



News release

Essilor creates a new standard in protecting eyes from damaging UV rays

Charenton-le-Pont (France), 1 March 2012 – Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics, today announces the introduction of Crizal UV, the corrective eyeglass lens offering the most advanced protection against damaging UV light. At the same time Essilor is introducing a new “Eye-Sun Protection Factor” (E-SPF) in order to drive consumer awareness about the importance of protecting eyes from ultraviolet rays.

Hubert Sagnières, Chairman and CEO of Essilor, said *“Visual protection is a fundamental part of our mission. I am proud that Essilor is once again at the forefront of innovation in launching Crizal UV. Protecting the eyes and the surrounding area against UV damage is such an important issue that we have also introduced the Eye-Sun Protection Factor to build consumer awareness and understanding”*.

Exclusive Backside UV Protection

Most eyeglass lenses prevent transmission of UV rays hitting the front side of the lens. However, up until now, even the best clear eyeglasses did not protect against the danger of the UV rays coming from the back and side of the lens, which can represent up to 50% of damaging UV light. The Essilor innovation involves a new anti-reflective coating on the backside of the lens which virtually eliminates UV light reflection into the eyes while maintaining the premium transparency of the lens. This breakthrough innovation has the potential to make an impact on the lives of individuals of all ages with all types of vision needs, all year long. This reinforced solution against UV rays is available for clear lenses as well as for sun lenses, with Crizal Sun UV.

Introducing the Eye-Sun protection factor to drive consumer awareness

To increase awareness about efficient types of UV protection for eyes, Essilor has developed an international Eye-Sun Protection Factor rating system, similar to the index used to rate skincare and sunscreen products' efficiency. A recent survey* in Europe showed that more than two thirds of consumers were unaware that clear lenses offered any protection against UV and over 90% recognised the utility of a sun protection factor for eyewear. This evaluation system will help drive understanding of the level of UV protection provided by eyewear. Values vary from 2 to a maximum of 25 for clear lenses and 50+ for tinted sun lenses. With an E-SPF of 25, Crizal UV lenses are the only ones to reach the maximum level of protection in the clear lens category** and outperform other lenses on the marketplace.

The E-SPF protocol has been developed and endorsed by independent third parties and provides an objective laboratory index for eyewear, certifying the global UV protection of a lens. Essilor is convinced that this unique evaluation system, along with Crizal UV, will increase consumer knowledge on UV and help improve visual health by protecting the eye from the invisible and often irreversible dangers of UV light.

UV Light: A Significant Threat to Healthy Vision

UV rays have a direct and irreversible impact on eye health: UV light has been proven to accelerate eye ageing, skin cancer and the appearance of cataracts. It is estimated that around 15 million people worldwide become blind from cataracts annually, of which up to 20% may be caused or aggravated by UV exposure. In addition 5 to 10% of skin cancers, also directly linked to UV rays, appear in the eye periphery. Children are particularly vulnerable to UV rays and their annual exposure is three times higher than that of adults as they spend more time outdoors. UV rays pose a threat 365 days a year, even in cloudy weather as 40% of UV exposure occurs when people are not in full sunlight.

* IPSOS Omnibus Survey conducted for Essilor in January 2012 in 5 European Countries (France, UK, Germany, Spain and Italy)
** for lenses made with all materials except Orma (the organic material with an index of 1.5).

About Essilor

The world's leading ophthalmic optics company, Essilor designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of lenses to improve and protect eyesight. Its corporate mission is to enable everyone around the world to access lenses that meet his or her unique vision requirements. To support this mission, the Company allocates around €150 million to research and development every year, in a commitment to continuously bring new, more effective products to market. Essilor's flagship brands are Varilux®, Crizal®, Definity®, Xperio®, Optifog™ and Foster Grant®. It also develops and markets equipment, instruments and services for eyecare professionals.

Essilor reported consolidated revenue of €4.2 billion in 2011 and employs nearly 48,700 people in around 100 countries. It operates 19 plants, a total of 390 prescription laboratories and edging facilities, as well as several research and development centers around the world. For more information, please visit www.essilor.com.

*The Essilor share trades on the NYSE Euronext Paris market and is included in the CAC 40 index.
Codes and symbols: ISIN:FR0000121667; Reuters:ESSI.PA; Bloomberg:EI:FP.*

Investor Relations and Financial Communications

Véronique Gillet – Sébastien Leroy / Phone: +33 (0) 1 49 77 42 16

Corporate Communications

Kate Philipps - Maïlis Thiercelin / Phone: +33 (0) 1 49 77 45 02