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INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

03 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

04 ECOO ONLINE SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

05 ON THE EU AGENDA

- MEDICAL DEVICES REGULATION (MDR)
- CONSULTATION ON THE REVISION OF THE DRIVING LICENCE DIRECTIVE
- EUROPEAN CARE STRATEGY
- E-HEALTH
- SUSTAINABILITY

06 HEALTHY AGEING
ACHIEVING A LIFE COURSE OF HEALTHY VISION

07 COUNTRY UPDATES

- POLISH OPTOMETRISTS AND OPTICIANS PROVIDE EYE CARE TO UKRAINIAN REFUGEES
- OVN AND DUTCH EYE ASSOCIATION JOINTLY ORGANISE THE GLAUCOMA WEEK 2022: DON'T REGRET IT, CHECK IT!

10 GFK REPORT: OPTICS 2022
ONLINE PURCHASING, PREMIUMISATION, ECP KNOWS BEST, AND COMFORT

- 1 ONLINE PURCHASING AND PREMIUMISATION ARE DRIVING GROWTH
- 2 TOP INFLUENCERS FOR BRAND AND PRODUCT CHOICE

13 UPDATE FROM THE WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

14 ECOO UPCOMING MEETING / FOLLOW-US ON SOCIAL MEDIA / SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEWSLETTER!

DEAR ECOO MEMBERS,



Just when we think that we might be finding a way back to some kind of normality, Europe is now faced with a new devastating challenge, a war with an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

In recent weeks ECOO, our members and industry have rallied together to support refugees fleeing the terror in Ukraine. Many refugees have crossed the border into Poland and our members in Poland are offering eye care help for people who forgot, lost, or simply need glasses, contact lenses, or eye care. They are providing their professional time free of charge and many industry partners have also supplied goods at no cost to aid their initiative. You can read more about their initiative in this newsletter. And I know other ECOO member have also reached out to support Ukrainian opticians and their families by providing offers of employment.

ECOO, has been accepted onto the “Supporting Ukraine, neighbouring EU Member States and Moldova” network on the EU’s Health Policy Platform and has been able to post about ongoing initiatives on the website to give it a profile throughout the whole of the EU.

Also, ECOO has reached out to UKROPTIKA, the Ukrainian association based in Kyiv, to inform them of the Polish initiative and to notify them of the offers of support from other organisations. Whilst we received a reply to our early e-mails, we have not heard anything for a while and we just hope that they are safe and stay free from harm.

Our heart goes out to the people of Ukraine at this truly terrible time. I am very proud of the actions of ECOO and our members and any action that we as individuals or professionals can take to help those who have had to leave their homes and their country, to make their lives more manageable, is so important.

Dr Cindy Tromans
ECOO President



Spring Meetings

2022



ECOO ONLINE SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

We are delighted that the ECOO spring meetings, including the members' General Assembly, will be taking place in Dublin on the 13 and 14 May 2022.

As well as the formal business at the General Assembly, there will be a workshop looking at how to achieve action on healthy ageing, while the open committee sessions will host discussions on e-health, myopia management and sustainability.

After two years of online meetings, the opportunity to meet in person, and to network with colleagues informally will be much appreciated. There will

therefore be a new "meet with the Executive" opportunity. And of course, the spring meetings start with a welcome "get together" social event on the evening of 12 May. There will also be an ECOO dinner on 13 May.

As in previous years, the ECOO spring meetings will be happening alongside the European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO) conference.

Full details of the ECOO spring meetings, the programme for the Academy conference, hotels and how to register can be found [here](#).





ON THE EU AGENDA

MEDICAL DEVICES REGULATION (MDR)

The work on the implementation of the MDR continues. The Commission has put forward implementing legislation under the MDR on the safety requirements for products with a non-medical purpose, such as contact lenses. ECOO submitted a response to the consultation in early 2022. In addition, a Q&A document on the role of distributors under the MDCG ([MDCG 2021-27 - Questions and Answers on Articles 13 & 14](#)) was published at the end of 2021. ECOO is also following the work on standards, which need to be brought in line with the MDR. ECOO has raised an issue on Standard ISO 12870 on “Ophthalmic Optics – Spectacle frames – Requirements and test method” to ensure that the reference to eye care professionals is in line with the MDR.

