

**Dear Colleagues,**

An increasing number of eye care practitioners, from all parts of the world, visits the website of the European (Continental) Chapter. This has resulted in many requests for information about eye care related matters. We thank you for your many reactions.

Another challenge in addition to the website activities is, at this moment, the organization of the *First European Vision Event*. The meeting will take place in Oberhausen, Germany, from 2 to 4 October 2004 and is a joint effort of the German Contact Lens Association (VDC), the Dutch Optometric Association (OVN) and the European Chapter of the American Academy of Optometry. It will be a fantastic continuing education opportunity for European optometrists, with many internationally well known speakers. So far Brien Holden, Thomas Lewis, Jan Bergmanson, Anthony Cullen, Chris Snyder, Marc Piccolo, James Sheedy, Rick Weisbarth and Joe Yager have been signed up for the international part of the program as organized by the chapter. During the next months the website will offer you more information about the conference.

Worldwide optometry experiences significant changes. Especially in Europe, where the so called *Bologna Declaration* has caused a complete restructuring of education. Within the next few years most European universities will convert to the Bachelor/Master (BaMa) system. From 2005 all four optometry schools at German universities of applied sciences will for that reason offer only courses leading to Bachelor degrees. The restructure of education offers unique opportunities to European optometry to develop a uniform standard of practice in all member states of the European Council of Optometry and Optics (ECOO).

Another important instrument to unify the profession in Europe is *ECOO's European Diploma in Optometry*. Recent graduates will be awarded their diploma during the ECOO meeting in London on 15 and 16 May. The next clinical/practical examinations will be held from 4 to 6 June at the school of optometry in Cologne (HFA Köln), Germany. The written examination will be organized in St. Étienne, France, from 1 to 3 October. For further information, please look at the website of ZVA: <http://www.zva.de>.

Optometry is a health care profession and health care professionals need continuing education. The *First European Vision Event* is a major European optometric conference that combines superb scientific and clinical education with great opportunities to meet colleagues from all over the world and to make new friends. We therefore sincerely hope that we may welcome you in October in Oberhausen. And bring your friends, please forward this newsletter to your colleagues!

With best wishes,

Wolfgang Cagnolati
Chair, European (Continental) Chapter of the American Academy of Optometry