

ECOO Blue Book

Data on optometry and optics in EuropeThe European Council of Optometry and Optics - 2017



Introduction:

Welcome to this third edition of the ECOO Blue Book, which follows-on from its 2008 and 2015 editions with updated information on the professions of Optometry and Optics in Europe.

Purpose and objective of the Blue Book

The "Blue Book" is a valuable aggregation of data relating to the professions of Optometry and Optics in countries across Europe. The aim is to provide comparable and comprehensive data for professionals, politicians and academics and to foster understanding of these two professions, its differences and similarities between countries.

The information gathered covers data on the number of professionals in the field of optics and optometry, the scope of competence of the professionals in their respective countries as well as the regulatory and educational environment.

As the data suggests, the professional landscape is scattered and each country has its particularities, which provides a fruitful basis to identify best practices and to learn from the different systems in place. This also showcases the benefits of ECOO working on achieving its mission:

- \cdot To improve eye health and vision for all and eliminate avoidable blindness and visual impairment in Europe.
- · To create a harmonised professional and educational system for optometry and optics based on the European Diploma in Optometry and Optics.
- · To develop the scope of practice for optometrists and opticians to the degree that the same high standards apply and are mutually recognised in all European countries

Methodology

A survey, facilitated by the World Council of Optometry (WCO) has been circulated to ECOO members, who are national professional associations. For countries where ECOO does not have a member, a national association has been identified to provide the information.

The geographic scope extends beyond the EU Member States and covers countries of the European continent.

Disclaimer

The data of the Blue Book has been entered by ECOO members using their respective sources of information. In this sense, the data has not been collected by a single person using the same criteria at the exact same time. Variations in terms of data used can therefore be expected and should be taken into account when using the data.

Terminology

Given that the scope of practice of optometry and optics varies across countries, members have been asked to fill-in the information at the highest competence of their country. The answers therefore reflect the highest competence and may not be a reflection of the majority of professionals in that country. For this reason, the data in the Blue Book should be seen in its entirety, which provides a holistic picture of the profession.



What the Blue Book tells us

With the rising cost of medical care and decline of the number of ophthalmologists in some countries of Europe, primary eye health care is transferred increasingly to optometrists and opticians.

The ability of optometrists and opticians to develop beyond their traditional handicraft activities and to offer primary eye health care is not uniform, it varies according to the circumstances of their country.

Optometry and optics are linked professions and in some countries of Europe considered to be one profession. In other countries, they reflect separate areas of professional activity and are considered as separate professions. Optometry is concerned with the clinical assessment of the human eye and the prescribing and after care of optical appliances (spectacles or contact lenses) to correct defects of sight. Optics (or services provided by opticians) focuses on assembly and dispensing such appliances.

In some countries, professionals combine the two functions. In other countries, they restrict their assessment to refracting the patient and then dispensing the corrective appliances. Beginning with the lowest level of training, we can say that in Europe we have dispensing opticians, followed by refracting opticians, followed by optometrists who are trained to detect pathology. In some countries optometrists also use diagnostic drugs to enhance examination of the eye, and a few optometrists have the capacity to manage ocular disease by the prescription of therapeutic drugs.

The varied scope of practice of optometrists and opticians in Europe is the result of the extent of available training, the law, the organisation of the profession, and the relative size, political weight and the independence of optometry relative to ophthalmology.

Education and training are recognised as the key to the advancement of the profession. A general trend is emerging, whereby opticians continue to be trained from the age of 16 onwards through a mixture of study and practical work experience; while optometrists are increasingly trained at university, having an element of supervised training in clinical practice.

Developments since the Blue Book 2015

Comparing the picture of 2017 to the Blue Book 2015, we are pleased that the data has been updated by all countries, providing us with an updated snapshot of the professional landscape in Europe.

