

Academic Activities Handbook

ELSA - The European Law Students' Association



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The European Law Students' Association

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Academic Activities (AA) world!

Being a member of the AA Team is a great challenge but also a very rewarding experience. All over Europe, hundreds of students dedicate their time for ELSA and its incredible initiatives. Some of them are AA'ers, just like you.

This Handbook was originally created to "help you to become the best AA officer possible." The AA Handbook will allow you to learn the basics of being the responsible for Academic Activities in your ELSA group.

You are reading an updated version of this tool that includes the latest developments in AA occurred during the academic year of 2012-2013, especially the International Council Meeting Cologne 2013, where the AA part of the Decision Book was totally renewed.

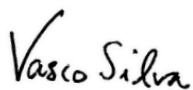
Academic Activities offers an infinite number of possibilities when it comes to projects. Innovation and creativity are some of the key words that define our work. And all of this while combining legal education, internationality and soft skills development.

With this introduction to the world of Academic Activities, it is our hope that you will enjoy and get all the motivation needed to embrace your task as AA officer. With the support of this document, the improvement of communication between the AA officers and the share of experience and ideas we hope to achieve high quality in our events.

We would like to thank the AA Officers who worked with me throughout my term in office and that contributed not only to the historical change of the AA regulations but also influenced and inspired me for updating this Handbook.

We hope you will give good use to this Handbook and that you can find it as informative and helpful as we do.

AAfully yours,



Vasco Silva
Vice President Academic Activities
ELSA International 2012/2013

Short introduction to ELSA and the key areas

ELSA is the world's largest independent law students' association. ELSA is an international, independent, non-political, non-profit-making organisation run since 1981 by and for students. It is comprised of students and recent graduates who are interested in academic and personal excellence. ELSA offers law students a perfect platform to develop their existing skills, acquire new skills and meet fellow students and legal professionals throughout Europe.

The Philosophy Statement of the European Law Students' Association

Vision

A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity.

Purpose

To contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers.

Means

To provide opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific co-operation.

To assist law students and young lawyers to be internationally minded and professionally skilled.

To encourage law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

Organisation

Local, National and International Level

The ELSA Network works on three levels, the local, the national and the international. ELSA has 42 National Groups as members and almost all National Groups are divided into Local Groups. Every Local and National Group has a Local or National Board.

Positions in the Board

Every Local and National Board shall consist of at least seven members holding the following positions: President, Secretary General, Treasurer, Vice President (VP) for Marketing (the four supporting areas), VP for STEP, VP for Academic Activities, and VP for Seminars and Conferences (the three key areas). In addition every Board can decide to have directors which are a part of the overall team. The International Board counts with eight members, including the recently created position of Vice President (VP) for Moot Court Competitions.

International Board

The International Board (IB) is the supreme executive body of the association. Its members are elected at the Spring Council Meeting for a one-year period. The term in office begins 1st of August and ends on the 31st of July the following year.

Its tasks are to represent ELSA, to carry out and be responsible for the day to day running and management of ELSA, to promote and to supervise ELSA's fields of activity, to advance the aims and efficiency of ELSA as well as executing and implementing Council decisions.

The International Board is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the organisation as a whole. That includes the support given to member groups both local and national, the collection and the redistribution of information throughout the network to ensure the fullest participation possible at all events.

International Council Meeting

The International Council Meeting (ICM) is the highest decision-making body of ELSA. It takes place twice a year, in the Spring and Autumn. It is composed of the representatives of the National ELSA Groups. The Council decides on the policy and direction that the organisation will follow and discusses the problems faced in ELSA.

The three key areas

ELSA has three key areas. The explanation of each of these three areas is essential for any ELSA member or officer. The key areas contain, in their essence, the main purposes of our association through their events and activities. These projects accomplish a predetermined group of objectives that permit ELSA to give a wide range of legal education opportunities to its members. ELSA aims to contribute to raise the skills of law students and young lawyers, offering the most qualified academic and legal instruction.

ELSA prepares legal professionals and students for the future, in a European and globalised context, providing them with new and unique tools, and contributing to their integration in a complex and selective job market. The existence of these three key areas, achievable through the four supporting areas, allows our association to launch innovative programs in different levels, welcoming ideas from dynamic young students.

The three key areas of ELSA are Academic Activities (AA), Seminars and Conferences (S&C) and Student Trainee Exchange Programme (STEP).

