



ECOO Blue Book 2015



European Council of Optometry and Optics



Introduction

Purpose of the Blue Book

The “Blue Book” is a valuable aggregation of information relating to the professions of Optometry and Optics in countries across Europe. Information is gathered through surveys from optometric and optical associations in member countries in Europe.

The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) first published the Blue Book in 2008. This has proven to be a valuable and useful source of information for professionals, politicians and academics.

Based on this success, the World Council of Optometry (WCO) has adopted the idea and digitised the approach. Thus, a report can be seen for regions across the world from WCO.

The added value of the ECOO Blue Book

The objective of the Blue Book is to provide comparable and comprehensive data across Europe. The information gathered covers data on the number of professionals in the field of optics and optometry, the scope of competence of the professionals in their respective countries as well as the regulatory and educational environment.

As the data suggests, the professional landscape is scattered and each country has its particularities. The Blue Book is therefore a tool to better understand the professional landscape of optometry and optics in Europe.

Future updates

The ECOO Blue Book is a living document and a long-term project of ECOO. Our members will be asked to update their respective country data every two years, upon which an updated version will be published on the ECOO website. This publication represents a ‘snapshot’ of these data in 2015.

What the Blue Book tells us

With the rising cost of medical care and the decline of the number of ophthalmologists in some countries of Europe, primary eye health care is transferred increasingly to optometrists and opticians.

But the ability of optometrists and opticians to develop beyond their traditional handicraft activities and to offer primary health care is not uniform, it varies according to the circumstances of their country.

Optometry and optics are linked professions and are in some countries of Europe considered to be one profession. In other countries they reflect separate areas of professional activity and are considered as separate professions. Optometry is concerned with the clinical assessment of the human eye and the prescribing and after care of optical appliances (spectacles or contact lenses) to correct defects of sight. Optics (or opticianry) focuses on assembling and dispensing such appliances.

In some countries, professionals combine the two functions. In other countries they restrict their assessment to refracting the patient and then dispensing the corrective appliances. Beginning with the



lowest level of training, we can say that in Europe we have dispensing opticians, followed by refracting opticians, followed by optometrists who are trained to detect pathology. In some countries optometrists also use diagnostic drugs to enhance examination of the eye, and a few optometrists have the capacity to manage ocular disease by the prescription of therapeutic drugs.

The varied scope of practice of optometrists and opticians in Europe is the result of the extent of available training, the law, the organization of the profession, and the relative size, political weight and the independence of optometry relative to ophthalmology.

Education and training are recognised as the key to the advancement of the profession. A general trend is emerging, whereby opticians continue to be trained from the age of 16 onwards through a mixture of study and practical work experience; while optometrists are increasingly trained at university, having an element of supervised training in clinical practice.

What you can expect from primary eye care

ECOO have established guidelines for optometric and optical service in Europe, which are accessible through our website www.ecoo.info or download it [here](#).

Optometrists and Opticians in Europe

The profession of optometry and optics has evolved at varying speeds within Europe and remains at different stages of development. Thus, it is difficult to paint a uniform picture of the profession, easily perceptible at a glance.

Generally, optometry has emerged from optics, as the education of opticians has expanded to include clinical subjects and as their scope of practice has been enlarged as a consequence. Some opticians have become optometrists.

Opticians continue to make and fit corrective spectacles, according to the prescription of an ophthalmologist (a medical practitioner) or an optometrist, depending on whether optometry is practised in that country. Such opticians are sometimes called dispensing opticians.

Optometrists perform full eye examinations on patients, resulting in the prescription of corrective optical appliances if necessary and, in a minority of cases, the detection of signs of possible disease, injury or abnormality of the eye. In such cases the optometrist refers the patient to a medical doctor for further investigation and possible treatment.

Some opticians have evolved to the stage of performing partial eye examinations, consisting mainly of refracting and prescribing corrective optical appliances, but not searching for or detecting pathology of the eye. Such opticians may be called refracting opticians.

In some countries optometrists and dispensing opticians are regarded as distinct professions, either in law or de facto. In other countries the profession is considered as a single profession, the optician optometrist, irrespective of the professional's scope of practice and day-to-day activities.



Contents of the Blue Book

- The number and size of the profession
- The status of the profession
- The scope of practice of the profession
- The profession's role in public health
- The education and training of the profession.

Disclaimer:

The data of the Blue Book has been entered by our members using their respective sources of information. In this sense the data has not been collected by a single person using the same criteria at the exact same time. Variations in terms of the data used can therefore be expected and should be taken into account when using the data.



