

ECOO GUEST ARTICLE



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THE EUROPEAN VOICE OF OPTICAL MANUFACTURERS

The history of collaboration between European optical manufacturers has deep roots. As early as 1958, well before the formal establishment of the federation, representatives of the continent's leading industries began meeting to discuss common challenges facing the sector and to exchange views on technical, production, and commercial issues. Those pioneering meetings, the result of a shared vision and a strong spirit of cooperation, laid the foundations for a process that would culminate, in 1992, in the official establishment of EUROM1 Optical Industries (EUROM1).

EUROM1 is the European federation representing manufacturers of optical products. The association brings together under a single umbrella the main national players in the sector—from frames to ophthalmic lenses, from sunglasses to optical equipment—with the aim of providing European optical manufacturing with a unified and authoritative voice in institutional forums.

Since its inception, EUROM1 has played a fundamental role: coordinating and facilitating dialogue between industries in different European countries, defending their common interests and ensuring that the sector's point of view is considered in regulatory processes and political decisions. The logic has always been one of collaboration: joining forces to be stronger in an ever-changing and increasingly global market.

Today, the members of the federation are: **ANFAO** (Italy), **AEO** (Spain), **GIFO** (France), **SPECTARIS** (Germany), **OSA** (United Kingdom), and **Optics Swiss** (Switzerland). **The Vision Council** (USA) is an affiliate. This composition clearly illustrates the breadth and richness of the sector: alongside the traditional European manufacturing hubs, there is also an international observer such as the US Vision Council, confirming that the debate can no longer be limited to continental borders.

EUROM1's mission is twofold: on the one hand, to represent and protect the interests of the European optical industry within the EU institutions, and on the other, to promote the growth and competitiveness of

companies through dialogue, cooperation, and the dissemination of best practices.

The federation's daily work is based on several fundamental principles:

Firstly, the **regulatory framework**: EUROM1 closely follows European legislative processes, participates in standardization committees (CEN, ISO), and engages in dialogue with the European Commission and Parliament. The objective is twofold: on the one hand, to ensure that the rules are adequate, clear, and consistent with the needs of companies; on the other, to ensure maximum consumer protection, an essential value for the sector.

A second area of action is **sustainability**. The European optical industry, which boasts a long manufacturing tradition, is now faced with the challenges of ecological transition. EUROM1, therefore, promotes innovative practices to reduce environmental impact, encourages responsible management of materials, and fosters the exchange of experiences between different countries about the circular economy. Alongside environmental concerns, there is also a social dimension: inclusion, diversity, and the enhancement of skills and people are an integral part of the sector's strategy.

The third front concerns **international competitiveness**. Europe is one of the world's leading players in the production of eyewear and optical components, thanks to the quality, design, and innovative capacity of its companies. However, the global market poses ever-new challenges, from tariff barriers to unfair trade practices. EUROM1 is committed to monitoring these phenomena and defending its member companies, helping to

create a more equitable and transparent trading environment.

Finally, **technological innovation**. Digitalization, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, augmented reality applied to optics: these are all trends that are reshaping the sector. The federation encourages dialogue between companies, research, and institutions to ensure that European industry remains at the forefront and can seize the opportunities offered by these transformations.

The value of EUROM1 also lies in its ability to network. Each national association brings its own specific characteristics and production traditions but finds in the federation a space for discussion and collaboration. This allows information to be disseminated quickly, European directives to be translated into concrete actions in individual countries, and joint projects to be developed.

Collaboration is not limited to the manufacturing industry. EUROM1 works closely with the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECCOO), and participates in international forums such as the World Optical Council. In this way, the entire supply chain - from production to distribution, from research to professional practice - can present itself in a cohesive and strengthened manner.

The challenges for the coming years are clear: tackling the ecological transition, defending and promoting Made in Europe, and supporting companies in their technological and digital evolution. But there is also a cultural challenge: promoting a sector that is not only industry, but also design, innovation, and above all, well-being for millions of people. Thanks to its network of members, technical expertise, and capacity for

dialogue, EUROM1 is ready to take on this challenge. The history of the European optical industry is one of excellence recognized throughout the world. The federation's mission is to ensure that this excellence continues to grow, innovate, and lead the future of vision.

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Eurom1 Optical Industries General Assembly in London, June 2025, including Eurom1 President, Salvador Alsina (1st from left), Vice-President, Renato Sopracolle (2nd from left) and Secretary General, Silvia Lazzarini (back row, 2nd left), with ECOO President-elect, Sylwia Kropacz-Sobkowiak (back row, 2nd from right).

EUROM1 OPTICAL INDUSTRIES

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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.