Academic Activities

Academic Activities are focused on contributions toward legal education, involving the development of legal knowledge through guided practical activities. This handbook will go deeper into this area on the following pages

Seminars and Conferences

ELSA's Seminars and Conferences key area serves to complement the formal university curriculum by raising students' consciousness and understanding of global, legal, social, economic and environmental issues. The programme includes conferences, law schools, seminars and study visits.

The Student Trainee Exchange Programme (STEP)

The Student Trainee Exchange Programme (STEP) enables law students and young lawyers to spend a period of time working abroad in a law related area. Thus introducing them to a different legal system and enabling them to gain valuable professional experience. ELSA supplements the traineeship schemes of law firms, companies, banks, universities, public and private institutions, and provides suitable trainees for both short and long-term placements.

Abbreviations in ELSA

AAEF Academic Activities Evaluation Form

AASF Academic Activities Specification Form

DB Decision Book

EC Essay Competition

EI ELSA International

EMC2 ELSA Moot Court Competition on WTO Law

HRMCC European Human Rights Moot Court Competition

IFP International Focus Programme

KAM Key Area Meeting

L@W Lawyers at work events

LB Local Board

LG Local Group

LRG Legal Research Group

MCC Moot Court Competition

NB National Board

NG National Group

OC Organising Committee

OYOP One Year Operation Plan

SSO Statutes and Standing Orders

VP AA Vice President for Academic Activities

WM Working Materials

WS Workshop

Introduction to the Academic Activities Area

Since the beginning of ELSA's history, Academic Activities has been one of our fundamental areas. The original idea was to form an international network for the exchange of scientific legal information. Academic Activities has faced an incredible expansion, and now consists of a vast number of programmes and projects. All of them have the common aim of spreading information on legal topics and to improve legal education in Europe.

It is not difficult to place each of the Academic Activities projects within the context of the philosophy statement and to realise that each of them represents a concrete effort to fulfil it. Through Academic Activities, ELSA makes a direct contribution to legal education. It also directly provides law students and young lawyers with opportunities of learning about other cultures in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific cooperation, as well as with opportunities of being internationally minded and professionally skilled.

Nevertheless, for Academic Activities to do so effectively, we must make a strong impact on the outside world. The Academic Activities programmes and products must be of high quality, and we must be reliable people to work with.

Keywords as continuity and effectiveness are of essence for AA. The aim of this Handbook is to make ourselves more effective Academic Activities officers, and to make our time with Academic Activities a valuable experience, especially for our members.

Academic Activities projects

Essay Competition

Introduction

An Essay Competition is an organised event in which law students and young lawyers compete through their essays on a specific given topic. It aims at preparing the participants for the specialised forms of written communication that are required within the legal profession. Usually essays contain writer's personal point of view concerning a specific topic.

ELSA is aware of the relevance of writing essays as part of an effective legal education. Firstly it is clear that writing legal essays is different from writing in other genres mostly because legal writing is a technical part of each of the national languages. A legal writer needs some legal background and a good amount of legal insight.

The AA officer shall assure that the essay competition has a relevant legal topic in accordance with the scope of the association, a recognised jury, and a comprehensive set of rules.

In the assessment of the essays the jury shall be guided by factors such as clarity, conciseness, persuasiveness, critical thinking and conformity with the objective standards that have evolved in the legal profession.

Background

The idea of having Essay Competitions as a project of Academic Activities within ELSA was implemented at the ICM in Brussels 1992. On the very same ICM also the philosophy statement was approved. Essay Competitions serve the purpose of the statement as it contributes to legal education and provide the opportunities for law students to learn about legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific cooperation.

Planning an Essay Competition

To plan an Essay Competition a few steps should be followed. The following text intends to give some suggestions on how to plan an essay competition. Since there are always several organization options these suggestions are not absolute.

- Firstly discuss with your board what your Legal Writing options are. If your option to improve legal writing in your local or national group is to launch an essay competition be aware that having a good activity plan is essential.
- Choose the topic. Suggestion: focus on the International Focus Programme or pick a hot topic, popular among the potential participants.

- Research for possible members for the jury. After having a topic you can contact professors or lawyers who teach or work in a specific topic of law. Suggestion: contact a Professor who previously helped you or your predecessor with an ELSA event.
- While contacting possible members for the jury have in mind that a prize for the participants or best legal writers will be needed. Suggestion: depending on the interests of the possible participants decide if you want to get a monetary prize or a legal publication, for instance. It is common that the jury decides the title or specific question addressed in the essay. Make sure it accomplishes the objectives settled.
- Create a draft of the EC Rules and present it to the jury. Suggestion: the first time you launch an EC you may ask for the support from other AA officer in the network who had previously organized an EC.
- Plan a timetable for the event appropriate to the possible participants and planned objectives.
- Develop a marketing plan with the Marketing officer having in mind the competition purposes.
- Launch the competition.

