

**Invitation for ACKMA members to participate in the
19th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology**

Catania, Italy, 30 August to 5 September 2020

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Chairman, UIS Commission on Volcanic Caves

The historic Sicilian city of Catania, which lies in the shadow of the active Mt Etna volcano, is the venue for this year's International Symposium of Vulcanospeleology.

ACKMA members are welcome to participate in the symposium.

A full program of activities is being planned, including:

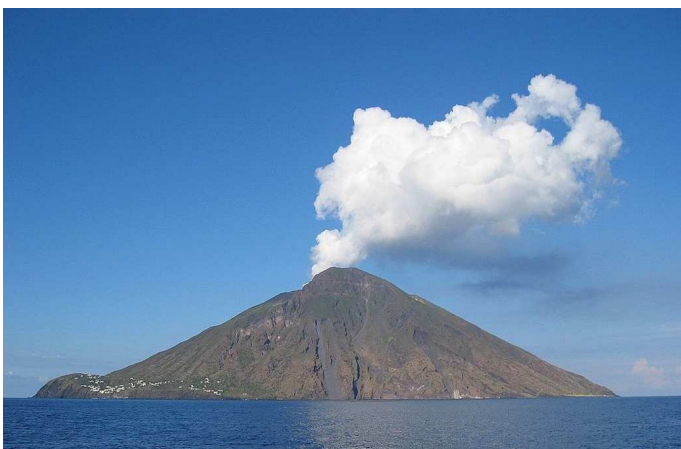
- presentations on research, exploration and documentation of volcanic caves;
- visits to local lava caves on several days;
- several excursions to volcanic features in the Mt Etna area, including to the summit area (eruption activity permitting), and to the site of the devastating lava flow of 1669;
- scenic and cultural tours in Catania and along the eastern coast of Sicily (aimed at accompanying persons, but several well-known cavers have already signed up!);
- a range of social activities, including a fair for symposium participants to view and sample products of local artisans and agricultural producers (ACKMA members should note that a local winery is a major sponsor of the symposium); and
- a 5-day post-symposium excursion to the Aeolian islands, including to the area of the Mt Stromboli volcano (this trip is already almost fully subscribed).

The symposium officially commences on Saturday 29 August, with major activities (an optional geological excursion around the Mt Etna area and a welcome party) commencing the following day. The formal program ends on the evening of Friday 4 September and the post-symposium trip to the Aeolian Islands departs by boat the following morning.

The symposium is being organised by the Gruppo Grotte Catania (GGC), a local caving club, on behalf of the UIS Commission on Volcanic Caves. For logistical reasons, GGC has set a limit of 80 participants. As at 20 February, about 50 registrations had been received.

Despite the current terrible situation with Covid-19 in Italy, the organising committee is continuing its work on the symposium and hopes to be able to run things as planned. However, it will continue to assess the situation and will make a final decision on whether to go ahead, postpone or cancel the symposium on 30 June. It is possible this decision date may be brought forward if it becomes clear that postponement or cancellation are the only realistic options.

The registration fee for the symposium is a modest €280 and (€230 for accompanying persons). Some excursions are included in the registration fee and others are at an additional cost. Detailed information on the symposium, and the registration form, can be found on the 19th ISV Website: <https://www.19isvetna.com/index.php>



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1. The Stromboli volcano. Photo: Carmelo Bucolo
2. Pollara area on Salina Island. Photo: Carmelo Bucolo
3. A large lava roll in Catanese II Cave. Photo: G. I. Sanfilippo