Countries surveyed

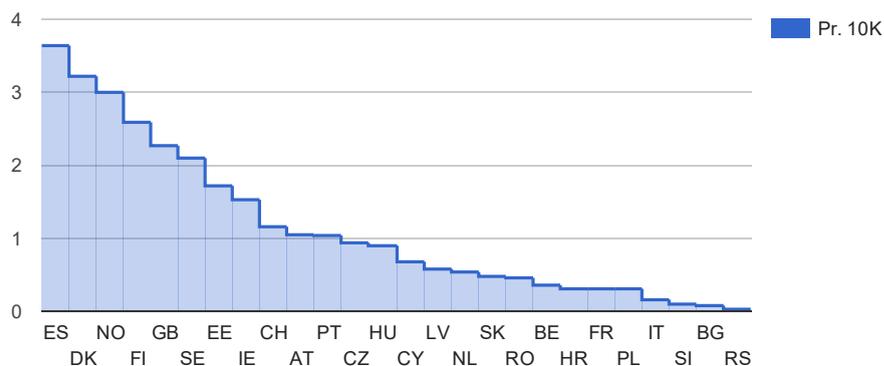


- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| 
Austria(AT) | 
Belgium(BE) | 
Bulgaria(BG) | 
Switzerland(CH) | 
Cyprus(CY) | 
Czech Republic(CZ) | 
Germany(DE) | 
Denmark(DK) |
| 
Estonia(EE) | 
Spain(ES) | 
Finland(FI) | 
France(FR) | 
United Kingdom(GB) | 
Croatia(HR) | 
Hungary(HU) | 
Ireland(IE) |
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Italy(IT) | 
Latvia(LV) | 
Netherlands(NL) | 
Norway(NO) | 
Poland(PL) | 
Portugal(PT) | 
Romania(RO) | 
Serbia(RS) |
| 
Sweden(SE) | 
Slovenia(SI) | 
Slovakia(SK) | 
Turkey(TR) | 
Ukraine(UA) | | | |

The number and size of the profession



Number of optometrists per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)

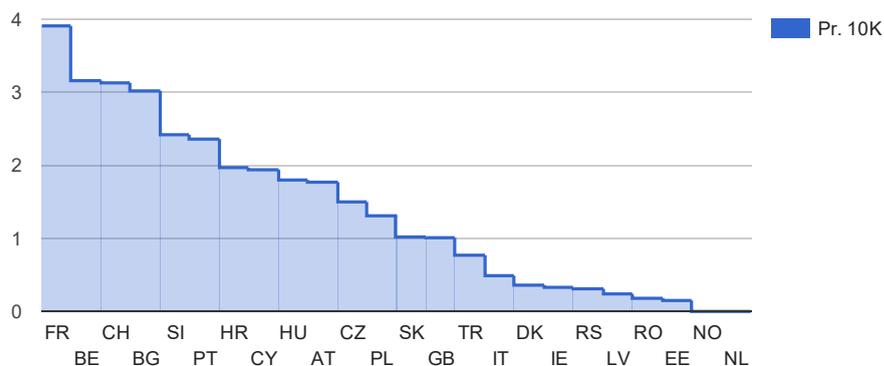


3.64 Spain(ES)	3.22 Denmark(DK)	3 Norway(NO)	2.59 Finland(FI)	2.27 United Kingdom(GB)	2.1 Sweden(SE)
1.72 Estonia(EE)	1.53 Ireland(IE)	1.16 Switzerland(CH)	1.05 Austria(AT)	1.04 Portugal(PT)	0.94 Czech Republic(CZ)
0.9 Hungary(HU)	0.68 Cyprus(CY)	0.58 Latvia(LV)	0.54 Netherlands(NL)	0.48 Slovakia(SK)	0.46 Romania(RO)
0.36 Belgium(BE)	0.31 Croatia(HR)	0.31 France(FR)	0.31 Poland(PL)	0.16 Italy(IT)	0.1 Slovenia(SI)
0.08 Bulgaria(BG)	0.03 Serbia(RS)				

The number and size of the profession



Number of opticians per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)



