



PROF. LUIGI MONDELLO

Candidate for the
Presidency of the
*Società Chimica
Italiana* for the
three-year period
2026-2028



**SCI: an
increasingly
strong bond**



Dear Members,

I am addressing all of you to share the reasons that led me to apply for this role of great responsibility, at the service of our scientific community and to bring to your attention my vision and my ideas on the future of our Society, hoping that they will meet your interest and approval.

Many of you already know me as President of the Analytical Chemistry Division, a role I have held since 2022. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Luigi Mondello, Full Professor of Analytical Chemistry at the University of Messina.

My training and my academic career are multidisciplinary, as chemistry is. I graduated in Chemistry in 1991, discussing a thesis in organic chemistry. After a period of research at the University of Leeds, I joined the University of Messina as a Researcher in Food Chemistry (1996) and, in 2000, as an Associate Professor in the same field. During my academic career, I have held various institutional positions, such as Coordinator of the PhD in "Food Chemistry and Safety" (2003-2013), member of the Evaluation Committee (2005-2013) and Delegate for Research for the Science and Technology Area (2013-2018) at the University of Messina and Ministerial and Interministerial positions as member of the Biocides Commission of the Ministry of Health and member of the Testing Laboratories Department of the Italian Institute Accreditation (*Accredia*).

Over time, my research activity has been increasingly focused on the development of innovative tools and techniques for separation, so I have increasingly approached the field of Analytical Chemistry, to which I have been working since 2005.

I founded in Messina (2005), together with the then Deputy Rector, Prof. Giovanni Dugo, the "*The Mediterranean Separation Science Foundation Training and Research Center*", given the presence of an international Advisory Committee of 25 scientists of clear fame in the field of separation sciences. The Center was created with the aim of promoting and disseminating knowledge, research and training in the field of separation science. The skills and human and structural resources of the Centre have formed the basis of a process of advanced training of young researchers through masters, advanced courses, internships, advanced summer courses, conferences and a program of exchange of researchers between European and non-European countries. Today the Center is reformed as "Messina Institute of Technology, MeIT", but it pursues the same goals and above all continues to invest in the training of young students and researchers, a theme that has always absorbed much of my efforts.

The spin-off that I founded in 2007 at the University of Messina, Chromaleont, has seen over the years numerous young talents who have reached high levels of expertise in the most advanced analytical techniques, thanks also to the cutting-edge instrumentation made available by the companies which I collaborate with. It makes me proud that many of my former students and collaborators have successfully pursued their academic and professional ambitions, and today hold prestigious positions in Italy and Europe, also playing important roles in leading multinational companies in the chemical sector or in specialized sections of the Military Police Corps and the Air Force.

It is no coincidence that the future of **young people** represents, in my opinion, one of the main objectives, and at the same time the tool that can contribute decisively to the consolidation and enhancement of the *Società Chimica Italiana*, far beyond national borders. With over 2600 members, distributed in the 15 Divisions, the SCI Youth Group today constitutes just under half of our community and represents a strong axis of growth, thanks to the numerous successful initiatives at national level and through the participation in the EuChems Youth Group (of the *European Young Chemists' Network*, EYCN, founded in 2006) which testify to its intellectual vivacity and operational concreteness, as well as being characterized by a strong vocation towards internationalization, a great communication capacity and a remarkable sensitivity towards gender and environmental policies. The role of young people in our community can be strongly enhanced and strengthened, first of all by consolidating their autonomy and the decision-making role of the **SCI Youth group**, ensuring wider participation in the various Commissions and Tables. At the same time, the strategy for the enhancement of young people will have to include a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening their planning, encouraging exchanges also at **international** level, promoting their training and encouraging their productivity, thus contributing to countering the sad phenomenon of the "brain drain". I refer, in particular, to the co-financing of PhD and post-doctoral scholarships, and to the participation in projects announced and funded by the SCI, in analogy with the actions promoted by the European Commission such as the *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions* and the *starting grant* funding of the *European Research Council*.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that young people represent our natural and most direct interlocutors with the world of **Schools**: it is therefore essential to promote their role as ambassadors of our community and recruiters by encouraging and supporting those initiatives that contribute to pursuing one of the founding objectives of our Company, which consists in "promoting and encouraging the study of Chemistry in Universities and in all Schools of every order and degree".

