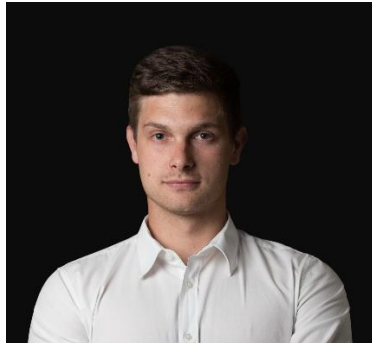


ECOO GUEST ARTICLE



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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OPTOMETRY: ECOO SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN LJUBLJANA

The Optical Association of Slovenia (DOOS) is excited to announce that it will be hosting the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) [Spring General Assembly](#) in the vibrant city of Ljubljana, Slovenia, from May 15-17, 2025. This highly anticipated event will coincide with the EAEO 2025 conference, aptly themed *“Innovative Eye Care for Life.”* It represents a pivotal moment for the optometry profession in Slovenia—a country where the field is yet to be regulated. With the active involvement of DOOS and ECOO, efforts to establish optometry as a recognized and essential healthcare profession are gaining momentum.

We wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little about Slovenia.

The optometric landscape in Slovenia: current challenges and aspirations

The optometric landscape in Slovenia is evolving rapidly! According to a recent employment survey (Fokus 2020, p. 28), around **80% of optometrists** currently work in refractive clinics within optical businesses, while **9%** are employed at private clinics. With approximately **100 optometrists** holding at least an undergraduate degree, there's a growing enthusiasm among professionals - **20%** of respondents are eager to pursue careers in clinics in the future.

In 2022, many private ophthalmology clinics began employing optometrists, highlighting the urgent need for these professionals across public institutions as well. Imagine the benefits: enhanced accessibility and quality of vision aid prescriptions, quicker resolutions to complications, and more time for patient consultations! This allows for

specialised tests necessary for prescribing custom contact lenses, telescopic glasses, and surgical eyewear. When patients require further care, detailed reports on visual function can facilitate the work of ophthalmologists.

The collaboration between ophthalmologists and optometrists is expanding and strengthening as they join forces in eye care through both private and public clinics. However, we must address the challenges posed by individuals with inadequate qualifications—these practices can undermine the progress being made. The presence of unqualified "optometrists," particularly from neighbouring countries, raises concerns about patient safety and care standards.

To protect patients and establish order within primary vision care, it is essential to set clear minimum requirements for practicing this profession. DOOS insists that a diploma in optical science/optometry at least at the first Bologna level is necessary for independent practice. In 2016, DOOS established a register of optometrists accessible on their website www.doos.si. They have also prepared a list of technical conditions and necessary equipment for conducting optometric activities.

The growing importance of optometry in Slovenia

As Slovenia strives to enhance its healthcare landscape, the role of optometry is becoming increasingly vital. DOOS is actively advocating for regulatory frameworks that ensure high standards of practice and

education within the field. By aligning with ECCOO's initiatives, Slovenia aims to harmonise its practices with European standards, significantly improving eye care services for its citizens.

This upcoming assembly will serve as an incredible platform for discussing best practices, innovations in eye care, and strategies to elevate the profession's status in Slovenia. It's not just an event; it's an opportunity to network with professionals from diverse backgrounds and foster collaborations that can lead to groundbreaking advancements in optometry!



Photo credit: www.slovenia.info Aljaž Sedovšek

Engaging opportunities during the Assembly – photo competition

We are thrilled to announce a [photo competition](#) that will make its debut at this year's EAOO event! This competition invites you to unleash your creativity and passion for optometry through photography. Capture the beauty and significance of eye care in everyday life! This is not restricted to those attending the EAOO conference: we strongly encourage all ECCOO attendees to engage actively in this programme — this is your chance to contribute visually to our shared mission of promoting eye health!

Discover Slovenia: Where nature, culture, and innovation converge

Slovenia is not just a backdrop; it's a breathtaking destination waiting to be explored! As you gather in Ljubljana for this pivotal event, you'll have the chance to visit some of the country's most remarkable attractions—all within an hour's drive:

1. **Lake Bled:** Often hailed as one of Europe's most picturesque lakes, featuring an enchanting island with a church and a medieval castle perched on a cliff.
2. **Postojna Cave:** A spectacular cave system that offers guided tours into its fascinating geology and unique ecosystem—an unforgettable subterranean adventure!
3. **Ljubljana Castle:** Dominating the skyline of Slovenia's capital, this castle provides stunning panoramic views and rich history.
4. **Triglav National Park:** Home to Slovenia's highest peak, Mount Triglav—perfect for outdoor enthusiasts seeking adventure amidst breathtaking natural beauty.
5. **Piran:** A charming coastal town with stunning Venetian architecture where you can stroll through narrow streets or relax by the sea.

Accessibility: Getting to Ljubljana

Getting to Ljubljana couldn't be easier! The city is conveniently accessible via Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport (LJU), located about 25 km from the city centre with direct connections to over 20 European cities. For transportation from Ljubljana Airport to the city centre you can get a public bus (30-40 minutes and costs around €4) or use a taxi/shuttle service.

An invitation to be part of optometry's future

Join us in Ljubljana, where the future of optometry is being shaped. The ECOO Spring General Assembly represents a unique opportunity to contribute to the advancement of the profession, exchange ideas, and explore the beauty of Slovenia. Engage with leading experts, participate in discussions that matter, and celebrate the strides being made to elevate optometry as a key player in healthcare.

Don't miss your chance to connect with peers, discover innovations in eye care, and immerse yourself in the cultural treasures of Slovenia. We look forward to welcoming you to Ljubljana—where innovation meets inspiration.

More info about both the ECOO General Assembly and the EAoo conference: www.eaoo2025.com



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.