

Igor Kovačević

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Economics and Business  
Department for Business Economics and  
Management

Branislava Hristov Stančić

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Economics and Business  
Department for Economic Policy and  
Development

Bojan Zečević

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Economics and Business  
Department for Economic Policy and  
Development

## WORLD EXHIBITION (EXPO) AS A NATION BRANDING AND SOFT POWER PLATFORM: THE CASE OF SERBIA'S PARTICIPATION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Svetska izložba (EXPO) kao platforma nacionalnog  
brendiranja i meke moći – primer nastupa Srbije na  
EXPO 2020 Dubai

### Abstract

With a history of over 130 years, World Exhibitions (EXPOs) have positioned themselves as a channel and tool for implementing the concept of soft power and nation branding. The EXPO 2020 Dubai is the first mega event organized live in the post-COVID period for regular visitors, and the figure of over 24 million visits justified the expectations of Dubai and the UAE in terms of communicating key messages of soft power and positioning the destination. On the other hand, the host's significant investments in the amount of over 7.7 billion dollars during the preparatory and event period will be justified through long-term legacy economic effects amounting to over 42 billion dollars and over 1 million jobs. In addition to the large number of participants, Serbia also had its own pavilion. The focus of its participation, through the aspects of soft power and nation branding, has been on the further establishment of high political-economic relations with the host country, along with the activities aimed at building the destination's image as a regional center of the Western Balkans in the fields of science, business, and development activities. The paper presents key concepts of soft power and nation branding, key specifics of EXPO organization, examples in the field of national brand communication for selected participating countries, as well as key indicators regarding the organization of EXPO 2020 Dubai and Serbia's success as a participating country.

**Keywords:** EXPO, world exhibitions, EXPO 2020 Dubai, soft power, nation brand

### Sažetak

Sa istorijom održavanja od preko 130 godina, svetske izložbe (EXPO) su se pozicionirale kao kanal i alat za implementaciju koncepta meke moći i nacionalnog brendiranja. EXPO 2020 Dubai je prvi mega događaj koji je organizovan u post-COVID periodu za redovne posetioce i cifra od preko 24 miliona poseta opravdala je očekivanja Dubaija i UAE u pogledu plasiranja ključnih poruka meke moći i pozicioniranja destinacije. Sa druge strane, značajne investicije domaćina u iznosu od preko 7,7 milijardi dolara tokom pripremnog i perioda održavanja događaja će se opravdati kroz dugoročne ekonomske efekte koji iznose preko 42 milijarde dolara i preko 1 milion radnih mesta. Pored velikog broja učesnika, i Srbija je imala svoj paviljon. Fokus nastupa, kroz aspekt meke moći i nacionalnog brendiranja, bio je baziran na daljem etabiliranju visokih političko-ekonomskih odnosa sa zemljom domaćina, uz aktivnosti izgradnje slike destinacije kao regionalnog centra Zapadnog Balkana u domenu nauke, biznisa i razvojnih aktivnosti. U radu su predstavljeni ključni koncepti meke moći i nacionalnog brendiranja, ključne specifičnosti organizacije EXPO, primeri u domenu komuniciranja nacionalnog brenda za selektirane zemlje učesnice, kao i ključni indikatori organizovanja EXPO 2020 Dubai te indikatori uspešnosti nastupa Srbije kao zemlje učesnice.

**Ključne reči:** EXPO, svetska izložba, EXPO 2020 Dubai, meka moć, nacionalni brend

### Understanding the World Exhibition history, role and model

The World Exhibition (hereafter referred to as EXPO) was established as a traditional event in 1851, and has been held regularly ever since, with the EXPO 2020 Dubai taking place 2021-2022 [36, p. 130]. In addition, two new destinations have been confirmed as hosts of future events – 2025 Osaka, Japan and 2027 Belgrade, Serbia, while the host for EXPO 2030 will be decided in November 2023 [7]. The BIE acknowledges several types of EXPO exhibitions [5]: World EXPO, Specialized EXPO, Horticultural EXPO, and Triennale de Milano EXPO. Each type of EXPO needs to follow certain criteria when it comes to the size of the EXPO grounds and duration of the event. According to the BIE “Registered EXPO or World EXPO” is organized every 5 years, lasting a maximum of 6 months, in which participants design and build their own pavilions or rent space from the organizers, and there is no limit on the EXPO site size, while “Recognized EXPO or International EXPO” is organized between two World EXPOs, with a maximum duration of 3 months, where participants can only rent space from the organizers, and the maximum size of the EXPO plot is 25 ha.

