

ECOO NEWS



Hugues Verdier-Davioud, President of FNOF (centre) with ECOO President Matjaž Mihelčič and President Elect Gabriëlle Janssen

ECOO SPRING MEETINGS IN HELSINKI

At the General Assembly meeting, held on 11 May 2024 in Helsinki, ECOO members voted unanimously to accept the Fédération Nationale des Opticiens de France (FNOF) into ECOO membership.

FNOF President, Hugues Verdier-Davioud, in his address to ECOO members, gave some background information about the FNOF and its members. He made clear his conviction that opticians are health professionals who serve the public, and that FNOF wanted to see enhanced recognition in France of

their professional skills, notably by implementing the Bologna agreements. He looked forward to working with colleagues in ECOO to help achieve a stronger recognition of optics across Europe.

Members also voted unanimously in to support the return of the Panhellenic Union of Opticians and Optometrists (PEOO), to ECOO membership. There are now 25 European countries represented in ECOO through 46 member associations.

During the General Assembly, ECOO members heard from Sandra Block, President of the World Council of

Optometry (WCO). Sandra highlighted three key initiatives. Firstly, she encouraged ECOO members to consider participating in the WCO's Optometry Course in Advocacy and Leadership (Opal). She also summarised the recently published competency framework for optometry, and gave some insights into the Global State of Optometry Survey, due to be published in the next couple of months.

There was also a presentation from Sarah Bartz of GfK. In a market update, Sarah said that the optical market was showing signs of recovery post-pandemic but was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. She also outlined the impact of changing consumer trends and future trends. She gave members advance notice of a survey of eyecare providers that GfK plan to conduct in partnership with ECOO over summer 2024. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of developments in eye care businesses across Europe.

Alongside the formal business of the General Assembly, ECOO members also enjoyed a packed programme of presentations, workshops and discussions, covering a diverse range of subjects. In particular, the future role of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare was addressed in a presentation from Dr Ishita Barua. During a lively workshop, led by Dr Daniel Hardiman-McCartney and Ian Humphries of the UK College of

Optometrists, members had the opportunity to consider in greater depth what different technologies were likely to be used in both clinical and business practice, and the pros and cons of those technologies. Clinical sessions addressed how eye care can be provided to patients in their own home, paediatric dispensing, how delegated functions are managed, and also considered the need for new guidance on the contents of an eye examination.

In the final discussion session, Fabienne Eckert and Ann Blackmore, from the ECOO Secretariat, considered the ways in which associations could seek to inform or influence policy and politicians at a national and European level during the run up to and after elections. They highlighted ways in which the ECOO manifesto, published earlier in the year, could be used by members.

The ECOO spring meetings were hosted in Helsinki, 11-13 May 2024, by ECOO's Finnish member, Näkemisen ja silmäterveyden toimiala (NÄE) – the Finnish Association of Vision and Eyecare. They took place alongside the annual European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO) conference. At the General Assembly, ECOO members took the opportunity to thank Liliana Stankova for all her work and commitment, as she finished her term as EAOO President, and welcomed new President Rupal Lovell-Patel.



The ECOO dinner, hosted by the Finnish Association of Vision and Eye Care.

ECOO's autumn meetings will be held in Hamburg, Germany, 11-13 October 2024 and will be hosted by ECOO's three German members, the Zentralverband der Augenoptiker und Optometristen (ZVA), Vereinigung Deutscher Contactlinsen-Spezialisten und Optometristen e. V. (VDSCO e. V.) and Wissenschaftliche Vereinigung für Augenoptik und Optometrie (WVAO)

ABOUT ECOO

The European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) represents the interests of optometrists and opticians across Europe. Our members are national professional associations from 25 countries who together represent more than 150,000 opticians and optometrists. 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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