

The Eposs project has started

Turin, 1 July 2011.

Today is a very significant day for all of us: the research project on ALS has finally started. This project could be adopted thanks to the funds raised on 23 March with **the SLAncio di Vita football match**. We can clearly remember that day at the Olympic Stadium in Turin, when the legendary teams of **Juventus and Torino**, as well as numerous artists fascinated **20,000 viewers sitting in the terraces and 193,040 TV viewers** (790,147 unique viewers), who could watch the match on TV channels SKY Sport 1 and SKY Sport Supercalcio. Incredible people and numbers, thanks to which we could give **Mario Melazzini**, chairman of AriSLA, a cheque of **EUR 223,000** to fund the “**EPOSS - ErythroPOietin in ALS: a Study of dose-finding and Safety**” project. This research project was chosen by the AriSLA International Scientific Committee following a competition organised in 2010 by Professor **Giuseppe Lauria** of the Neuromuscular Diseases Unit of the Foundation of the Carlo Besta Neurological Institute IRCCS of Milan.

As Prof. Lauria puts it ‘The beginning of the EPOSS project means starting investigation focused on understanding the mechanisms through which erythropoietin exercises a protection effect on motoneurons in ALS patients. The outcome of the investigation may represent a major step forward in finding a possible treatment for the disease. Even if at the moment we cannot talk about treatment for ALS, we hope that we will be able to find drugs that help slowing down its progress. I wish to say thank you to AriSLA which believed in this project and chose it for the 2010 competition, the Vialli and Mauro Foundation, which organised the football match, the football players that participated in the match to support this research project, and all those people who made this possible.’

Therefore, this was a victory that a single great team made possible, as Juventus President Andrea Agnelli and Torino President Urbano Cairo wish to underline. They were fully available to support this event.

Andrea Agnelli stated that ‘Some months have passed since the football match took place at the Olympic Stadium, to raise funds for the ALS research project. And all those who participated in it can remember it clearly. First of all, I would like to say thank you to the Vialli and Mauro Foundation for organising the event and to all those supporters who contributed to raising a considerable amount of funds by buying the ticket or sending SMS messages. I also wish to say thank you to all those people who made it happen, therefore the football players, athletes, artists who entertained the public during the event. I can remember the smiling face of **Michele Riva**, who had dreamt about this event for years, and that of AriSLA Chairman Mario Melazzini, who is a big supporter of Juventus’.

As Urbano Cairo puts it ‘I was honoured and proud of participating in this event; I cannot describe the emotions I felt today when I thought about the SLAncio di Vita football match. I wish to say thank you to the Vialli and Mauro Foundation for the commitment and the energy shown, as well as to all the people and companies that contributed to this event and the thousands of supporters who came to the Olympic Stadium. The people from **Turin** participated enthusiastically in a wonderful event organised by their city: therefore we have to start from here, from this clear example of social commitment, to continue and invest in scientific research.’

There will certainly be new opportunities to continue on this track. On 15 June, the **Third AriSLA Competition** ended and 55 new projects were submitted, for a total amount of EUR 7 million. As **Massimo Mauro** puts it ‘Scientific research requires very significant economic contributions, and continuity is the real added value. When we understood that the objective for which this event was organised had been reached, we were not only filled with joy, but we wanted to do more and more. The Slancio di Vita football match and the exceptional team that made it come true will always be in our hearts, but now our dream is to be able to do this major step forward, as mentioned by Dr. Lauria. This would be the best gift.’

To follow the progress of the Eposs project, please visit www.arisla.org or the “objectives” page of www.fondazionevialliemauro.com