

OPTOMETRY AND OPTICS

IN EUROPE



As the European population grows older and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases rises, the burden of progressive and blinding eye diseases becomes an important consideration. We need to find ways to identify and treat these diseases, or support people who have them, to enable them to continue to live full and productive lives as they age. Optometrists and opticians have a pivotal role to play in offering primary eye care and helping to tackle preventable sight loss.

The 2017 ECOO Blue Book reveals data on the number of professionals in the field of optics and optometry in 30 European countries, the scope of competence of the professionals in the different countries, as well as the regulatory and educational environment.

This infographic highlights some of the key figures presented in the ECOO Blue Book.¹

What is an optician?

An optician assembles, fits and dispenses spectacles or contact lenses to correct low vision and other vision impairments, which are prescribed by optometrists and ophthalmologists (medical practitioners).

What is an optometrist?

An optometrist provides a clinical assessment of the eye and prescribes spectacles or contact lenses to correct defects of sight and can detect eye disease.

What is an optician-optometrist?

In Spain and in the Scandinavian countries, the professions are combined in one profession and the applicable scope of practice is defined by national law for this single profession.

THE STATUS AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF THE PROFESSIONS

The data shows that the professional landscape is scattered and each country has its particularities. This provides a basis to identify best practices and to learn from the different systems in place to achieve one common goal: **strengthening the role of primary eye care.**



Vision test, when applying for a driving licence, is carried out by opticians and optometrists in **2/3 of the countries surveyed.**



The testing of vision in relation to sports is practiced by opticians and optometrists in **almost all countries (28 out of 30).**



The **United Kingdom** and **Ireland** are the only countries where **qualified professionals are permitted to use therapeutic drugs.**



Professionals in optometry and optics in **90%** of the countries surveyed refract, examine eyes, prescribe and sell products.



Opticians and optometrists in almost **all countries (29)** are allowed to fit and **supply spectacles to children.**



The professions are **protected by law** in **23 countries.**



Like in the UK and Ireland, **PROFESSIONALS IN SWEDEN, NORWAY, FINLAND AND THE NETHERLANDS** are allowed to use diagnostic drugs.



Professionals **IN THE UNITED KINGDOM** enjoy the widest scope of practice.



IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA, the professions are regulated under the **HANDICRAFT LAW**.



IN SPAIN, the professions of optometry and optics are combined in one. **THE PROFESSIONAL IS CALLED A "ÓPTICO-OPTOMETRISTA"**.



920 STUDENTS IN ITALY each year qualify for the optometry and optics profession.

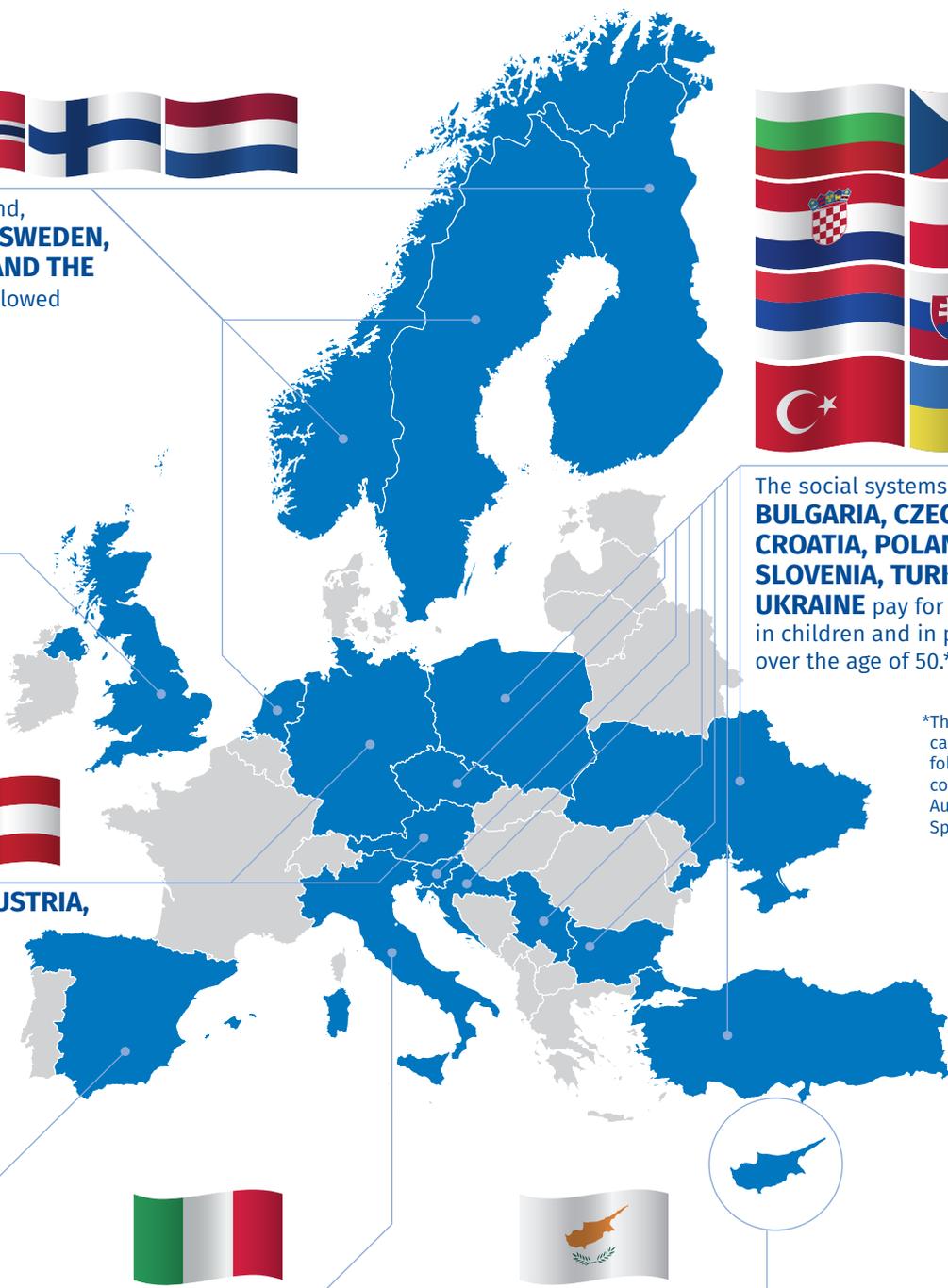


CYPRUS has roughly **1 RETAIL OUTLET FOR EVERY 4000 CITIZENS**.



The social systems of **BULGARIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, CROATIA, POLAND, SERBIA, SLOVENIA, TURKEY AND UKRAINE** pay for eye exams in children and in people over the age of 50.*

*This is also the case in only the following other countries: Austria, Belgium, Spain and France



The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO)

is the European organisation which represents the interests of optometrists and opticians from 25 countries. It aims to promote eye health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe.

¹ The facts and figures on this infographic are only a small selection of the information outlined in the 2017 ECOO Blue Book, which came out of a survey executed by ECOO members and partners in 30 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine.



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