



**PALACONGRESSI
DI RIMINI**

Press release n. 3

RIMINI'S NEW CONFERENCE CENTRE: FOUNDATION STONE LAID END 2007

**In the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister Francesco Rutelli
and the President of Regione Emilia Romagna Vasco Errani.**

A ceremony held on 27 September 2007 saw the laying of the foundation stone of the new Rimini Palacongressi. Taking part were the President of Rimini Fiera **Lorenzo Cagnoni**, the president of Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini **Mauro Ioli**, the President of the Rimini Chamber of Commerce **Manlio Maggioli**, the Mayor of Rimini **Alberto Ravaioli**, the Deputy Prime Minister (in 2007) the **Hon. Francesco Rutelli**, the President of the Emilia Romagna Region **Vasco Errani** and the President of the Province of Rimini (in 2007) **Ferdinando Fabbri**.

His Excellency Monsignor Francesco Lambiasi, Bishop of the Diocese of Rimini, blessed the foundation stone and the building site, which will employ hundreds of workers over the next months.

The ceremony was also attended by German architect **Wolkwin Marg** of Studio GMP Hamburg, who designed the new complex.

The foundation stone, made by Riminese sculptor Giò Urbinati, was laid on the site that saw the inauguration on 1 December 1968 of the Rimini trade fair, transferred in March 2001 to a new site at Rimini Nord.

Società Palazzo dei Congressi di Rimini, 100% initially controlled by Rimini Fiera and later participated by public and private partners, is in charge of construction. The company will retain ownership of the building and will commission Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini (a Gruppo Rimini Fiera company) to run it.

The investment, including the value of the area, is worth around **€113m**.

The new Rimini Palacongressi will stand on an area of **38,000 sq m** and has been designed by German architect **Volkwin Marg of Studio GMP in Hamburg**. Mark also designed the new Rimini Expo Centre and is one of the 15 top names in contemporary world architecture.

The new Rimini Palacongressi will feature two main bodies linked by an impressive system of foyers and associated service areas and by three entrances. It will cover a usable **surface area of approximately 29,000 sq m**. The building will house up to **42 halls and 9,300 seats**. The main hall can accommodate **4,700 guests**. Spacious car parks will be provided underground. The complex will also house the new offices of Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini.

The companies belonging to Gruppo Rimini Fiera took part in and contributed to the laying of the foundation stone; the event was coordinated by Unica, an agency based in San Marino.

DECLARATIONS

Lorenzo Cagnoni, President of Rimini Fiera Spa: Work now begins on the construction of a great driver for our local economy. The new Rimini convention centre will give another boost to the de-seasonalization of the tourist industry.

The reasons for the investment can be found in an analysis of the market: we needed new convention facilities that could make the most of a positive trend in the conference market in our area. Business tourism directly generates substantial fallout, as well as high-profile professionals and business enterprises.



PALACONGRESSI DI RIMINI

To have two modern venues of the scale of the Palacongressi and the Rimini Fiera Expo Centre in the same town is unique in our country and they can help each other grow by working in synergy; I consider them as media and in our communication society they represent a formidable step forwards for our town.

Now we need a strong improvement drive to raise the standards of our hotels and restaurants, of our local environment and accessibility and our cultural offering; we need a framework of public and private services in step with these developments. Much is already in place, much still needs to be done on both fronts.

Manlio Maggioli, President of the Rimini Chamber of Commerce: Today we are laying the foundation stone of the new Rimini Convention Centre: the road we have travelled to reach this point has not always been smooth, but our determination to give the Rimini area and its business community a vital tool that will soon give a boost to the whole provincial economy, and to conference tourism, has been stronger than any of the obstacles in our way.

In supporting this vital public work, the Rimini Chamber of Commerce has simply continued along the same lines that recently enabled Rimini to provide itself, for example, with the new Expo Centre.

The positive fallout for the whole population from that major investment is there for all to see.

The great new economic effort made, sustained by the whole business community via the Chamber of Commerce, is a new wager for the future, an injection of confidence in the Riminese economic system, because it will pave the way to positive prospects in the long term.

Alberto Ravaioli, Mayor of Rimini: With the new Palacongressi, Rimini is taking a stake in its own future. Just as it did with the Expo Centre inaugurated in 2001, this town is investing in better infrastructure and in innovative regeneration, well aware that the balanced growth of the area depends greatly on these, rather than on extemporary solutions. I believe that the determination with which Rimini operates – focusing on broader horizons than everyday convenience – is exemplary; I believe that the community of intent between the local authorities and local businesses that has led to the realization of the Expo Centre and now of the Convention Centre is exemplary.

There is an Italy that manages to work together, that gets to the heart of problems and solves them and that identifies concrete answers to the demands of the social, economic and cultural fabric.

