

Poste Italiane presents in Geneva the EPCM (Electronic Postal Certification Mark)

This new plug-in application has been developed in cooperation with Microsoft for the Universal Postal Union

Rome, 30 July 2008 - Poste Italiane has presented in Geneva the **Electronic Postal Certification Mark (EPCM)**, developed, in cooperation with Microsoft, for the Universal Postal Union (UPU). This new technology has been illustrated to the representatives of the 191 country members of the international postal body by Poste Italiane's CEO, Massimo Sarmi, during the UPU Congress now in progress in Geneva. Mr Sarmi has then handed over to the Director General of the UPU, Edouard Dayan, the plug-in application, which enables a user to access through the Microsoft Office 12-2007 software application the electronic postmarking service supplied by a postal operator. The ceremony has been organised in cooperation with the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland.

The Electronic Postal Certification Mark will eventually be available through the UPU to all **international postal operators** willing to be compliant with this standard, thus granting **interoperability** in certified communications between postal operators.

"We are very much satisfied with the results of our activity of research and development, which has enabled us both to implement the EPCM standard and to provide the UPU with a very advanced application making communications simpler and safer – explained Massimo Sarmi, Poste Italiane's CEO. The Gruppo Poste Italiane has joined the effort to establish a technologic platform for the development of electronic postal certification and securisation services worldwide. This has led to the engineering of the EPCM plug-in as a practical application of the related standard. The Group – Sarmi added – is also committed at national level for the acknowledgment of a legal value to the UPU standards. The Italian Government has recognised the legal equivalence between the EPCM and the physical postmark, which has allowed us to create a service based on the EPCM application for the certification of the exact date and time of signature of electronic documents, with important applications in the financial domain."

The EPCM application developed by Poste Italiane is an **electronic postmark** allowing to verify electronically files, communications, as well as electronic transactions, by associating a double guarantee: **certainty of date and time of the postmarking** and **integrity of the electronically postmarked item**. Both proofs can be stored and re-verified at any time. In particular, this second

feature represents an additional asset compared to the traditional postmark: any kind of falsification and tampering will be easily and definitely detected.

Moreover, **content confidentiality** is guaranteed, since document certification is carried out without access or reading by the postal operator. This new technology will make procedures much simpler and can find important applications in the sending of legal documents, contracts, purchase orders, invoices or whenever two individuals exchanging documents and/or information need to mutually safeguard themselves. This electronic postmark can also be associated to files and documents, such as project plans, contracts or agreements, whose existence needs to be certified at a certain date and time to the addressees, but which can be sent or shared afterwards. Finally, the EPCM application is an enabling tool for **e-Government procedures**, allowing individuals to send certified digital documents traditionally delivered physically at the counters of the concerned Public Administration.