

Cover Story

Universal
Expositions



Showcases to the world?

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Nearly 170 years after 'The Great Exhibition', the very first Universal Exposition held in London in 1851, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is now a few months away from welcoming the first visitors to its pavilion at the next major exhibition in Dubai. This will be the 24th Universal Exposition in which Luxembourg has participated since 1851. Let's take a look back at the history of Universal Expositions, which is also intimately linked to the history of Luxembourg's participation in these extraordinary events.

— A true phenomenon of civilisation, the history of fairs and markets is part of the history of mankind and our need to consume and therefore to trade. In antiquity, Corinth's fairs and Alexandria's markets, among others, were the scene of intense commercial activity. Over time, as economic life evolved, fairs and markets multiplied, reaching a peak in the Middle Ages. They became meeting places where we participated in city life. People came not just to haggle (sell and buy), but also to take the pulse of the epoch. Buyers and sellers often coming from far away (exchanging products brought back from the Crusades was common), these fairs were spread over several weeks and, in addition to commercial activities, they also hosted feasts and games.

The birth... of the universal

The first Universal Exposition was held in London in 1851. Britain, then at its peak politically and economically, reinvented the existing concept of national industrial exhibitions. This first 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations' took place in Hyde Park in a magical palace of glass and steel, the Crystal Palace. On 1 May 1851, the day of its inauguration, the central gallery reached thirty metres in height, and an equally high transversal nave made it possible to retain a grove of old trees inside

the building. This immense greenhouse was 560 metres long, with a surface area of 8 hectares. The exhibits were divided into four main classes: raw materials, machinery, manufactured goods and works of art. Britain and its colonies had reserved half of the building for themselves, with foreign nations sharing the rest, placed from the centre to the back of the Crystal Palace in descending order of the number of exhibits. The Palace welcomed 17,000 exhibitors, including six Luxembourgers recommended by the Chamber of Commerce: the shoe manufacturer J. Wemmer (bootmaker to the Grand Duke, who would be awarded a medal); the glovemakers Ganterie Française de l'Union; linen manufacturers Godchaux; wallpaper manufacturer Jacques Lamort; ceramicist Jean François Boch; and master blacksmith Auguste Metz, who could not be grouped together but were obliged to exhibit in different areas depending on their type of product.

A spectacular contest

The success of this Universal Exposition in London was such that the concept grew, with similar events being organised all over the world, testifying to their power of attraction and their ability to create spaces of unrivalled renown. Participating countries tried to outdo each other in originality

to awe visitors. These exhibitions became places of wonder, showcasing the spectacular and the utopian.

The 19th century and its cult of progress and industrial development played a decisive role in the organisation of major Universal Expositions, which were intrinsically linked to the Industrial Revolution. From the beginning, they allowed participating countries to promote their culture, to pronounce their power and to present their architectural and technological innovations, with the aim of selling a national image of modernity and bolstering their prestige.

These exhibitions have also witnessed the birth of numerous inventions, as well as new architectural techniques through emblematic constructions, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, or the Atomium. They have been essential in stimulating the innovative genius of industrialists and scientists. There is no Universal Exposition that has not seen the launch of new products: in 1876, Bell presented the telephone in Philadelphia; in Paris in 1878, visitors could admire Hugues' microphone, the phonograph and a refrigeration technique for ships; in 1900, the moving pavement caused a sensation in Paris; in 1958, visitors to the Soviet pavilion discovered the first Sputnik, etc.

At each successive exhibition, countries have vied to emulate previous exhibitions by being bigger and more spectacular. This race to set records has also affected the

surface area of exhibitions as they spread out more and more. While the London exhibition in 1851 covered 11 hectares, that of St Petersburg covered 500 hectares. The most deserving exhibitors are awarded with a grand prize, a medal or diploma, and the award ceremony has become a highlight of all exhibitions.

To go or not to go?

Very early on, Luxembourg asked itself whether it would be acceptable to participate in Universal Expositions when the country's means would not allow it to organise one itself. However, as these places traditionally have been 'the first spaces of global communication in history' (*Un petit parmi les Grands. Le Luxembourg aux Expositions universelles de Londres à Shanghai (1851-2010)*, Jean-Luc Mousset, Luxembourg, Musée national d'histoire et d'art, 2010), some immediately saw an opportunity to make Luxembourg known: this was true of Antoine Schaefer and Jean-Pierre Kuborn, chairman and secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at the time of the very first 'Great Exhibition', and of the various governments which have justified the expense of participating by advancing the notion that the Grand Duchy should not lag behind its neighbours.