Noteworthy developments include:

- There has been a slight increase in most countries in the number of optometrists and opticians as a percentage of the population. The population data has also been updated based on the latest WHO data.
- The ratio between Optometrists and Opticians has largely remained the same, with countries like the Nordics, UK, Ireland and the Netherlands having more optometrists than opticians and the majority of the other countries having more opticians than optometrists. It should also be noted that in Spain, the professions are combined in one, so there is no split in the figures.
- A positive development is also the number of qualifying student optometrists, which has also increased slightly over the past two years.
- The number of people wearing contact lenses has largely remained the same. The data the contact lenses has been questioned in the past as it seemed too low in some countries, however the question refers to people who wear contact lenses only, it thus excludes the people who wear both contact lenses and spectacles.
- The scope of practice picture illustrates the scattered landscape and also showcases the work some of ECOO members engage in to achieve recognition of the profession and to expand the scope of practice. Overall, the dominant colour green showcases that a wide range of activities are well established.



Primary eye care guidelines

ECOO has established guidelines for optometric and optical services in Europe, which are accessible through our website www.ecoo.info.

Optometrists and Opticians in Europe

The profession of optometry and optics has evolved at varying speeds within Europe and remains at different stages of development. Thus, it is difficult to paint a uniform picture of the profession, easily perceptible at a glance.

Generally, optometry has emerged from optics, as the education of opticians has expanded to include clinical subjects and as their scope of practice has been enlarged as a consequence. Some opticians have become optometrists.

Opticians continue to make and fit corrective spectacles, according to the prescription of an ophthalmologist (a medical practitioner) or an optometrist, depending on whether optometry is practised in that country. Such opticians are sometimes called dispensing opticians.

Optometrists perform full eye examinations on patients, resulting in the prescription of corrective optical appliances if necessary and the detection of signs of possible disease, injury or abnormality of the eye. In such cases the optometrist refers the patient to a medical doctor for further investigation and possible treatment.

Some opticians have evolved to the stage of performing partial eye examination, consisting mainly of refracting and prescribing corrective optical appliances, but not searching for or detecting pathology of the eye. Such opticians may be called refracting opticians.

In some countries optometrists and dispensing opticians are regarded as distinct professions, either in law or de facto. In other countries, the profession is considered as a single profession, the optician optometrist, irrespective of the professional's scope of practice and the day-to-day activities.

Beyond Europe - Global data

Following the success of the ECOO Blue Book in 2008, the World Council of Optometry (WCO) has adopted the idea and rolled-out the survey on a global basis. For data from non-European countries, please visit the website of the WCO: http://worldcouncilofoptometry.info

Contents of the Blue Book

- The number and size of the profession
- The status of the profession
- The scope of practice of the profession
- The profession's role in public health
- The education and training of the profession



Countries surveyed







































Portugal(PT)







Serbia(RS)













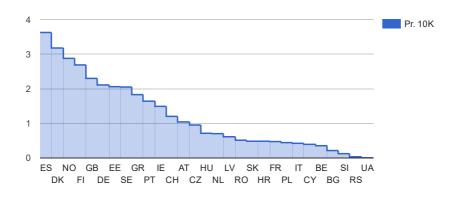








Number of optometrists per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)





Average: 1.25 Comment:

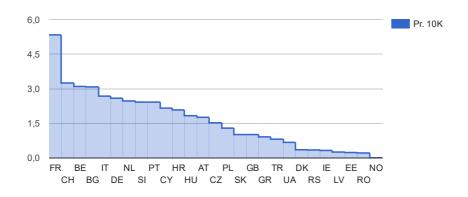
The professions of Optometry and Optics in Spain and the Nordic countries are combined in one, which is why only one figure has been included under Optometrists and not under Optics.

The figures in the brackets represent the variation compared to the value from the Blue Book 2015.





Number of opticians per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)



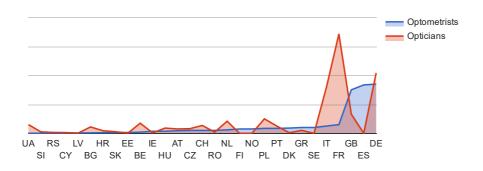


Average: 1.7 **Comment:**

The professions of Optometry and Optics in Spain and the Nordic countries are combined in one, which is why only one figure has been included under Optometrists and not under Optics.