 3.91
France(FR)

 3.16
Belgium(BE)

 3.13
Switzerland(CH)

 3.02
Bulgaria(BG)

 2.42
Slovenia(SI)

 2.36
Portugal(PT)

 1.97
Croatia(HR)

 1.94
Cyprus(CY)

 1.8
Hungary(HU)

 1.77
Austria(AT)

 1.5
Czech Republic(CZ)

 1.31
Poland(PL)

 1.02
Slovakia(SK)

 1.01
United Kingdom(GB)

 0.77
Turkey(TR)

 0.49
Italy(IT)

 0.36
Denmark(DK)

 0.33
Ireland(IE)

 0.31
Serbia(RS)

 0.24
Latvia(LV)

 0.18
Romania(RO)

 0.15
Estonia(EE)

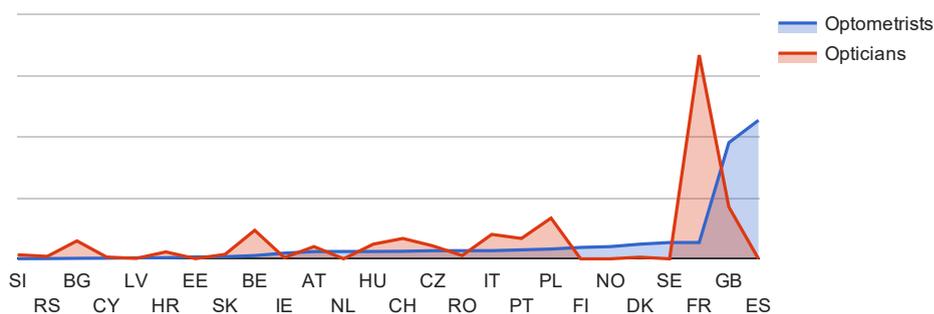
 0
Norway(NO)

 0
Netherlands(NL)

The number and size of the profession



Number of Optometrists VS Opticians

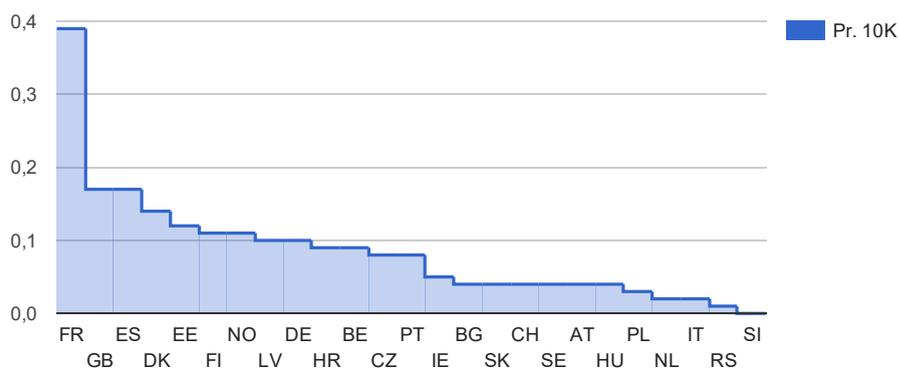


Country	Optometrists	Opticians	Country	Optometrists	Opticians	Country	Optometrists	Opticians
Slovenia(SI)	20 (4%)	500 (96%)	Serbia(RS)	30 (9%)	300 (91%)	Bulgaria(BG)	60 (3%)	2200 (97%)
Cyprus(CY)	77 (26%)	219 (74%)	Latvia(LV)	120 (71%)	50 (29%)	Croatia(HR)	135 (14%)	850 (86%)
Estonia(EE)	230 (92%)	20 (8%)	Slovakia(SK)	260 (32%)	550 (68%)	Belgium(BE)	400 (10%)	3500 (90%)
Ireland(IE)	700 (82%)	150 (18%)	Austria(AT)	890 (37%)	1500 (63%)	Netherlands(NL)	900 (100%)	0 (0%)
Hungary(HU)	900 (33%)	1800 (67%)	Switzerland(CH)	925 (27%)	2500 (73%)	Czech Republic(CZ)	1000 (38%)	1600 (62%)
Romania(RO)	1000 (71%)	400 (29%)	Italy(IT)	1000 (25%)	3000 (75%)	Portugal(PT)	1100 (31%)	2500 (69%)
Poland(PL)	1200 (19%)	5000 (81%)	Finland(FI)	1400 (100%)	0 (0%)	Norway(NO)	1500 (100%)	0 (0%)
Denmark(DK)	1800 (90%)	200 (10%)	Sweden(SE)	2000 (100%)	0 (0%)	France(FR)	2000 (7%)	25000 (93%)
United Kingdom(GB)	14249 (69%)	6365 (31%)	Spain(ES)	17000 (100%)	0 (0%)			