Since their debut, Universal Expositions have known no other event able to compete with them in terms of area, scale, duration and number of visitors. There are millions of visitors, and the exhibitions are large-scale platforms for education, working as bridges between governments, businesses, international organisations and citizens. So very early on, they developed an educational approach because it was considered essential to educate this mass of visitors. As early as 1900 in Paris, the International Exposition School organised guided walks and conference programmes. Thanks to their festive air, their shows and their amusement parks, the Universal Expositions allowed visitors to inform themselves and to learn by being immersed in an interactive experience.

The 1900 exhibition was, at the same time, the first where serious questions were raised about holding such events, and the first where the Grand Duchy set up its own pavilion. On its ground floor were exhibitions of 'mining, tanneries, spinning mills, ceramics and brewing. A bar was set up by a syndicate of Luxembourg brewers, to allow for the tasting of their products'. Various administrative bodies were there in order to show 'the industrial and intellectual

'At each successive exhibition, countries have vied to emulate previous exhibitions by being bigger and more spectacular.'



activity of this small country in continuous contact with France, Germany and Belgium' (*Un petit parmi les Grands. Le Luxembourg aux Expositions universelles de Londres à Shanghai (1851-2010)*, Jean-Luc Mousset, Luxembourg, Musée national d'histoire et d'art, 2010). The book reveals that the Grand Duchy attracted 'the attention of the Parisian newspapers for their school exhibition. They appreciated the primary education of children and even suggested the Grand-Duchy as an example to follow'.

And the pavilions?

To begin with, the Universal Expositions were essentially orientated towards industrial prowess. They were designed to bring together products and producers, grouped by branch and by country. Nations came not only to show themselves in a favourable light, to display their progress or to demonstrate the superiority of their products, but also to find new outlets. The pavilions reflected the importance of certain areas of business. For this reason, given

01. The Crystal Palace, all cast iron and glass, built in Hyde Park, London to house the Great Exhibition of 1851, the first Universal Exposition.

02. The most deserving exhibitors were awarded a grand prize, medal or diploma. One of the highlights of the exhibition was the award ceremony (© Heintz van Landewyck).

03. The Brussels International Exposition of 1935 resulted in the complete development of the Heysel site. Luxembourg had a 2,100 m² building. On both sides, artwork in relief by the artist Auguste Trémont illustrated the country's industry and agriculture. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)



the industrial character of the exhibitions, the dimensions grew to accommodate machines of all sizes. From one exhibition to the next, the pavilions became longer, higher, and overall expanded to accommodate an increasing number of ever-larger machines. From 1867, nations were invited to build pavilions in a national style. The exhibitions were then transformed into cities so that an English cottage, a Russian izba, an Egyptian temple, an Austrian village, or Byzantine cupolas rubbed shoulders all along the same main avenue. The



Schmit-Noesen, architecte D. P. L. G.

Aquarelle par Gay

FAÇADE DU PAVILLON

04.

04. 05. For the 1937 International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life in Paris, the great social upheavals of 1936 meant some of the buildings were unfinished. Others, intended to last, would not be finished until after the exhibition, without the public noticing. Luxembourg presented its most artistically accomplished pavilion. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).

exhibitions had an ephemeral character, the architects of pavilions trying different styles, more or less modernist. The image the countries tried to promote was closely linked to the architecture of their exhibition. For example, at the 1900 exhibition, Mexico had a pavilion in the neo-Greek style dear to its then president, whilst Luxembourg installed a pavilion on the Quai d'Orsay made entirely of wood and plaster inspired by the Grand Ducal Palace and Mansfeld Castle.

