EXPO '95
A World's Fair for Vienna and Budapest

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nothing could highlight the speed of developments in Europe better than a comparison between the present and the past of just a year ago. Let us look back at May 19, 1989.

That day, Vaclav Havel was working as a stoker in a housing block. Today he is President of Czechoslovakia.

On May 19, 1989, Erich Honecker, party leader and head of state, was busy making preparations for the parade to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the German Democratic Republic. Today, he is almost an outlaw and has fallen into oblivion.

On May 19, 1989, the first new opposition groups were forming in Hungary. Just a couple of weeks ago, they won an absolute majority in the first free parliamentary elections for 40 years.

Europe in May '89 and in May '90. Only a year has passed – a year, however, of historic events.

What has happened?

Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and the struggle of the Eastern European nations for democracy and freedom have resulted in a historic turnabout: the age of Soviet imperialism and neo-Stalinism has come to an end. The superpowers are gradually withdrawing from the heart of
the Old World. Eastern and Western Europe are no longer drifting apart, but striving towards each other, with dynamic force.

The American artist Christo will no longer be able to “wrap” the Berlin Wall, as had been one of his proposed spectacular projects for the future. Pieces of brick from the Wall and barbed wire from the Iron Curtain have become best-selling souvenir items.

The reason for all this is the “hot autumn” of 1989: 200 years after the French Revolution the Eastern Central European nations commemorated the Declaration of Human Rights – their human rights – and set out to shape their own destiny.

– The first to do so were the Hungarians and Poles in spring 1989,
– then came the East Germans in October,
– followed by the Czechoslovaks in November,
– and, finally, the Romanians in December.

German unification has become the order of the day. A unified Europe is a much-needed (and no longer Utopian) objective.

Provided there is no setback, the 90's will go down in history as the European decade. On the threshold of the third millennium the vision of a unified continent without political frontiers and trade barriers materializes.
Halfway through this European decade, in ’95, Vienna and Budapest will be hosts to millions of visitors from Europe and overseas. By co-hosting an international exposition, they will endeavour to span “Bridges to the Future” - which is the theme of EXPO ’95 - and highlight development beyond the year 2000.

The supreme objective of EXPO 95 will be to organise a major event which reflects the social and technological developments of the late 20th century and provides a unique and memorable experience for its visitors.

In the age of electronic media where every child thinks that it’s all been on the screen before, the Exposition will have to demonstrate that a “hands-on” reality is more exciting and more stimulating than any media-made reality.

After a period of “specialized” and “universal” expositions, the Vienna and Budapest event will be the first truly supranational, the first truly Central European exposition, thanks to the twin-city concept.

EXPO 95, however, will not only be a challenge to Austria, it will also be a challenge to the country’s capital, Vienna.

Every city needs to find symbols in order to develop self-awareness and self-assuredness. Such symbols include major events like Olympic Games or World Championships or international expositions. They may become part of a positive, forward-looking urban identity.
Let me quote the famous Austrian-born market-researcher Ernest Dichter: “A World’s Fair must bring about identification with what is being displayed and offered. Every visitor must be given the impression, for at least the short span of one day, that he is living in a new world, that he is sharing the concerns, wishes and dreams of other people.”

The Austrians have learnt, over a period of 500 years, to communicate and cooperate with their neighbours in the north, south and east. After all, present-day Czechoslovakia and present-day Hungary were part of Habsburg Austria for 500 years.

40 years of division by the Iron Curtain cannot eradicate 500 years of common destiny. Even during the Cold War, Austria was usually one step ahead of other countries as regards cooperation with the East, thanks to its neutrality.

Recent developments in Europe have transformed my native city from a “terminal” into a “bridgehead” of Western Europe. Vienna has become the heart of the “new old Central European fatherland”, the very centre of Europe.

It is against this background that I would like to explain, in the second part of my presentation, the philosophy and concept of the ’95 World Fair in Vienna and Budapest.

EXPO ’95 will be a vision of the future and a panorama of the 21st century, not only in the eyes of the organisers, but
also and above all in the eyes of the exhibitors, who will present what bridges they think will link us to the future.

We do not lay down what is to be shown, we have chosen the subject to stimulate, to further creativity. EXPO’95 is to be a “festival of creativity”.

