

ECOO NEWS



ECOO PRESIDENT LOOKS FORWARD TO 2025

Dear ECOO Members and friends, as we step into 2025, I want to take a moment to personally wish each of you a happy and prosperous New Year.

This fresh start brings an opportunity for us to reflect, set goals, and strive toward a brighter future for our profession and the people we serve. I firmly believe in the power of what we can achieve together to improve eye health across Europe.

At the same time, I cannot help but feel a sense of concern about the growing political unrest in many parts of the world, including Europe. These turbulent times will inevitably affect the decisions and policies that shape our future. The uncertainty makes it more challenging to advocate for our profession at a political level, yet it also reinforces

the importance of our collective efforts to ensure that optometry and optics are recognised and supported.

Despite these challenges, ECOO is determined to move forward with energy and purpose. We have ambitious plans for 2025, and I am confident that together, we can make a meaningful difference. Later this month, we will hold our first Executive Meeting of the year to begin working toward the goals we've set. One key focus will be the continued development and promotion of the ECOO Blue Book. The Blue Book is a cornerstone of our work, offering a unique aggregation of data on the optometric and optical professions across Europe. This resource is vital as we work to ensure the recognition, harmonisation, and advancement of our professions, and as we showcase its importance to policymakers and stakeholders.

Over the years, I've come to appreciate the Blue Book more and more. It's a tangible reminder of how far we've come and a guidepost for where we need to go. I hope you'll once again contribute data so we can paint the clearest and most accurate picture of optometry and optics in each country.

This year, we'll also advance initiatives to harmonise educational standards, promote the European Diploma in Optometry and the European Qualification in Optics, and expand the role of our profession within health systems. Raising awareness about vision and eye health, pushing for stronger vision standards in EU directives, and addressing challenges like digital health and sustainability will remain high on our agenda.

I'm particularly passionate about ensuring that ECOO stays ahead of the curve in the digitalisation of healthcare. The European Health Data Space (EHDS) offers exciting opportunities to revolutionise healthcare through better integration and collaboration, but it also poses challenges, especially for member states that need to catch up with digitalisation. With the close

monitoring undertaken for us by Hans Torvald Haugo, from our member Norges Optikerforbund, and our plans to establish a working group on this matter, I'm confident that we'll stay proactive in shaping this space. If you share this passion, we would be thrilled to have you join us in this effort.

Looking ahead, I am excited about our General Assembly, which will be hosted by our Slovenian member in Ljubljana in May, alongside the annual conference of our colleagues at the European Academy of Optometry and Optics. It's always a highlight of the year to connect with so many of you, share ideas, and chart the future of ECOO together.

I want to thank you for your unwavering commitment to our shared mission. Let's embrace 2025 with enthusiasm, determination, and a vision of better eye health for all. I'm proud to stand alongside you as we navigate both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

With warm regards,
Gabriëlle Janssen
ECOO President
January 2025

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 200,000 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.