [Parallels] – appeared branded with the Agency's new logo. In 1991, the year when BTA was founded (1898) was added under the logo. The logo with the year underneath was registered with the Patent Office in 1994. The magazines were a window to the world of culture, science, fashion, and music. In them, BTA's authors turned from initials into names that have left their mark.

The first photographer at BTA was appointed in 1940, and in 1952, the Press Photo independent editorial office was set up. One of the Agency's greatest achievements was the 1972 World Press Photo Award that went to Stefan Tihov's photograph of a US pilot captured in Hanoi.

With materials from its text and photo archive, BTA has organized several documentary photo exhibitions with unpublished photos and texts from the archive of the Bulgarian News Agency.

In 2023, BTA together with the Bulgarian National Radio, Bulgarian National Television, the Archives State Agency, the Bulgarian National Film Archive, and the Electronic Governance Infrastructure Executive Agency, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance, launched the implementation of the Digitization of Museum Collections, Libraries and Archives project within the National Recovery and Resilience

Plan. Under the project, BTA equipped a modern digitization centre with four planetary scanners, six photo scanners for digitization of the BTA photo archives, and a visualizer with a microfiche scanner. As of March 2025, a total of 2,621,453 pages of bulletins out of approximately 5,300,000 pages have been digitized, as well as 308,845 photos of BTA's archive out of approximately 1,800,000.

Under the Recovery and Resilience Plan, BTA has entirely new archival storage facilities that are equipped with mobile shelving and fixed shelving systems, which provide the most efficient use of archival space, quick and easy access to documents, catalogues, films, and files. They also provide optimal environment conditions for long-term storage. In accordance with archival standards in Bulgaria, the archive storage facilities are equipped with precision air-conditioning systems. The systems have ventilation air-conditioning chambers to supply fresh air as well as to maintain temperature and relative humidity.

The Bulgarian News Agency has an information centre, the BTA Archive Hub, which provides access to BTA's archives for all interested parties in the fields of journalism, culture, education and science. At the entrance to the Archive Hub, visitors are greeted by the art installation Your Audience, created by Prof. Georgi Yankov, Rector of the National Academy of Art.





# ***THE REAL NEWS***



-  [www.bta.bg](http://www.bta.bg)
-  Bulgarian News Agency
-  [bta.bg](https://www.instagram.com/bta.bg)
-  [bta.bg](https://twitter.com/bta.bg)
-  Bulgarian News Agency
-  BTAnewsBG
-  Bulgarian News Agency (BTA)
-  [bta.bg](https://www.tiktok.com/bta.bg)