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## PRESS RELEASE

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### AVANCHAIR: CROWDFUNDING SUCCESSFULLY CLOSED FOR THE HIGH-TECH WHEELCHAIR PROMOTED BY ENEL AND BANCO BPM

- *Thanks to the support of Enel and Banco BPM, the goal of 130 thousand euros needed to start the production of the electric powered wheelchair in 2022 was reached*

**Rome/Milan, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021** - The crowdfunding campaign was successfully closed, thanks to the contribution of Enel and Banco BPM, exceeding the goal of 130 thousand euros necessary to create the ready-to-market prototype of Avanchair, the latest-generation electric powered wheelchair managed by automatic movement systems, which will be launched in 2022. The fundraising campaign, which lasted around a month and was promoted on Eppela, was supported with donations of 50 thousand euros each from Enel and Banco BPM.

*"With the crowdfunding campaign we have achieved and exceeded the fundraising objective that will allow us to create the prototype we have already baptized 'Avanchair One'," said **Andrea Depalo**, Founder and creator of Avanchair. "I want to say thank you for their sensitivity and availability to **Ernesto Ciorra**, Enel's Chief Innovability® Officer and mentor of the initiative, and to **Giuseppe Castagna**, Chief Executive Officer of Banco BPM, which is also the company I work for, as well as to their teams. Thanks also to all the around 150 indispensable small and large donors who also made this achievement possible and who perhaps in many cases are themselves people with disabilities. We initially said that we have invented a 'special power' and it is true. This chair has something special because it is not aimed at helping you sit down but at allowing you to get up and move independently. The end of the fundraising campaign represents, for us, a new beginning that will lead us to finish the prototype and to ensure that Avanchair One becomes an option available to 70 million people in Italy and around the world."*

*"Andrea Depalo gave us the idea from which JuiceAbility by Enel X was born, the first solution in the world for charging wheelchairs in public spaces. We contributed to the achievement of the monetary goal necessary for the development of Andrea's startup, Avanchair. This relationship is a source of pride and satisfaction and clearly demonstrates how we collaborate with startups, with openness, dedication, passion, realizing concrete, innovative and sustainable industrial projects," said **Ernesto Ciorra**, Enel's Chief Innovability® Officer. "Avanchair is an opportunity for people with disabilities; an innovative tool that can improve their lives, overcoming barriers and obstacles that limit their lives every day. The Avanchair project is a virtuous example of how the principles of sustainability and inclusion, which are the basis of Enel's corporate strategy, lead to the possibility of creating new businesses and a more sustainable world, a better world."*

*"We are proud to have contributed to the project of our colleague Andrea who, despite facing many difficulties, works every day to realize the dream of improving the lives of many people," said **Giuseppe Castagna**, Chief Executive Officer of Banco BPM. "The Bank, which has always been attentive to sustainability issues and innovative projects, has decided to support Avanchair precisely because it is a young startup with an ambitious goal that has a value not only from the point of view of social inclusion, but also of technological innovation and environmental impact."*



Avanchair, compared to the electric powered wheelchairs currently on the market, offers innovative elements for users during activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL). The advantages are mainly represented by the lateral translation that allows people with disabilities to transfer with absolute ease from the wheelchair to other surfaces, for an experience of total integration with the surrounding environment. In addition, the IoT sensors inside the chair allow the monitoring of the person's vital signs and offer support in remote assistance operations thanks to integration with digital health platforms (e-health). Thanks to Enel X's JuiceAbility device, Avanchair can be charged via the charging infrastructure of electric cars. Through an intelligent cable and the Enel X JuicePass app, JuiceAbility allows you to recognize the batteries of electric wheelchairs and connect them to the network of charging stations for electric vehicles.

The campaign also saw donations from SPII, a company specialized in the creation of human-machine interfaces for driving vehicles, Burago Viti, which will study and develop special fastening elements, and Kronos Informatica, which will manage and re-elaborate big data collected from the chair, as well as Le Village start-up incubator, in addition to private donors.

**Enel** is a multinational power company and a leading integrated player in the global power and renewables markets, as well as a main gas operator in the retail market.

It is the largest European utility by ordinary EBITDA, and is present in over 30 countries worldwide, producing energy with around 88 GW of installed capacity.

Enel distributes electricity through a network of over 2.2 million kilometers, and with more than 74 million end users is the 1<sup>st</sup> network operator globally<sup>1</sup>. Enel Green Power is the world's largest renewable private player, with around 49 GW of wind, solar, geothermal, and hydropower plants installed in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Enel X, Enel's global advanced energy services business line, is the worldwide demand response leader, with a total capacity of over 6 GW managed globally; the company has installed around 100 MW of storage capacity as well as, in the electric mobility sector, about 195,000 EV charging points<sup>2</sup> around the globe.

<sup>1</sup> Publicly owned operators not included.

<sup>2</sup> Public and private charging points. It includes interoperability points.

**Avanchair** is an innovative start-up with an important social impact. Its founder, Andrea Depalo, 38, from Saronno, suffering from quadriplegia at birth, in 2019 devised a system that could allow him to at least partially compensate for one of the effects of his motor disability. His creation also offers many millions of people with disabilities the real possibility of becoming independent from their caregiver. The "Avanchair One" product, now in the prototyping phase, is a wheelchair that allows the seat of the chair itself to be raised and lowered vertically but, above all, its lateral movements thanks to which the user can move independently on other surfaces. Thus a new product was born, which until now was unthinkable due to its unprecedented functions. Avanchair is protected by a patent filed in Italy, Europe, the USA and Russia. Avanchair is a trademark owned by Avanchair srl.

**The Banco BPM Group** was founded on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 with the merger of Banco Popolare and Banca Popolare di Milano. The deep-rooted tradition of the original cooperative banks has inspired Banco BPM to pursue a mission aimed at creating value that is stable over time for shareholders through sustainable profitability and development. Banco BPM serves 4 million customers through an extensive and complementary network and a widespread distribution model that sees innovation and sustainability among the main founding elements. The territorial presence, which benefits from a strategic position in Northern Italy, makes Banco BPM the national leader in various business sectors with high added value, with a unique positioning, a portfolio of highly recognized brands and cross-selling opportunities between product factories. Over the last year, under the further push of the Covid-19 emergency, the Bank has invested significantly in digital and sustainability, strengthening governance on ESG issues, with the aim of integrating the various aspects in corporate and business activities and addressing the demands of economic, environmental and innovation transition, to play a leading role in the sustainable and inclusive development of the country. Banco BPM recently published the "2020 Sustainability Report - Consolidated Non-Financial Statement" available at the link: <https://gruppo.bancobpm.it/en/sustainability/non-financial-statements/>



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