According to the Paris Convention [6] “exhibition is a display which, whatever its title, has as its principal purpose the education of the public: it may exhibit the means at man’s disposal for meeting the needs of civilization, or demonstrate the progress achieved in one or more branches of human endeavor, or show prospects for the future.” EXPO is a platform for destination urban development through the event-led regeneration process that is at the same time organized to support local economic development by attracting foreign direct investments, tourism development, and media outreach

[8, p. 1]. Increasingly, over time and throughout history, in order to secure higher visitation, organizers of EXPO have needed to integrate entertainment elements for consumer consumption [10, p. 14].

### Understanding nation branding and soft power

Soft power and nation brand are key elements of public diplomacy [20, p. 253]. The term “soft power” was introduced over 30 years ago by [31] to describe a divergence from “hard power” that has its foundation in military activities. It has been confirmed that soft power has higher and more long-term impacts than hard power [39, p. 5]. Table 1 highlights the key differences between hard and soft power.

Soft power is a central tool of nations’ foreign policies and is “implemented mainly through the projections of the attractiveness of their national culture” [2, p. 373]. Soft power reflects the capability of a country (nation) to impact the other countries’ perception of itself on a global macro scale and to shape the activities of other countries in its favor, while nation branding is seen as a marketing communication activity that targets people in other markets and countries [18, p. 148]. Nation (country) branding is not a simple series of global PR and marketing campaigns, but rather a complex journey of storytelling on subtle and sensitive aspects [32, p. 126]. “Nation branding can be described as a practice used by governments in conjunction with public relations consultants and corporate businesses to launch campaigns promoting a certain image of a nation-state” [4, p. 531]. Nation branding involves a diverse presentation that will reach the target audience/public with the cultural diversity and richness of a country [24, p. 15].

On the other hand, some others equate nation branding with the terms “country of origin” or “place marketing”

**Table 1: Difference between hard and soft power**

	Hard power	Soft power
<b>Spectrum of behaviors</b>	Command Stress	Setting the agenda Attract and absorb
<b>Resources</b>	Induced force transaction Sanction bribery	Political values Institutional system Cultures Foreign policies (diplomacy)

Source: [28]

[25, p. 253]. The concept of nation branding is also often matched with the “competitive identity” concept, which involves the use of both public diplomacy and brand management in the process of increasing national visibility and competitiveness [3]. Soft power is characterized by its relative, immaterial, and context-based nature, making it difficult to measure and manage [18, p. 152]. The soft power tools vary depending on the political goals and internal dynamics of each country and can be focused on attracting direct foreign investment and foreign tourists [20, p. 256]. “No country has a monopoly on soft power. Any organisation, country and culture can develop soft power – the question is not who can or cannot develop soft power, but to *whom* it is soft power” [18, p. 154].

### World Exhibitions as the platforms for national branding and soft power

The organization of the EXPO in a host destination involves the implementation of several strategies, that at the core have the urbanization and sustainability of the event and the EXPO site, as well as the entire city [40, p. 1], although most EXPO sites are either closed, demolished, or enter a “status quo” phase after the exhibition ends [10, p. 4]. The initial aim of organizing an EXPO – to promote the host country’s industrial progress and national products [36, p. 138], has evolved over time to providing a global platform that allows public diplomacy activities, the promotion of national culture and intellectual creativity, and the creation of global networks [29, p. 183]. “EXPO 2020 Dubai saw a fascinating fusion of diaspora diplomacy and expo diplomacy as countries with substantial worker populations in the Emirates looked to inspire pride in their own citizens and introduce themselves to their employers and colleagues in the UAE workforce” [9, p. 50]. It is also necessary to recognize that each participating country has the freedom to define its own vision and mission for EXPO participation and to choose its own partners and supporters. Having in mind that EXPO participation entails high costs and budgets that countries need to secure, the role of supporters, partners, and sponsors is very important. Even in this case, countries will insist on promoting the “best” companies from their nation.

