Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues, dear students, dear partners, and finally, dear organizers of this event,

As Vice-Dean of this Department of Pharmacy, it is a great pleasure for me to open this tenth edition of the Drug Discovery Day, a seminar on therapeutic chemistry, a discipline central to our Faculty's identity for more than a century.

As you know, this year we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy in Lille. This seminar is finally the result of a long history, patiently built and deeply rooted in Lille.

When the first Chair of Pharmacy was established in 1881, chemistry, whether organic, mineral, or analytical, was already at the heart of the training, research, and scientific ambition of our institution. Since then, it has never stopped being one of its founding pillars.

Let me highlight a few key moments from this history

At the beginning of the 20th century, Professor **Ernest Gérard** paved the way for a modern approach to drug research through his studies on sterols and how drugs distribute in the body, long before pharmacokinetics became an official field.

Between the two World Wars, Professor **Michel Polonovski**, head of the Chair of Organic and Biological Chemistry, brought medicinal chemistry to an exceptional level. His work on aminooxides and alkaloids, presented in Brussels in 1929, helped build Lille's scientific reputation well beyond France. Some of his results even led to marketed drugs — a perfect example of how academic research can lead to real therapeutic innovation.

This momentum continued with **Albert Lespagnol**, an important figure whose work on benzoxazolones enriched the field, alongside **Professor Denise Bar**, the first woman professor of pharmaceutical chemistry in Lille. Under Lespagnol's leadership, Lille hosted the **first Therapeutic Chemistry Meeting in 1964**, bringing together academics and industry from all over Europe — a precursor to the kind of seminar we are attending today.

Our faculty has a strong scientific tradition in therapeutic chemistry, carried by researchers who shaped the discipline: i'm thinking of Professors **Tartar, Lesieur, Hennichart**, and today Professors **Melnyk, Deprez, Millet, and Willand**.

At a time when therapeutic innovation is more necessary than ever, for chronic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, or emerging infections, therapeutic chemistry remains essential. It is the art and science of turning an idea into a structure, and a structure into a safe and effective medicine.

Today, our Department of Pharmacy plays a major role in linking academic research to therapeutic innovation. Three recent examples from our teams or local collaborations show the strength of our research:

- **Elafibranor (Iqirvo®)**
- **Ezeprogind (AZP2006) and**
- **Alpibectir**

These three projects show how therapeutic chemistry can transform ideas into treatments, for rare liver diseases, neurodegenerative conditions, or persistent infectious diseases.

Even though global therapeutic challenges remain great, our community proves every day that it has the skills, the knowledge, and the ambition to face them.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your presence and wish you a seminar full of fruitful discussions and, perhaps, future collaborations.

Thank you