

## Press release

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**Major exhibition at the National Gallery for Foreign Art, Sofia, Bulgaria**

The Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Sergey Stanishev, formally opened a major exhibition of the work of Foster + Partners in Sofia, Bulgaria on Wednesday 12 December 2007.

The exhibition is being held at the National Gallery for Foreign Art, one of Sofias most prestigious cultural institutions. Located on Nevsky Square, in a beautiful 19th Century neo-classical building, it features European, Asian and African art, as well as a separate contemporary art collection.

At the ceremony, attended by dignitaries from the worlds of both government and architecture, Lord Foster was presented with the Medal of the International Academy of Architecture. After the opening, Lord Foster and Sergey Stanishev toured the exhibition which illustrates a rich cross-section of the work of Foster + Partners. The exhibition, housed in three magnificent rooms of the Gallery, highlights three themes of the practice: History and Culture, Infrastructure and the Civic Realm. The exhibition includes many of the seminal works of the practice. With the use of large scale photographic banners and more detailed displays of drawings, images and models, it aims to give the visitor a comprehensive impression of the many completed buildings and projects yet to be realised, created over the last 40 years by the practice. It also illustrates the increasing scale and variety of the work of Foster + Partners. Following the opening, Spencer de Grey, Head of Design, gave a lecture on the work of the practice to an audience of architects and architectural students at the Aula Maxima, University for Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, which was attended by over 1000 people.

The exhibition is part of an initiative, European Architecture Week, launched in January 2007 to celebrate Bulgarias accession to the European Union. It has been promoted by Georgi Stanishev, a highly respected architect and academic, and supported by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, and the Ykov Chernikov International Foundation.

The opening was attended by the Prime Minister, Georgi Pirinsky, Chairman of the Parliament, Asen Gagauzov, the Minister of Regional Development, Stefan Danailov, Minister of Culture, Georgi Stoilov, President of the International Academy of Architecture and Andrey Chernikov, representing the Ykov Chernikov International Foundation.

Lord Foster said: We are delighted and honoured to be invited to show our work here in Sofia. To celebrate Bulgarias accession to the European Union through architecture illustrates the increasing importance of culture in the political arena.

The exhibition runs until the end of January 2008.

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