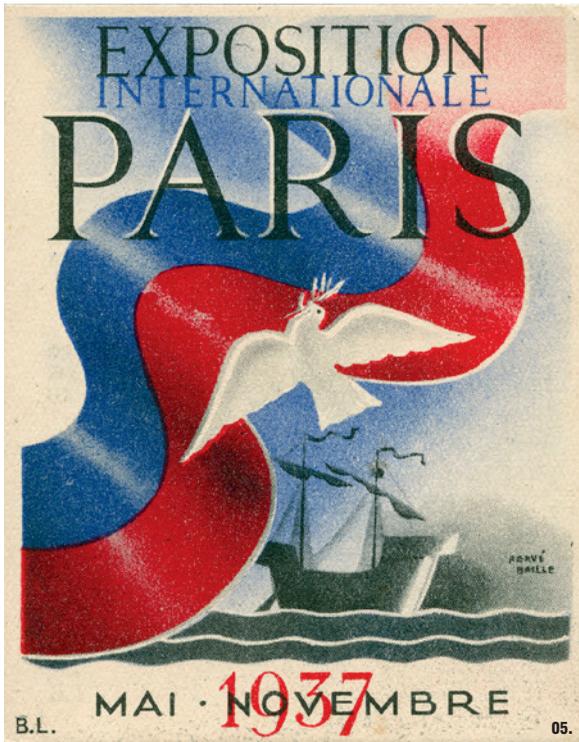
A turning point in 1928

In 1928, the *Bureau international des expositions* (BIE) (in English, International Bureau of Exhibitions) was set up and began functioning in 1931. Its role is to guarantee the quality of exhibitions and protect the rights of both organisers and participants. Its creation was a consequence of an increasing number of exhibitions which threatened to dilute the image and quality of Universal Expositions. Indeed, *'although the exhibitions were international events, each organising country set the rules for its exhibition alone, without involving the*

other participating countries. This then created three major problems: the lack of transparency and a lack of information concerning laws, regulations and taxes, which sometimes seemed to favour the organising country; an overbidding of the exhibitions, because each country wanted to surpass the last event, which became prohibitively expensive; and the appearance of new types of exhibitions such as colonial, sectoral or other much smaller exhibitions which were unjustifiably called Universal Expositions' (BIE).

The 1928 Paris Convention and the BIE were aimed at ending these problems. The idea of establishing a common organisational framework for exhibitions had begun to emerge in 1867, when the general commissioner of the British pavilion at the Paris exhibition published a memorandum, signed by his counterparts from Austria, Prussia, Italy, Russia and the United States. The protocol defines three main objectives: to control the size and duration of Universal Expositions, to establish a system of rotation between countries, and to clarify the

'To begin with, the Universal Expositions were essentially orientated towards industrial prowess.'



different types of exhibition and guarantee their quality. It was not until 1928 that the project was realised. The German government took an important step in 1912 by organising a diplomatic conference concerning international exhibitions, but the First World War interrupted those discussions. Governments reconsidered the question at the end of the 1920s, and in Paris, on 22 November 1928, 31 countries signed a convention regulating the organisation of international exhibitions.

The 1928 Paris Convention applies to all international exhibitions of a non-commercial nature, which are not fine art exhibitions and which last more than three weeks. All exhibitions organised by signatory countries corresponding to these criteria must



Gérard Zoller
General manager, Peintures Robin (Robin's Paints)

'Open to the world'

How did you hear about the Dubai World Expo in 2020?

For the past few years, we have been very attentive to environmental issues and our company has entered the circular economy on the ground floor. In this context, we have often participated in conferences to present our business, or working groups, that relate to the 'Third Industrial Revolution' strategy initiated by the Chamber of Commerce. Through this, we heard about the Dubai exhibition.

What do world's fairs mean for you?

It's a great way to open up to the world and discover innovations and discoveries from other countries.

Your 'circular' paint will be applied to the Luxembourg pavilion. You will also be there physically. What benefits do you expect from participating in the Dubai exhibition?

Since the early 2000s, Robin's Paints has been redirecting its product lines out of the petroleum era. We are continuing our efforts to offer paints based on vegetable oils or mineral paints. The products that will decorate the Luxembourg pavilion and which we will present in Dubai are Verdello, C2C certified, based on tall oil, and Luxlin, a paint based on locally-produced linseed oil, a project for which we have collaborated with the Chamber of Agriculture and with the drinking water distribution syndicates to carry out a project to protect the catchment areas of spring water. The flax seeds are pressed in Luxembourg and transformed into paint in the Robin factories. Then, we will also present the Robin Loop, developed in collaboration with the SuperDrecksKéscht, a paint made from recycling other paints. We hope that the Middle East market will be sensitive to our circular approaches, to sustainability and that this will open doors for us to a wider market.



