

The 15th Leonardo da Vinci Prize, created by the Henokiens Association and the Château du Clos Lucé, was awarded on June 17, 2026, to the Italian company Mapei in the prestigious setting of the National Museum of Science and Technology-Leonardo da Vinci in Milan in the presence of its Director General, Mr. Fiorenzo Galli.



The Leonardo da Vinci Prize was awarded under the auspices of Ms. Letizia Moratti, Member of the European Parliament, to Mrs. Veronica Squinzi, Chief Executive Officer of Mapei with by her side Marco Squinzi and Laura Squinzi, and the presence of Julian von Möller, President of the Henokiens Association and François Saint Bris, President of the Château du Clos Lucé – parc Leonardo da Vinci.



From left to right : Julian von Möller - Veronica Squinzi - Marco Squinzi - Laura Squinzi - François Saint Bris

Mapei, an Italian family-owned industrial company, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of chemical products for the construction and public works sector. Founded in 1937, the company has been owned by the Squinzi family for three generations and has contributed to some of the world's most important architectural and infrastructure projects. Present in 59 countries through 98 subsidiaries and with 106 plants in 42 countries, the company employs 13,200 people and generated revenue of €4.4 billion in 2024.



The 15th Leonardo da Vinci Award ceremony was opened by Julian von Möller, President of the Henokiens Association. He began by expressing his sincere thanks to Pietro Beretta and Alberto Marengi for organizing the award ceremony here in Milan. He continued by noting that « the 15th Leonardo da Vinci Prize once again returns to Leonardo's homeland, adding that « it is an immense privilege and a profound honour to gather here today to celebrate the company Mapei, built on expertise, culture, and a vision

focused on future generations. Founded in Milan in 1937 by Rodolfo Squinzi, Mapei began as a small family business producing materials for the construction industry. Through vision, determination, and an unwavering commitment to quality, it evolved into one of the world's leading manufacturers of chemical products for building, construction, and infrastructure. A decisive chapter in this remarkable journey was written by Giorgio Squinzi, whose entrepreneurial talent transformed Mapei from a successful national company into a truly global enterprise. Under his leadership, innovation became a strategic principle, research became a defining characteristic, and international expansion was pursued without ever compromising the company's identity or values. Today, under the leadership of Veronica Squinzi and Marco Squinzi, the company continues to demonstrate that continuity is not the preservation of the past alone; it is the ability to carry forward a legacy while adapting to the challenges of a changing world and this balance between permanence and transformation is one of the greatest achievements of any family business ». Julian von Möller then reflected on what makes family businesses unique « they think in terms of generations, not quarters. They foster lasting loyalty among their employees, customers, and communities. They are driven not only by financial performance but also by a deep sense of responsibility towards a legacy they have inherited and are committed to passing on». According to Julian von Möller « their relationship with time is a form of

wisdom, because lasting success is born of patience, resilience, and the constant pursuit of excellence. He concluded by expressing his conviction that « Mapei's greatest achievement, beyond the number of its factories, its patents, and its global presence, is the successful transmission of a culture, one of entrepreneurship, responsibility, excellence, and respect for people. These are precisely the values embodied by the Leonardo da Vinci Prize, whose trophy, designed by the jeweller Mellerio and inspired by Leonardo's aerial screw, symbolizes vision, aspiration, and progress».

To illustrate the relevance of selecting Mapei as this year's laureate of the Leonardo da Vinci Prize, François Saint Bris, President of the Château du Clos Lucé – Parc Leonardo da Vinci, highlights the Leonardo's achievements as both an architect and an engineer: « Leonardo da Vinci was an urban planner ahead of his time. Following the ravages of the plague, he became concerned about the sanitary condition of cities. He imagined an ideal city with canals to drain away fluids and waste and organised on several levels according to social categories, with the aim of making Milan a clean and functional city. He was also highly skilled at drawing up plans for cities such as Milan, Urbino and Imola. As a civil architect, he imagined an ideal city for King Francis I of France at Romorantin. As a military architect, he imagined low, horizontal defensive lines, reinforced fortresses and angular fortifications that prefigured Vauban's bastion forts. According to François Saint Bris « this portrait also outlines the profile of Mapei, as there is a particularly strong resonance between Leonardo da Vinci's research for his grand urban and civil infrastructure projects and his architectural work carried out in France and Italy and the practical technical solutions and sustainable development initiatives that Mapei implements worldwide ». He went on to note that « since its foundation in Milan in 1937 by Rodolfo Squinzi, three generations of the Squinzi family have preserved the company's identity, maintained family ownership, and ensured its long-term continuity ». He also emphasized that « Mapei contributed to the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris following the 2019 fire and the renovation of the Colosseum and the Grand Palais in Paris in 2020, major heritage projects that echo the founder's conviction that « work cannot be separated from art».. He concluded by stating that « the Leonardo da Vinci Prize presented to Mapei today crowns eighty-nine years of exemplary entrepreneurial and human achievement, embodying a socially responsible, holistic approach focused on future generations ».



