

ECOO NEWS



ECOO MEMBERS MEET IN RIGA, LATVIA, MAY 2026

More than 50 delegates from 19 countries met in Riga, Latvia, for the ECOO spring General Assembly, 14-16 May. The spring General Assembly runs alongside the European Academy of Optometry and Optics. Both meetings, ably hosted by ECOO's Latvian members, the Association of Latvian Optometrists and Opticians (ALOO), were held at the University of Latvia, Riga.



The House of Nature at Latvia University, Riga

It was fitting that during her update on the work of the ECOO Accreditation Agency, Professor Julie-Anne Little was able to announce that the University of Latvia Optometry School has achieved full accreditation to deliver the European Diploma in Optometry. The total number of diploma graduates had now risen to 748.



Professor Julie-Anne Little and Baiba Balode, first Latvian graduate to gain the European Diploma in Optometry



A workshop on the European Health Data Space, facilitated by Dr Cindy Tromans, heard a presentation from Dr Ole Johan Bakke, President of the European Doctors (CPME). He outlined the opportunities and challenges of new data sharing regulations.

Delegates considered the impact on optics in their countries and what plans need to be put in place to ensure valuable data sharing, and cooperation between eye care professions for the benefit of patients.

Sarah Bartz, Global Strategic Insights Director at NiQ, accompanied by her colleague Alessandra Capelli, presented the initial findings of their survey of eye care professionals in Europe, showing how optics and optometry is currently weathering the storms of uncertainty in the world. A full version of their report will be produced in due course.

During the EAOO conference Gabriëlle Janssen and Julie-Anne Little explored how the Blue Book supports policy development, educational harmonisation, and the future growth of the profession across European countries. The ECOO Blue Book 2025 provides a comprehensive overview of optometric education, regulation, workforce, and scope of practice across Europe.



Among the many other topics discussed at the meetings were:

- An update on Medical Devices Regulation (MDR) and the Unique Device Identifier (UDI)—presented by Carsten Leutloff of EUROM1
- Smart Eyewear—a presentation from eyewear designer, Sébastien Brusset
- Format and standards for cross-border prescriptions—considering whether ECOO should endorse an approach
- The Strategic Role of Eye Care Professionals in optimising vision in Sport—announcing plans to produce an ECOO position paper
- The State of Optometry in Latvia—presented by Kristine Detkova of ALOO

- An update on the Horizon I-SCREEN research study, which has reached its halfway stage, as well as plans for a parallel study on the qualitative experience of professionals and patients involved in the study.
- The delivery of eyecare in the community by optometrists—presented by Dr Nicholas Rumney—explaining developments in parts of the UK

In addition, both the Presidents of the World Council of Optometry – Dr Cindy Tromans – and the European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO) – Rupal Lovell-Patel – gave

presentations at the General Assembly, reporting on progress and explaining how members can engage with their work.

And, of course, the General Assembly received and discussed reports on communications and lobbying activities; ECOO's annual accounts for 2025; progress against the business plan; and the budget for 2027. The current business plan runs until 2027, and members are invited to make suggestions for the plan that will follow it.

ECOO's autumn 2026 meetings will be held in Billund, Denmark, 16-18 October. Registration will open shortly.



ECOO delegates at work

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.