Cindy Tereba
Director, International
Affairs, Chamber
of Commerce

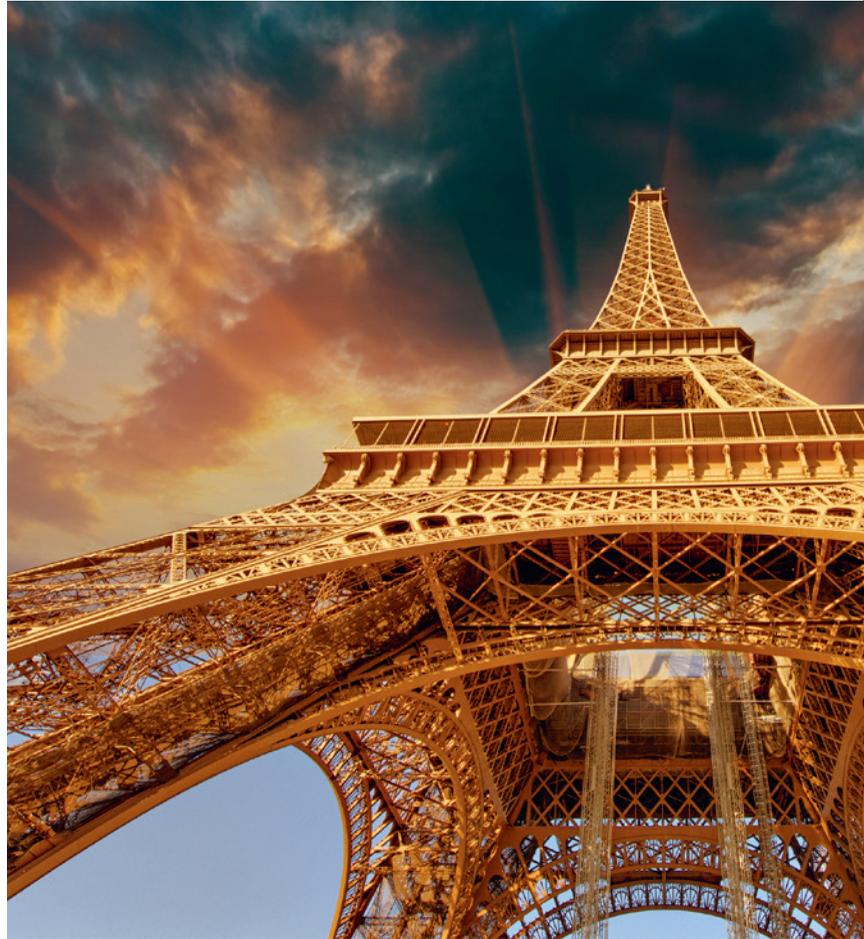
'Offer many opportunities to companies'

The Chamber of Commerce has an economic programme intended to help the country's companies during Expo 2020 in Dubai. What are its objectives?

Assistance to the international development of a member company is one of the flagship missions of the Chamber of Commerce. Therefore, the Chamber will organise a diversified and varied economic programme for Luxembourg companies wishing to participate in the Dubai Expo which will include various activities organised throughout the six months of the exhibition. During this unprecedented opportunity to present the Luxembourg economy to the whole world (25 million visitors are expected), tailor-made sector missions, as well as a 'Luxembourg Day' and a 'Made in Luxembourg' week, will allow participating companies to showcase in front of a professional and international audience. The Chamber's economic programme, linked to the major international fairs organised in the Dubai region during the Universal Exhibition, will facilitate the access of our nationals to international markets and build a strong economic image of Luxembourg, while putting an emphasis on future technologies, digitalisation, mobility and the circular economy. Anyone interested can already find out about the various activities on our website dedicated to the programme: www.cc2020.lu.

Your professional career has already taken you to this region of the Gulf, which you know well. What are the specifics of this market? What opportunities can it offer to Luxembourg companies?

I have indeed spent four years of my private and professional life in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is one of the most dynamic economic regions in the world. The visionary leadership of the country permits the implementation of projects at breakneck speed. Among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Dubai serves as a commercial centre, which radiates throughout the region and opens a commercial space that extends far beyond the UAE. In this context, I am convinced that our programme developed within the framework of the Universal Exposition can offer our businesses opportunities not just in the UAE, but also open new markets far beyond.



now comply with its rules. The Convention identifies different (non-exclusive) types of exhibitions, establishes their frequency, defines a regulatory procedure for the host and participating countries and creates a body to guarantee its application: the BIE. Since its creation, the BIE has placed education, innovation and cooperation at the heart of the Universal Expositions, thus changing their *raison d'être*. Showcases of industrial innovation, they have become platforms for global discussion aimed at finding solutions to humanity's greatest challenges. Over fifty Universal Expositions have been organised under the auspices of the BIE since 1931 and their success attracts new Member States each year. Today, the BIE has 170 member countries. Over time, the Bureau has adapted the exhibitions to the needs of a constantly changing world. Thus, socio-economic inequalities and the need to act for the environment are being increasingly highlighted, with industrial progress,

07. The 1939–40 New York World's Fair was divided into many thematic zones. The designers wanted a central symbol: the Trylon (186 meters high) and the Perisphere (55 meters in diameter), from the Greek 'Peri' which means 'around' and 'Tri' which defines '3 sides' and their shapes symbolised, according to the designer, the finite and the infinite. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)



06. 08. The exhibitions give birth to many inventions and new architectural techniques through emblematic buildings, such as the Eiffel Tower or the Atomium.

as portrayed at the 19th century exhibitions, deemed insufficient. The exhibitions have thus become international platforms for education and development. The BIE adopted a resolution in 1994 declaring that they must solve the crucial problems of our time and meet the challenge of protecting the environment. Since then, the Universal Exhibitions have made sustainable development their main objective and they are resolutely organised around themes aimed at improving knowledge, responding to human and social aspirations and promoting scientific, technological, economic and social progress.

