

## ECOO MEMBER ARTICLE



### *The Bulgarian Association Of Optometrists (BAO)*



### *The National Association Of Bulgarian Optometrists And Opticians (NABOO)*

### **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RECOGNITION OF THE OPTOMETRY PROFESSION IN BULGARIA**

In recent years, Bulgaria has been experiencing increasing professional and institutional discussions regarding the formal recognition and regulation of the optometry profession. While the field of optics has long been established in the country, optometry as a health-related discipline remains in the process of definition and alignment with European standards.

The two representative professional bodies – the *Bulgarian Association of Optometrists (BAO)* and the *National Association of Bulgarian Optometrists and Opticians (NABOO)* – have been working together to promote awareness of the role of optometrists in primary eye care and to encourage the introduction of a clear framework for professional practice and

education. These efforts are supported by academic institutions offering higher education programmes in optics and optometry, which follow modern European curricula and aim to ensure the necessary competencies for independent practice within their scope of training.

At national level, the topic of regulation is currently under discussion among relevant stakeholders and health authorities. The professional community emphasises the importance of establishing transparent standards for education, professional registration, and continuing development, ensuring both patient safety and the effective use of human resources in eye health care.

The dialogue aims to create a balanced model, in which optometrists can contribute to improving access to vision care, particularly in underserved areas,

while maintaining a collaborative approach with ophthalmologists and other healthcare professionals. Such a framework would align Bulgaria with the practices already established in many EU member states, supporting mobility and professional recognition across Europe.

Bulgaria's optometry community continues to follow the examples and guidance from other European countries and from ECOO's best practice recommendations, looking forward to a constructive and sustainable path towards the full integration of optometry in the national healthcare system.

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## **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 27 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.