



The European Academy
of Optometry and Optics

PRESS RELEASE

SATURDAY 16 MAY 2009

NEW EUROPEAN ACADEMY LAUNCHED IN SWITZERLAND

The European Academy of Optometry and Optics (EAOO) was officially launched on Saturday 16 May 2009 at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Officers of the Board of Trustees were appointed by the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO) in Brno, on 28 February 2009. Dr Feike Grit, appointed as inaugural President, will serve a two-year term and will be succeeded by the inaugural Vice-President, Professor Roger Crelier. Nick Parker was appointed as the inaugural Treasurer and will serve a one-year term. Bryony Pawinska, Chief Executive of the College of the Optometrists, London, which hosts the Academy Secretariat, was appointed Company Secretary. Dr Rob Hogan, President of the College of Optometrists, London, was appointed to the Board as the College's representative during the Academy's start-up phase.

The results of the election of the Board of Trustees were announced at the ECOO General Assembly on 16th May. Trustees will serve a one-year or three-year term in one of four categories:

- 1 Representing European Educational Institutions**
Dr Alessandro Fossetti (Italian Optometric Society, Italy)
Dr Paul Murphy (University of Cardiff, UK)
- 2 Representing ECOO member organisations**
Christian Stebler (Swiss Optical Association, Switzerland)
Dr Eduardo Teixeira (Association of Licensed Optometrists, Portugal)
- 3 Individual educationalists**
Jean-Paul Roosen (France)
1 x vacancy
- 4 Individual practitioners**
Gerhard Gschweidl (Austria)
1 x vacancy

Commenting on the need for the European Academy Dr Grit said: "This is an exciting time for optometry and optics in Europe. To meet the requirements of a modern profession, ECOO needed a far greater input from the profession across Europe. A different framework was essential to enable us to optimize the cooperation between different stakeholders, leaders of optometry, practitioners, educators and scientists. The Academy will provide this new framework." Dr Grit added;

I am delighted to become President of the European Academy and I look forward to spending the next two years taking this exciting new venture from strength to strength. Research is essential for the development of every profession and the launch of the Academy provides us with a unique opportunity to advance our profession, develop our scientific knowledge base and support and promote lifelong learning for optometrists and opticians across Europe. This weekend's excellent inaugural Research and Academic Symposium, at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, and the Gala Dinner, held in the beautiful Beau Rivage Palace Hotel, was an amazing start to my term as President."

The European Academy, an initiative of ECOO, has been established to build on the work of the former Association of European Universities and Schools of Optometry (AEUSCO). The Academy aims to: develop scientific knowledge of optometry and optics; advance and promote education and research into optometry, optics and related subjects; promote for the public benefit the science and practice of optometry and optics and the professional competence and conduct of Academy members.

The European Academy's launch and its first event, the Research and Academic Symposium, was incorporated into the ECOO Spring meeting, running from 14 – 17 May. The Research and Academic Symposium brought key stakeholders from across Europe together to discuss and disseminate the latest research relating to optometry, optics and vision science.

In his welcome address, Dr Wolfgang Cagnolati, President of ECOO, told delegates that the foundation of the Academy is a milestone for the future of eye care in Europe that "opens new frontiers for European optometrists and opticians." He added that the Academy had the potential to make optometry and optics stronger, for the benefit of both the public and the profession. He stressed that for the Academy to thrive and meet its potential it will need the support of a broad range of stakeholders from the sector. Dr Cagnolati went on to stress that although the Academy is in the early stages of its development, there are very ambitious plans in place for moving the organisation forward, including establishing a comprehensive set of member benefits, developing a Fellowship portfolio programme and developing a portfolio of Awards and Grants.

130 delegates attended the two day event, hearing lectures from 15 presenters from eight countries and viewing a series of eight poster presentations on a variety of research topics. The Symposium featured two keynote lectures. Dr Robert Harper, Optometrist Consultant at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital, England, presented *Glaucoma: Challenges and opportunities for optometry*. Dr Harper told delegates that Glaucoma is a significant cause of visual morbidity throughout the world. He examined where there is scope for optometry to develop as a profession in relation to the identification, management and treatment of this condition, identified the research relating to optometric involvement in glaucoma pathways that is currently available and described some of the areas requiring further research based evidence. Dr Harper finished his presentation by examining the roles of specialist education, clinical governance and audit in relation to developing optometric involvement in glaucoma care pathways.