As it was previously said, this is just one of the possible ways of planning an essay competition. There are always other options.

Your tasks as a Local AA officer

- To promote the participation of law students and young lawyers and engage in the organisation of essay competitions.

Suggestion: Think about a theme for the essay competition. Getting advise from a professor in your university is a good idea, not only because he is better qualified for coming up with a theme but also because he could motivate his students to participate.

- Submit information about topic, rules, timeline, structure, awards and supporters and promotional material to the National Group.

Suggestion: After you have chosen the theme, the next step is to get some help from the Marketing responsible in your Local Group, because that is the best person to help you out with creating awareness of this event among the students in your university and also the responsible one for promotional material for sponsors. Create some guidelines for the applying students that include the style, length, and layout.

- Afterwards, get a professor/group of professors to grade the essays, being part of the jury. Do not forget to get some prizes for the winner(s).

- Submit an AA Event Specification to the AA officer in the National Board and to the International Board.
- Submit an AA Event Evaluation form to the AA officer in the National Board and to the International Board.

Local and National Essay Competitions

It may be common for law students and young lawyers to write essays. Most of the courses or subjects in legal field require frequently that papers submitted by students be completed in a form of an essay.

Subsequently it is understandable why is so important for local and national officers to plan and to launch essay competitions. The local AA officers have the possibility to launch an essay competition for local members but it is also possible to open the competition in a national level or even to accept international participants.

Local essay competitions are a good option to promote ELSA in your city or university, to get new partners and the support from professors and to acquire new members. All the questions regarding the essay competition may be discussed with the responsible for AA in the national board.

Suggestion: make sure you have updated archives with the necessary information that can be used by your successor in your position in the local or national board. It seems quite difficult to create an essay competition without transition or support materials, so you must assure that any information is lost.

If you are looking for new partnerships, launching an essay competition may be an excellent solution. Usually there are law firms interested in collaborate with local groups in this kind of project, providing members for the jury or giving prizes for the participants.

Suggestion: Contact a law firm which usually cooperates with your local or national group other in other projects such as STEP and L@w events.

International Essay Competitions

ELSA International organises international essay competitions every year. These competitions are generally open to all ELSA members and depending on specific project even to participants from all over the world.

Some of the international essay competitions are planned with the collaboration from other international associations or institutions. For example, essay competitions in collaboration with the Council of Europe, regarding Human Rights.

In the past years, EI also has launched successive editions of the International Focus Programme Essay Competition which concerns this specific legal topic, for example, Health Law or Intellectual Property Law.

ELSA International is directly responsible for these competitions with the cooperation of the local and national officers who play a relevant role in finding participants and promoting the event in their universities.

Essay Competitions' Outcome

Frequently students seem to be more interested in see a practical result of their research than to be awarded with a monetary prize. For a law student or young lawyer, having their essays published is very attractive. For most of the law professionals is rare to have the opportunity to publish some of their papers. Consequently, to give that opportunity to a student is a good way to foster her/his enthusiasm regarding law and ELSA itself.

A reasonable solution is to have a partnership with a law review that can publish the best essays. Other way to achieve this goal is to have those essays published in your university law review.

Suggestion: Have a meeting with the responsible for your university law review to start a new partnership. Explain how ELSA can help the university to foster the enthusiasm of possible participants in essay competitions, raising the quality of the papers submitted.

Other possibility is to publish the essay online in your local or national group website or even in your university website. This is a good way to keep the awareness of participating in such events and it might be a way to recognize the quality of the students and academic institution.

Legal Articles, Comments and Case Notes

Apart from the relevance of the essays, in the law field we can frequently find articles, comments and case notes written by law professionals. It is important not to forget those specific sorts of legal papers, which are very common in a jurist daily life. The articles and comments are quite similar to the essays. The main difference might be the paper length.

Articles

When an event to promote legal writing among law students is launched, there are a few aspects that have to be kept in mind if the aim is to collect legal articles.

Firstly the contents or topic must be defined.

Suggestion: A simpler way to choose a topic and collect students' articles is to utilize papers written by the students for some subjects during their law course.