The question of ethical principles in choosing partners sometimes goes beyond global development goals, like in the example of an “unethical” partnership between Philip Morris International and the Swiss Pavilion at EXPO 2020 Dubai, where Philip Morris was confirmed as one of the two main sponsors of the Swiss pavilion [26, p. 1126].

EXPO is a great opportunity for host and participating countries to use it as an instrument for implementing the soft power toolkit for national branding [36, p. 135], and it is considered a major global event for the host destination since it has a pivotal role in promoting social and economic development [23, p. 1]. In addition, most EXPO hosts will use EXPO as a catalyst for urban regeneration [8, p. 1], the tool that is used to revitalize weakening economies and destinations due to the depraved economic situation, low living and social standards, and an absence of industrial revolutions towards value-added industries [19, p. 20]. Therefore, both the organization of EXPO and a country’s participation through a national pavilion can enhance national competitiveness in the global market in various fields and improve national branding [30, p. 11]. In addition, hosting EXPO has a positive influence on industrial activities and production of the host destination, region, and country [27, p. 1478]. However, we need to understand that one destination cannot built its image, brand and reputation through a single event, even if it is an EXPO organized on a large scale, but it requires years of engagement both before and after the event to establish the desired reputation legacy [9, p. 49].

### EXPO 2020 Dubai

Although postponed for 1 year due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the EXPO 2020 Dubai confirmed its role in providing a global platform for national and destination branding, image creation and the demonstration of creativity and innovation by both the host and participating countries [36, p. 129]. “The challenges of organizing such a mega event are many, however, Dubai has proved to be a destination capable of handling a big event with its state-of-the-art infrastructure both in the accommodation and transport sectors” [38, p. 3]. The grand theme of EXPO 2020 Dubai was “connecting minds, creating the future”

and it played a pivotal brand role in proving organizers' desire to position Dubai as a global crossroad and hub for people, ideas, creativity, and cooperation [9, p. 49].

In addition, one of the key pillars in developing Dubai as an EXPO destination was the implementation of the "smart city" concept, which included a focus on digitalization in urban development [35, p. 51]. Dubai was also the first destination in the world that has reintroduced the "live" (in-person) event in the post-COVID-19 era, and despite many restrictions being in place (e.g., vaccination certifications), the EXPO 2020 Dubai managed to attract over 24 million visitors [9, p. 49]. Moreover, one of the major objectives of EXPO Dubai was to reach 4 major sustainability objectives [1, p. 1], [14, p. 17]: leaving a legacy of sustainable infrastructure and future-oriented sustainable practices, catalyzing sustainability efforts in Dubai and the UAE, increasing public awareness by engaging

**Table 2: Capital expenditure, operating expenditure, and operating revenue of the EXPO 2020 Dubai**

Item	Amount in USD, millions
<b>Capital expenditure</b>	
Temporary event-related structures	319
Thematic districts	1,264
Parks	195
Infrastructure	596
Thematic pavilions	669
Dubai Exhibition Centre	449
Project management, design, and supervision	485
<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>3,977</b>
<b>Operating expenditure</b>	
Exhibitions and pavilion operations	60
Personnel operations	760
Village and accommodation services	64
Innovation and future technology	615
Support functions	103
Marketing and communications	546
Commercial	98
Events and entertainment	508
Site operations	720
Other	293
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>3,776</b>
<b>Operating revenue</b>	
Sponsorships	880
Rent	93
Ticketing	105
Food and beverage	28
Other	10
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>1,116</b>

Source: [12, p. 26]

society on sustainability principles and sustainable living, and developing sustainability solutions that are scalable, extending their benefits to the wider economy.

