



Message from the President

Welcome to the first ECOO Newsletter of 2013. It has been a busy start to my term as President, not least due to the untimely departure of our Secretary-General, Ulrich Adam. The new ECOO Executive committee held an extraordinary meeting to discuss the future of the Secretariat and secure the continued smooth running of the ECOO Secretariat. This also included extensive discussions with Hill+Knowlton. After an impressive interview in February in Brussels, the Executive committee were delighted to appoint Ms Eckert as Acting Secretary General and we had the chance to say good-bye to Ulrich and wish him well for his future work.

Fluorescein classification continues to be an important issue for ECOO members. The EU Medical Devices Expert Group on Borderline and Classification issues met in February 2013 and ECOO lobbied members of this group and submitted a detailed response objecting to the possibility of fluorescein being classified as a medicinal product. I would like to thank ECOO members for helping to contact their national bodies to assert our position. This, along with continued pressure from the ECOO Secretariat has helped ensure that the EU group did not make an inappropriate or rash decision. However, we will continue to monitor this activity as they work to define

the term 'diagnostic' which will have an impact on medical device and medicinal product classifications.

In other activities, ECOO continues to work with other parties under the EFAB banner and build upon the work of World Sight Day EU Parliament event in 2012.

In recent weeks, there has been some correspondence to members about our upcoming ECOO spring meeting in Malaga. You will also have seen that the ECOO Guidelines for Optometric and Optical Services has gone out to all members for consultation. In addition, the application process for the European Diploma Accreditation panel has been sent out to members.

Finally, in my first visit as ECOO President, I had the pleasure of attending an optometry conference in Portugal. It was an interesting and wide-ranging meeting and I met many active and engaged professionals.

I hope to see you all in Malaga for our Spring meeting.

Best wishes

Julie-Anne Little



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Regulatory Updates

Fluorescein discussed by EU Expert Group in February

On 18 February 2013, the EU Medical Devices Expert Group on Borderline and Classification met in Brussels to discuss amongst other issues the classification of fluorescein. ECOO attended the expert group meeting in October 2012 to present the fluorescein matter for the first time. The non-binding MEDDEV guidance document, which provides guidance to national competent authorities on the classification of borderline products, considers fluorescent ophthalmic strips for diagnostic purposes to be medicinal products. However, in practice fluorescein strips are used in contact lens fitting across Europe and have been manufactured mainly as medical devices since their invention. As a result of the meeting in 2012 the European Commission asked the European Medicines Agency to issue a Scientific Opinion on this matter. During the discussions on 18 February 2013 it has been highlighted that the term 'diagnostics' is not sufficiently defined and will be clarified by the next meeting in autumn 2013. This definition will be important to help determine the classification. Similarly to other 'visu-

alisation' products ECOO believes that fluorescent ophthalmic strips for non-diagnostic purposes should be considered medical devices.

ECHA published report on Cadmium in Spectacle Frames

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) recently published its report on "Cadmium in Spectacle Frames" following a consultation in 2012 to which ECOO responded. ECOO members have provided information on the current use of cadmium in metal spectacle frames that do not fall within the scope of the relevant EU legislation (Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals – REACH). In their answers, ECOO members stated that Cadmium is not widely used in the production of frames, however there are some known trace elements which have never adversely impacted on patients. This input has been taken into account in the report, which concludes that there is no indication that would suggest a risk related to cadmium in the metal parts of framed and argued that further restrictions would be disproportionate to the cost which would result from more stringent testing re-

gimes. The full report by ECHA can be consulted [here](#) and the ECOO press release on this topic can be read [here](#).

Cross-border medical prescriptions

On 20 December 2012, the European Commission set out in an implementing directive (a piece of European legislation that follows-up on the frame EU law on patient's rights in cross-border health care) the minimum requirements that a medical prescription issued in an EU member state has to contain in order to be recognised throughout the European Union. These provisions on cross-border prescriptions introduce the elements that help identify prescribers, patients and prescribed products.

According to recent estimations, only 2.3 million EU prescriptions per year are currently cross-border ones (this means between 0.02 and 0.04% of all prescriptions issued in a year). The European Commission expects that the new rules will result in an additional 200,000 cross-border prescriptions per year.

To recall, ECOO, EUROM I and EUROMCONTACT responded to the public consultation on 'measures for improving the recognition of prescriptions issued in another Member State' carried out by the Commission in 2012. ECOO also met with representatives of the European Commission in June 2012, who recognised the complexity of medical devices and their use and stated that requirements for these would not be specified in the legislation.