It is essential to define length as criteria for publishing submissions. The length will depend on the objectives planned for the competition Rules, publication opportunity, and suggestion from the jury. Usually the range of minimum words excludes footnotes. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout the text and appear at the end of the page or the text and before the bibliography.

Suggestion: In some cases a brief summary is required to be submitted together with the article. It will depend on the structured settled with the jury.

Comments

Comments usually are scholarly articles or essays written by law students or young lawyers and published in law reviews, analyzing a judicial decision and its context in law in general or in a particular area or field. It might be an explanation of a statute, code section or administrative rule written by the drafters of the statute, section or rule.

Preparing law students and young lawyers to correctly write law comments or annotations is relevant for their careers. It is vital for the law professional to be prepared to compose those kinds of law annotations as part of a daily basis work.

Suggestion: An excellent way to prepare ELSA members in this field is to suggest a professor to start a project with law students to comment or annotate legal codes or rules that can be published afterwards. Students may find this kind of project really attractive to them since it is an opportunity to learn more about specific law fields and to prepare for their future professional lives. Having the collaboration from professors will assure the quality aimed for the project.

Case Notes

A case note is a summary of a legal case. Frequently, in law schools, professors ask their students to write case notes as part of their legal education. It is a good way of evaluating students' knowledge and interpretation skills. It also is an excellent way to familiarize students and young lawyers thoroughly with law real life cases and the relevant law.

In contrast to a brief or a memorandum, a case note highlights and analyzes a relevant development in the law field, taking a narrow focus on a single case, statute or other improvement. A case note is supposed to identify how different authorities have determined the question and then specifically addresses how the case, statute or administrative rule resolves the topic presented.

Usually, a successful case note contains an extensive treatment of the prior law and analyzes the main case, statute or administrative rule in light of that previous law.

It is possible to create case notes competitions. The topic chosen should be based on equally strong arguments on both sides of the problem in analysis. The competition score should not be affected by the fact the participants' case notes reach or not the same conclusion as the court.

Suggestion: Create an online section of your local or national group website where you can publish case notes written by law students.

Legal Research Groups, LRG

A Legal Research Group (LRG) is a group of law students and/or young lawyers carrying out a research on a specified topic of law with the aim to make their conclusions publicly accessible.

Depending on the topic, the working methods and the language chosen a legal research group can involve students and young lawyers on a local, national or international level.

Introduction

The background of the LRG is to make ELSA-work more academic and to be able to present some results to academics and professionals. The work of the ELSA-members should contribute to this field and bring up some new aspects as well. On the other hand ELSA-members have the possibility to either publish their work in a handbook, present their work on conferences or hand it in to academics.

Background

At the International Council Meeting in Malta in October 1994 the idea was born to form International Working Groups on different fields of law to contribute to legal research. This way ELSA-members can contribute to legal education just as is stated in the philosophy statement. As it happens so often in ELSA, the name changed from International Working Group to International Academic Law Forum (ALF International) and again in 1997 to Legal Research Groups (LRG). The first working LRG was formed in October 1996 to work on aspects of “International Criminal Law”.

The first LRG, the one on “International Criminal Law” was very successful. After they started their work they were invited to the sessions of the United Nations Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court in 1996. During this PrepComm it was realised that many countries lacked financial resources to send big delegations and that human resources with knowledge in International Criminal Law were scarce. The idea of an easy-to-read Handbook, which focuses on the difficult aspects of the negotiation, was then born. The Handbook was written by the members of the LRG and was published in 1997. The members of the LRG participated in the PrepComms in 1996 and in 1997. The handbook is still one of the few publications on this field of law and a second edition came out in 1998.

Throughout the years 2011-2013, the ELSA for Children Legal Research Group involved 23 National Research Groups, each with up to 10 National Researchers. The National Research Groups were led by National Coordinators from each country, working on collecting the research results and on communicating with other parties involved in the research. Each National Research Group will be supported by a National Academic Advisor. The project had the support of the Council of Europe, especially the Children Rights' Division and the Directorate of Communications.

In 2013, ELSA International launched a new international legal research group on Online Hate Speech as part of the campaign of Council of Europe “European Youth Against Online Hate Speech” and the “No Hate Speech Movement”.

Structure and Work of the LRG

The Legal Research Groups work at local, national or international level, consisting of groups of students who have an interest in one specific field of law and due to that reason come together to research about certain legal matter. The development of the research is most of the times dependent on individual work carried out at home and shared online with the other researchers.

Results of Legal Research Groups

The result of the LRG can be published in diverse forms such as online or hard copy publications presented during conferences/ panel discussions or handed in to academics.

