Warsaw, 1 March 2017

**Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden visits Poland**

**On 1 March 2017, Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden visited Poland at the invitation of the Medicover Foundation and Medicover. The focus of the visit was care for elderly people and dementia sufferers and subjects related to nursing education. The occasion for the invitation was the final ceremony of the competition for Queen Silvia Nursing Award which was presented with all honours at the Swedish Embassy. Her Majesty Queen Silvia also met with the residents of the Medicover Senior Józefina Care Home and the nurses working in the Medicover Hospital in Wilanów.**

The purpose of the visit was to create a platform for discussion of the challenges related to care over seniors and to highlight the significance of the nurse’s work.

These very subjects were tackled in the competition for the Queen Silvia Nursing Award. The participants who were nursing students presented their ideas how to improve the standards of care over elderly people. The Queen personally handed the award to the winner, Natalia Duszeńska from the Warsaw Medical University. The goal of the winning project called ”It’s Never Too Late To Follow Your Dreams” is based on involvement of NGOs, institutions and local authorities in making seniors’ dreams come true.

*”I work at a treatment and care facility. My daily contact with seniors helped me understand their problems, but also their aspirations and dreams much better. I think that elderly people are a very important social group as they pass on their knowledge and experience to younger generations. I hope that my idea will contribute to the improvement of their quality of life,”* said **Natalia Duszeńska, the competition winner**.

The Queen Silvia Nursing Award is a gift which H.M. Queen Silvia received for her 70th birthday from the Swedish Care International.

*“We are very pleased with the response to the first edition of the Queen Silvia Nursing Award which we got from Polish students. The participants demonstrated a lot of creativity and dedication. The projects tackled a broad range of subjects related to geriatric care in Poland. I hope that the future editions of the competition will help raise the interest in the elderly care in our society,”* said **Marcin Radziwiłł, President of the Medicover Foundation**.

During her stay in Poland, **Her Majesty Queen Silvia** also visited the Medicover Senior Józefina Care Home. One of the subjects discussed in the meeting was the Swedish Care International certificate which the Medicover Senior Józefina Care Home received in June 2016 as the first Polish facility. Her Majesty’s visit was also intended to highlight the importance of high quality eldercare. The last item on the agenda was a visit to the Medicover Hospital in Wilanów near Warsaw where Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden met with nurses who work in the hospital and reiterated the significant role of nursing staff in health care.

*“We feel honoured to have hosted Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden at Medicover. In our organisation, we are dedicated to providing proper care standards to seniors. Of crucial importance for that are nurses who work directly with elderly people on a daily basis. I am very glad that their role was appreciated so much during this exceptional visit,”* said **Artur Białkowski, Vice-President of Medicover’s Management Board**.

The organizer of the competition in Sweden is the Swedish Care International and in Poland the Medicover Foundation.

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**Swedish Care International** is one of the leading worldwide providers of education in the area of elderly and dementia care. It is currently present and operating in eight countries of the world through a network of partner institutions and makes a valuable contribution to raising the standards of senior care knowledge and quality partner institutions.

The **Medicover Foundation** has been established by the Medicover Group with a sense of responsibility to fulfil a social mission. The main statutory tasks of the Foundation include raising awareness about healthy and safe lifestyle, promoting prevention and correct diagnosis and raising social awareness of the need to provide quality medical services. Based on the knowledge and experience in the field of medicine, the operations are focused on educating people, supporting local communities, and developing programs which directly or indirectly contribute to improving the health and public awareness.

The **Medicover Group** is an international healthcare organization which offers a comprehensive range of medical services. In Poland, it has served more than 8,000 companies and 660,000 patients for 21 years. It operates a network of 160 own medical centres in various regions of Poland and cooperates with more than 1,700 partner medical facilities all over Poland. Patients have access to more than 3,000 physicians and 1,100 nurses and other healthcare staff employed in Medicover’s own centres plus over 9,000 physicians who cooperate with the organization. A milestone in the development of the company’s operations in Poland was the opening in 2009 of the first multi-speciality Medicover Hospital in Wilanów near Warsaw.

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