The EXPO 2020 Dubai enabled the destination of Dubai and the entire UAE to globally demonstrate its image and brand based on first-rate infrastructure, built attractions, outstanding hotel properties, and easy global and local accessibility [21]. The EXPO 2020 was considered as a great opportunity to promote the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, among which raising environmental awareness came across as the most important one [1, p. 1]. One of the goals is related to the social sustainability of local citizens in Dubai and research results showed that "there is a positive trade-off between EXPO economic benefits and the inconvenience that EXPO can cause to residents", such as traffic congestions, increased property rental prices, population growth, unethical drug usage and similar" [38, pp. 13-14]. "The EXPO 2020 Dubai showed the continued viability of EXPO as a public diplomacy form" [9, p. 49].

The UAE and Dubai, as hosts, have shown great dedication in organizing a remarkable event. Table 2 highlights investments and ROI from the financial perspectives of the UAE Government.

Table 3 shows key figures that demonstrate the KPIs of the EXPO 2020 Dubai as an event.

All participating countries did their best to showcase the best of their nation branding throughout the 6-month period, with focus on future development, sustainability of activities and future technologies. Table 4 highlights the features of national pavilions of some countries.

**Table 3: Event key performance indicators of the EXPO 2020 Dubai**

Event key performance indicator	Amount / figure / number
Total visitation	24,102,967 visitors
Repeated visitation	49% repeat visitors
Average duration of time on-site for domestic visitor	6.1h for domestic visitor
Average duration of time on-site for foreign visitor	6.5h for foreign visitor
Ticket sales level in pre-event phase	19% of all soled tickets
Total GVA to the UAE economy in period of 30 years	USD 42.2 billion
Total full-time jobs	1,039,000 full-time jobs

Source: [12, p. 478], [12, p. 486]