Your tasks as a Local or National AA officer

Creating new LRG and finding members for the LRG:

- Promote ELSA's network as a platform for legal research and support the establishment of legal research groups.
- Provide the ELSA-members and other law students in your country or Local Group with information about active legal research groups. If you are a Local officer contact the VPAA of your National Group.
- You can talk to academics that work in that field of law. They know many students who might be interested in working in such a LRG.
- If you find somebody that is interested in participating in a LRG, contact the VP AA of ELSA International (vpaa@elsa.org) and inform the other National VP AAs. They could give you further information what the status quo of different LRG in the network are right now. They could also try to find more students that are interested in participating in a new LRG on that topic.
- Pass the information on to the person who is interested in the LRG.
- Assure that the legal research group has an outline including its aims, timeline, guidelines for the written report and guidelines with the tasks of the participants and other parties involved. The outline should include examples of former legal research groups.
- Assure that the legal research group includes the following: (a.) a coordinator, preferably the VP AA of the organising group; (b.) at least one academic coordinator, responsible for the Academic Framework; and (c.) an academic advisor, responsible for the academic quality of the final report or outcome of the research.

Keeping track:

- Provide LRG with the relevant forms from ELSA International and make sure that the forms are filled in properly, and send them to the National Group and ELSA International
- Try to stay informed of what is going on in the LRGs that are working.
- Usually the news of the LRG is presented on the ICMs and is also sent to the AA-mailing-list.
- Please make sure that the AA officers and the ELSA-groups know what the status quo of these LRGs are. This way they get interested and might think of participating themselves in LRGs.

Presentation of the result:

- Support LRGs with the presentation of their conclusions and send the outcome of legal research groups to the National Groups.
- Inform the network about the way the results will be presented.
- Collect the outcome of LRGs from the Local Groups and send it to ELSA International.
- Collect the outcome of LRGs in the network and send it to the Local Groups in your country.

For complementary information about Legal Research Groups please read the LGR Guidelines to be found at the Officers' Portal.

Law Review

The law review is a legal publication consisting of contributions from students, practitioners and academics. The law review should publish contributions of the highest academic standard. Students should be responsible for the editing of the content, style and referencing.

The law review should serve as a platform for ELSA members to strengthen their legal writing skills and to publish their contributions.

Background

The idea of publishing a Law Review from students to students was born in 1987. The famous Harvard Law Review was the reference to create such a publication. The first issue came out in 1989 as the ELSA Law Review (ELR) and was intentionally planned published every three months. Since 1993 the ELR came out twice a year and compiled articles from law students and young lawyers all over Europe on International Law.

Although the project was admired by ELSA-members and academics, it faced many difficulties. To give the Law Review a brand-new start, the ICM Istanbul in October 1996 decided on a complete new concept for the publication.

The name switched from ELSA Law Review to ELSA Selected Papers on European Law – ELSA SPEL. A new layout and new marketing materials were created. The greatest change though was that a professional publisher was found to take over the distribution and administration of the selling. After ICM Lisbon 2008 it was published as a web journal. In ICM Poznan 2010 it was cancelled.

In 2013, during ICM Cologne, the concept of having a Law Review for ELSA was brought back and generally accepted by the AA officers.

For more information concerning the development of the new Law Review of ELSA, please contact the VPAA of ELSA International at vpaa@elsa.org or at legalwriting@elsa.org.

Legal Debate

A legal debate is discussion of a particular subject of Law. It normally consists of a panel of participants, with a majority of students. The Debate is controlled by a person acting as a moderator, and watched by an audience.

Debating is a skill that teaches not only critical thinking, but also allows law students and young lawyers to engage with current affairs, improve their communication skills and hone their analytical abilities.

Advantages of the Legal Debates

Below you can find the main advantages associated with the organisation and implementation of this kind of events, taking in consideration four main points of view: participants, audience, panel and officers. The advantages listed below are only suggestions based on the authors' experience.

For the Participants

- To develop argumentative skills and simplify the process of exposing different ideas;
- To obtain specific knowledge about a topic and then put it into practice;
- To improve researching skills and promote team work;
- To enhance communicative techniques and of public speech.

(Promotion suggestions - marketing collaboration: posters and flyers)

For the Audience

- To extend the knowledge about the debated topic;
- To motivate the participation of audience members in future debates as speakers;
- To boost the debate's relevance within the academic community/ faculty.