The number and size of the profession



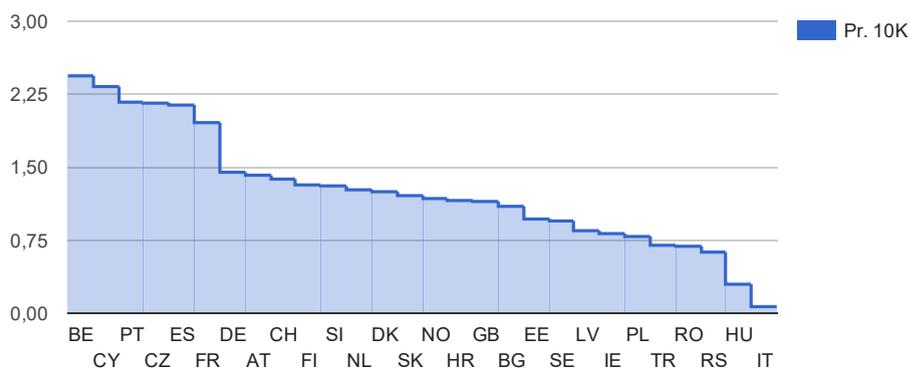
Number of qualifying student optometrists per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)



The number and size of the profession



Number of retail outlets per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)

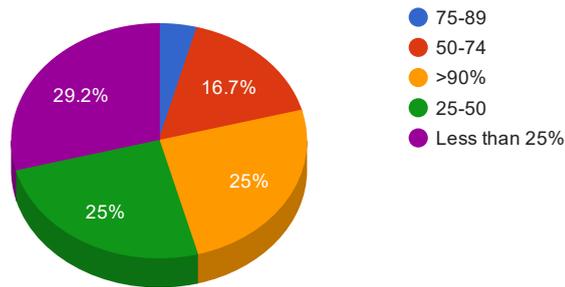


2.44 Belgium(BE)	2.33 Cyprus(CY)	2.17 Portugal(PT)	2.16 Czech Republic(CZ)	2.14 Spain(ES)	1.96 France(FR)
1.45 Germany(DE)	1.42 Austria(AT)	1.38 Switzerland(CH)	1.32 Finland(FI)	1.31 Slovenia(SI)	1.27 Netherlands(NL)
1.25 Denmark(DK)	1.21 Slovakia(SK)	1.18 Norway(NO)	1.16 Croatia(HR)	1.15 United Kingdom(GB)	1.1 Bulgaria(BG)
0.97 Estonia(EE)	0.95 Sweden(SE)	0.85 Latvia(LV)	0.82 Ireland(IE)	0.79 Poland(PL)	0.7 Turkey(TR)
0.69 Romania(RO)	0.63 Serbia(RS)	0.3 Hungary(HU)	0.07 Italy(IT)		

The status of the profession



How many of the total refractions/primary eye exams are done by ophthalmologists?(in %)



75-89 (1):



50-74 (4):



>90% (6):



25-50 (6):



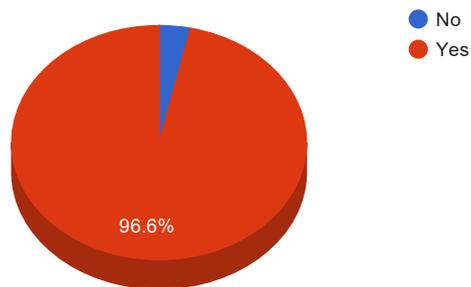
Less than 25% (7):



The status of the profession



Do practices refract, examine eyes, prescribe and sell products?



No (1):



Hungary

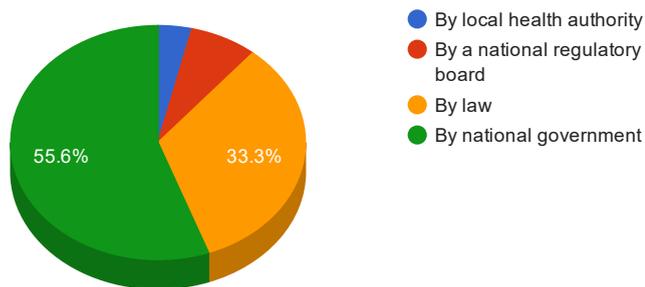
Yes (28):



The status of the profession



How is the profession generally regulated?



