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# The Legacy of the world expos: the urban landscaped entertaining parks or the “green presence-memory

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# progression

the BIE newsletter



## The BIE celebrates its 80th Anniversary!



### Vicente González Loscertales

#### BIE: 80 years of existence, 160 years of tradition

The history of the BIE and the history of Expos are inseparable. Though the BIE was created only 80 years after the first World Exhibition in London in 1851, some commissioners general had after the Expo of Paris in 1867 already prepared a memorandum in order to establish rules for these big events.

Four Expos were enough to predict their usefulness, they were so important that they justified the need for a harmonious and concerted development between Nations.

The creation of the BIE in 1931 was the outcome of dialogue and reflection that experienced interruptions, new beginnings, and change of direction, which mirrored the historical conditions on one side and the different national realities of the participating Nations on the other.

The genesis of this course shows the essential role of national Committees, made up of industry, experts, exhibitors and public representatives, which organised two important conferences in Paris in 1907 and in Brussels in 1908. If professionals highlighted the crossroads of interests inside the Expos: business, technological progress and international public relations, the important political powers of this era were conscious of the governmental stakes linked to the Expos.

This is why the final approach that led to the creation of the BIE was launched by governments, and in particular, in 1912 by Germany, setting up a diplomatic conference on that topic.

The Berlin Conference of 1912 saw 16 committed countries and started to define the frequency, the geographical rotation and the terminological foundations. Unfortunately the outbreak of the War did not allow the ratification of more than 50 %.

Hence one had to wait until 1927, when the International Chamber of Commerce revived the idea, which was seized by France. The configuration of Europe and of the world, however, had changed and the efforts that had been started in Berlin had to be resumed from the beginning. 1928 was the year when an international conference, which gathered 40 countries, began in Paris and provided the first regulations of the Expos.

The time of the institutional construction under the direction of Maurice Isaac

endowed the BIE with the legal instruments and a regulatory framework that allowed and still allows its functioning.

The entrance of the BIE was made with the on-going Expo in Barcelona in 1929 and other Expos that were being prepared. This was a time of important activity that was to be interrupted by the War, which also caused the cancellation of the Expo scheduled in Rome in 1942.

The need to adapt and to improve several regulatory aspects to the needs of each era and in view of experiences was felt very soon. After the 2nd World War, the BIE introduced some modifications that had become necessary due to the evolution of the relationships between Nations, of the technical advances, and of the means of communication (Protocols of May 10th 1948, November 16th 1966). In 1959, the BIE also established contact with the AIPH (International Association of Horticultural Producers) and included the International Horticultural Exhibitions to its field of interests.

The most important modifications were made with the Protocol of 1972 that came into force on June 9th 1980. Negotiations for a more flexible framework, which brought the 1982 amendment into being, had given rise to a proliferation of Expos.

This institutional situation was corrected with the 1988 Amendment that became effective on July 19th 1996 thus contributing to the restoration of an appropriate legal structure and to the institutionalisation of the current principles and resolutions.

Besides the development of an appropriate legal framework and the institutionalisation of general principles, the BIE has led a wider and more political reflection, in particular on the themes of the Expos and their contribution to global progress. So, among the topics of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on June 8th 1994, future Expos must respect the environment and strive to become innovative and educational laboratories for sustainable development.

For years, the BIE has not stopped growing and today has 157 member States, thus ensuring a complete geographical representation.

To date and at this hour of celebrating its

80th anniversary, the BIE is facing new challenges: increased political value; Expos that see a more and more active participation of developing countries; Expos that contribute to the development of the image of the countries; a socially aware participation contributing to the solutions of important issues of our era as shown in the themes of current Expos; a closer cooperation with other international organisations for a better global public dialogue on important challenges for humanity.

The BIE must carry on this path towards a promising future by giving more space beside the Nations to new actors, by intensifying the collaboration between member States and by calling for a more important commitment by Nations.

**Vicente González Loscertales,**  
*Secretary General of the BIE from 1993 to date*



1888, World Exhibition Barcelona, the Greenhouse.



## Patrice Ballester

The Legacy of the Expos : the urban landscaped entertaining parks or the "green presence-memory".

### The Spanish example .

Spain maintains for the XIX<sup>th</sup> century a strong relation between International Exhibition and urban transformation by the creation of big landscaped entertaining parks. Now, the example of Zaragoza shows the possible outlets for a post-Expo city within the framework of the organisation of an international Horticultural Expo in Zaragoza in 2014.

It is a fact that, since the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and the first World's Fair of 1888 in Barcelona, Spanish cities maintain strong links with the organisation of exhibitions and the legacy of big urban parks. With Barcelona 1888, industrial Spain opens its frontiers to Europe and the first Iberian Expo is recognized as a success that allows the region of Catalonia and Spain to acquire an industrial legitimacy at the European level. The city also inherits the Park of the Citadel with more than 56 hectares for the happiness of the population, which wished such a space of recreation and relaxation. It is moreover a place with a strong symbolic value for Catalonia where, on September 11th, the National Day, called Diada, is held yearly. As for the Parliament of the Generalitat of Catalonia, it is located in the centre of the park.

Currently, Michel Corajoud, the great landscape gardener of the School of Architecture and Landscape of Versailles is redrawing the circulation system of the green space inherited from 1888 and he suggests to return it to the proper essence of those whom the first planners of the project wanted to give to this Mecca of the "catalanism".



1929, Sevilla, Maria Luisa Park.

Some years later, in 1929, it is the turn of Sevilla and again Barcelona, to organise an international exhibition, which, for Barcelona, marks the rhythm of the urbanisation of the mysterious hill of Montjuich but also its "enjardinement", beautiful Catalan word which shows the will to make this space the biggest urban park of Spain with its 210 hectares. Nowadays, the infrastructures



1929, Barcelona, the Pergolas of JCN Forestier.

It is then necessary to wait until 1992 and the World Expo of Sevilla to restart the story of the Spanish Exhibitions with the media success and the requalification of the Cartuja Island as a Business, Leisure and Research Centre. A large modern and entertaining park with a lot of fountains is offered to Sevillans who, every weekend, choose by a large majority this new public site.

Then, Zaragoza 2008 opens a new page in the story of Expos in Spain, which is at present the only country to have hosted two Expos within seventeen years. The relations and the activities between the various actors of the project (Spanish State, Region of Aragon, Municipality of Zaragoza and BIE) are an example of shared decision-making governance which supply together directions and activating urban forms of the lifeblood of a nation always in progress in a globalizing context that allows an expected requalification of the banks of the River Ebro.



2008, Zaragoza, Park of the Ebro, the beaches.

In conclusion, the organisation of an Expo benefits not only the district and the site of the Expo itself but also the entire city, which wants to look smart to welcome the tourists. The main axes or water ways as the Ebro are privileged and on the very long term, parks become laudatory references and a memorial site thanks to the spirit of the place which is drawing out making reference to the short-lived presence of an expected long-lasting and beneficial Expo in the long term by the presence of a green presence-memory.

Milano 2015 tends to take example with these green corridors, its dirt tracks and water canals which will guide the visitors up to the World Expo Site across 50 000 trees which will be planted for the occasion in the city. Moreover, the planners want the Expo area to be a new garden of Eden with all the world horticultural varieties in connection with a theme " Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life ", a kind of utopia coming true one time in cities more and more sustainable.

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2014, Saragossa, Flowers and Gardens, logo.