

## **Mediterranean Games. Record figures, 4,180 athletes**

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Twenty-two days before the inauguration, the Mediterranean Games of Pescara 2009, scheduled from June 26th to July 5th, have already reached a record. First of all, for the number of athletes: 4,180, with 2,139 managers and accompanying persons, for a total of 6,319 persons that will animate the event in Abruzzo. The event was officially presented this morning at the Room of Honor of Coni. The event, in its sixteenth edition, will see 23 Mediterranean countries competing, two more than those that competed in Almeria (Andorra and Montenegro), in thirty different sports. The Italian delegation will be the most numerous (853 total), followed by France (684) and Greece (645). Morocco decided to withdraw its National football team from the Games, maintaining participation in all the other sports. In the upcoming days, the new groups will be drawn with now only 11 participants and the city where the group that includes the Under 20 team coached by Francesco Rocca will play will also be decided. There are 7000 volunteers, 813 medals to assign to the countries, 1276 to the athletes (408 gold, 408 silver, 460 bronze), 800 thousand spectators expected that will fill up the 33 sports facilities that respond to the Adriatic Stadium of Pescara. Record figures for an event that, after the tragedy of the earthquake, assumes extra-sports meanings: for the Abruzzo region, the Games are the first, great opportunity to come back to life after the catastrophe. “We will make a good impression. The games are a great showcase for Abruzzo and for the entire country as far as both sports and politics are concerned, and they will pave the way for other events and will make dialogue easier with other Mediterranean countries: this I show the Coni president, Gianni Petrucci, opened the press conference during the presentation of the Games. The press conference was attended by the undersecretary Rocco Crimi, the extraordinary commissioner of the Games, Mario Pescante, the Honorary Organizing Committee of the Games, Sabatino Aracu. “I would like to thank the Government – said Petrucci – because they gave us a great deal of help and have always been close to us, the honorary president of the Organizing Committee of the Games, Sabatino Aracu, for having brought this event to Italy and the extraordinary commissioner of the Games, Mario Pescante, who has inherited a difficult organization, but has given it his experience, charisma, authority and skill.”