

Rome, 31st August 2016

Professor Fausto Pinto to His Holiness Pope Francis

Your Holiness, we are extremely honoured to welcome you to the European Society of Cardiology at the conclusion of our scientific congress. This annual event is the summit of cardiovascular research.

During the past five days, a record 33,000 healthcare professionals have gathered here to share the very latest medical advances in the fight against cardiovascular disease, a most formidable enemy of mankind.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death around the world. It claims the lives of more than 17 million people a year. Many more struggle to live with its debilitating effects.

The European Society of Cardiology, like the Vatican, is committed to alleviating suffering and promoting healthy lifestyles. We share a common purpose of delivering care to those in need; of helping people live longer, healthier, more productive lives.

The European Society of Cardiology began this mission more than sixty-five years ago. We are currently a federation of fifty-six national cardiac societies, representing more than 95,000 health professionals who are eager to exchange scientific knowledge and improve patient care. Today, the ESC is a global society bringing together some of the most renowned cardiovascular specialists from more than 120 different countries - men and women who are pushing the boundaries of cardiovascular medicine.

And they do this not only at congresses like this, but throughout the year. The European Society of Cardiology publishes twelve scientific journals, delivers continuing medical education courses, creates clinical guidelines to define the latest and best practices, and shares a vast array of international data to compare different treatments and patient outcomes.

We are making progress. But there is so much more that could be done, and must be done. In Europe alone, 1.4 million people under the age of 75 die prematurely each year from heart attacks and strokes because, in many cases, they are not getting the timely and effective healthcare they need. 1.4 million people a year. Many of these deaths could be prevented. We can do much better to protect our populations.

Governments, public health systems, clinics, hospitals, universities, we must all recognise the urgency of this public health crisis. And a crisis is exactly what it is, and how it should be seen.

Your Holiness, I do hope your visit here today helps to shine a brighter light on cardiovascular disease and the need for a more concentrated and comprehensive response. Thank you very much for your support in this fight with no boundaries.

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To reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe

The European Heart House - Les Templiers - 20135, Route des Colles - CS 80179 BIOT - 06903 Sophia Antipolis Cedex - France
Tel. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 00 - Fax. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 01 - www.escardio.org

Brussels Office - 29, Square de Meeus - 4th floor - B-1000 Brussels - Belgium - Tel. +32 (0)2 274 10 70

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