The Leonardo da Vinci Prize was awarded under the auspices of Ms. Letizia Moratti, Member of the European Parliament. In her address, Ms. Moratti emphasized that « this distinction recognizes not only Veronica Squinzi's professional and personal achievements, but also pays tribute to an entrepreneurial and family legacy that has made a significant contribution to the international prestige of *Made in Italy* ». For Letizia Moratti, «the history of Mapei is a remarkable example of success: a small family business founded in 1937 that, through a vision based on innovation, research, quality, and the development of people, has grown into a global group ». She added that « speaking about Mapei inevitably means speaking about Giorgio Squinzi, one of the leading figures of Italian industry, both as an entrepreneur and as



President of Confindustria. Throughout his career, he consistently championed the role of business as a driver of economic development, innovation, and social cohesion. His legacy remains a benchmark for all those who believe that economic success must be accompanied by responsibility towards people, local communities, and society as a whole ». Letizia Moratti went on to praise « the way Veronica Squinzi has carried this legacy forward with intelligence and determination, while giving it a distinctly forward-looking perspective. Family businesses represent one of the most valuable assets of Italy's productive system, and when a generational transition is successfully achieved—as it has been at Mapei—it becomes a powerful source of long-term stability and growth. Against the backdrop of a world shaped by technological transformation, the energy transition, geopolitical tensions, and increasing international competition». Ms. Moratti called for « concrete examples demonstrating that it is possible to innovate without abandoning one's values, to grow while remaining faithful to one's roots, and to compete globally without losing sight of one's responsibility to society. In this respect, the journey of the Squinzi family and of Mapei perfectly embodies this vision». She concluded by thanking « Veronica Squinzi, her family, and all those who contribute every day to Mapei's success, expressing her wish that they would continue with the same determination, the same capacity for innovation, and the same sense of responsibility that have made the company's history an example for both Italy and Europe ».



Veronica Squinzi said she was « particularly delighted to receive the Leonardo da Vinci Prize at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Milan, an important institution that Mapei has always supported. Being here in Milan makes this moment even more special, as it is the city where Mapei was founded and where Leonardo spent many years of his life ». Squinzi then turned to her family's history with a memorable tribute to her grandfather, Rodolfo Squinzi: « by day, he painted; by night, he manufactured ». A professional decorative painter, Rodolfo Squinzi had the decisive insight to produce the materials he himself used. It was from this determination to overcome limitations that Mapei was born. His son, Giorgio Squinzi, a trained chemist, subsequently expanded the product range and successfully opened international markets with vision and perseverance. Our aunt, Laura Squinzi, has always played an active role in the company's strategic decisions, while my mother, Adriana Spazzoli, who was responsible for marketing, helped

establish Mapei as a globally recognized brand ». Veronica Squinzi emphasized that « this award is inspired by the spirit of the Renaissance: the transmission of knowledge from master to apprentice, but also from one generation to the next, as a living and intangible heritage. That is the true strength of family businesses: the ability to unite tradition and innovation, generation after generation ». She added that « the third generation—my brother Marco, my cousin Simona, and myself—continues this journey with the support of our aunt Laura and more than 14,000 people who bring the excellence of *Made in Italy* to all five continents every day ». She concluded by stating: « this award is not only a recognition of what has been achieved, but also an encouragement to continue along this path. Like Leonardo, Mapei moves forward with passion, curiosity, and determination—not to reproduce the past, but to keep inventing the future ».



The trophy of the Leonardo da Vinci Prize

The trophy, designed by the jeweller Mellerio, is inspired by the flying helix invented by Leonardo da Vinci. It embodies the laudable values of superiority, advancement and vision that the "Leonardo da Vinci Prize" was created for to recognize, promote and reward.