

International Philately Festival: All set for the event that will bring philately experts and enthusiasts from all over Europe and beyond to Rome.

From Wednesday 21 to Sunday 25 October, Palazzo dei Congressi

Preparations are moving up a gear for “**Italia 2009**”, the **International Philately Festival**, organised by Poste Italiane with the cooperation of the Federation of Italian Philatelic Societies, the Association of Professional Italian Philatelists and the Italian Philatelic Press Association.

The event, to be held in Palazzo dei Congressi in Rome from Wednesday 21 to Sunday 25 October, will take place under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic, with the sponsorship of the European Federation of Philatelic Societies and the support of the International Philately Federation.

*“During the five-day International Philately Festival we are getting ready to hold here in Rome, the city will be at the very centre of the world philately scene – **said the Minister for Economic Development, Claudio Scajola**. I am certain that collectors and philately sector experts who will be arriving in Italy from all corners of the world will appreciate the organisation of the event, which has been the task of Poste Italiane, with the support of the Associations representing Philatelic Circles, traders and philatelic journalists. Even in this day and age, increasingly characterised by the use of new communication technologies, the cultural, social and communicative value of stamps has survived unscathed, and this Festival we are preparing to host – a celebration of stamps in all shapes and forms – will be tangible proof of this”.*

*“The International Philately Festival pays homage to the universal nature of the cultural value inherent in stamps – declared the **Chairman of Poste Italiane, Giovanni Ialongo**. A paper monument, a manifesto, a cult object that inspires a passion able to draw generations and nations together. A precursor of globalisation, the stamp remains a symbol of unity that has been the forerunner of the major technological innovations: before the days of Internet, letters were the most common form of communication. Each letter bore the stamp and postmark of the country it came from: a mark that transmitted the meaning of an image that knew no borders. In October, this ingenious simplicity that is the hallmark of stamps will set up home in Rome, opening its doors to Europe and indeed the rest of the world”.*

The event will include a competition exhibition open to collectors from Europe and the countries around the Mediterranean basin, as well as Canada, the USA, Argentina, South Africa and Australia.

The exhibition will be divided up into the following competition classes: *aerophilately, thematic philately, traditional philately, maximaphilia, postal history and philatelic literature*.

Also planned are commercial exchanges between expert philatelists from all over the world, and the programme will be completed by a wide range of superb cultural and promotional events.

Issues that have preceded the event

The event has been publicised by three stamp issues, which are listed below in chronological order.

7 March 2008: €0.60 stamp featuring a stylised illustration of Palazzo dei Congressi, where the Festival is to be held; €0.65 stamp depicting the Colosseum, the universal symbol of Rome;

10 October 2008: two stamps (€0.85 and €2.80) dedicated to the marble mask of the *Bocca della Verità*, the Mouth of Truth;

27 March 2009: two stamps (€0.60 and €1) dedicated to the International Philately Festival.

Issues planned for “Italia 2009”

The series of stamp issues that will characterise the five days of the Festival are sure to be the object of interest and admiration not only on the part of collectors; given the variety of subjects featured and the modest face values they are expected to be widely appreciated and purchased even outside of strictly philatelic circles.

Among the series planned for **21 October**, on **Italian Language Day** are: the €0.60 stamps dedicated to Dante Alighieri, grouped together into mini-sheets of five specimens, each with a tab, issued jointly with San Marino and the Vatican. These will be followed by four philatelic postcards, in the denominations of €60, €65, €85 and €1.00, dedicated to the Eur district, where “Italia 2009” is to be held. As usual, a stamp will be issued (in the denomination of €0.60) to **Philately Day**.

On **22 October**, **Sports Day**, stamps in the denomination of €0.60, €0.65 and €1.40. will be issued in memory of three champions: the cyclist Gino Bartali, the footballer Valentino Mazzola and the Formula 1 racing driver Michele Alboreto, while a €0.65 stamp will be placed on sale to celebrate 130 years of diplomatic relations between Italy and Bulgaria.

Set for **23 October**, **Collectors’ Day**, are three highly original issues inspired by comics: “Cocco Bill” by Jacovitti, “Diabolik” by Angela and Luciana Giussani and “Lupo Alberto” by Silver, all three in the denomination of €1 and sold together on a single sheet. On the same day, two stamps will be issued dedicated to Christmas, with the €0.60 one featuring a religious theme and the €0.65 one depicting a lay theme.

Luciano Pavarotti, Mino Reitano and Nino Rota will be featured on the stamps – in the denominations of €0.65, €1 and €1.50 respectively – issued to celebrate **Music Day** on **24 October**.

The closing day of the event, **Europe Day**, on Sunday 25 October, will be marked by five self-adhesive €0.65 stamps, gathered together in a booklet and featuring illustrations that recall the Roman presence in Europe: Hadrian’s Wall (in Great Britain), the Pont du Gard bridge (in France), the Aqueduct Bridge of Segovia (in Spain) the Porta Nigra of Trier (Germany) and the Odeon of Patras (Greece).

The selection of the collections on display has been made by a jury of ten, chosen from national and international names in philately.

The largest section in the exhibition, with 102 exhibitors, deals with postal history, followed, in order of size, by traditional philately and the section entitled “Un quadro”, with 69 collections each; thematic philately (66 collections); aerophilately (26 collections) and maxi cards (14 collections).

The event is expected to host 158 commercial stands and to welcome 53 overseas postal Administrations.