	Optometrists Opticians		Optometrists Opticians			Optometrists	Opticians	
	0 (0%)	3000 (100%)		25 (5%)	500 (95%)		30 (9%)	300 (91%)
Ukraine(UA)			Slovenia(SI)			Serbia(RS)		
	45 (15%)	252 (85%)		120 (71%)	50 (29%)		150 (6%)	2200 (94%)
Cyprus(CY)			Latvia(LV)			Bulgaria(BG)		
	205 (19%)	880 (81%)	(#)	260 (32%)	550 (68%)		270 (90%)	30 (10%)
Croatia(HR)	,	,	Slovakia(SK)	,	(,	Estonia(EE)	, , , ,	, , ,
	400 (10%)	3500 (90%)		700 (82%)	150 (18%)		700 (28%)	1800 (72%)
Belgium(BE)	400 (10%)	3300 (90%)	Ireland(IE)	700 (02%)	130 (10%)	Hungary(HU)	700 (20%)	1000 (72%)
De igidiii(DE)			iretand(iz)			mangary(mo)		
	890 (37%)	1500 (63%)		1000 (38%)	1600 (62%)		1000 (27%)	2700 (73%)
Austria(AT)			Czech Republic(CZ)			Switzerland(CH)		
	1000 (71%)	400 (29%)		1186 (22%)	4180 (78%)		1483 (100%)	0 (0%)
Romania(RO)			Netherlands(NL)			Finland(FI)	, ,	
	1500 (100%)	0 (0%)		1700 (25%)	5000 (75%)		1700 (40%)	2500 (60%)
Norway(NO)	1300 (100%)	0 (0%)	Poland(PL)	1700 (23%)	3000 (73%)	Portugal(PT)	1700 (40%)	2300 (00%)
(1.0)	4000 (00%)	000 (100)	(<u>-</u>	2000 (470)	4000 (220)	()	0000 (4000)	0.4044
	1800 (90%)	200 (10%)		2000 (67%)	1000 (33%)		2000 (100%)	0 (0%)
Denmark(DK)			Greece(GR)			Sweden(SE)		
	2500 (14%)	16000 (86%)	\mathbf{O}	3000 (8%)	34370 (92%)		15034 (69%)	6612 (31%)
Italy(IT)			France(FR)			United Kingdom(GB)		
	14750 (100%) O (O%)		17000 (45%)	20000 (EE%)	. ,		
Spain(ES)	16750 (100%) 0 (0%)	Germany(DE)	17000 (45%)	20700 (33%)			
Spani(LS)			Octimality(DL)					

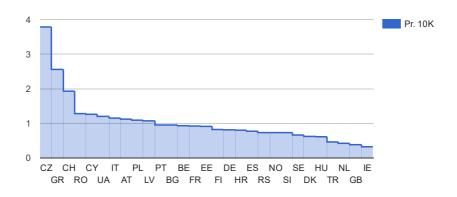
Comment:

The professions of Optometry and Optics in Spain and the Nordic countries are combined in one, which is why only one figure has been included under Optometrists and not under Optics.





Number of ophthalmologists per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)



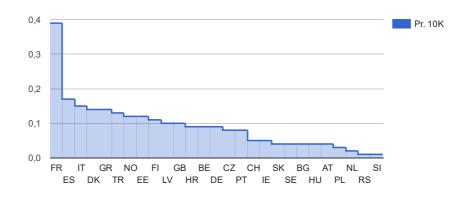


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Number of qualifying students per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)





Average: 0.09 **Comment:**

Answers refer to the grand total of students qualifying each year in Optics and Optometry.





Number of retail outlets per 10K of population(Pr. 10K)



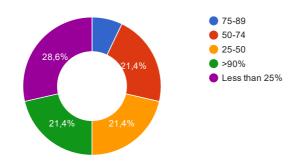
2.54 _(0.21) Cyprus(CY)	2.39 _(-0.05) Belgium(BE)	2.28 Greece(GR)	2.22 _(0.05) Portugal (PT)	2.18 _(0.02) Czech Republic(CZ)	2.1 (-0.04) Spain (ES)
2.03 _(0.07)	1.67 _(1.6)	1.49 _(0.04) Germany(DE)	1.4(-0.02) Austria(AT)	1.33(-0.05) Switzerland(CH)	1.31 Slovenia(SI)
1.26(-0.01) Netherlands(NL)	1.25(-0.07) Finland(FI)	1.22(-0.03) Denmark(DK)	1.2(-0.01) Slovakia(SK)	1.2 _(0.9)	1.18 _(0.02) Croatia(HR)
1.14(-0.04) Norway(NO)	1.14 _(0.13) Estonia(EE)	1.12 Bulgaria(BG)	1.11(-0.04) United Kingdom(GB)	0.92(-0.03) Sweden(SE)	0.89 _(0.04)
0.8(-0.02)	0.79 _(0.09) Turkey(TR)	0.78(-0.01) Poland(PL)	0.77 _(0.08)	0.68 _(0.05) Serbia(RS)	0.33 Ukraine(UA)