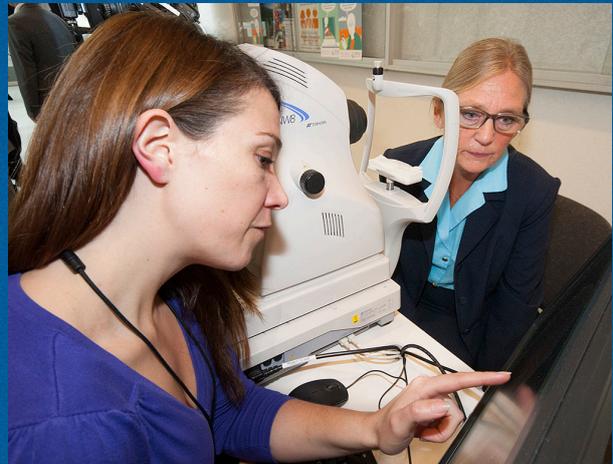
European Forum Against Blindness continues its activities in 2013

ECOO, the European Men's Health Forum (EMHF), the AMD Alliance International and the International Diabetes Federation European Region (IDF Europe) have joined forces in 2012 with the aim of bringing together key stakeholders to increase awareness of eye diseases which can lead to vision loss and promotes prevention, timely diagnosis and accurate care. The so called 'European

Forum Against Blindness' (EFAB) was officially launched with the organisation of a well-attended event at the European Parliament on World Sight Day 2012. The evening debate with policy makers was accompanied by a two-day information stand, where ECOO provided the opportunity for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other people to have a photograph of their retina

taken. The successful event resulted in the subsequent commitment of various MEPs to addressing preventable blindness at EU level. EFAB is now planning on building on this success and to engage in various activities throughout the year including the organisation of the 2013 World Sight Day event in Brussels. This initiative is supported by Novartis and Alcon as a service to medicine and patients.

World Sight Day 2012 event in the European Parliament



Driving with low vision to be presented at 23rd World Congress of the International Traffic Medicine Association

Driving with low vision is currently a hot topic in Europe. Since 2009, Bioptic Driving is allowed in the Netherlands. Currently there are over 70 legally licensed drivers with low visual acuity who use a Bioptic Telescope System in the Netherlands. This rehabilitation programme, called AutO&Mobility, took more than 12 years of scientific research and was carried out in a partnership of Royal Dutch Visio, centre of expertise for blind and partially sighted people,

the University of Groningen (UMCG), the Ministry of Transport and the Netherlands Bureau of Driving Skills Certificates (CBR). Twenty five optometrists were specially trained to supply and fit the BTS-systems for driving. This AutO&Mobility-consortium is planning to present a sub-symposium on driving with low vision including the Dutch experiences at the 23rd World Congress of the International Traffic Medicine Association (ITMA), which will be held from 19-22

May 2013 in Hamburg. Scheduled speakers are Ruud Bredewoud (CBR; legislation), prof. dr. Wiebo Brouwer (UMCG; visual, tactical and operational driving tasks), dr. Wim van Damme (Royal Dutch Visio, Driving with Bioptic Telescope), drs. Gera de Haan (UMCG; Driving with hemianopia) and dr. Bart Melis-Dankers (Royal Dutch Visio; AutO&Mobility and driving with nystagmus). More details on this congress can be found on www.trafficmedicine.org.

ECOO members consulted on the Guidelines for Optometric and Optical Services in Europe

The working group on the ECOO Guidelines for Optometric and Optical Services, led by Dr Julie-Anne Little, successfully completed a first draft of the Guidelines that has now

been opened for input from ECOO members. The aim of the Guidelines is to provide information on what ECOO believes to be an acceptable standard of primary eye care service

in Europe. The working group has taken into account the varying scope of practice throughout Europe, and focused on identifying causal links rather than providing a description of eye care services.



ECOO members have been asked to provide their input by 15 March 2013. Once their responses to the questionnaire on the Guidelines are received and centralised, they will be discussed at the Professional Services Committee during the Spring ECOO meeting in Malaga (18-21 April 2013). The Guidelines will then be finalised and shared with ECOO members, as well as made more widely available to relevant stakeholders.

Country News

Government open to optometry in France

In December 2012, Ms Marisol Touraine, French Minister of Social Affairs and Health, publicly confirmed the government's intention to allow for certain tasks to be delegated from ophthalmologists to optometrists. According to Ms. Touraine, this measure is prompted by a shortage of ophthalmologists in

France combined with increasing demands for treatment from the patients. The intention to introduce the 'optician-optometrist' branch to the profession in France has been confirmed to ECOO's French member the Union des Opticiens (UDO) during a meeting with Mr. Jean-Luc Nevache, Head of the Cabinet of Ms Touraine. The French authorities aim to have this measure in place by September 2013. UDO supports



the initiative and has declared its openness to discuss the practical details of the reform with the ophthalmologists.

