

**The Osaka World Expo is the gateway to the world's largest tourism source market
- The Hungarian Pavilion on show in Tokyo**

With the participation of some 161 countries and 9 international organisations, the next World Expo will be held in Osaka from 13 April to 13 October, 2025. The organisers expect more than 28 million visitors to the Expo, primarily from the East Asia region, which includes Japan, South Korea and China. It is also the world's largest tourism source market for Hungary, so successful Hungarian participation could significantly increase the number of tourists visiting Hungary from that region. At the same time, in addition to tourism, presence at the World Expo can also trigger a significant boost to business relations and investment. After all, Hungary is one of Japan's most important business partners in Central Europe, last year attracting the most investments from the East Asia region. In addition to building the country's image, the aim of the Hungarian Pavilion is also to create opportunities for business development and networking for a large number of Hungarian companies.

Expo is one of the world's three most important events with impacts on the economy, culture and tourism. In addition to the millions of visitors expected by the organizers, content about the Hungarian Pavilion, Hungarian culture and gastronomy will reach an even larger audience through the press and social media. That can significantly enhance our country's tourism position and contribute to building our country's image. Hungary's goal is to welcome more guests from the East Asia region after the World Expo, and to promote business cooperation, too. According to data from the National Tourism Data Service Centre, nearly 309,000 guests came to Hungary from that region last year, spending nearly 905,000 nights in Hungary. Tourist traffic from China was four times higher, from South Korea more than three times higher and more than double from Japan in comparison to the preceding year.

"The fact that a Hungarian diplomatic mission will also be opened in Osaka during the World Expo and is expected to further deepen the long-standing bilateral relations between the two countries, will also add special significance to the Hungarian presence next year." - said **Anna Aulner-Bálint**, Hungary's ambassador in Tokyo, while opening the event. *"Asian companies play a decisive role in the growth of the Hungarian economy, so the World Expo can effectively help domestic SMEs entry into the international market and reinforce the bilateral and multilateral business relations of Hungarian-owned companies. Hungarian exports to Japan are growing dynamically, with a volume that last year exceeded USD 1 billion, and we are working to get that figure even higher."* - she added.

Ákos Kristó, managing director of EXPO 2025 Magyarország Nonprofit Kft. said at the press conference in Tokyo, that participation in the Osaka World Expo would open up unique opportunities for Hungary. The organisers expect 28 million visitors to the event. Due to the layout of the World Expo site, guests will pass directly by our building and thus be presented with an impression of Hungary, and at least 1 million visitors will be able to see the exhibition in the Hungarian Pavilion. In addition to expanding our country image, the main objective of the presence is to promote economic cooperation with the countries of the East Asia region. Japan is a key economic partner for Hungary, with more than 180 companies from that country operating in Hungary, bringing capital investment estimated at €3.2 billion and employing approximately 32,000 people.

"The Hungarian Pavilion has been designed with focus on the development of the economy and the country's image. Hungary is preparing with a uniquely designed and constructed pavilion, and the building will have many functions. In the multi-storey building, a separate floor of more than 100 square metres is dedicated to economic development. Another important task of the building is the presentation of Hungarian gastronomy, so the bistro on the first floor of the Pavilion will serve classic Hungarian dishes and the adjacent wine bar will offer products from Hungary's wine regions. A visitor shop has been set up at the final point of the exhibition space, where pavilion visitors will be able to buy souvenirs and Hungarian handicraft products. Those functions serve to exhibit and promote Hungarian products in the region and thus also serve the purpose of market development." - said Ákos Kristó. "Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the Hungarian economy, and the Hungarian Pavilion will give them the opportunity to showcase their products in East Asia. On the second floor of the building, the focus will be on building economic and business relations, and a conference room and meeting room will provide a venue for professional meetings, business presentations and workshops. We would like to organise hundreds of such meetings in this area during the six month period." - emphasised Ákos Kristó. He pointed out that Hungary is one of Japan's most important economic partners in Central Europe, and the 'country of the rising sun' serves our country as a gateway to Asian markets.

The main theme of the Expo is designing the society of the future, in which Hungary has an interest. Planning for the future is unthinkable without knowledge of and respect for the past, so the focus of the pavilion's exhibition is to present a slice of Hungarian culture through folk music. *"Folk music reveals a lot about us Hungarians, it expresses our values and it can also present our natural treasures. Visitors can embark on a journey in a space decorated with images inspired by folk songs, taking them to our most beautiful regions to feel the love for the homeland from the depths of the folk songs. Instead of providing traditional information, the show offers an emotional experience, including a live, singing performance." - said Ákos Kristó.* The main attraction of the Hungarian Pavilion is the immersive theatre space, which creates the experience of being close to both nature and our homeland. Visitors will be able to enjoy live folk music performance 10 hours a day, for 184 days. At the same time, the aim is for the Hungarian Pavilion to attract the attention of the World Expo audience with its design. Natural building materials and construction methods found in both Japanese and Hungarian folk architecture inspired the architectural concept. Both the Japanese and Hungarian cultures are strongly connected to nature and the relationship between man and landscape, so the built and landscape environment are presented in the design in unity. Visitors will enter the pavilion building through a forest clearing reminiscent of the flora of the Hungarian meadows, followed by the 'Wandering Space', showcasing our folk music, and then a huge dome, which will be the venue for the live folk music performance.

"Throughout the six months of the Expo, Hungary will organise more than fifty folk, classical, light music and cultural events at various venues, giving domestic and international visitors to the World Expo a further insight into the diversity of Hungarian culture." - emphasised Ákos Kristó.

Hungary's presence at next year's world exhibition will contribute to the strengthening of business relations and investments with the countries of the East Asian region, it will offer Hungarian companies an excellent opportunity for business development and the development of new markets, and at the same time it will support the building of the country's image and thus increase tourist and business inbound traffic from the region.

Tokyo, 28 October 2024.