Average: 1.36





How many of the total refractions/primary eye exams are done by ophthalmologists? (in %)

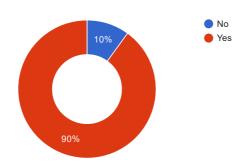








Do practices refract, examine eyes, prescribe and sell products?

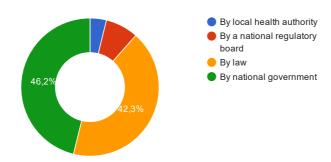


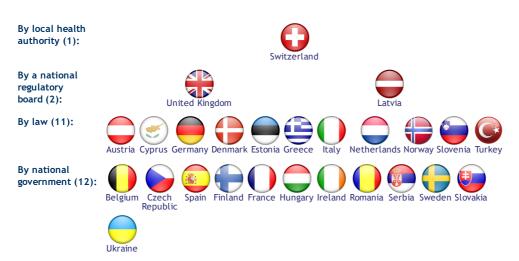






How is the profession generally regulated?





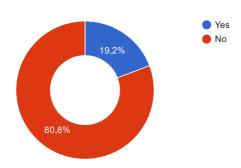
Comment:

Answers are given for the highest level of qualification of the profession in a given country.





Is the profession closely monitored (must licensing be renewed)?





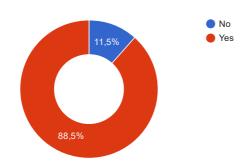
Comment:

Answers are given for the highest level of qualification of the profession in a given country.





Is the profession protected by law?





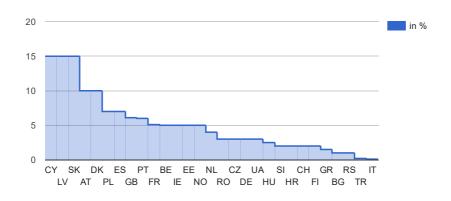
Comment:

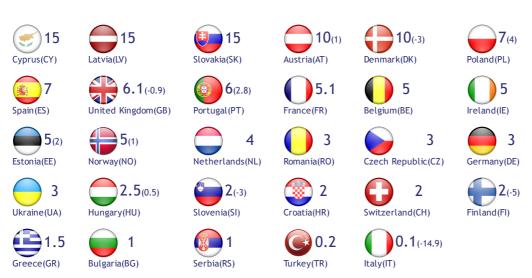
Answers are given for the highest level of qualification of the profession in a given country.





How many people (approximately) wear contact lenses?(in %)





Average: 5.05 Comment:

This figure is based on the number of people wearing contact lenses only. It excludes people who wear both contact lenses and spectacles.







How many people (approximately) wear spectacles?(in %)



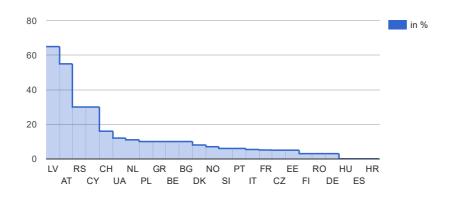


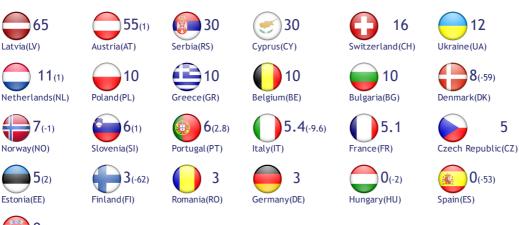
Average: 48.34





How many people (approximately) wear both CL and spectacles?(in %)





O(-1)