CONSULTATION ON THE REVISION OF THE DRIVING LICENCE DIRECTIVE

The European Commission is in the process of revising the Driving Licence Directive. A [public consultation](#) with the objective of gathering views from different stakeholders has been launched and is open until 20 May 2022. ECOO has raised the importance of adequate visual requirements for driving with the European Commission over the years and will respond to the consultation. ECOO will also take part in a European Commission workshop on medical fitness to drive on 19 May 2022.

EUROPEAN CARE STRATEGY

Following ECOO engagement with the European Commission on ageing in

2021 and the publication of its Policy Brief on the WHO platform for the Decade of Healthy Ageing, ECOO is providing input to the European Care Strategy. A response to the Call for Evidence on the strategy has been submitted, highlighting in particular the importance of vision and eye health for long-term care.

E-HEALTH

Work continues to progress at the EU level to introduce the new European Health Data Space, with adoption of the regulation expected during 2022. ECOO continues to monitor developments and to make the case that the EHDS must be accessible to all providers of health care.

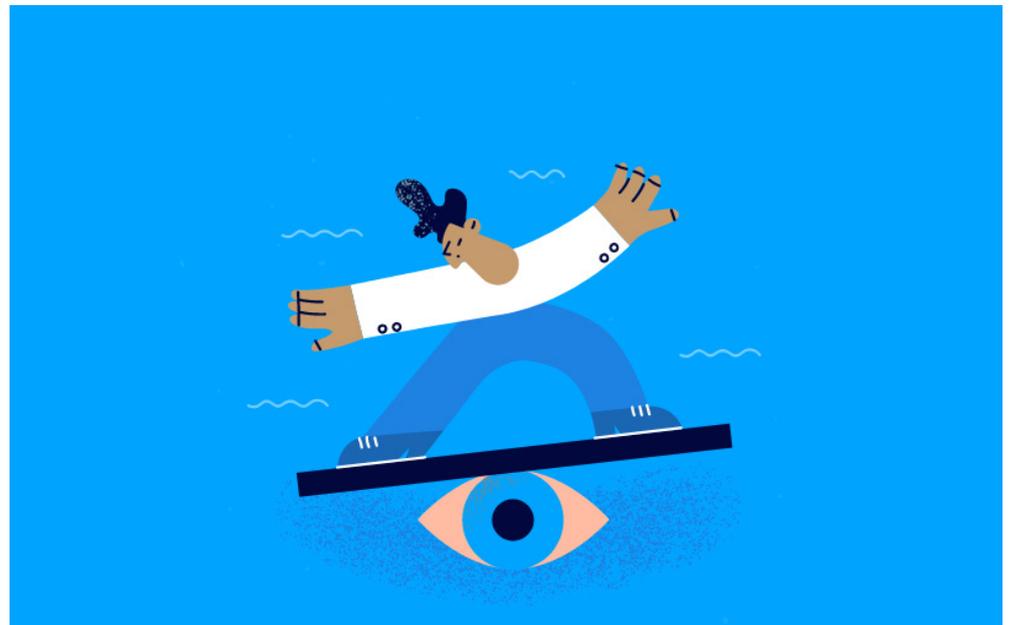
We are also following developments in relation to artificial intelligence (AI) and the Commission’s proposed AI regulation. AI has the potential to make a big impact in the way healthcare is provided. ECOO published an initial discussion article in March – [read here](#) – and work is underway to develop a position paper and potentially guidance for members on the role of AI in optometry and optics.

SUSTAINABILITY

ECOO is working with member organisations and partners in the optical sector from manufacturing and civil society in order to understand the implications of the sustainability agenda and provide advice and information to members. We are monitoring a variety of legislative initiatives which may impact on the way optical practices and optical professionals operate, for example in relation to packaging and recycling.

HEALTHY AGEING

We are excited to have started the year with a positive achievement. As a follow-up to our workshop on ageing and vision, moderated by Michael Hodin in April 2021 that members participated in as part of our spring General Assembly, we have worked with the Global Coalition on Aging and IAPB to develop an Advocacy Brief: Achieving a Life Course of Healthy Vision.



