Dear friends,

I am really sorry I cannot be with you in Rome today. Non-proliferation is not only very close to my heart: it is also one of the most urgent issues of our times. Once again we have to deal with nuclear tests, and the threat of a nuclear attack. The only wise thing to do in a moment like this, is to invest all our political capital in the power of diplomacy, multilateralism and international cooperation. We should open new channels for dialogue and mediation, and we definitely shouldn't destroy the channels we already have - even more so, if they are delivering. We should protect and expand all international agreements on non-proliferation. This is certainly not the time to dismantle them.

The lesson of Edoardo Amaldi and his generation is more relevant than ever, and too often forgotten.

People like Amaldi understood better than anyone else the risk of nuclear proliferation. Amaldi knew the power of the bomb, and he always worked to prevent a new Hiroshima. The one and only way to do so, was (and still is) investing in international cooperation.

His generation understood the need for cooperation on a global scale. Exactly sixty years ago, Amaldi and others gave birth to a global movement of scientists...
for nuclear disarmament. And in the same year, the International Atomic Energy Agency also saw the light.

Just a few months before, in March 1957, Amaldi was among the founding fathers of Euratom – one of the original building blocks of our European Union. Our founding fathers and mothers believed that only a united Europe could survive in a world of superpowers. They believed that without European unity, we would be irrelevant on the global stage. And they knew that together, we could be a scientific superpower, and we could contribute to shaping the rules of a more cooperative global order.

Sixty years on, we know that our founding fathers and mothers were right. International cooperation and European unity are still interlinked, and both essential to global non-proliferation and disarmament.

Just look at the nuclear deal with Iran. It would have been impossible, without a strong European Union.

We put all our power to the service of peace, and this was crucial for the success of the negotiations.

At the same time, the Iran nuclear deal has also shown the power of international cooperation. Through diplomacy and dialogue we achieved a win-win solution, we set a milestone for non-proliferation, and we prevented a dangerous, devastating military escalation.

And since we reached the deal two years ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency has been monitoring the implementation of the deal, including with inspections and it has certified Iran’s compliance eight times.

Sixty years after the birth of the IAEA, the Agency is a guarantee for all of us. Because the deal as anything related to nuclear non-proliferation does not belong to one or two countries – but to the whole world, to the whole of us.

In fact, the Iran Nuclear Deal is a UN Security Council Resolution.

The deal with Iran has concluded one of the worst nuclear crises of our times. Now, as we face a different new nuclear threat, from North Korea, we really cannot afford to open another front. We have an interest, and a responsibility, a
duty, to preserve the nuclear deal with Iran, and to work to strengthen, not to weaken, the global non-proliferation regime.

Right now, we are putting maximum pressure on North Korea: we in the European Union are leading by example on the implementation of all the UN sanctions, and on top of them we have imposed our own European measures. At the same time, we are working to build the unity of the international community. We believe the only option is to build together, and in particular with our partners in the region, a peaceful pathway towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

In a moment like this, we must explore all possibilities to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. With all our energy, with all our determination. This is the most serious security threat the world is facing today. We all need to be extremely serious about it.

Some of you may know that I am personally involved in the work to universalise the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, as a member of the Group of Eminent Persons supporting it.

The Treaty has already provided us with an unprecedented mechanism to control nuclear tests all around the world. This has allowed us to independently assess the nature and magnitude of North Korea's tests.

But the Treaty has not entered into force yet. This prevents the use of on-site inspections – which would be an essential tool to guarantee non-proliferation, which means security, and peace.

Today, an effective universal nuclear test ban may sound like a dream. But this was also the case when Amaldi and others launched the campaign in support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The NPT is now the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. And we will do all we can to ensure the success of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2020.

Our Union will continue to be a global force for non-proliferation and disarmament. We will continue to work to relaunch the Conference on
Disarmament, and to conclude negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The two EU Member States who possess nuclear weapons have already declared a moratorium on the production of fissile material. We invite all other nuclear weapon States to do the same.

In the meanwhile, thanks to our support to the G7 Global Partnership and the International Science and Technology Centre, we have contributed to destroy the stockpiles of fissile material, and to re-direct scientific expertise towards peaceful purposes.

In a difficult moment like this, we must stick to our previous commitments. For instance, the United States and Russia are due to reduce their deployed warheads by February 2018. Respecting this deadline will send a powerful message not only of peace and cooperation but also of increased security, to the whole world.

But we must also work for bold and visionary solutions, such as turning the Middle East in a nuclear weapon free zone. Today it seems impossible – but Nelson Mandela used to say: "It always seems impossible, until its done".

Sixty years ago, the peaceful use of nuclear energy was a cornerstone in the process of building our European Union. Today, the European Union is a leading global force and an indispensable partner for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

So my message today is this: the world can count on us. The world can count on the European Union. We will preserve the deal with Iran. We will seek a peaceful, secure and de-nuclearised Korean peninsula.

And we will work for making a world finally free from nuclear weapons, a dream coming true.

Thank you.