“Bridges to the Future” is an invitation to the hosts and architects, the exhibitors and sponsors to symbolize, visualize and materialize things and ideas which are capable of forming a bold and yet sustainable transition from the present to the future.

In this context, “bridge” also signifies constructive new development, new and better coherence as a result of their harmonization.

Let me give a few examples:

* the reconciliation of nature and technology,
* of ecology and the economic system;
* the interaction of market forces and planning strategies;
* the harmonized action of the economic and the cultural sphere;
* the combination of the useful and the beautiful;
* the balance between high tech and high touch;
* the overcoming of the generation gap;
* the resolution of the North-South conflict, and
* the cooperation between different social systems, which will not have ceased to exist in the world of ’95.
The **basic objective** is to show the **options** open to human kind for overcoming existing differences and thus **meeting** the **challenges of the future**. It is this outlook that forms the principal **dynamic element** of the “Bridges to the Future” theme.

Such an interpretation provides the **guarantee** that – to quote **Ernest Dichter** – visitors are enabled to “make that fundamental discovery that it is **just great to be alive**.”

Of course, in a competitive and performance-oriented society, **EXPO’95** must also be a **showcase for achievement**, a **demonstration of optimism** and **confidence** in the future.

Drawing on extensive research, we expect an estimated **20 million visits** during the six-month World Fair. **6 million visits** are likely to be by people from **Eastern European countries**, which, though not far away geographically, had sofar formed a watertight world of their own.

**Bechtel Corporation**, our American consultants, have defined what benefit of participation a visitor needs to derive from such an event.

“Visitors will gain an **understanding** of human affairs and develop a **new appreciation** for the accomplishments of their predecessors. Some of the elements can perhaps be seen at trade fairs, in theatres, at theme parks. However, the **combined impact** of these features in a single, special purpose environment, is a **unique experience**.”
The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and thus the third part of my address will outline projects and plans to be completed until yearend.

In December '89, Vienna and Budapest were finally awarded EXPO '95 by the International Bureau of Expositions in Paris.

In January, four teams of prominent Austrian architects presented their visions and basic ideas. On that basis and in cooperation with the City of Vienna, we have formulated a master programme which defines the site and its integration into Vienna's overall urban planning strategies. This programme is one of the principal elements of the architects' competition starting this June to construct the pavilions and design the layout of the site.

Another major task will be to work out financing concepts with a high degree of private-sector involvement. Although infrastructural costs will be borne by the government and the City of Vienna, all of the operating costs and a maximum of the buildings and facilities on the Exposition grounds will have to be financed through private-sector participation.

Another important decision concerns the allocation of the advertising and promotion budget. In a two-stage presentation, GREY were ranked first by an international jury as the company to carry out worldwide advertising and promotion of EXPO '95.
The communications concept will include programmes for public relations activities and advertising as well as business to business activities covering the tourist sector, special events and promotion. A detailed strategy for the acquisition of sponsors and the selling of rights will also be elaborated.

The first steps in communications will include an international competition for an EXPO-logo starting in June 1990 and subsequent competitions to create a mascot and the EXPO-music.

An important prerequisite for success has already been fulfilled: a positive attitude among the population. Let me quote from most recent opinion polls:

- 87 % of all Austrians are informed on EXPO '95;
- 80 % regard EXPO as a good or even very good thing;
- 66 % say they will be going to visit EXPO '95;
- 74 % think this event will help promote tourism;
- 69 % view it as an important contribution to world understanding.

The figures for Hungary are the following:

- 95 % of all Hungarians know about the World Fair;
- 80 % have a favourable attitude.

I have now outlined the political context as well as the underlying concept of EXPO '95 and the progress made in translating it into reality.
The estimated **20 million visits** are a **great challenge** even in a country which, last year, registered some **95 million** overnight stays of foreigners (given a total national population of approximately 8 million).

This illustrates the significance which the tourist sector has for the country’s overall economy. A little **juggling with figures** will help to make my point. The ratio between the number of inhabitants and the number of overnight stays by foreigners in **Austria** is **1 to 12**. Given a **US population** of **242 million** people, this would correspond to **2.9 billion** overnight stays in the USA!

The tourist sector is a key industry in Austria and amounts to approximately **8%** of the gross domestic product, thus holding a larger share than the **construction sector** and twice as large a share as **agriculture**.