Our advocacy brief has been accepted by the WHO and has been uploaded onto their online platform for the Decade on Healthy Ageing:

<https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/find-knowledge/resources/publications/detail/achieving-a-life-course-of-healthy-vision>

The WHO platform for the Decade of Healthy Ageing gathers knowledge and information on the topic of ageing and our submission is now an official resource. Our brief outlines the need for action to support a life course of healthy vision and outlines 6 policy windows to help achieve this.

At the end of last year, we have also held several conversations with the European Commission on follow-up

actions to the EU Green Paper on Ageing. We will continue to pursue our efforts to raise vision on the ageing policy agenda, for example as part of the European Commissions' call for evidence on the European Care Strategy

We also picked up this theme on **World Optometry Day**, publishing an article on achieving a life course of healthy vision, which you can read [here](#).

COUNTRY UPDATES

POLISH OPTOMETRISTS AND OPTICIANS PROVIDE EYE CARE TO UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

By Sylwia Kropacz, Polish Optometry and Optics Society (PTOO)

The ongoing war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis have had an impact on the activities of optometrists and opticians in Poland. From personal involvement in the direct provision of shelter, clothing, and food for Ukrainian refugees to the provision of services and eye-care products to Ukrainian patients.

Within a very short period of time - in the first week of the war - the Polish Optometry and Optics Society (PTOO) and other organizations (optical chains, associations) published information posters and special maps of optical shops and optometry practices to which Ukrainian refugees can turn for cost-free services, glasses

or contact lenses. Practitioners from all over Poland (not only members of PTOO) can register on the website their practice which can support refugees from Ukraine and additionally indicate which services and devices they can offer free of charge. In addition, many companies in our industry have also actively joined in the assistance by preparing basic Ukrainian language glossaries and training courses in the Ukrainian language for eye care professionals. Many companies allowed those who wanted to take part in helping refugees, be it at the border or at railway stations and other places where refugees gather, to take 3 days off from work for this purpose.

POMOC DLA UKRAINY

Jeśli chcesz i możesz zaoferować nieodpłatną pomoc uchodźcom z Ukrainy, pozwól abyśmy jako PTOO poinformowali o tym organizacje wspierające osoby przybywające do naszego kraju w sposób skoordynowany w zorganizowanej kampanii: Optometryści dla Ukrainy.

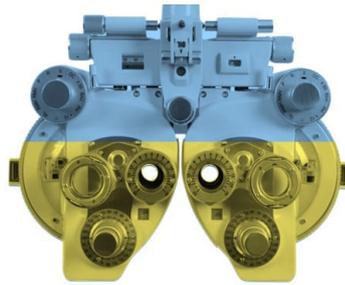
Wypełnij formularz a my prześlemy informacje do ośrodków i organizacji wspierających uchodźców z Ukrainy

ZGŁOŚ SWÓJ GABINET



PTOO has also been approached by a large number of foreign companies and organisations who want to help refugees by offering free glasses frames or jobs for Ukrainian refugees

in our industry. Although we are currently dealing with a refugee and humanitarian crisis, the biggest challenges are still ahead of us in terms of eye care.



Polskie Towarzystwo
Optometrii i Optyki

Оптометристи для України

- З нами Вы можете БЕСПЛАТНО
- проверить зрение
 - получить рецепт на изготовление очков
 - получить квалифицированную консультацию по подбору контактной коррекции

We realize the importance of coordination and cooperation, which is why we are currently working with ECOO, other international organizations, and experts in eye care services for refugees and migrant crises to create an action plan for the coming years.

While we all wish the Ukrainians a speedy end to the war, experts say that a significant number of Ukrainians may be in exile for years to come, and it will be necessary to provide them with adequate health care, including eye care.

OVN AND DUTCH EYE ASSOCIATION JOINTLY ORGANISE THE GLAUCOMA WEEK 2022: DON'T REGRET IT, CHECK IT!