**Table 4: Approaches to communicating national brands in various pavilions**

Country	Key nation branding communication messages
UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing the UAE's rich culture and bright future.</li> <li>• The land of dreamers who do.</li> <li>• From its ancient roots as a crossroads for people, goods, and ideas, to its transformation into a unified nation, see the uniqueness of the UAE as a welcoming home to people from over 200 countries.</li> <li>• Featuring 6 different zones for an exceptional experience, a three-story structure totaling 15,064 sqm, design features based on 28 moveable wings.</li> <li>• Oasis – A fresh introduction to Emirati culture.</li> <li>• Falaj – A moment of connection and anticipation.</li> <li>• Desert of dreams – A multi-sensory journey through a rapidly changing landscape.</li> <li>• Description of the pavilion: pavilion demonstrated the UAE embraces openness, champions culture, nurtures entrepreneurship, and creates and shares knowledge for the benefit of all. The UAE Pavilion immerses visitors in the history and future of this nation – from its origins to its thriving present to the dreamers shaping an even better tomorrow for all.</li> </ul>
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience a journey that takes you to the heart of Italy.</li> <li>• See how creativity comes from different places and disciplines in an unprecedented journey through the Italy of Beauty, touching on the country's extraordinary past, present and future.</li> <li>• An unforgettable experience that presents new educational, professional, and business opportunities.</li> <li>• Buildings, systems and technologies for sustainability, circular economy, and digital architecture.</li> <li>• Foster cooperation, participation, and development through cultural and scientific diplomacy.</li> <li>• Description of the pavilion: The Italian exhibition is following the pavilion's theme of "Beauty connects people." The pavilion has a 17-foot, 3D-printed reproduction of Michelangelo's famed David monument, as well as various other cultural and historical displays, with 160 flora species adorning the walks and walkways inside. Furthermore, the expo showcases a number of innovative Italian technologies that support circular economies and propose answers to environmental concerns.</li> </ul>
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An engaging look at an environmental trailblazer</li> <li>• 'Enrol' at Campus Germany for an entertaining, surprising, hands-on digital experience. Based around a campus theme, Germany's pavilion blends creative environmental ideas with real-life results.</li> <li>• The 'edutainment' focused pavilion showcases German innovations and sustainable solutions. Visitors can wear cutting-edge connected devices as they explore themed areas including The Energy Lab, The Future City Lab and The Biodiversity Lab.</li> <li>• A restaurant serving German cuisine.</li> <li>• Description of the pavilion: Being a campus, the pavilion has three labs: the energy lab, the future city lab, and the biodiversity lab. In each lab, cutting-edge German sustainable technologies are presented. Visitors to the pavilion can learn about energy, smart cities, and biodiversity by visiting the three labs. Visitors are supposed to raise their environmental awareness at these labs through various communication channels such as interactive experiments, movies, and exhibits. A group of visitors swings in a vast room toward the end of the exhibition to demonstrate how we can transform our surroundings by working together.</li> </ul>
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is hard to tell where nature begins and architecture ends.</li> <li>• Nature. Nurture. Future.</li> <li>• Showcasing Singapore's urban innovations, the net-zero energy pavilion designed by WOHA explores our journey towards livability and resilience.</li> <li>• An immersive 3-dimensional greenery experience.</li> <li>• A net-zero energy rainforest powered by a self-sustaining ecosystem</li> <li>• The Singapore story through interactive exhibits, programmes, and flavours</li> <li>• Description of the pavilion: Singapore's vision is to become a city in nature, and the exhibition is proof of that. Visitors to the pavilion enter through the ground garden that soothes the senses through the cool air, proper sunshine, and abundance of greenery. Visitors then watch a 360-degree, panoramic display in the city cone that presents challenges faced in large cities and how Singapore was able to defeat these challenges to become a city in nature. In addition to the city cone, the pavilion has rainforest and flower cones. On the one hand, the center piece of the rainforest cone is a mimic of the giant Dipterocarp tree's two-wing fruits that spin down during the fruiting season. On the other hand, the flower cone presents Singapore's orchid hybridization and conservation.</li> </ul>
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a more sustainable future for all.</li> <li>• Intelligence for life.</li> <li>• The Spain Pavilion aims to become an example of intelligent creativity, capable of uniting people around sustainable projects in the fields of science, technology, production, education, and art.</li> <li>• Iconic architecture that tempers high temperatures and highlights Spain's links with the Arab world.</li> <li>• An art installation leads to the theatre, where a fantastic story of collaboration is displayed.</li> <li>• An immersive exhibition gallery related to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</li> </ul>

Country	Key nation branding communication messages
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A country to live in – The Spain Pavilion will demonstrate the values and personality of the Spanish people – solidarity, creativity, innovation – along with what makes Spain attractive for tourists and investors, and the country’s commitment to the theme of Expo 2020 Dubai.</li> <li>Description of the pavilion: The exhibition’s centerpiece, the Forest of Intelligence, is kept underground to save on cooling costs. The fake forest trees are made of special materials and can absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases in the same manner that real trees can. Microalgae produced specifically for the pavilion also enhance oxygen levels, reduce global warming, can minimize future climate change effects, and are used to make biofuels and protein-rich diets. Other innovations concerning circular economies and closed-loop supply networks are also presented.</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable solutions through out-of-the-box creativity</li> <li>Uniting water, energy, and food</li> <li>Enter a miniature world with its own climate system. Brimming with sustainable solutions, the pavilion harvests water, energy, and food through innovations including a cone-shaped vertical farm.</li> <li>Description of the pavilion: Through an immersive and engaging experience, visitors to the pavilion can learn about the biotope. A short film demonstrating how the biotope works are displayed on umbrellas handed to guests inside the cone. Waterfalls like rain from the top of the cone at the end of the 3-min show.</li> </ul>

Source: [1], [15], [37]

