

# GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ECOO

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CHAIR OF THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE



***What is your professional background, and what is your role at ECOO?***

I hold qualifications in Optics and Optometry from three Spanish universities: the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Granada, and the European University of Madrid. These qualifications reflect the evolution of optometric education in Spain over recent decades, from programmes focused primarily on optics to the current university degrees that fully integrate optics and optometry, with educational standards closely aligned with those promoted across Europe today.

As a second-generation optometrist, my more than twenty years' experience in my family's optical practice gave me first-hand insight into both patient care and the management of a healthcare business.

I studied further at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in the United States, and, later, business management at IESE Business School of the University of Navarra. I've also been involved in university teaching, for several years teaching

Clinical Optometry to undergraduate students in the Optics and Optometry degree programme at CEU San Pablo University in Madrid.

Teaching future generations of optometrists has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career.

I serve as Secretary General of the General Council of Optometrists and Opticians of Spain (CGCOO) and am responsible for the clinical activities of the Spanish Visual Health Foundation.

Sustainable, well-managed practices are essential if we are to continue investing in technology, professional development and patient care. I actively support initiatives aimed at helping optometrists develop, not only their clinical skills, but also their leadership, management and entrepreneurial capabilities.

***What are the most important skills/personal attributes needed to do your job?***

My work has included clinical optometric practice, institutional and professional leadership responsibilities, and a public service role within municipal government of the city where I live. I have developed skills in communication, negotiation and consensus-building.

Independent practices, retail groups and chains, manufacturers, suppliers, universities, researchers, regulators, professional associations, foundations, and non-governmental organisations all contribute to the development of optics and optometry, although their priorities and perspectives do not always coincide.

I believe it is essential to listen carefully, understand different viewpoints and build bridges

between people with differing interests. All while safeguarding our ethical principles, professional standards and, above all, the best interests of patients.

Teamwork, humility and a willingness to continue learning from others are essential qualities.

***What has taken you by surprise in your work with ECOO?***

I thought it would be difficult to reconcile the many professional realities that exist across Europe, given the different regulatory frameworks, educational models and scopes of practice represented within ECOO. Reaching common positions could be a challenge. But I have found exactly the opposite.

ECOO has a remarkable ability to bring together very different perspectives and transform them into a shared vision for the future of our profession.

I have been impressed by the dedication of so many colleagues who contribute their time and expertise to ECOO on a voluntary basis. Most of them balance their involvement with demanding professional and personal responsibilities. It is inspiring to see people investing years of effort in projects whose benefits may only become fully visible to future generations of professionals.

The collaboration, generosity and collective commitment deserve enormous recognition.

***What is your biggest achievement at ECOO so far?***

Meaningful progress is always the result of collective effort. No significant project is ever achieved alone. I am proud to have played a

small part in strengthening our profession across Europe.

ECOO has made an invaluable contribution to raising professional standards, promoting educational excellence, such as through the European Diploma, and enhancing the recognition of optometry and optics within healthcare systems and public institutions.

There is still much work to be done, and many challenges lie ahead. However, I believe we can all be proud of the contribution ECOO has made to building a profession that is stronger, more respected and better prepared to meet the needs of European citizens.

One of the most important messages we continue to promote is that optometrists and opticians represent the first and most accessible point of contact for visual healthcare for millions of people. Helping society better understand and recognise this role remains one of our greatest collective achievements and one of our most important future objectives.

***What is the best piece of professional advice you have received?***

Watching how colleagues across Europe have transformed the position of optics and optometry within their countries has taught me the value of perseverance, consistency and long-term vision.

If I had to summarise this lesson in a single sentence, it would be that meaningful achievements rarely

happen overnight. They require patience, sustained effort, adaptability and, above all, a committed team united by a common purpose.

***Bonus question:***

***When you manage to escape from ECOO or your day job, how do you like to spend your time?***

I consider myself fortunate to live in Spain, a country that offers wonderful opportunities to enjoy life outdoors. I enjoy walking, exercising, spending time with friends and family, and appreciating our gastronomy and wines.

Sport has always played an important role in my life. For many years I was passionate about skiing and racket sports, particularly tennis and padel. Unfortunately, injuries and the passing of time have persuaded me to reduce some of these activities. Nowadays, I maintain a more moderate fitness routine, including several visits to the gym each week and long walks around my beloved Madrid.

I also enjoy travelling, learning about the history and culture of the places I visit, and cinema, trying to watch new releases on the big screen whenever possible.

And, of course, one of my lifelong passions: football. I have been a member of Real Madrid since birth and enjoy following the club whenever my schedule allows. As we proudly say: ¡Hala Madrid!