But even a flourishing tourist trade needs ever-new **stimulation** and **impetus**. EXPO’95 will be such an **instrument**.

We are currently compiling an attractive schedule of events. It will **run the gamut** from **classical** to **light music**, from **theatre** to **opera**, from **concerts** and **exhibitions** to **circus** and **fireworks**.

1995 will moreover be a memorable year for **cinema lovers**: it is the **centennial** of **motion pictures**. We are therefore planning to organise a major **film festival**.

At present, the number of **American tourists** amounts to approximately **2%** of all overnight stays, with **8.5%** in **Vienna** alone.
By 1995, the capacity of the hotels in and around Vienna will have increased to 75,000 beds. Already, Vienna has surpassed Geneva, Brussels, Venice, Amsterdam and Madrid in international city tourism, ranking among the top together with London and Paris.

Vienna is a focus of the arts and culture. Franz Schubert was born in the City, Mozart and Beethoven lived and worked here. It was in Vienna that Sigmund Freud developed his revolutionary ideas.

Guests from abroad can make a choice between 184 museums. In 1989, the large Austrian museums saw the number of visitors increase by about a million compared with 1988. And it was mainly visitors from Eastern Europe who contributed to that veritable boom.

Vienna is also a centre of music, the “home base” of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the Vienna Symphonic Orchestra and a number of other prestigious ensembles which perform in half a dozen splendid concert halls.

That Vienna has three opera-houses is probably well-known to you. But you may not have been aware that with a population of 1.5 million and 56 theatres and stages, Vienna may also be called a centre of theatre life. I understand that there are 158 Broadway, off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway theatres in New York City, which means that there is one theatre per 45,000 New Yorkers. In Vienna, the ratio is 26,000 inhabitants per theatre.
As mentioned above, Bechtel Corporation carried out a project study in 1988, providing the first predictions of the expected number of visitors, the economic implications and the organisational requirements.

Bechtel experts estimated 10 million visitors for Vienna. The volume of spending during six months of the EXPO 95 is expected to amount 6 billion Austrian schillings in Vienna and 18 billion forints in Budapest. In the wake of the most recent development in Eastern Europe, another study was commissioned by early 1990, to be carried out by Triconsult, and their prediction indicated some 20 million visits for Vienna alone.

On the average, we expect about 110,000 visitors per day and between 160,000 and 180,000 visitors on peak days.

Cost analyses have been worked out too. Austria's share of EXPO costs is estimated at 9 to 12 billion.

One institute has calculated that every billion spent in connection with the EXPO 95 will increase gross domestic production by AS 1.6 billion, creating 1,400 to 1,600 jobs.

Bechtel Corporation are expecting 50 to 70 exhibitors for Vienna and Budapest. The number of sponsors is estimated at about 30.

During the event some 15,000 people will be working for EXPO 95 in each of the two cities. If we include the suppliers, this means that some 50,000 people will be involved in this event.
In its study of the effects of EXPO '95 on the national economy, the Austrian Institute of Economic Research maintains that the project "constitutes a chance for developing and modernizing the economic area, being effective not only in the Vienna area, but also in the rest of the country."

The study further elaborates that revenues of approximately AS 30 billion (at 1987 prices) may be expected. Of these 30 billion, AS 6 billion will flow out of the country. The remaining domestic spending power will result in a real net output of AS 16 billion in Vienna and AS 8 billion in the other provinces. A comparison of current cost-benefit values reveals an accounting surplus of approximately AS 1 billion.

It is this function as a provider of impetus and stimulation that we need to develop, making EXPO '95 a forum for new insights, critical spirit, enlightenment, a proving ground for experiments, exploration and the willingness to take risks.

A small country can only maintain its position in the interactive and interconnected world of tomorrow with intellectual curiosity, establishing contacts with the outside world. EXPO '95 affords an opportunity for exhibitors and visitors to see an open-minded, friendly, outward-looking Austria capable not only of improvisation but also of efficient organisation. A country able to cope with the future.

Actually, economic aspects and planning considerations will be given priority. But they are not the only criteria governing the organisation and the success of the project.
EXPO '95 will be measured above all by what it contributes to the Austrian identity: Was it trail-blazing, did it hold out promise for a new European partnership, was it a vehicle with regard to the country's millennial and the new millennium?

These will be the yardsticks of EXPO '95.