By local health authority (1):



By a national regulatory board (2):



By law (9):



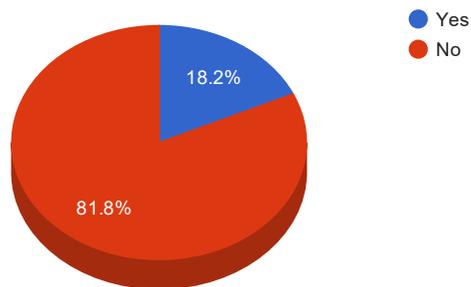
By national government (15):



The status of the profession



Is the profession closely monitored (must licensing be renewed)?



Yes (4):



Cyprus



Latvia



Portugal



Romania

No (18):



Austria



Belgium



Switzerland



Germany



Denmark



Estonia



Spain



Finland



France



Croatia



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Serbia



Sweden



Slovenia



Slovakia

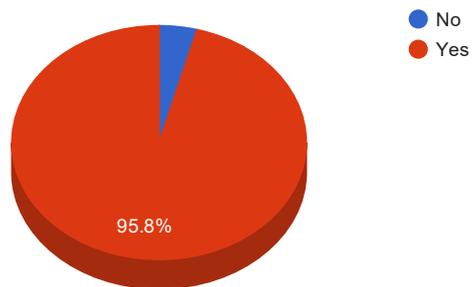


Turkey

The status of the profession



Is the profession protected by law?



No (1):



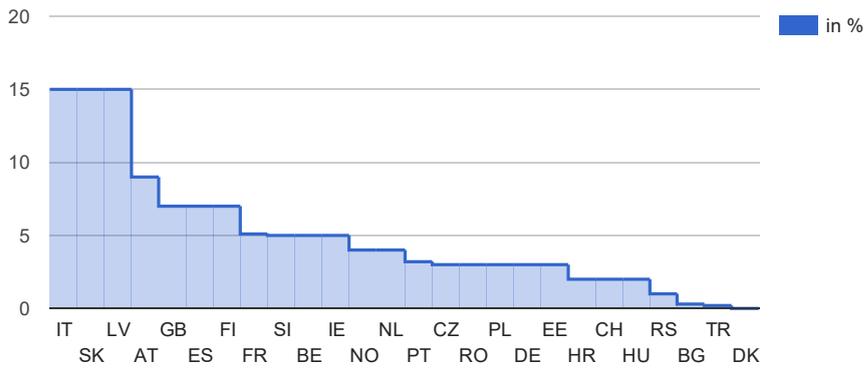
Yes (23):



The status of the profession



How many people (approximately) wear contact lenses(in %)



 15
Italy(IT)

 15
Slovakia(SK)

 15
Latvia(LV)

 9
Austria(AT)

 7
United Kingdom(GB)

 7
Spain(ES)

 7
Finland(FI)

 5.1
France(FR)

 5
Slovenia(SI)

 5
Belgium(BE)

 5
Ireland(IE)

 4
Norway(NO)

 4
Netherlands(NL)

 3.2
Portugal(PT)

 3
Czech Republic(CZ)

 3
Romania(RO)

 3
Poland(PL)

 3
Germany(DE)

 3
Estonia(EE)

 2
Croatia(HR)

 2
Switzerland(CH)

 2
Hungary(HU)

 1
Serbia(RS)

 0.3
Bulgaria(BG)

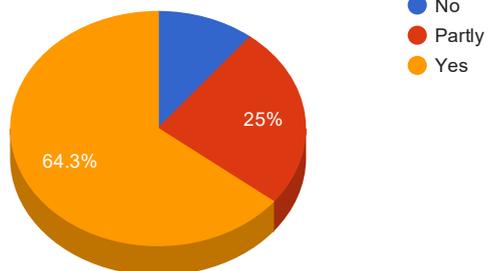
 0.2
Turkey(TR)

 0
Denmark(DK)

The profession's role in public health



Does the social system pay for eye exams in children? (<16 years)



No (3):



Denmark



Finland



Italy

Partly (7):



Bulgaria



Switzerland



Estonia



Ireland



Latvia



Portugal



Sweden

Yes (18):



Austria



Belgium



Cyprus



Czech Republic



Germany



Spain



France



United Kingdom



Croatia



Hungary



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Romania



Serbia



Slovenia



Turkey

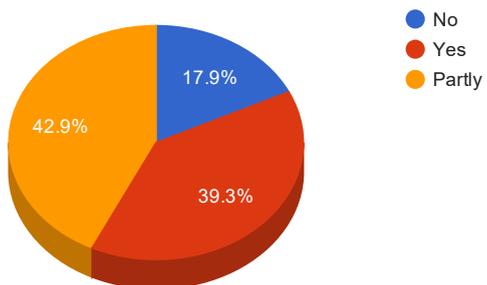


Ukraine

The profession's role in public health



Does the social system pay for eye exams in the elderly? (> 50 years)