Josephine Mullin, Director of Education at the College of Optometrists, London, United Kingdom presented the Education keynote on developing a Scheme for Registration. Ms Mullin described how the College has been developing the Scheme for Registration to ensure that those who complete it successfully have the clinical knowledge, skills and experience to practise independently.

The European Academy will organise annual meetings in the spring with a comprehensive program of lectures, posters and workshops that will be of interest to leaders of optometry, scientists and clinicians from all over Europe. The date and location of the 2010 Academy event will be announced shortly.

For further information or to request photography from the launch of the European Academy please contact Ellen Colquhoun, Head of Marketing and Communications, College of Optometrists on + 44 (0) 20 7766 4342 or email Ellen.colquhoun@college-optometrists.org

Notes for Editors:

1. The secretariat for the European Academy is provided by the College of Optometrists, London, United Kingdom.
2. For more information about the Academy please go to www.eaoo.info or contact:

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3. Biographies of the Board of Trustees

President:

Dr Feike Grit

Dr Feike Grit qualified in 1969 as an optician at Christian Huygensschool in Rotterdam in The Netherlands and in 1973 in optometry at City University, London (UK). He spent internships at Optische Werke G. Rodenstock in Munich (Germany) and at Guy's Hospital and Moorfield's Eye Hospital in London (UK). Between 1982 and 2000 Dr Grit was President of the Dutch Optometric Association (OVN). He co-founded the Dutch school of optometry at Hogeschool Utrecht in 1988 and played a key role in the development of the legislation regulating the optometric profession in the Netherlands (2000). Dr Grit has held positions in international optometry including: Chair of the World Council of Optometry's Education Committee and International Admittance Committee, American Academy of Optometry and President of the European Council of Optometry & Optics. He is Adjunct Faculty in the rank of Clinical Professor in Optometry at the University of Houston College of Optometry, Texas (USA) and the Inaugural President of the European Academy of Optometry & Optics (2009). Dr Grit's main area of interest is in the professionalisation of optometry.

Vice President:**Professor Roger Crelier**

Professor Crelier qualified in 1980 as an Optician and in 1985 as a dipl. Augenoptiker at the Schweizerische Höhere Fachschule für Augenoptik (SHFA). He completed a Master of Science in Clinical Optometry at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (SALUS University). In 1988, following a period in optometric practice, Professor Crelier began to lecture at the SHFA, becoming Dean of the SHFA between 2003 and 2007. In 2007, when the SHFA merged with the University of Applied Science of Northern Switzerland, he became Director of the University's Institute of Optometry. In 2008 he was appointed to professorship. Professor Crelier has held various positions in optometry including member of the executive committee of the International Association of Binocular Full Correction, Convenor of the Binocular Vision section of the Board of Examiners of ECOO and Chair of the Education Committee.

Treasurer:**Nick Parker**

Nick Parker is a Non-executive Director of Pension Insurance Corporation Holdings LLP and Advisory Partner of Pension Corporation LLP, for which he chairs the Audit Committee, is a member on the Allocations Committee and provides advice to the senior executive team. Nick Parker is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Corporate Finance Faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Mr Parker currently holds a number of chairs and directorships in the private equity, waste management and agricultural sectors. Mr Parker was a part time senior civil servant at The Scottish Executive and a member of the UK College of Optometrist's Lay advisory panel and Board of Trustees.

College of Optometrists' representative:**Dr Rob Hogan**

Dr Rob Hogan is President and a Trustee of the College of Optometrists, London, England. Dr Hogan is a Board member of the General Optical Council, London, England and Director of Professional Services for Dollond and Aitchison, UK. Rob is a Trustee of Vision2020 UK and at a local level, a member of the Birmingham Local Optical Committee.