International Symposium on Educational and Commercial Development in Vision, Istanbul – Turkey

1. ULUSLARARASI KORUYUCU GÖRME SAĞLIĞI ÜZERİNE EĞİTİMSEL VE TİCARİ GELİŞİM SEMPOZYUMU

1. INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN VISION CARE

25 - 26 MAYIS 2013 | HILTON CONVENTION CENTER, İSTANBUL

AKADEMİK DESTEK

OKAN ÜNİVERSİTESİ İSTANBUL

TOOMAD
TÜM OPTİK VE OPTOMETRİK MESLEK ADAMLARI DERNEĞİ
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF OPTICIAN-OPTOMETRISTS

The International Symposium on Educational and Commercial Development in Vision Care, which is going to take place on May 25-26, 2013 at the Hilton Convention Centre in Istanbul*, is organized by ECOO's member the Turkish Professional Association of Opticians and Optometrists (TOOMAD), together with the scientific contribution of the Okan University in Istanbul and the General Directorate of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices (Ministry of Health). The driving force behind this collaboration is to evaluate the status and developments of the

World optical sector and to compare it with the Turkish situation. This international symposium is directed primarily towards all professionals and organisations involved in optics, schools of optics and optometry, as well as other appropriate health care professionals.

The core aim of the symposium is to evaluate, within the framework of global education, the growth of the optical sector, the competencies of optometrists and the general characteristics of optometry. This will include the collaboration of optome-

trists and dispensing opticians, their shared responsibilities and services, with examples from best practice-countries, to find out the best possible ways to prepare the base for the near future.

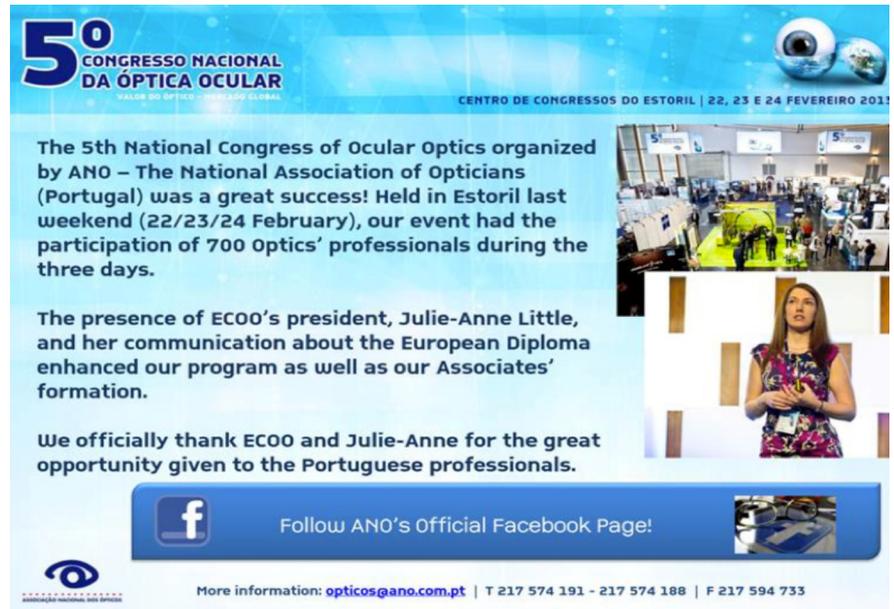
The mission of this event is to raise awareness and to inform the society and the decision makers, as well as all involved parties about the evolution of the optical professions, the contributions of optometry in primary vision care, its recognition and practice processes, and the dynamics of commercial growth within the sector.

Featuring top-level speakers engaged in interactive panel discussions, the Symposium will discuss several key issues, i.e. the educational and commercial development process of the optical sector and next steps to take. Professional surveys taken before and after the event will serve as indicators about the effectiveness of the work.

We invite all colleagues and stakeholders to attend the International Symposium on Commercial and Educational Development in Vision Care and hope to see you in May 25-26 at the Hilton Convention Center in Istanbul.

(*) English-Turkish simultaneous translation will be available during the whole event.