Luxembourg's pavilions adapt

The thematic pavilions are reflections of the importance of certain debates and issues that grip people at a given moment in time. The themes chosen by the organisers provide guidelines for the event and assert an intellectual and moral ambition.

Since the 1930s, the Grand Duchy has presented different aspects of itself: for Chicago's 'A Century of Progress International Exposition' in 1934, in addition to steelmaking, tanning, glove-making and tourism, Luxembourg presented itself for the first time as an international financial centre following the creation of the stock market and the passing of a law on holding companies in 1929. In Paris in 1937, the pavilion designed by architect Nicolas Schmit-Noesen was the most artistic of all Luxembourg's pavilions built so far. The facade exhibited a large relief entitled 'Panoramic view of the City of Luxembourg', designed by Pierre Blanc, and the main hall contained a 20m x 4.5m model of the mining basin. A booklet distributed at the exhibition presented the country and *'its picturesque valleys (...)* *its opulent, clean and rich villages, (...)* and

its familial swimming resort of Mondorf les Bains', as one of *'the smallest in the world, but one of the most industrial and the most resolutely modern'*. Paul Weber, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at the time praised the iron and steel industry (7th in the world), the banking businesses, the stock exchange, the many textile, glove, earthenware and ceramic industries, breweries, distilleries and sparkling wine producers and the tobacco and explosives industries as the building blocks making up a *'happy little country'* with an *'advanced and stable economy and industrial and social legislation'*.

The Brussels Expo58, the first in Europe in the post-war period, revived the idea of faith in the benefits of science and technology, if they are put at the service of man. Its theme, 'For a more human world', allowed Luxembourg to highlight all its know-how and greatness in steel production and to present itself as one of the three countries of the new Benelux economic union, signed in 1958. In Seville in 1992, under the theme 'The age of discovery', the Luxembourg pavilion, a large cube of glass and steel, took visitors into the era of information technology and the audio-visual industry. In Lisbon in 1998, with 'The oceans, a heritage for the future', the theme of the exhibition allowed the Luxembourg pavilion to present the framework of a boat and a series of containers which accommodated the different aspects of the themes developed. As the country is more than 300 kilometres from the sea, the pavilion notably focused on Luxembourg's aquatic leisure activities, the water industries, environmental protection and even state-owned firms and institutions active in the recycling and management of water. Expo 2010 in Shanghai saw Luxembourg's participation - the largest in its history along with Brussels in 1958 - honour the theme 'Better City - Better Life' with a pavilion in Luxembourg steel and wood, covered in vegetation, intending to showcase the *Schengenland*, where travellers can move freely, unhindered. Another strong point of the exhibition, 'promoting tourist exchanges between the two countries', was the decision to move the powerful symbol of peace and emblem of the country, the *Gëlle Fra*, to the pavilion. This decision unleashed impassioned discussion between those who applauded the idea



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432



Other times, other customs

At the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1889, when Luxembourg participated for the first time as an independent country and the P&T (*Entreprise des Postes et Télécommunications*, today POST) presented a plan to equip Luxembourg with a telephone network, France, on the other hand, a colonial empire, was proud to show the rest of the world how the 'natives' lived and behaved within its empire. To do so, 400 Senegalese, Gabonese and Congolese were installed in a fake village. The exhibition also hosted Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West Show' with his 'tribe' of Native Americans transformed into actors. The show included scenes from the Far West: miners attacked by Native Americans, buffalo hunts, the lassoing of horses, etc. Le Figaro reported on how forty *Indians* climbed the Eiffel Tower.



And the hostess appears!

When Brussels hosted Expo58, Jean Destrée, to whom management had entrusted the task of organising the welcoming of visitors, was inspired by the United States. He decided to hire 280 young women and launched a major advertising campaign to recruit candidates to become hostesses. Most of the young women, aged 18 to 35, earned a high salary at the time: 6,000 Belgian francs (BEF) a month, to which an additional BEF 500 were added for each foreign language spoken. The uniform (to be returned at the end of the event, with the exception of blouses, skirts and shoes) was designed by Brussels designer Jean Liétard and consisted of a white blouse, a skirt, a naval tricorne hat, a dark red jacket and a bag specially created by Delvaux.

