



The international assembly of space scientists is coming back to Tuscany: the Global Committee for Space Research chooses Florence after 62 years

Florence is the only city in the congress history to host the prestigious scientific event for three editions, after 1961 and 1964.

In July alone, it is the fourth congress won for the city of Florence.

Florence, July 29, 2022 – The 44th Assembly of the global **Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)**, that connects 46 national scientific institutions and 12 international organizations involved in space research, has just ended in Athens.

The committee, officially announced the city that will host the 46th edition **in 2026**: Florence, which beat competitor Prague to secure the prestigious space science congress, to be held at the Fortezza da Basso from Aug. 1 to 9, 2026. Nearly 3,000 delegates from around the world are expected for the event. The time was right for COSPAR to be back in the Tuscan capital after more than 60 years: the Assembly had already taken place here in 1961, just after the Committee was founded, and in 1964. For our city this is an **undisputed record**: historically, only London and Washington have hosted the Assembly twice, but Florence is the only destination in the world to even hold a third edition.

Promoted by **INAF**, the Italian National Institute of Astrophysics, the bid was successfully developed thanks to a dynamic teamwork coordinated by the Local Committee chaired by **Prof. Pietro Ubertini** and **Prof. Sofia Randich**, Director of the Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory, and the Scientific Committee overseen by **Prof. Tomaso Belloni** and Dr. Francesca Altieri, with the constant support of **Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera, AIM Group International**, University of Florence and local institutions.

In addition to the destination's undoubted cultural as well as logistical and organizational highlights, it is certainly thanks to the consolidated reputation of the Italian scientific community in space programs – Italy was the third country in the world to send a scientific satellite into space, in 1964 – and the unanimous support of the city, Chamber of Commerce and institutions that Florence has been able to achieve this important milestone.

"COSPAR's biennial assemblies are a unique opportunity to have a comprehensive overview of the latest accomplishments in the field of space research and exploration," said **Prof. Pietro Ubertini** of the National Institute of Astrophysics (INAF), newly elected vice president of COSPAR, to which more than 10,000 scientists and technologists belong. *"At the end of the Athens assembly, with more than 2,700 delegates from the 46 scientific institutions and 12 international organizations members of COSPAR, Florence was selected to host the 2026 General Assembly. The winning proposal, submitted by the Italian delegation on behalf of INAF's President Prof. Marco Tavani, was prepared with the support of Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera and AIM Group who worked enthusiastically and extremely professionally to prepare it for months. It was a breathtaking head-to-head, with Florence selected by only three votes more than Prague, another candidate city."*



COSPAR 2026's announcement comes at a significantly positive time for the Florentine meetings industry and for the destination, which **just in the month of July won three more major bids** that will bring nearly 2,000 convention attendees to the city over the next three years. Once again, it's the constant teamwork between **Firenze Convention Bureau and Firenze Fiera** that led to this achievement.

In chronological order, first is the **IEEE Vehicular Technology Society - VTS Spring/Fall**, an annual international conference that brings together approximately 600 scientists, engineers and students to discuss research and development issues in vehicular technology and mobile networks. In winning the bid to hold the event at the Palazzo dei Congressi and the new Palazzo degli Affari **from June 18-21, 2023**, the engagement of the departments of Information Engineering and Industrial Engineering at the University of Florence was crucial.

In 2024, thanks to the valuable support of **Kenes Group**, Florence will host the prestigious **Congress of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS)**, whose current President Elect is Tuscan Prof. Rino Rappuoli. The event, for which nearly **500 delegates** are expected, will be held in the spaces of the Palazzo dei Congressi and Palazzo degli Affari **from October 21-25, 2024**.

Last but not least, 500 international delegates will arrive in Florence **from June 18 to July 2, 2025** for the **Annual Meeting of the Organization for Computational Neuroscience (OCNS 2025)**, the bid for which was won thanks to the successful collaboration with **MCR Conference**.

This is definitely a great achievement of the whole Florentine meeting industry, which has proven resilience and long-term vision by implementing the **Florence Restart** program – supported by the City of Florence, the Florence Chamber of Commerce and the Fondazione CR Firenze. We are now reaping the excellent fruits of all the efforts and the constant exchange with the University of Florence, in which Firenze Convention Bureau and Firenze Fiera have invested substantially over the past two years.

"Trade shows and congresses are essential to our city's economy, and these internationally significant events prove that Florence's dynamism is back in full swing," said **Councillor for Trade Shows and Congresses Federico Gianassi**. *"Thanks to the ongoing work in synergy between the City Municipality, Firenze Convention Bureau and Firenze Fiera, Florence as a destination proves to be qualified to compete with the leading international convention destinations. These latest four bids won in just a few weeks show that the economic recovery is happening and that by working as a team we can still improve Florence as a quality convention destination."*

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