Great success of the 5th National Congress of Ocular Optics in Portugal



ECOO calls for applications to join the Accreditation Panel of the European Diploma in Optometry

Following the successful accreditation of the University of Applied Science in Olten, Switzerland with the European Diploma in Optometry last year, ECOO now seeks to intensify its efforts to accredit eligible training institutions. ECOO has established an accreditation scheme for training institutions that want to benchmark their programmes against the European Diploma. This would allow graduates of approved programmes be exempt from part or all of the examinations of the European Diploma.

The application process for candidates to join the Accreditation Panel as so-called 'Visitors' has recently

been opened. Their task will be to evaluate the self-assessment document, the syllabus, the programme specification, the examinations and assessments of the training institutions to be accredited. Furthermore, they will visit the training institutions, observe teaching, inspect facilities and discuss with students, staff and institutional managers. Visitors are not salaried but will receive a daily fee and will be appointed initially for three years. Time commitment is expected to be about ten days a year. Candidates should have experience in optometric practise or in education and training. [Full details on the position and the application form](#)

The European Diploma in Optometry aims towards a harmonized European optometric education and clinical practice. Set at the Bachelor level in European Higher Education, it qualifies Optometric practice at Category 3 of the World Council of Optometry's four categories model. To ECOO members, it represents the "Gold Standard" for European Optometry.

Update from the European Academy of Optometry and Optics

Register now – ECOO General Assembly in Malaga 18-21 April 2013

The Spanish General Council of Optometry is pleased to invite ECOO members to the spring General Assembly in Malaga, Spain on 18-21 April 2013. The conference will bring together key stakeholders from over 25 countries to discuss and share the latest research, education and clinical practice in optometry, optics and dispensing, and vision science. The Malaga 2013 programme also features discussion forums, poster presentations, case studies

and clinical workshops led by professionals from around the world. Alongside this event, Malaga 2013 will also be hosting the European Academy of Optometry and Optics annual conference, the World Council of Optometry General Delegates Meetings, and the Spanish General Council of Optometry National Conference. For further information and registration, please visit the ECOO website and [MALAGA 2013](#).

International eye and vision care experts Professor Brien Holden and Dr Eef Van Der Worp will deliver the keynote lectures at the European

Academy of Optometry and Optics' annual conference at Malaga 2013. Prof. Holden, from Australia, will discuss how technology can help eye health professionals to meet the different eye care needs of different developing and developed countries. Dr. van der Worp, from the Netherlands, will cover the clinical issues around fitting large diameter contact lenses.

Malaga 2013 accompanying person programme

If you are thinking of bringing someone with you to Malaga 2013, please



sign them up for the accompanying person programme and they will have plenty to see and do while you attend the event! Highlights of the city sightseeing package include:

- lunch at historic tapas restaurants El Pimpi and Los Patios de Beatas;
- a guided tour of Malaga Cathedral;
- a tour of Nerja and visit to the famous caves, Cuevas de Nerja;
- a visit to La Alcazaba, the best-preserved Moorish fortress palace in Spain.

Tickets for the city sightseeing package are €150 per person. You can also buy tickets for your guest for the ECOO dinner on Friday 19 April for €60, and for the Academy and WCO dinner on the Saturday evening for €70. View the full programme at www.malaga2013.info.

Join the Academy on LinkedIn

If you have a LinkedIn account, you can connect with over 200 eye and vision care professionals from around the world by joining the Academy's group. The group is connecting Academy members and supporters worldwide for discussion and networking. Log on to www.linkedin.com, search for the European Academy of Optometry and Optics and connect with us today!

Academy Fellows 2013

Thank you to everyone who applied for the Academy's 2013 Fellowship programme. Fellowships are awarded to optometrists around the world in recognition of their commitment to the profession.

This year's candidates all submitted a portfolio that demonstrated excellence or innovation in one or more of the following categories: clinical practice; research; education; professional advancement or management of visual healthcare, and will attend a panel interview at Malaga 2013.

Candidates going through to the panel interview this year are from Austria, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, UK and USA. Successful candidates will be awarded their Fellowship at Malaga 2013 and will be allowed to use the letters FEAOO after their name.

Find out more about the Academy's Fellowship programme at www.eaoo.info/fellowship.

Save the date

The ECOO Autumn meeting 2013 will take place on 18-20 October 2013 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Please save the date in your calendars. Further information will be made available

shortly. Special thanks go to ECOO's Bulgarian member, the National Association of Bulgarian Optometrists and Opticians (NABOO) for organising the conference.



Newsletter

The Newsletters are sent to ECOO's members and contacts via e-mail. Please inform us of any additions to the mailing list or of staff changes in your respective organisations. Should you have any news or updates which may be of interest to ECOO members, please contact Fabienne Eckert at the ECOO Secretariat:

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