

The Czech Republic supported the proposal to postpone the EXPO 2020 in Dubai by one year

On Monday the 27/04/2020, the Czech Republic supported the proposal of the Organisers of the General World Exposition to postpone the EXPO 2020 in Dubai by one year. It did so as one of the first countries that has voting rights at the International Bureau of Expositions (Bureau International des Expositions – BIE) because only BIE can decide to change the date of the EXPO.

The Organisers of the EXPO 2020 in Dubai propose to postpone the start of the first World Exhibition in the Arab World from the 20th of October 2020 to the 1st of October 2021 and the end from the 10th of April 2021 to the 31st of March 2022. The reason for this is the global pandemic of COVID-19, which affects both the preparation of exhibitions and the expected attendance at the EXPO.

To approve the proposal, the BIE needs the consent of two-thirds of the Member States with voting rights - there are 113 of them, so 75 votes are enough to change the date. The BIE officially accepted the request of the Dubai organizers of the EXPO on the 21st of April and already on Friday, the 24th of April, it called on its members to vote in the form of diplomatic notes. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the postponement of the EXPO this Monday morning.

"To open the World Exposition in an incomplete or unfinished condition and with a low number of visitors would be meaningless, which in my opinion must be recognized even by the other states", comments Jiří František Potužník, the General Commissioner of the National Participation and a Steering Committee member at the EXPO 2020, "nevertheless, we will deliver the pavilion according to the original plan and we will submit a modified concept of our participation at the EXPO in Dubai to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the partners based on the final decision of the BIE."

The BIE rules give voting members five weeks, so until the 29th of May 2020, to voice their position (for-against-abstention). However, the Steering Committee and other unofficial sources indicate that the decision is likely to be made by seventy-five votes no later than the end of April or beginning of May.