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## Press release

# Responsible recycling of waste by optical and optometric professionals and their patients/customers

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5 June 2021

**As part of World Environment Day, 5 June 2021, ECOO highlights the role of European opticians and optometrists in supporting and promoting sustainability. World Environment Day places a special emphasis on creating a good relationship with nature. World Environment Day also launches the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.**

Optometrists and opticians are providers of primary eyecare, embedded and engaged with their local communities. The optical/optometrist supply chain is multi-faceted and involves a range of different actors, materials and stages that have an impact on the environment. ECOO recognises that this offers many opportunities to help the planet and foster ecosystem restoration through the way optical/optometric practices manage waste, in particular plastic, and how they guide their customers/patients in their communities.

Some key areas where plastics enter the environment include used contact lenses, plastic bags which frames are delivered in, spectacles cases, dummy lenses, patients' own outdated spectacle frames and lenses, micro particles of plastic washed out with the water of edging machines, packaging from products and Personal Protective Equipment. In addition, simple things like turning lights off at night and reducing the practice's carbon footprint are also important ways that opticians and optometrists can help the planet. Cleaning the environment is everyone's responsibility with opticians and optometrists keen to play their part to restore the ecosystem.

To mark World Environment Day, ECOO announces a new active workstream to provide guidance and foster awareness about sustainability to its members throughout Europe. ECOO will be looking to strengthen alliances with professional bodies, manufacturers, opticians, optometrists and business owners in the sector, joining forces in this important work to protect the environment. As a first step, ECOO is supporting the Euromcontact campaign [“Contact Lenses: See Green”](#).

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Note for Editors: The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) is the European organisation which represents the interests of optometrists and opticians from 25 countries. Its members together represent more than 150,000 opticians and optometrists across Europe. ECOO aims to promote eye health to the public across borders and to harmonise clinical and educational standards of optometric and optical practice throughout Europe.

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