

## **Luxottica invests in Tuscany and announces the acquisition of the Institute of Research and Studies in Optics and Optometry in Vinci**

**Vinci (FI), July 15, 2021** - Luxottica announces its acquisition of the Institute of Research and Studies in Optics and Optometry (IRSOO) in Vinci (FI), a historic school of optics and optometry that is among the most prestigious in Italy.

The investment in Tuscany will allow the enhancement of an Italian excellence, preserving its quality and autonomy, and providing resources to support its future development, benefitting the entire sector. Together with IRSOO, Luxottica will be able to invest in further supporting and spreading the optician profession, one of the few positions in Italy to boast almost 100% employment.

Now more than ever, the role of professional training for both young individuals and professionals is central to the development of the optical market. These specialized trainings generate the skills, innovative thinking, and professional aptitude that can raise the quality and service level of the sector over time, benefitting both optical professionals and consumers.

Joining IRSOO is part of a series of training initiatives launched and strengthened in recent years by the company, not only for the benefit of employees, but also for optical customers worldwide. EssilorLuxottica has recently launched Leonardo, a new training platform inspired by the Italian scientist, inventor, and artist born in Anchiano, a hamlet of Vinci, establishing a further ideal link to the entire Florentine region.

The Institute's management team, which has contributed to strengthening the prestige of IRSOO over several years, will work to ensure the path of continuity, competence, and development that the new ownership intends to undertake. Alessandro Fossetti will remain the Director and Head of Training of IRSOO, and the school will retain its headquarters in its current historic building in the town of Vinci. Lawyer of the Court of Florence and expert in administrative law, Gaetano Viciconte, has been appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Directors.

*"Our priority, shared with Luxottica, will be to preserve the quality and autonomy of the Institute so that it can remain a point of reference in the region for the entire sector, open and at the service of all. At the same time, we'll be able to count on the support and resources of a major Group like EssilorLuxottica to make the school's quality education and facilities sustainable in the long term, as well as to develop new opportunities for the future, which, thanks to digital, we will also evaluate at a European level,"* explained IRSOO President, Gaetano Viciconte.

*"IRSOO will continue to be a center of excellence for training and continuing education, with a solid basis in scientific evidence and in the field of ophthalmic optics and optometry, also acting as a point of reference on the Italian scene for those who want to train and/or work in the sector,"* added IRSOO Director and Training Manager, Alessandro Fossetti.

*“IRSOO has been purchased by Luxottica at the conclusion of a public selection procedure. We hope it will give the Institute a more secure future and a prospect for great growth, as it will become a place where excellent training will be provided and benefit the industry as a whole.,”* commented Giuseppe Torchia, Mayor of Vinci.

*“With the definition of the public selection procedure, a long and complex operation has been closed. It has significantly involved ASEV. We believe that this is an opportunity for growth for the entire Empolese Valdelsa area and a winning bet for the industry as a whole. My sincere thanks to all those who have accompanied us and helped us to complete this operation,”* added Andrea Mortini, President of ASEV.

**Luxottica Press Office:** Oriana Pagano, [oriana.pagano@luxottica.com](mailto:oriana.pagano@luxottica.com)

#### **Luxottica Group S.p.A.**

Luxottica Group is a leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of fashion, luxury and sports eyewear. Its portfolio includes proprietary brands such as Ray-Ban, Oakley, Costa, Vogue Eyewear, Persol, Oliver Peoples and Alain Mikli, as well as licensed brands including Giorgio Armani, Burberry, Bulgari, Chanel, Coach, Dolce&Gabbana, Ferrari, Michael Kors, Prada, Ralph Lauren, Tiffany & Co., Valentino and Versace. The Group's global wholesale distribution network covers more than 150 countries and is complemented by an extensive retail network of approximately 9,000 stores, with LensCrafters and Pearle Vision in North America, OPSM, LensCrafters and Spectacle Hut in Asia-Pacific, GMO and Óticas Carol in Latin America, Salmoiraghi & Viganò in Italy and Sunglass Hut worldwide. For more information on the Group: [www.luxottica.com/en](http://www.luxottica.com/en).

#### **IRSOO**

IRSOO provides technical, scientific, professional, and health training in optics, ophthalmology, and the study of vision sciences, offering basic training, professional refreshers, and continuing education courses for professionals in the field of ophthalmic optics and ophthalmology. The Institute is also involved in accompanying training with experimentation and research activities in the same fields, with particular attention to human vision, as a supplement and support to both theoretical and practical training activities. For many years, IRSOO has organized and implemented a three-year integrated training course consisting of a two-year qualification to practice the auxiliary healthcare profession of optometry, followed by a year of specialization in optometry. Many Italian opticians have trained at the Vinci “school” in the course of its more than 50 years of existence. In addition to basic training, the Institute's activities include continuing education programs for professionals already working in the field, which generally consist of advanced, specialized, and refresher courses in various areas of optometry and vision science. The school derives directly from the National Institute of Optics in Arcetri. It was here that, in 1929, courses for the licensing of opticians began. From Arcetri, in the 1969/1970 school year, it moved to Vinci and took the name “Istituto Superiore di Optometria Vasco Ronchi”. In 1981, the “Istituto Regionale di Studi Ottici e Optometrici” (IRSOO) was founded as a non-profit foundation by ten municipalities in the Empolese Valdelsa area. In July 2005, the IRSOO became an operational unit of the Agenzia per lo Sviluppo dell'Empolese Valdelsa (Empolese Valdelsa Development Agency). In 2014, the IRSOO changed its name to Istituto di Ricerca e di Studi in Ottica e Optometria. [www.irsoo.it](http://www.irsoo.it).