

THEME STATEMENT

Pavilion of the Republic of Serbia - EXPO 2027 Yokohama

"PLAY UP - Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity"

EXPO 2027 Yokohama, as a global platform dedicated to the goals of sustainable development, international economic cooperation and innovation as solutions to the social issues of modern society, gathers the countries of the world not only to show their achievements, but to share their fundamental values with the world. The main topics of the event are agriculture and food in the context of the society of the future, implementation of green infrastructure, improvement and rejuvenation of agriculture as an economic branch in rural areas through the promotion of new technologies, promotion of tourism and revitalization of underdeveloped areas.

The Republic of Serbia presents itself at this world exhibition with the theme "PLAY UP - Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity" - as a modern, dynamic, open and creative European country with an agribusiness model that is equally based on family farms and industrial production and processing, and thus not only successfully resists the influence of international markets, but continues to develop thanks to the fact that it bases its values on human freedoms and on the belief that play and curiosities firmly based on tradition are the basic drivers of human progress.

In this sense, "PLAY UP – Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity" is a platform that represents a strong tradition together with the latest achievements through play not only as entertainment, but as a space of collective and individual freedom: freedom of thought, creation, connection and joint shaping of the future.

The context of the presentation of Serbia at the EXPO 2027 Yokohama exhibition

Participation in the international horticulture exhibition EXPO 2027 Yokohama is strategically important for Serbia for a number of very important reasons. First of all, Serbia's participation serves as a direct bridge to its own role as host of the EXPO 2027 Specialized Exhibition in Belgrade, where Japan has already confirmed its participation. Japan is currently very seriously preparing its performance under the theme "Play and Connect, Together Playful Spirit of Japan" with significant investments, and such engagement is significant both for the fulfillment of the principle of diplomatic reciprocity towards a friendly country, as well as for learning, branding of domestic products and technologies and economic diplomacy, bearing in mind the close ties between these two events.

Serbia and Japan nourish long and close relationships of friendship and cooperation and Japan strongly supports the development and Japan strongly supports Serbia's integration into the European Union. Besides being one of the most important individual donors to Serbia, Japan considers Serbia as a long-term long standing friendly country with whom it shares many common values.

In addition, Japan is one of the largest investors in Serbia, which in the long term, with as many as 14 manufacturing, predominantly export-oriented factories and over 50 companies that are actively operating, employs thousands of people in Serbia. Serbia's participation will certainly serve to explore the possibility of cooperation on new investment projects, not only in already known strategic sectors, such as energy, mobility, green technologies and the like, but directly in the agricultural and agribusiness sectors. It is particularly important to note that foreign trade exchange with Japan is around the value of 300 million euros per year, whereby Japan is a significant exporter of agricultural food products from Serbia, with a constant tendency to increase exports multiple times. To achieve these goals, long-term planning with significant investments and branding is necessary, as well as formal harmonization of mutual import procedures, so that the presence of Serbia will represent a significant platform for promotion and further constructive work in this domain.

In recent years, Serbia has increasingly invested in the development and modernization of the agricultural sector and the revitalization of rural areas. This is done directly by agricultural policy measures, but also by significant infrastructure development. The promotion of tourism is particularly important, because Serbia in this sector has been experiencing significant multi-year growth, especially in the influx of foreign guests whose demand, in line with world trends, is rapidly shifting from cities to spas and nature. Serbia is creating increasingly recognizable brands of its own products, tourist destinations and unique contents, and has exceptional prerequisites for the growth of new models of tourism and additional attraction of foreign tourists, especially from Japan.

The following year, 2027, is a significant anniversary for bilateral relations between Serbia and Japan. Serbian King Milan I Obrenović, the first monarch of Serbia after gaining independence at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, immediately after his coronation in March 1882, sent a letter to the Japanese Emperor Meiji. This was the first diplomatic correspondence between the sovereigns of Serbia and Japan, which will be marked in 2027 as the 145th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two states.

Serbia - the heart of Europe, the land of flows, fertility and encounters

Serbia is located in the heart of Europe, at the crossroads of cultures, ideas and natural flows, the most important European rivers and winds. Its landscapes are shaped by large rivers - Danube, Sava, Tisza and Morava - but also by wide plains, hills and fertile fields. The country of Serbia is among the most cultivated and fertile in Europe, which for centuries formed the basis of its survival, development and identity.

Fertile soil is not only an economic resource, but also a symbol of the relationship between man and nature - a relationship based on care, work and long-term thinking. It is from this soil that modern Serbia is born, which today combines tradition and modern technologies, agriculture and innovation, natural cycles and the digital future, rural development and family farms with the cities of the future.

" PLAY UP – Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity " draws its inspiration from that balance: from the ability to view complex systems - food production, sustainability, community development - through the prism of creativity, flexibility and play that naturally lead to the creation of harmonious relationships of all factors for the sake of global prosperity and the advancement of international economic and scientific cooperation.

Pavilion architecture: free space for movement and discovery

The Pavilion of the Republic of Serbia, located on a plot of about 350 m², with a building on two floors with a total area of about 150 m² and a 200 m² garden, was designed as an open, flowing and inclusive space. Its architecture does not aspire to monumentality, but reflects national values that are reflected in human moderation, immediacy and hospitality.

The two-story structure symbolizes the layers of Serbia - historical depth, contemporary energy and future ambitions - while the garden is an equal and integral part of the pavilion itself, a place where architecture, nature and the visitor meet without hierarchy. The boundaries between the interior and exterior spaces are intentionally soft, emphasizing the idea of free movement and choice.

The pavilion does not impose a narrative, but offers one. He invites visitors to explore, to play with the space and to want to stay in it as long as possible - following the example of the experience of all those who visit Serbia for the first time.

Exhibition content: Serbia as an experience

The exhibition concept is based on interaction and personal experience. Visitors are not just observers, but active participants who discover modern Serbia through play, touch, sound and movement. Themes of innovation, science, creative industries, sustainable development and culture are presented through playful, non-linear narratives.

Play has a clear function here: it encourages learning, sharing and connection. Serbia presents itself as a country of people who think freely - young scientists, engineers, artists and farmers - who, out of curiosity, create solutions for global challenges.

Garden of Serbia: fertility, sustainability and future

The garden of the 200 m² pavilion represents Serbia as a green, fertile and sustainable country. It will present agricultural crops typical of Serbia, with special emphasis on raspberries, strawberries and forest fruits, one of the most recognizable Serbian products on the global market.

The raspberry, as a symbol of the combination of nature, knowledge and work, testifies to Serbia's ability to create value from fertile soil that crosses borders. The garden is not just an exhibition element, but a living space that talks about the relationship to the earth, food and a sustainable future.

In the context of EXPO 2027, the garden becomes a place of respite, encounter and dialogue, but a strong message about responsibility towards the planet and the generations to come.

" PLAY UP – Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity " as a call to the world

" PLAY UP – Cultivating in Harmony for Prosperity " is an invitation to the world to get to know Serbia as a country of open ideas and a playful spirit. As a society that believes that the future is not built exclusively by rules and structures, but also by freedom of thought, trust, imagination and cooperation.

In Yokohama, Serbia presents itself as a modern, reliable and creative partner - a country that finds its strength in tradition, fertility and the ability to play while seriously building new bridges of cooperation and a common future.

Author: Oliver Lepori

On behalf of the Government of Serbia

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water
Management

Name: Prof. Dr. Dragan Glamočić

Title: Commissioner

Address: Nemanjina 22-26, 11000 Beograd, Serbia

Signature:



Date: