

You are not alone

In 1905, the Spanish writer George Santayana penned the subsequently oft-quoted words *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"*. With these words in mind, I recently leafed through earlier editions of the EIPG journal since its first publication in 2008, and came across the editorial I penned in the winter of 2014 (*Will they? Won't they?*).

Fast forward 2 years, and little seems to have changed. Global events continue to shake the industry – mergers and acquisitions and streamlining activity continue unabated, and the companies that were the subject of uncertainty amongst industrial pharmacists at the time, have once again, in recent weeks, made headlines, regrettably for the same reasons. Friends and colleagues find themselves once more looking with uncertainty and trepidation to their futures, one that is currently rendered even more uncertain by the latest European and global political events.

I also wrote back then, referring to the Delegated Regulation on safety features, *"While the broader strokes of this legislation that will have far-reaching effects throughout the continent are by now fairly clear to many, the minutiae of the process remain largely unknown, leaving actors in the pharmaceutical supply chain in a state of uncertainty, asking largely unanswered questions."* There are still many unanswered questions, brought regularly to my attention by industrial pharmacists in the pharmaceutical supply chain all over Europe. EIPG highlighted its concerns in a statement on the Regulation earlier this year, and recently elaborated upon them at the Interested Parties Meeting of the European Medicines Agency. The European Medicines Verification Organisation Progress Monitoring Monthly Report for the last 3 months is also disquieting. Whilst



progress is being made, two-thirds of countries are behind schedule, and one has to wonder how much time there will be to deal with issues – both technical as well as those related to everyday good practices – that will most probably arise when the entire system goes live EU-wide.

Industry is busy dealing with the technical aspects of the implementation of the Regulation, but it is the role of associations such as EIPG and its member organisations to deal with the professional matters. The British statesman Sir Winston Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons in 1935, said, *"Want of foresight, unwillingness to act when action would be simple and*

effective, lack of clear thinking, confusion of counsel until the emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong – these are the features which constitute the endless repetition of history." EIPG will do its utmost to take heed of this advice, and thus to prevent industrial pharmacists from feeling isolated in facing their challenges. Inspiration is to be found in our academic colleagues at the University of Camerino in Italy, who, notwithstanding the destruction wreaked to their beautiful city by the strongest earthquake to hit the peninsula in the last 30 years, came together only days later to witness the graduation of a new crop of pharmacists. Their courage and fortitude in looking to the future are an example to us all.

I extend to everyone the best wishes of EIPG for the season, and encourage you to look forward to a new year with confidence, for, I assure you, you are not alone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claude Farrugia', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Claude Farrugia
President, EIPG