The week of 6 - 12 March was internationally dedicated to glaucoma. This year the Dutch Eye Association and the Dutch Optometry Association (OVN) worked together on a campaign to make international Glaucoma Week a great success in the Netherlands. The Dutch Eye Association is the patient- and interest organisation for all people with an eye condition in the Netherlands. The motto of the Glaucoma Week this year was: 'Don't regret it, check it!' Because every timely discovery and treatment of glaucoma is profit and prevents unnecessary blindness and/or poor vision.

CALLING ON MEMBERS OF THE OVN TO JOIN IN AND DRAW ATTENTION TO GLAUCOMA

The OVN and the Dutch Eye Association asked the members of the OVN to join the campaign. We made several materials available for this purpose:

- [Two video animations](#) for narrow casting screens in the practice/optician shop
- Three digital posters. The poster points out the importance of early detection of glaucoma to clients

in the risk group and contains a reference to the Dutch Eye Association website. There one could find the 10 most frequently asked questions about glaucoma and a quiz with questions about glaucoma. Once on the site, one was given the option of requesting a digital brochure with 100 questions about glaucoma via email.

- A press release that optometrists could use to draw attention to their actions during Glaucoma Week in the local media.

The members of the OVN use the OVN guideline Glaucoma in the screening and can refer their clients to information on what the optometrist can do for glaucoma and sample questions about glaucoma that clients can ask the optometrist.

The Dutch Eye Association and the OVN posted daily messages on social

media during Glaucoma Week. These messages used the campaign slogan and linked to our member locator 'Find an optometrist', the 10 most frequently asked questions about glaucoma and a quiz about glaucoma.

During Glaucoma Week, the Dutch Eye Association organized two webinars about Eyetracking and safe and responsible driving with glaucoma, which optometrists could attend.

During Glaucoma Week, there were 686 searches for an optometrist on the member finder. 140 optometry practices downloaded the materials to promote glaucoma. Engagement of posts on social media was 5345. The focus on glaucoma was included in 15 publications in news releases from stakeholders and or news magazines. The OVN and the Eye Association Netherlands look back on this joint activity positively and are investigating whether they can jointly draw attention to eye diseases in more areas.

ABOUT THE EYE ASSOCIATION NETHERLANDS:

The Dutch Eye Association is the patient- and interest organization for all people with an eye condition in the Netherlands. We actively lobby for improved eye care and inclusion. We have around 6000 members.

See www.oogvereniging.nl for more info.

ABOUT OVN

The OVN is the professional association of optometrists and has 1344 members. The OVN has an organization degree of 86%.

See www.optometrie.nl for more info.





Growth
from
Knowledge

OPTICS 2022: ONLINE PURCHASING, PREMIUMISATION, ECP KNOWS BEST, AND COMFORT

Sarah Bones, Global Strategic Insights Manager

By the end of last year, contact lenses, spectacle lenses, and frames were enjoying healthy recovery globally¹, after the slump caused by pandemic lockdowns.

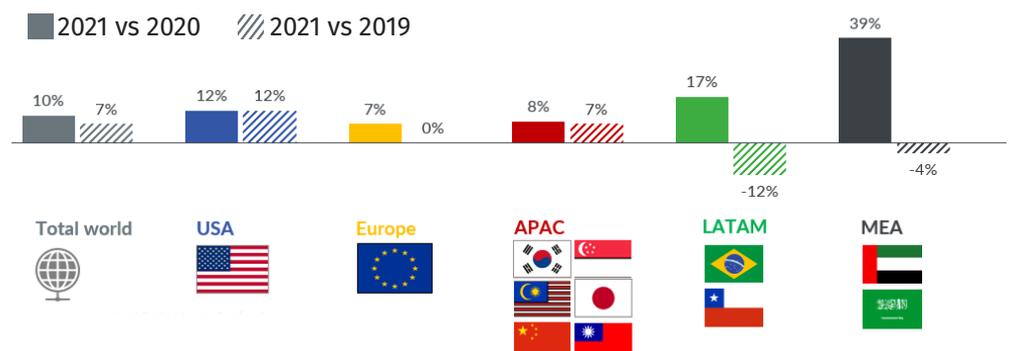
Global sales of contact lenses were up 10% in value full-year 2021 vs 2020, and up 7% compared to the same period 2019 (ie pre-pandemic). Sales of spectacle lenses and frames have also rebounded following the headwinds caused by the pandemic since 2020 – up 14% 2021 vs 2020 and 1% on 2019¹.