**Table 5: Serbia’s approach to the communication of nation brand**

Country	Key nation branding communication messages
Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspired by the past, shaping the future.</li> <li>The ideas that changed, and are changing, humanity.</li> <li>Serbia creates ideas! We celebrate 7,000 years of creativity and innovation on Serbian territory while shaping the future through our leading position in the world of innovation.</li> <li>Explore amazing virtual exhibitions of Serbian ideas that changed and are still changing the world.</li> <li>Discover why Serbia is called the ‘Silicon Valley of the Balkans.’</li> <li>Create your own avatar as you journey through the Serbian pavilion and interact in real-time – Dive into an inspiring Virtual Reality ‘exhibition of exhibitions’ of Serbian ideas including the great scientists, the treasures of the National Museum of Serbia, the Tesla Museum, and the City of Belgrade Museum, as well as Serbian contemporary art and design.</li> <li>Discover our digital transformation – Learn how Serbia is leading the world in areas such as tech/ICT, start-ups and innovation, health and COVID-19 management, digital e-government, creative industries, agriculture and e-agriculture, and digital education.</li> <li>Discover modern Serbia – Learn how Serbia is prioritizing innovation and creativity to find new solutions to some of the world’s most pressing problems, and is in turn flourishing as a modern, dynamic, optimistic, and collaborative nation.</li> <li>Learn how great ideas can change the trajectory of humanity – Discover how Serbian ideas have changed, and are changing, the world: from the creation of the first metals, through electricity and the radio, to climate science and early space exploration, to medical breakthroughs and Nobel Prizes.</li> <li>Belgrade is ranked among the world’s 5 most creative cities – Embrace modern Serbia as an open, collaborative, and fun nation full of creative, innovative, and imaginative people through our programme of events and live music.</li> <li>Description of the pavilion: The Serbian pavilion consists of four parts. Serbia Creates</li> <li>Ideas (Ground Floor): Retail zone of creative Serbian product plus BUSINESS – digital brochures of Serbian offerings, including presentations programme. Serbia Creates Opportunities – Inter-joining conference and meeting rooms of adjustable size and specification that can be booked for meetings, conferences, presentations. Serbia Creates Experiences – A tourism and events zone available for VR presentations of innovations, talents, artists, cities, tourism destinations, museums, major events etc. Serbia Creates Inspiration – A permanent exhibition connecting the genius of Vinča with the creativity and innovation of modern Serbia.</li> </ul>

Source: [13], [17]

## Serbia’s participation at the EXPO 2020 Dubai

Serbia has been present on BIE World Expos for over 135 years, and over time, all participations have brought significant exposure to the country [16]. Table 5 shows Serbia’s approach to the communication of nation brand.

Based on the available data, Table 6 indicates key performance indicators of Serbia’s participation at the EXPO 2020 Dubai.

## Conclusions

Combining available data on reached event performance indicators and communicated nation branding messages, it is possible to conclude that Serbia managed to communicate a new image of modern Serbia using traditional values and heritage during the EXPO 2020 Dubai. Compared to previous participations in world exhibitions, during the EXPO 2020, and based on the existing data on the official

Table 6: Serbia key performance indicators of participation at the EXPO 2020 Dubai

Event key performance indicator	Amount/figure/number
Total visitation	1,223,262 visitors
Total number of working days	191
Total number of events on the pavilion and EXPO ground	149
Total number of visitors on public events	Over 38,000
Total number of thematic business delegations from Serbia	9
Total number of Serbian companies in business delegations	Over 600
Total number of Serbian entrepreneurs and business owners in business delegations	Over 1,200
Total number of investment conferences	5
Total number of business contacts established through the pavilion activities	Over 10,000

Source: [17], [22], [11], [33], [34]

websites of the UAE and Serbia, it is evident that Serbia leveraged “soft power” and public diplomacy relations with the host country and managed to maintain and even increase the level of political-economic relations. At the same time, business and public diplomacy activities through official and business delegations demonstrated Serbia’s strong interest to position itself as the hub of all scientific, business and development activities in the Western Balkan region, and to spread the joint global values, such as unity, peace, collaboration, and the improvement of the well-being.