Average: 14.34

The scope of practice of the profession



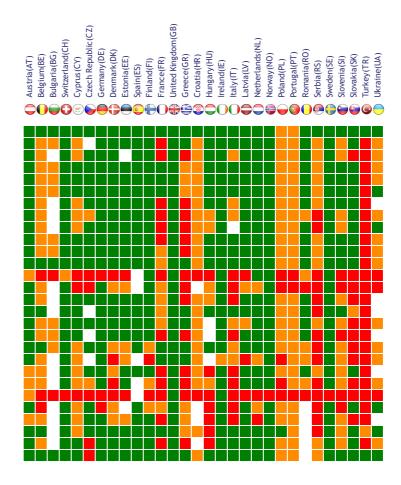


Professions Scope of practice: What is permitted, prohibited and what is prohibited, but practised



Sell optical appliences Examine exterior eye Examine interior eye Subjective refraction Objective refraction Check binocular vision Ophtalmoscopy Tonometry Perimetry Prescriptions for spectacles Prescriptions for CLs Fit CLs Use diagnostic drugs Test drivers sight Test VDU users sight Fit optical appliances for VDU users Test sight of low vision patients Prescribe low vision aids for partially sighted Refer to medical doctor Refer directly to eye hospital Detect ocular pathology Inform medical doctors of Pxs pathology Use therapeutic drugs Pre and post monitoring of refractive surgery Orthoptics Sports vision

Test vision and prescribe spectacles to children Fit and supply spectacles to children

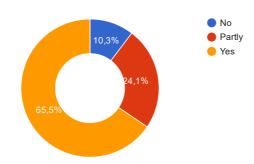








Does the social system pay for eye exams in children? (<16 years)



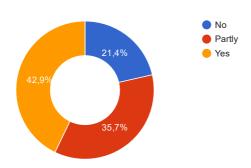


The profession's role in public health





Does the social system pay for eye exams in the elderly?(> 50 years)



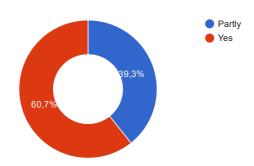


The profession's role in public health





Does the social system pay for eye exams in adults with low vision?



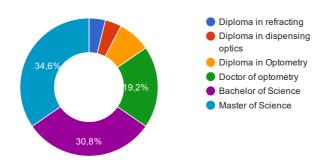


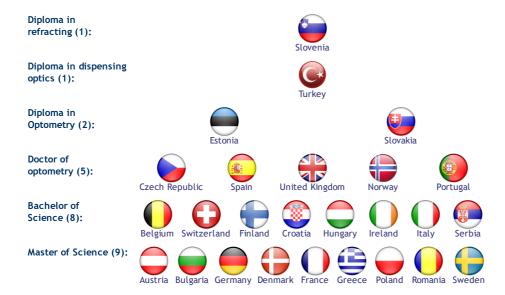
The education and training of the profession





What is the highest qualification offered?

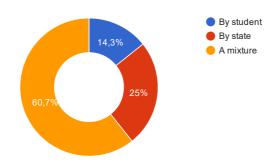




The education and training of the profession







By state (7):

Amixture (17):

Austria

Belgium

Bulgaria

Switzerland

Serbia

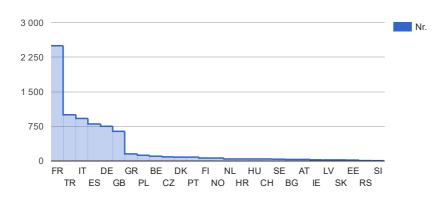
Slovenia

The education and training of the profession





How many students qualify each year?(Nr.)





Average: 284.67



Acknowledgements:

ECOO thanks its members and partners for providing the data for the Blue Book:

Austria: Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, Bundesinnung Gesundheitsberufe (WKO)

Belgium: Association Professionelle des Opticiens et Optometristes de Belgique (APOOB)

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Opticians (NABOO)

Croatia: Hrvatsko Drustvo Opticara i Optometrista (HDOO)

Cyprus: Cyprus Association of Optometrists and Cyprus Optical Association **Czech Republic:** Spolecenstvo Ceskych Optiku a Optometristu (SCOO)

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Hungary: Magyar Optikus Ipartestület (partner)

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Ireland (FODO Ireland)

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and Uniao Profissional dos Opticos e Optometristas Portugueses (UPOOP)

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Slovenia: Društvo očesnih optikov Slovenije (DOOS)

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Sweden: Optikerförbundet

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