Lastly, I wish to point out that the new Palacongressi will bring with it widespread road and environmental improvements; the area, which suffered decades of inconvenience whenever trade shows were in progress, will become a source of pride for the town and will provide spaces to be enjoyed everyday by families and children.

Ferdinando Fabbri, President of the Province of Rimini (in 2007): The new Rimini Palacongressi is a work of enormous significance in our development strategy and an essential link in that chain of major infrastructure that our local network must have at its disposal if we are to meet the great challenges of global competition successfully.

Trade fairs and conferences are, in fact, the cornerstones of what should become, over the next three decades, the Rimini “model”.

A “model” that will increasingly depend on the excellence of the personal and business services provided and one that sees the keystone of its own economic success in the culture of hospitality, exchanges and relations.

Lastly, the new European-class convention centre will make a further contribution to *de-seasonalizing* our tourism business, paving the way for the new Rimini-style tourism of the 21st century.

Vasco Errani, President of the Emilia Romagna Region: This new complex consolidates the role of this area – the powerhouse of Italy – in the global tourism market. The various types of tourism are merging and business tourism fits in perfectly. We already belong to the top end of the conference system in Europe. The Region has decided to invest along with you: commitment and cooperation are required to build an effective tourism network. Together we have to improve this choice, which places us in the top end of the hospitality market. Our aim is to get into distant global markets, such as China and India. The conference business has high added value but we risk seeing it move to other countries of inferior quality to our own. Wolkwin Marg has presented us with a project of fine environmental quality and beauty, essential aspects. This town has to concentrate on its beauty. It is an absolute benchmark. Rimini has one of the finest and most efficient expo centres in Italy, so it needs to be competitive, working on fundamental aspects by which to distinguish itself: beauty, quality, the hospitality culture. The latter needs to be formalized because, above all when the economy is growing, you – you entrepreneurs – simply cannot afford to make the mistake of being caught unprepared. The competition is too stiff. The road we are suggesting – addressing the Minister – is that of cooperation between the authorities and private concerns, between Majority and Minority, for the strategic points. The best solution to today’s problems lies in doing, creating, providing answers, working together.

Francesco Rutelli, Deputy Prime Minister (in 2007): Conference tourism needs infrastructure, marketing and organization. International statistics show our country lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, we are behind in terms of organization and in terms of marketing. And yet the sector has high added value: those who take part spend, create jobs, multiply enterprises and enrich the area. But let no man – addressing the Riminese – interfere with seaside tourism! You have shown that you can stay one step ahead of the times. You were the first



PALACONGRESSI DI RIMINI

to realize that the bathing season should be integrated by multiplying the types of tourism. The decision to invest in conference tourism is fundamental: and congratulations to Riccione, which has integrated its old trade fair facilities with the new expo centre. Here you have understood that you can work all year round, without detriment to seaside tourism, by offering diversified services. This is Italy's prime conference district. On the infrastructure front, for example, up until three months ago, Venice had one 250-seat hall, now it has a conference hotel with 600 seats and has received the go-ahead for the Palazzo del Cinema, which will also be a conference venue. It's crazy how Italy has just been sitting waiting. I am delighted that here you have invested: it was a courageous and far-sighted decision. The investment is a stake in your future.

The Government has provided incentives for your sector, first by allowing you to deduct 50% of VAT, then 100% for food services too. This is an area that much to teach to others.

In the 21st century tourism will be our country's number one industry: we are well aware of the fact that we have to join forces and work together.

Mauro Ioli, President of Convention Bureau Riviera di Rimini. The logo of the new Rimini Palacongressi makes explicit reference to Rimini as a seaside town; it is a simplified symbol of the architecture of one of the most expressive features of the new conference complex, that plenary hall, emblematically compared to a shell; it effectively refers to all the meanings of a shell, as a natural container of things both tasty and precious.

Lastly, this schematic but at the same time easy, strong and distinguishing symbol, recalls the curve of a parterre, ready to accommodate, any number of tourists, visitors, delegates and members of the general public in a warm and welcoming embrace.

Then there is another aspect that I would like to clarify about this great project officially starting today, in the presence of the most authoritative institutional representatives of our province and of our country.

I am referring to the close relationship with the innovation of our area's services industry, with the innovative fallout that it will consequently have on the tourism economy in this area, in short, with the development of the Riminese community in the regional, national and international scenario.

Rimini's new Convention Centre – along with the other venues planned and in the making in this province – will produce a change of pace in the innovation of our tourist offering that will enable us to gain a competitive edge over our main competitors and enable us to dedicate even more attention to the guests and delegates that will hopefully flock here from all over the world. We therefore expect this new complex to be sufficiently international to highlight our attention to all places of origin, to all identities and to whatever the current market demands of us.

This is why we particularly like the slogan that our consultants have coined to sum up the important potential of this great project: “**serve everyone, everyone will be served**”. From now on, as well as being a slogan, it will have to be considered our prime objective.

FURTHER INFO FOR THE PRESS

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