09. 10. The symbol of Expo67 was the Montreal Biosphere from visionary architect Buckminster Fuller; it marked a crucial moment in the history of contemporary architecture and is the largest building of its type in the world. It now houses an environmental museum. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)

11. The 1.9 km trip from downtown Seattle to the 1962 Century 21 Exposition took 95 seconds on one of two specially installed high-speed monorails. This form of mass transit system was described as visionary and futuristic at the time. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)



and those who were fiercely opposed to it.

Participation to what effect?

As early as 1900, and still today, some questioned the potential economic benefits of Universal Expositions compared to the expenses they entail. Among the arguments put forward are the fact that these exhibitions do not increase resources but just consume them; that they focus only on one city; and that they do not benefit all economic sectors, nor businesses that are not located close to the sites. From a scientific point of view, they offer favourable conditions for intellectual piracy by revealing manufacturing secrets, and from a social point of view, they only benefit a part of the working population, who, after relocating to build the exhibits for a temporary period, are then plunged back into unemployment and precariousness immediately afterwards. There are, however, many counterarguments, among which is that they may also be the birthplace of new

services. In 1867 in Paris, for example, a ferryboat service on the Seine was created to transport visitors. In 1851, the Great Exhibition enabled Thomas Cook, an English railway agent (unfortunately caught up in sad news at the end of 2019), to introduce methods of mass tourism. Following the exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1893, electrical energy found new industrial applications: the metro, medical devices, etc. Much later, in 1992, Spain was able to showcase improved tourist accommodation offers and cultural possibilities in its hinterland. Today, the issues raised relate more to the environment and city planning.

Temporary cities and landscape transformation

At the start, Universal Expositions did not entail profound changes to the landscape. But, little by little, as they developed and attained their present scale, they became large-scale operations in order to develop a considerable area to welcome and transport



‘Each exhibition is however a unique product of its time and its geographical location.’

visitors. The need to find solutions to these problems in a relatively short time has, on some occasions, made it possible to develop methodologies and solutions applicable to other events, such as the Olympic Games. Powerful drivers of transformation and catalysts of positive change for the cities that host them, the exhibitions create new neighbourhoods, encourage local development and initiate new forms of urban dynamism. Their effects are visible far beyond the duration of the event. They stand out both in the physical changes that the exhibitions set up and motivate, and also in the intangible imprints they have on the quality of life and the expectations and behaviour of cities and their citizens. Each exhibition is however a unique product of its time and its geographical location. Each era has its peculiarities and translations in terms of urban change, be it iconic buildings, infrastructure, parks and leisure spaces, or socio-cultural developments. However, all the exhibitions have common denominators: sustainable urban development,

regeneration, investment and public policies geared towards citizens and the future. Drivers of urban change in the cities, regions and countries that welcome and organise them, the exhibitions then leave behind a lasting urban and cultural heritage and contribute to building the cities of tomorrow. If they also act on socio-economic indicators, the most significant changes remain the components of the urban landscape - infrastructure, superstructures and eco-structures. Selecting the location of an exhibition site is therefore a very important step in the planning process. Thus, all the changes made to the urban landscape of the cities and regions hosting the exhibition can have positive effects for citizens. For example, in Port-au-Prince in 1949, the Universal Exposition enabled the development of the coast, with more than a dozen hotels built accompanying the renovation and sanitation of a site of 24 hectares, along the bay of Gonâve. The New York architect, August Ferdinand Schmiedigen, conceived the plan following his work for the Paris 1937 and New York 1939-1940 exhibitions. The exhibition contributed to the urbanisation of the capital of Haiti with the extension of boulevards and *art nouveau buildings*, decorated with colourful frescoes depicting Haitian life.

12. The theme of the Osaka Expo70 in Japan was 'Progress and Harmony for Mankind'. It was an opportunity to take stock of developments in telecommunications. © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)

13. Although it was larger than previous exhibitions, it did not meet with great public success.



Awareness?

One of the roles of host cities today is to help promote environmental awareness and action among the public and policy makers. This cause has become more urgent today because of the combined effects of hyper-urbanisation and the global ecological crisis.

In recent years, exhibition sites, especially those located on the outskirts of cities, have also faced many challenges in the transition to being truly integrated into the urban landscape. The creation of urban heritage has gradually become central to the development and regeneration of cities hosting events. The theme of Expo 2010 in Shanghai was 'Better City - Better Life', to promote the concept of a 'Harmonious City' and the sustainable development of the city. Shanghai has thus created a lasting legacy by implementing a major process of urban

restructuring, serving as a catalyst for many projects and strategies for urban revitalisation that improve the quality of space and city life for citizens. Secondly, the chosen theme encouraged the city to pay attention to its inhabitants by adopting a people-focussed approach to better involve the inhabitants during the preparation of the event, the relocation process and post-event development.