Educational Institution representatives:

Dr Alessandro Fossetti

Dr Fossetti is a Past President of the Italian Optometric Society and is currently responsible for the EU activities for the society. He has broad experience of optometry and optics within Europe, an Italian degree in Philosophy, a European Community Degree in Optometry and a Masters in Optometry from the University of S. Marino. Alessandro has established educational programmes in optometry schools across Italy, is a frequent speaker for both professional associations and manufacturers and taught visual and ophthalmic optics at the University of Padua, Italy for three years.

Dr Paul J Murphy

Dr Murphy has worked in optometry for over 20 years, graduating from Cardiff University in 1998. He has worked in private practice and in hospital optometry at Newcastle General Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. Dr Murphy completed his PhD at Glasgow Caledonian University in 1996. He has been involved in optometry training since 1997, firstly at Glasgow Caledonian and from 2001 at Cardiff University, where he is Director of Teaching. Dr Murphy publishes regularly in scientific journals on contact lenses, cornea and tear film. He has collaborative links with fellow researchers in the UK, Germany, USA, Japan and New Zealand. Paul is a Member of the UK's College of Optometrists, a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, a Member of the International Society of Contact Lens Researchers and a Fellow of the British Contact Lens Association.

ECOO member organisations representatives:

Christian Stebler

Since 2001 Christian Stebler has been President of the Swiss Optical Association (SOV). Mr Stebler is a self employed optometrist, working in independent practice in Aarau, Switzerland. He qualified in 1981 in Olten, Switzerland, and went on to study Diplomas as Licensed Optician and Expert and Leading Optician, between 1982 and 1991. Over the last three decades Mr Stebler has played an active role in the development of optics in Switzerland, becoming an Executive Council Member (President of the Business Management Commission) of the SOV in 1990. Between 1993 - 1996 he was President of the Board of Examiners for SOV Examinations and since 1996 he has been Chairman of Visus Members. Between 1999 - 2003 he was a Board Member of the Foundation Schurmatt. Mr Stebler served as a Municipal Council Member for Cantou Aargau between 1999 and 2003 and as Executive Committee Member of the Trade Association of Canton Aargau between 1997 and 2004.

Dr Eduardo Teixeira

Since 2004 Dr Teixeira has served as President of the Board of APLO, the Association of Licensed Optometrists, Portugal. From July 2001 Dr Teixeira has worked as an optometrist, co-ordinating the clinic's activities and conducting eye examinations at the Centre of Vision and Optics, Setubal, Portugal. Between 1999 and 2000 he was a member of Senate of the University of Beira interior, representing students of the Pedagogical Science Unit. Dr Teixeira served as President of the Board of the organization of student of Applied Physics at the same university between 1998 and 1999. Between 1997 and 1998 he was a member of the Board of NEFAO and from May 1998 he has been a

member of the organizing committee of the II International Symposium, XIII Congress of UPOO, V Congress of NEFAO of Optometry and Optics.

Individual educationalists representatives:

Jean-Paul Roosen

Jean-Paul Roosen is a professor of clinical optometry and professional ethics. He is director of the International College of Optometry in Bures-sur-Yvette, France. The College specialises in the teaching of optometry and develops specific programmes for educators. Mr Roosen has a special interest in improving and developing the standards of optometric education in Europe and in developing countries. He was General Secretary of the former European Association of Universities, Schools and Colleges of Optometry (AEUSCO). He was a member of the Management Committee of the European Diploma in Optometry and a member of the World Council of Optometry's Education Committee. Mr Roosen is a member of the French Society of Physiological Optics (SFOP) and of the Association Representative des Initiatives en Basses vision (ARIBa). Mr Roosen has been Vice President of the European Society of Optometry (SOE) and of the Syndicat National des Opticiens Optométristes de France (AOF).

Individual practitioner representatives:

Gerhard Gschweidl MSC

For the last 40 years Gerhard Gschweidl has worked as a self employed optometrist in Klosterneuburg, near Vienna. Mr Gschweidl has been heavily involved in the training, development and education of young optometrists through his practice. Since 1977 he has worked for a number Austrian examination boards, specialising in optics and contact lenses. Mr Gschweidl has played an active role in the legal representation of the interests of the profession in Austria since 1975, initially in the low Austrian guild committee and from 1989 to 2005 as a country guild master of Lower Austria. Since 2005 he has served as President of the professional association of the opticians, orthopaedic technicians and hearing device technicians.

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