## References

- Al-Shihabi, S., Aydin, R., Hadj-Alouane, A. & Alshanas, A. (2023). Sustainable technologies, mega-events, and environmental awareness - Lessons from Expo 2020 Dubai. *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 5, 1-11.
- Ang, I., Isar, R.Y. & Mar, P. (2015). Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(4), 365-381.
- Anholt, S. (2007). *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Bolin, G. & Miazhevich, G. (2018). The soft power of commercialised nationalist symbols: Using media analysis to understand nation branding campaigns. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(5), 527-542.
- Bureau International des Expositions. (BIE). *What is an Expo?* Retrieved from <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/#>
- Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). *Protocol amending the Convention signed at Paris on the 22nd November 1928 relating to the international exhibition*. Retrieved from [https://www.bie-paris.org/site/images/stories/files/BIE\\_Convention\\_eng.pdf](https://www.bie-paris.org/site/images/stories/files/BIE_Convention_eng.pdf)
- Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Retrieved from <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/world-expo-2030#>
- Chen, Y., Tu, Q. & Su, N. (2014). *Shanghai’s Huangpu riverbank redevelopment beyond World EXPO 2010*. 2014 AESOP Annual Conference at Utrecht and Delft, the Netherlands (pp. 1-17).
- Cull, N. J. (2022). The Greatest Show on Earth? Considering Expo 2020 Dubai. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 18, 49-51.
- De Groote, P. (2005). A multidisciplinary analysis of world fairs (= expos) and their effects. *Tourism Review*, 60(1), 12-19.
- Euronews Serbia. (2022, April 2). *Paviljon Srbije na EXPO 2022 čista desetka: Beograd kandidat za domaćina mini izložbe 2027. godine*. Retrieved from <https://www.euronews.rs/kultura/aktuelno-iz-kulture/43305/paviljon-srbije-na-expo-2022-cista-desetka-beograd-kandidat-za-domacina-mini-izlozbe-2027-godine/vest>
- EXPO 2020 Dubai. (2022). *The EXPO 2020 Dubai Story – EXPO Closing Report*. EXPO 2020 Dubai UAE & BIE
- EXPO 2020 Dubai. (n.d.). *Serbia Pavilion*. Retrieved from <https://www.expo2020dubai.com/en/understanding-expo/participants/country-pavilions/serbia>
- EXPO 2020 Dubai. (n.d.). *Sustainability Report 2019: Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*. Retrieved from <https://www.expo2020dubai.com/-/media/expo2020/sustainability/expo2020-sustainability-report-2019-en.pdf>
- EXPO 2020 Dubai. (n.d.). *Understanding EXPO/Participants/Country Pavilions*. Retrieved from <https://www.expo2020dubai.com/en/understanding-expo/participants/country-pavilions>
- EXPO Serbia. (n.d.). *Serbia at world exhibitions*. Retrieved from <https://exposerbia.rs/en/expo-history-serbia.php>
- EXPO Serbia. (n.d.). *Serbia Creates Ideas*. Retrieved from <https://exposerbia.rs/en/index.php>
- Fan, Y. (2008). Soft power: power of attraction or confusion? *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 4(2), 147-158.
- Fraser, C. (2003). Change in the European Industrial City. In C. Couch, C. Fraser, and S. Percy, (eds.), *Urban Regeneration in Europe* (p. 20). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gunek, A. (2018). A New Type of Soft Power: Country Branding. *International Journal of Cultural and Social Studies (IntJCSS)*, 4(1), 252-259.
- Haneef, S. K., Ansari, Z. & Bhavani, G. (2019). Attractions of Dubai and Expo 2020: An exploratory study. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 11(3), 266-278.
- InStore Media. (2022, April 1). *Zatvoren EXPO 2020 Dubai*. Retrieved from <https://www.instore.rs/sr/article/44421/zatvoren-expo-2020-dubai>
- Jing, Yu. (2010). *Study on the Adaptability of Urban Design of the World EXPO*. 46th ISOCARP Congress 2010.
- Johnston, K. (2008). The relevance, scope and evolution of nation branding: Country Case Insight – South Africa. In Dinnie, K. (ed), *Nation branding: Concepts, Issues, and Practice*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

