



Hello everyone,

First of all I would like to thank the Community of Sant'Egidio for giving Mediolanum Farmaceutici the opportunity to participate in the celebration of a very important stage of the "Long Live the Elderly" project. By engaging in this initiative our company is taking part in an admirable effort - which has gone on for many years - not only to "assist" the elderly, but also **not to abandon them**. This is in line with a long term aim of Mediolanum Farmaceutici, an Italian company founded in Milan in 1972 by my father Rinaldo. Since the beginning Mediolanum has paid special attention to the diseases of the elderly, to their inherent fragility, the problems caused by comorbidity which they often suffer, but also the issues arising from the interactions among the many drugs they often need to take. Not surprisingly, our company has focused on therapeutic areas of interest to the general population – such as psychiatry, antibiotics and allergies - but more than ever on diseases mainly affecting older people, such as cardio-metabolic, vascular and articular. It was in the latter segment, back in 1983 that we patented our first proprietary molecule, designed to treat chronic venous ulcers, a typical disease of the elderly.

Over the years we have expanded and internationalised thanks to various acquisitions. We went abroad, but then returned. This **is because our efforts were always focused on two core values: the Italian spirit and research**. So we left Italy and returned to Italy. To be precise, in January last year, with the acquisition of the MSD of Comazzo, near Lodi, **Mediolanum Farmaceutici became one of the few Italian examples of so-called "backshoring", returning to produce in our country, while so many other companies continue to flee abroad**. And of course **we have never ceased to pursue our research**. We have made 93 new inventions or discoveries, registering over 700 patents in more than 40 countries. Recently we have been working on an innovation particularly relevant for the elderly: an original system of subcutaneous controlled release for the administration of different types of drugs, using ten different technology platforms.

The intentions of Mediolanum and the Community of Sant'Egidio thus converge in that we both want to assist the elderly **from up close**. This is why it is natural for our company to support the "Long Live the Elderly" project. However, more than that and beyond the human and social merits, the initiative that we are celebrating today also contains **enormous political value**, because it represents a first but very real step in a direction that various decision-makers in the world of health have already referred to as strategic and almost obligatory, that is to increasingly **privilege home care and assistance in the broad sense to the elderly and to chronically ill patients in general**.

The latest OECD figures tell us that Italy has the second oldest population after Switzerland and together with Japan. This figure that can be seen as a warning, but also as a great success for Italy and our health service - one of the last truly universal ones - that in little more than 30 years has helped double the number of over 75s from 4.7% of the population in 1981 to 10.6% in 2013. Within this subgroup the average age has risen further with a continuous reduction in mortality among the elderly. Naturally though, these changes together with the economic crisis, would strain any health care system, because it certainly costs more to take care of an octogenarian than a teenager.

Home care, the reduction of hospital admission rates and time spent in hospital, less invasive operations and the ability to give good and continuous assistance at home are just some of the **buzzwords for the healthcare of the future, which the project "Long live the Elderly" has in some ways anticipated**. The pharmaceutical industry must play its part in this journey, by for example providing the health service with increasingly adaptable drugs - both for the patient and the operator or caregiver -, but especially safer and more effective, and consequently also more sustainable ones.

We have thus embarked together with the Community of Sant'Egidio, upon a process that involves several levels: the human, the social and the political world, this time really in the true sense. I believe that the result of this effort can have an effect at all levels and speak to everyone. I could not say whether it is better to treat the elderly at home, to assist them where they prefer to be, or to make the health care system more efficient, but I am sure that the "Long Live the Elderly" project has been and is a cutting-edge laboratory for attempting to pursue both objectives effectively.

Thank you.