An example of success that I like to remember is represented by the Chemistry Games and Olympiad, recognized by the Ministry of Education and Merit among the initiatives to enhance excellence concerning Upper Secondary School students, which aim to stimulate interest in this discipline in young people.

The extraordinary work carried out in previous years, in particular by our current President, has marked a path of development that has led the *Società Chimica italiana* in the direction of the largest European Chemical Societies, with more than 5400 members. The effort to expand our Society must be pursued not only in terms of numerical consistency, but also and above all to expand and diversify the areas of origin of the **Members**, implementing a series of initiatives that can concretely attract the participation of chemists working in the world of **Schools**, in the various professions, in the **public and private sectors, in public research institutions and industry**. These may consist, in addition to the already consolidated patronage of scientific events, in a training offer aimed at attracting the participation of institutions and companies with adjacent interests, in strengthening and increasing collaborations with associations close to our Society, with special working groups proponents of joint actions that can develop new synergies and find increasingly shared points of contact between the two realities, also with attention to research and development.

The link between science and **industry** is very strong, and the only industry that shares its name with science is, in fact, chemistry, which makes use of scientific knowledge to create technologies and products that contribute to meeting the needs of an increasingly large part of the population, in every aspect of everyday life. According to *Federchimica*, Italy, with a production value of over 66 billion euros, is third in terms of the chemical industry on a European scale, also in relation to the employees employed, and its importance is not limited to the size component but takes on a strategic character. Technological innovations have in fact positive effects on the entire economy in terms of improving productivity, competitiveness and environmental sustainability of all the main Italian production chains. In this perspective, the attractiveness of the SCI to non-academic members will play a key role, strengthening initiatives of industrial interest, including training and professional updating, also through innovative multimedia solutions.

A targeted strengthening policy will have to make use of a powerful and coherent communication strategy, which uses all available channels to effectively reach the interlocutors, and which will also have the final result of strengthening the centrality of the

Società Chimica italiana in the current reality and to enhance the effectiveness of intervention of our community, by virtue of an inclusive multiplicity that is attentive to gender equality policies.

After all, the capillarity of our company, which sees us present throughout the territory, allows us to intercept the peculiarities of each reality and each individual context. The clarity and transparency of communication are of critical importance in the current scenario, characterized by continuous social and political changes and, unfortunately, often also by widespread misinformation, especially since the value of chemistry is not immediately perceived.

The promotion of **scientific rigor** based on theoretical and experimental analysis, as well as on independent verification by third parties, as a necessary premise for the circulation of new ideas, is a theme of primary importance in the context we are experiencing, in which the widespread diffusion of the Internet, social networks and smart devices has exponentially accelerated the spread of news including, sometimes, even theories completely devoid of scientific basis that unfortunately meet with considerable media following. Our commitment to the development of our country therefore requires us to take clear and easily intelligible positions, in order to promote a scientific mentality and a critical spirit, the **integration between universities, research institutions and industry** and the desire to represent a point of reference for civil society on a wide range of issues that concern everyone, but which can be traced back to very clear technical and scientific aspects.

By virtue of the positive collaboration established and perpetrated over the years, the SCI today occupies a very important role in the process of consolidating the identity of the **community of European chemists** represented by EuChemS and the EYCN, and contributes to providing a single and impartial European voice on key policy issues in chemistry and related fields.

In over thirty years of membership in the *Società Chimica Italiana*, I have made these motivations a concrete commitment, holding various roles of responsibility in the SCI as well as in EuChemS. I have been a Member of the Board of Directors of the Interdivisional Group of Science of Separations (2003-2008), which has its largest representation in the Sicily section, Coordinator of the Interdivisional Group of Science of Separations (2016-2018), Member of the Permanent Scientific Commission of the SCI (2017-2019), Vice President of the Division of Analytical Chemistry (2019-2021) and, currently, President of the Division of Analytical Chemistry since 2022 and Member of the Central Council of the SCI. I am also Delegate of the Division of Analytical Chemistry in the *Division of Analytical Chemistry* (DAC, since 2022) and Member of the *Sample Preparation Study Group* Committee (EuChemS-DAC, since 2023).

My path as President of the SCI will be first and foremost focused on collaboration with the current Governance, sharing its vision and strategic objectives and, likewise, on dialogue with the whole Community to ensure transparency and active participation of the various Members, which I am committed from now on, if elected, to represent in the best possible way, in all areas, in a cooperative and non-competitive way.