Off to Dubai!

Based on the theme 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', Expo 2020 will be held in Dubai from 20 October 2020 to 10 April 2021 and plans to welcome 25 million visitors, 70% of whom will come from abroad. Nearly 170 years after the very first Universal Exhibition, Luxembourg will participate in this 24th edition with a pavilion designed by architects Metaform with the scenography provided by The Space



14.

Factory from Lyon. Visitors will be able to tour several floors, finding general information on the country, its various economic sectors, daily life and an area dedicated to new technologies where space mining will be showcased. A boutique and a restaurant, the 'Schengen Lounge', will conclude the tour (see Interview with Maggy Nagel page 80). The restaurant will occupy a privileged place within the pavilion. A gastronomy section will be set up there in collaboration with representatives from the Horesca sector, Euro-toques, the Vatel Club, the *Lycée technique de Bonnevoie*, the *Institut viti-vinicole*, and the *Ecole d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme du Luxembourg (EHTL)*. The gastronomic concept developed by the EHTL means that the restaurant will not only offer traditional Luxembourg cuisine, but also cuisine with different international influences, copying restaurants within the country. All the dishes will thus reflect Luxembourg and its cultural diversity. For

14. The theme of the Universal Exposition of Seville (Expo '92) was 'the Age of Discovery' and intended to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' in 1492 of the American continent by Christopher Columbus, the first person in modern history to cross the Atlantic Ocean and discover a round-trip route between America and Europe (here Avenue de l'Europe) © Bureau International des Expositions (BIE)



Mohamad Jizaoui
Graduate Engineer -
Managing Partner, Milestone
Consulting Engineers

'Learning from the experiences of others has always been a powerful engine of progress in general, and for us a source of motivation and inspiration'

The Chamber of Commerce organised many events at the Shanghai Expo2010. Why did you participate? What was your interest in this exhibition?

Since the very first Universal Exhibition in London in 1851, these events have been technological and industrial showcases for the participating countries and they have left an historical record of technical prowess such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris that we still admire today. The Universal Exposition in Shanghai 2010 was, for us, an excellent opportunity to discover state of the art technologies, the most advanced techniques in construction, as well as an excellent way to admire the achievements of our colleagues, architects and engineers from other countries both in the design of the expo pavilions themselves, as well as in the subjects and materials exhibited in the pavilions. Meeting people and learning from others has always been a powerful engine of progress in general and a source of motivation and inspiration for us.

What were the benefits of your participation? What has it brought you?

Our participation allowed us to meet people from all walks of life, fellow architects and engineers, industrialists, etc., and to build relationships with potential customers. It also allowed us to compare our business practices with the best in the world. The organisation and speed of construction by Chinese companies particularly impressed us. The technologies of implementation, the design and manufacturing processes as well as the integration of new technologies in the study and construction processes were of great interest to us. The contacts made during our discussions were very interesting and allowed us to build lasting personal and professional relationships. The opportunity offered to us by the Chamber of Commerce to participate in the various events at the Shanghai Expo also allowed us to discover it in ideal conditions. We are therefore awaiting the 2020 Universal Exhibition in Dubai with great interest, in particular to discover the Luxembourg pavilion and its elegant and futuristic architecture. This will be an opportunity to reconnect with this regio of the Gulf, where Milestone Consulting Engineers had an excellent technical collaboration with ArcelorMittal in 2006-2007, when we contributed to the construction of flagship projects such as Burj Khalifa and other exceptional achievements and to discover yet another facet of this region by participating in the programme of visits which will be organised by the Chamber of Commerce.



Jenny Wickeler
(19)

First and second year Hotel Technicians,
École d'Hôtellerie et de Tourisme du
Luxembourg (EHTL)



Alexandra Goergen
(18)

'Open mindedness and unique experiences'

What was your motivation to participate in this gastronomic experience in Dubai?

Jenny Wickeler:

For me, being able to participate in this Universal Exposition in Dubai is above all a great opportunity to represent the Luxembourg Hotels and Tourism School and the country in our pavilion. Then, it will also allow me to discover other cultures, other people, and why not, to make new friends.

Alexandra Goergen:

For me, too, it is a unique opportunity to discover a region, different cultures, to improve my skills and to be in contact with customers who come from all over the world.

What do you expect from this unique opportunity?

Jenny Wickeler:

To gain autonomy, openness and independence because we will not be at school. I hope this will be an opportunity to make many contacts.

