

# Expo 2008 Zaragoza

**The theme Water and Sustainable Development is the focus of Expo Zaragoza 2008. Bernd Reinecke: “The German pavilion is a scientific landscape experience.”**

By Oliver Sefrin



The unusual journey starts with a raft. Once you go on board and it sets off, you are immediately launched into an intricate water world. The journey starts in the underground caves of groundwater, takes you through a labyrinth of supply mains into a futuristic household, and a few minutes later, you are in the clean and glass-clear water of Cologne Bay, which is actually just a projection. This highly original raft trip through a virtual water world –

based on a modern water circulation system – is the focal point of the German Pavilion at Expo 2008 in the northern Spanish city of Zaragoza, the key theme of which is Water and Sustainable Development.

Along with Germany, about 100 nations, regions and international organizations and enterprises will address this theme at Expo 2008, from 14 June to 14 September. Over a period of 93 days they will all be showing innovative technologies and new developments for responsible water management. This vital resource is not only precious, it is also in short supply. One third of the world's population does not have sufficient water. Lack of safe drinking water and bad or non-existent sanitation are the cause of diseases, social conflicts and international tensions. Scientists anticipate that clashes over water will be one of the main causes of conflict in the future. Although water shortage is an altogether serious topic, visitors to the Expo will be enabled to experience the basic principles of sustainable water management in an enjoyable way, promises Jerónimo Blasco, Vice President of Expo Zaragoza.

Germany will be presenting its ideas about sustainable water management on an area of 1,200 square metres. That is the size of the German Pavilion, which is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. It commissioned Hamburg Messe und Congress GmbH with the organization of the Pavilion, where the Expo philosophy, the triad of information, technology and entertainment, has been condensed into an exciting water landscape.

On the 120-metre-long raft trip through the water world, filter systems are described, the taking of water samples illustrated and processes for purifying waste water presented. A virtual young lady called Wia accompanies the raft travellers, explaining the various stages and showing responsible water management in Germany. After the journey on the raft, visitors are guided to an exhibition in which German companies present innovative technologies for a sustainable water cycle (see page 22). “The German pavilion is a scientific landscape experience. The seven-minute raft trip is intended to entertain, engender an understanding of the water cycle and raise awareness of water technology,” says Bernd Reinecke, who developed the concept for the German Pavilion along with his agency Reinecke New Media and the partner agency Totems Communication & Architecture.

Dietmar Schmitz, Commissioner General of the German Pavilion, anticipates about 6,000 visitors a day. Overall, about six million visitors are expected to the three-month Expo Zaragoza 2008. Many of them will be guided to the grounds of the exposition via the so-called Bridge Pavilion. This construction was designed by star architect Zaha Hadid, London, and inspired by the nature of water. It links the city with the grounds of the Expo across the river Ebro, and together with the water tower, resembling a drop, it forms the Expo logo. Another attraction of Expo 2008 is a 9,000-square-metre aquarium – one of the largest in the world – where more than 60 pools illustrate life in river landscapes on five continents.

By the way, Zaragoza itself has achieved a lot in terms of water saving. The city, with its population of 700,000, has the lowest per capita water consumption in the whole of Spain, at 96 litres. Welcome to the “Capital of Water”.

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