At country level, however, there's a very different story. Looking at contact lenses, the USA is the massive

heavy-weight– both in terms of total sales value (\$7bn+ USD full-year) as well as a driver of the global uplift posting growth of 12%, both vs 2020 and vs 2019. Alongside the US, APAC – driven solely by China contributed to recovery growth vs 2019. Sales in most other regions, notably Great Britain, Germany and Japan, are still lagging behind 2019 levels. However, Italy and Spain emerged as recovery winners, together offsetting the softness in Great Britain and Germany.

Contact Lenses growth by region

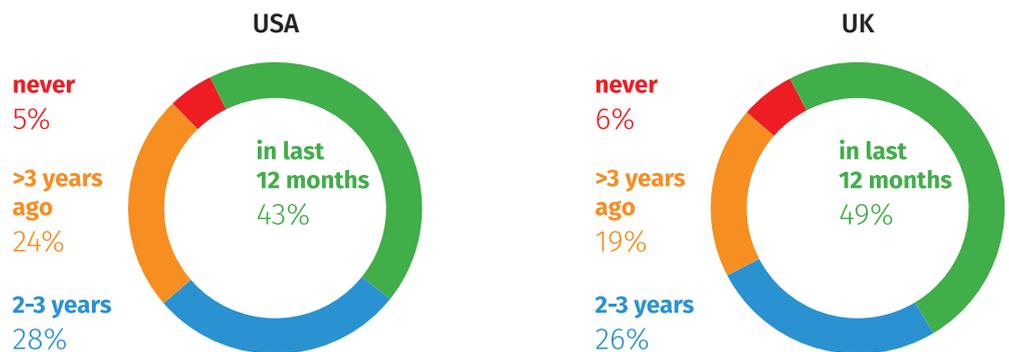
USD fix value growth / 2021 vs 2020 resp. 2021 vs 2019 / Jan-Dec 2021



1 ONLINE PURCHASING AND PREMIUMISATION ARE DRIVING GROWTH

While it has been possible to get eye tests over the last two years, rigid hygiene measures and subsequent backlogs with appointments have made in-person visits less convenient. At the end of last year, less than half of the populations of the UK and USA had attended an eye exam in the previous 12 months².

Have you attended an eye exam in the past 12 months?



GfK Omnibus survey, November 2021. N=1000

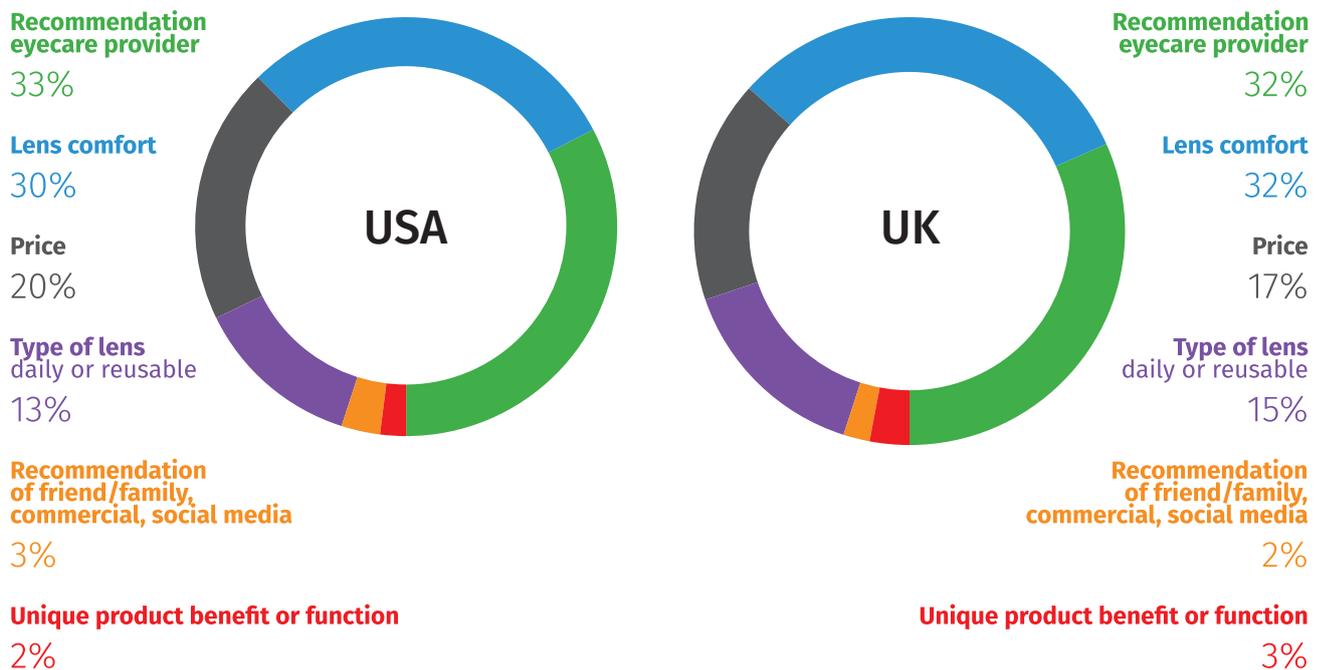
Pharmacies and online retailers gained business over this period at the cost of brick & mortar opticians. The online share of contact lens sales grew significantly in 2020 – and the trend continued into 2021, with almost all markets maintaining or exceeding that growth.