Alexandra Goergen:

To be able to discover other countries by visiting the pavilions present at the exhibition, to compare our ways of working, to be able to learn from others and to know where we stand in relation to them and to all sectors of tourism and the hotel business that will be there.

To what extent do you think this experience will help you in the future?

Jenny Wickeler:

I want to travel around the world thanks to my job and the Universal Exposition may help me to meet future employers, or even get the job of my dreams!

Alexandra Goergen:

I hope that this will be a factor on my CV that will make a difference with recruiters because it will show that I have experience with an international clientele and that I know how to work in a team.



15.

15. 16. The theme of Expo 2010 in Shanghai was 'Better City - Better Life'. Luxembourg had a very noticeable pavilion from the architects' office of Hermann & Valentiny and Partners, and for the duration of the exhibition, the *Gélie Fra* was installed in front of the pavilion. The Golden Lady of Luxembourg was immediately adopted by the Chinese.

17. Chinese pavilion at Expo 2015 in Milan.



17.

*'Based on the theme
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16.

catering and support services for visitors to the pavilion over the entire duration of the exhibition, the EHTL will send students on a rotating basis (see Side Interview page 56). They will take on tasks in the kitchen, in serving and welcoming visitors, complementing the resources made available by a local service provider. A total of 36 students will thus be able to put into practice the knowledge acquired during their training at the EHTL. The students will be supervised on site by three teachers and by KimKevin De Dood, a 28-year-old Luxembourgish with

a Michelin star who is head chef at Saint Pierre restaurant in Kuala Lumpur and a former student of the EHTL.

For its part, the Chamber of Commerce will set up a vast economic programme for Luxembourg companies to participate in Expo2020 in Dubai. Various activities, organised during the six months of the exhibition, will aim to highlight the participating companies and the different sectors of the Luxembourg economy. This diversified and varied programme will cover the

technologies of the future, construction, the food sector, digitalisation, mobility and the circular economy. Unlike the programme set up at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, the Luxembourg presence in Dubai will not only target the local market. On the contrary, the Dubai exhibition will serve as a gateway to the whole world via its international dimension, as 70% of the 25 million expected visitors will come from abroad. The global dimension will also be underlined through international and specialised events revolving around this unmissable event (see Side



Dubai live!

For the next exhibition in Dubai, a time-lapse camera has been installed on the site of the Luxembourg pavilion to monitor the progress of the construction site live. Since November 2019, everyone can follow the progress of the work until its completion and the official opening on 20 November 2020. Luxembourg was the first country to officially confirm its presence at this exhibition and the works started in August 2019. About thirty people work on the site. As the work progresses, it will be possible to watch an accelerated film of the construction work:

■ www.luxembourgexpo2020dubai.lu/en/construction-progress/



The ULT for discovering the region

The *Union Luxembourgeoise de Tourisme* (ULT) celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2019. It is now one of the most efficient tour operators in the Grand Duchy, providing a service in more than 110 countries. Having always had the objective of offering quality trips, the official agency of the Luxembourg pavilion in Dubai has created a whole series of offers to combine a visit to the Luxembourg pavilion with cities or nearby destinations. Everyone can take advantage of the event to discover Dubai, Abu Dhabi or the Sultanate of Oman.



Interview with Cindy Tereba page 50).

What future for Universal Expositions?

Almost two centuries after their first appearance, these grandiose exhibitions, useful in their time, have marked the collective memory. But perhaps we should ask if they are not outdated. Today, we no longer need Universal Expositions to widely disseminate knowledge, scientific and technical progress, since information technology, the Internet and social networks have taken over this role. It is now less a matter of celebrating progress than of collectively addressing the immensity of the problems we face (sustainability, housing, environmental protection, etc.) and the need to tackle them together. The themes addressed in recent years: Man – Nature – Technology (Hanover

2000), Better City – Better Life (Shanghai 2010), Connecting minds, Creating the Future (Dubai 2020), show that the future of Universal Expositions depends on their ability to put forward all these thoughts and to outline solutions. —

Sources : *Bureau International des Expositions* (BIE) / GIE Luxembourg Pavillon Expo 2020 Dubaï / *Un petit parmi les Grands. Le Luxembourg aux Expositions universelles de Londres à Shanghai (1851-2010)* / Florence Pinot de Villechenon (PUF)



18.

18. 19. Organised on the theme 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', the Universal Exhibition to be held in Dubai from 20 October 2020 to 10 April 2021 plans to welcome 25 million visitors, 70% of whom are from abroad. The Luxembourg pavilion designed by Metaform Architects takes the shape of a Möbius strip.



The History of Universal Luxembourg

Find our detachable poster at the end of the magazine!



19.