25. Kotler, P. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: a place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4-5), 249-261.
26. Künzli, N., Puhan, M.A. & Suggs, L.S. (2019). Will the Swiss pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai damage your health? *International Journal of Public Health*, 64, 1125-1126.
27. Lamberti, L., Noci, G., Guo, J. & Zhu, S. (2011). Mega-events as drivers of community participation in developing countries: The case of Shanghai World Expo. *Tourism Management*, 32, 1474-1483.
28. Lin, L. & Hongtao, L. (2017). Joseph Nye's Soft Power Theory and Its Revelation Towards Ideological and Political Education. *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 69-74.
29. Manor, I. (2019). *The Digitalization of Public Diplomacy*. Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy.
30. Napat, M. (2012). Analysis of the Swedish Pavilion at the World Exposition 2010 in Shanghai Through Latour's Actor-Network Theory. Master's programme in International Museum Studies School of Global Studies Gothenburg University, pp. 1-76.
31. Nye, J. S. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Basic Books, New York, USA.
32. Pilon, J. C. (2005). Book review "Soft power: the means to success in world politics". *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Spring, 125-131.
33. Privredna komora Srbije. (2022, March 31). Danas se zatvara EXPO 2020 Dubai. Retrieved from <https://pks.rs/vesti/spustase-zavesa-na-expo-2020-dubai-6161>
34. Razvojna agencija Srbije. (2022, March 22). Paviljon Srbije na EXPO 2020 dočeka milionitog posetioca pred sam kraj Svetske izložbe u Dubaiju. Retrieved from <https://ras.gov.rs/paviljon-srbije-na-expo-2020-docecao-milionitog-posetioca-pred-sam-kraj-svetske-izlozbe-u-dubaiju>
35. Singh, B. (2015). Smart city-smart life - Dubai Expo 2020. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 10(4), 49-52
36. Tudor, A. (2022). From London to Dubai – 171 years of national branding through World Expos (1851-2022). *Europolity*, 16(1), 129-152.
37. UAE Pavilion. (n.d.). *A Symbol of the UAE's Bold and Daring Spirit*. Retrieved from <https://uae pavilion expo.com/about-us/the-pavilion/>
38. Vij, M., Upadhya, A., Vij, A. & Kumar, M. (2019). Exploring Residents' Perceptions of Mega Event-Dubai Expo 2020: A Pre-Event Perspective. *Sustainability*, 11(5), 1-17.
39. Windsor, B. (2000). Hard Power, Soft Power Reconsidered. *Canadian Military Journal*, 2000, Autumn, 51-56.
40. Wu, Z. (2009). *Sustainable planning and design for the world expo 2010 Shanghai China*. Beijing: China architecture Press.



**Igor Kovačević**

is an associate professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade. He lectures in business economy and management (Destination Management, Event Management, Marketing in Tourism) and in the area of economic policy and development (Tourism Economics). His academic and professional interests are focused on tourism marketing and management, with special emphasis on the meetings industry (MICE), events, business travel, and the creative economy. Igor also served as the Pavilion Director of the Republic of Serbia Pavilion at Dubai EXPO 2020.



**Branislava Hristov Stančić**

is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business in Belgrade. She lectures in business economy and management (Management of Tourism and Hospitality Enterprise, Revenue Management, Marketing Management) and in the area of economic policy and development (Tourism Economics). Her academic and professional interests are focused on hotel management, hotel operations, revenue management.



**Bojan Zečević**

is a full professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade. He has received professional and advanced training from some of the major universities in Europe and the USA in the field of tourism and, in particular, of modern tourism management. At the bachelor's level of studies, his teaching commitments include the courses of Tourism Economics and Marketing in Tourism. As for the master's studies, he has developed and teaches the Tourism Management module. He is an active member of scientific and professional organizations from the field of international and domestic tourism.