

Translation of the German speech by Harald F. Stock, PhD., Chief Executive Officer of the Grünenthal Group, on the occasion of the Thalidomide-Memorial inauguration upon invitation by the City of Stolberg on 31 August 2012 in Stolberg/Rhineland

Check against delivery.

Dear Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen – and particularly dear Mr. Igel!

The fact that a Grünenthal representative is given the opportunity to speak on this special day and special occasion will surely be discussed as being controversial. I would like to thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak today. Thalidomide is and will always be part of our company's history. We have a responsibility and we face it openly.

This day is marked by courage and commitment.

You, Mr. Igel, are brave. And you are committed. You have just described how much you have dreamed about and how hard you have worked for this day and the fact that you – people affected by thalidomide – have a symbol and a place to ensure that our society does not forget. I personally understand your desire well.

Nevertheless, we all were able to learn from the media and from statements from those both involved and uninvolved – that this day has triggered very critical reactions alongside great support. I think you will agree that it comes with the specific nature of this issue that positive intentions are criticized for other motivations.

We have chosen to support your cause, Mr. Igel, which is also the cause of many affected people. The memorial symbolizes an important milestone of a larger development. It is a development towards an ongoing dialogue, ongoing moving towards one another, incipient efforts to understand and – consequently – to act together. A development that began in 2007 by starting official and regular talks between representatives of our company and representatives of the affected people. Over the past few years the intensified dialogue led to our endowment of 50 million Euros in 2009 as well as to projects in Germany and abroad, such as the Belgian patient card or the direct support of hardship cases which started about one year ago, to support those needs of individual affected people that are not covered by the foundation or social services.

In numerous talks with those affected, but also for example with the Ministry of Health, Equalities, Care and Ageing of North Rhine-Westphalia – especially in the last few months –, we learned how much it is publicly desired that we express our deep regrets to those affected by Thalidomide, and in particular to their mothers.

We are aware of our responsibility and will continue to fulfil it in demand-oriented projects and initiatives.

The fact that I can stand here today and address a few words to you, is nevertheless not a matter of course.

Your courage, dear Mr. Igel, in accepting our support on the initiative of Mayor Gatzweiler – even in the face of the resistance on the part of the representatives of those affected – and your willingness to listen to us today is a testament to greatness, for Grünenthal is the company that developed and marketed Thalidomide.

On behalf of Grünenthal with its shareholders and all employees, I would like to take the opportunity at this moment of remembrance today to express our sincere regrets about the consequences of Thalidomide and our deep sympathy for all those affected, their mothers and their families. We see both the physical hardship and the emotional stress that the affected, their families and particularly their mothers, had to suffer because of Thalidomide and still have to endure day by day.

The Thalidomide tragedy took place 50 years ago in a world completely different from today. The international scientific community, the pharmaceutical industry and governments, legislators and administrations have had to learn a lot from it. Throughout the world the tragedy influenced the development of new authorization procedures and legal frameworks, which seek to minimize the risks of new medicines for patients as much as possible.

Grünenthal has acted in accordance with the state of scientific knowledge and all industry standards for testing new drugs that were relevant and acknowledged in the 1950s and 1960s. We regret that the teratogenic potential of Thalidomide could not be detected by the tests that we and others carried out before it was marketed.

Hence the drug was taken by many women who had no reason to imagine that it could seriously harm their unborn children. Therefore we want to address this message particularly to all the affected and their mothers. We realise that the mothers are carrying a heavy burden.

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We also apologize for the fact that we have not found the way to you from person to person for almost 50 years. Instead, we have been silent and we are very sorry for that.

We ask that you regard our long silence as a sign of the silent shock that your fate has caused us. We have learned how important it is that we engage in an open dialogue with those affected and to talk and to listen to them. We have begun to mutually develop and implement projects with them, to improve their living situation and assist in hardship situations easily and efficiently. We will continue to pursue this path in the future.

We wish that the Thalidomide tragedy had never happened. It is an important part of our thinking and acting – today as in the future.