No (5):



Cyprus



Germany



Denmark



Finland



Italy

Yes (11):



Austria



Belgium



Czech Republic



Spain



France



Croatia



Hungary



Serbia



Slovenia



Turkey



Ukraine

Partly (12):



Bulgaria



Switzerland



Estonia



United Kingdom



Ireland



Latvia



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Portugal



Romania

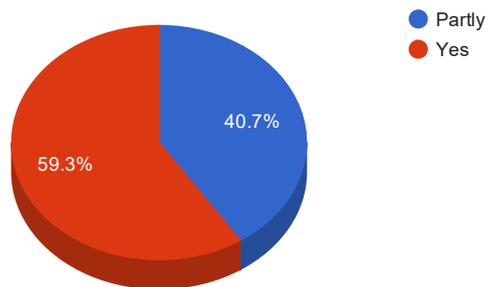


Sweden

The profession's role in public health



Does the social system pay for eye exams in adults with low vision?



Partly (11):



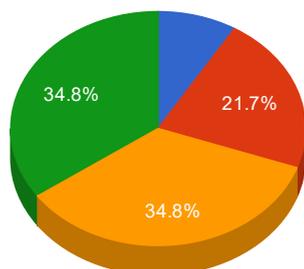
Yes (16):



The education and training of the profession



What is the highest qualification offered?



- Diploma in Optometry
- Doctor of optometry
- Bachelor of Science
- Master of Science

Diploma in Optometry (2):



Estonia



Slovakia

Doctor of optometry (5):



Czech Republic



United Kingdom



Italy



Norway



Portugal

Bachelor of Science (8):



Belgium



Switzerland



Spain



Finland



Croatia



Hungary



Ireland



Serbia

Master of Science (8):



Austria



Bulgaria



Germany



Denmark



France



Poland



Romania

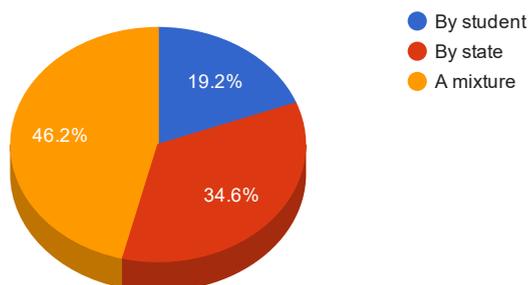


Sweden

The education and training of the profession



How is education funded?



By student (5):



By state (9):



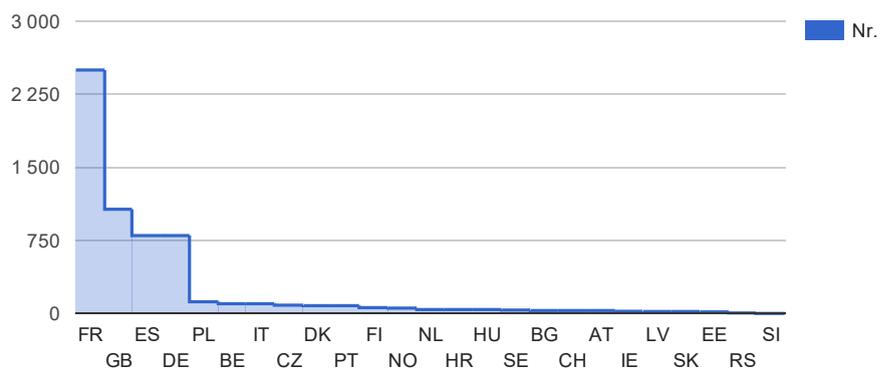
A mixture (12):



The education and training of the profession



How many students qualify each year?(Nr.)



 2500
France(FR)

 1070
United Kingdom(GB)

 800
Spain(ES)

 800
Germany(DE)

 120
Poland(PL)

 100
Belgium(BE)

 100
Italy(IT)

 85
Czech Republic(CZ)

 80
Denmark(DK)

 80
Portugal(PT)

 60
Finland(FI)

 55
Norway(NO)

 40
Netherlands(NL)

 40
Croatia(HR)

 40
Hungary(HU)

 35
Sweden(SE)

 30
Bulgaria(BG)

 30
Switzerland(CH)

 30
Austria(AT)

 22
Ireland(IE)

 20
Latvia(LV)

 20
Slovakia(SK)

 16
Estonia(EE)

 5
Serbia(RS)

 0
Slovenia(SI)



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