Another core trend was premiumisation, with growth in sales value being driven by a switch to more premium silicone hydrogel lenses and consumers paying more for the convenience of daily lenses. On account of this dynamic, average price per monthly wear rose across almost all regions, with the exception of the Middle East where online and pharmacies gained share, adding downward price pressure.

2 TOP INFLUENCERS FOR BRAND AND PRODUCT CHOICE

Looking at what is influencing the contact lens product and brand that people buy, both the USA and UK markets are driven heavily, and in equal amounts, by the eyecare provider's recommendation and by lens comfort, both trumping price.

Primary Drivers of Patient Choice of Contact Lens Product



FULL ORIGINAL ARTICLE INCLUDING FURTHER COMMENTARY

<https://www.gfk.com/en-gb/insights/Optics-2022-trends-online-purchase-premiumisation-ECP-knows-best-comfort>

Footnotes:

1 Countries included in Contact Lenses: Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Brazil, Chile, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, United States of America. Countries included in Spectacle Lenses and Frames: Japan, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Russia, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates.

2 GfK Omnibus Survey, November 2021. UK, USA, Germany. n=1000 per country

FOR MORE INFO ON GFK OPTICS RETAIL PANELS PLEASE VISIT -

<https://www.gfk.com/products/gfk-optics-panel>



Growth
from
Knowledge

MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE GFK PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAMME IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)



WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

UPDATE FROM THE WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

WORLD OPTOMETRY WEEK 2022

This World Optometry Week (March 21-25), WCO shared a video series highlighting how the optometry community works towards addressing vision care needs worldwide, with each video focusing on a different WCO Region: <https://worldcouncilofoptometry.info/world-optometry-day-2022/>.

MYOPIA MANAGEMENT: PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

This past February, WCO partnered with [CooperVision](#) to host a virtual, global event geared toward myopia management. The event, entitled “Myopia Management: Putting It Into Practice,” was held Feb. 12, 2022. It served to advance WCO’s ongoing efforts to establish a global myopia management standard of care.

View the event recordings now on our [myopia resource site](#).

MYOPIA PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

WCO and [CooperVision](#) have partnered to release “[A Practical Guide to Managing Children with Myopia](#)”. The professional article is authored by four experienced ocular health and science professionals from around the world and is available in several languages on WCO’s [myopia resource site](#).



UPCOMING MEETINGS

The ECOO spring meetings will take place 13-14 May 2022 in Dublin. Members will be informed of all details at least one month ahead of the meetings.

The ECOO autumn meetings will take place 14- 15 October 2022 in Malta. More details will be available in the summer.

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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 the ECOO Secretariat: secretariat@ecoo.info

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