For the Panel

- To improve the interpretation and evaluation of regulations;
- To expand moderation abilities and conflict resolution;
- To develop a better sense of impartiality and organisation capacity.

For the ELSA Officers

- To keep contact with specialists in the areas being debated;
- To stimulate the relationship between the ELSA group and the faculty's executive board;
- To promote ELSA's image by making new members;
- To develop the event organizers capacities of time management, conflicts resolution, team work and sense of autonomy;
- To raise budget management abilities;
- To promote partnerships and to deepen fundraising techniques.

This kind of events is of easy implementation, not requiring a substantial economic effort and yet having immediate effects when taking in consideration the knowledge achieved by its participants and audience. The VPAA's shall be the main promoters of the legal debates within the network, as a reflection of their strong contribution to the legal teaching of ELSA members. It is suggested the reading of the AA materials and to contact the more experienced officers in the organization of this events.

Other debates

A legal debate can also be any kind of simulation of an assembly or committee of an international or national institution organised in accordance to the appropriate rules.

Responsibilities of the AA officer

The AA officer shall take measures to involve ELSA members in debating activities. Debating is a skill that teaches not only critical thinking, but also allows law students and young lawyers to engage with current affairs, improve their communication skills and hone their analytical abilities.

Legal Course

A legal course is an interactive formation that aims to deepen practical knowledge, to develop skills to supplement the academic curriculum and to ensure an early contact with the legal world.

It should consist of a minimum of six hours divided into at least three sessions.

A legal course focuses on practical skills that are not acquired through a pure study of substantive law but which are necessary in order to carry out a legal profession.

Background

The concept of ELSA Legal Courses was introduced for the first time during the II Key Area Meeting in Brno, Czech Republic. A group of National and Local officers took part in the discussions in how to structure the legal courses and during ICM Batumi 2012, the first plan for the project was ready to be approved.

The Legal Courses aim to develop new opportunities that will provide the necessary practical skills to complement the education received by law students during their studies and to train law students and young lawyers to be comprehensive, thoughtful and proactive. These events also are determined to improve law students and young lawyers' soft skills and to ensure development of the Legal Writing activities by providing ELSA members with specific training on Legal English and Legal Writing.

The role of the legal course in legal education and soft skills

According to the Philosophy Statement, ELSA is committed to contribute for the improvement of legal education. It also aims to assist law students and young lawyers to be professionally skilled. Considering the involvement of the Academic Activities field in ELSA in the development of the topics above referred, there is the necessity to evaluate the effects of our projects to achieve these goals and the ways to improve them. Academic Activities aim to deepen practical knowledge, develop skills to supplement the regular education curriculum and to assure an earlier contact with legal professionals and academic experts.

It is to be highlighted that the Legal Courses shall be planned to provide the participants with practical skills and exercises. By this, it is meant that a Legal Course is not a lecture. Instead, it shall be focused in the improvement of practical knowledge. Such courses can have as topics, for example:

- oral and written communication;
- analytical reasoning;
- legal research;
- client service;
- management;
- technological legal tools;
- time management;
- organisation and;
- teamwork.

Legal Courses: new opportunities!

Other of the most relevant opportunities provided by the Legal Courses is to prepare our members in the fields of Legal Writing, Legal English and Legal Research. By providing them with the chance to take part in a course dedicated to these topics, they will be more prepared to write and submit their essays for international, national and local Essay Competitions. They would also have a concise view of their tasks as members of a Legal Research Group. Legal Courses can have as topic any kind of preparations for Moot Court Competitions, which would help the Academic Activities officers to reach a larger number of students and increasing the number of participants and teams in different moot courts organised within our Association.

There is a clear potential in the implementation of the Legal Courses. The reasons are various:

- It is a project easily planned and managed;
- It does not necessarily request any financial investment;
- Since it has a well-defined but yet flexible structure, the Legal Courses allow the ELSA Network to focus on the topics/content of the event itself and potential new partnerships;
- Each Group that takes a Legal Course as an Academic Activities' project will be able to involve law firms, companies, other NGOs, universities and training organisations. This is a unique opportunity to start new cooperation with legal institutions, universities and law firms that will provide experts to deliver the trainings in soft skills, Legal Writing or Legal English;
- The Legal Course can be provided to ELSA members for any of the referred institutions. It shall be academically and administratively prepared by ELSA.

How to get started

1. You should ask yourself what are the skills the members from your group would like to develop. Are they just looking for deepen legal knowledge or they also want to learn how to perform the practical tasks of the daily work at the law firm.
2. It was already said that a legal course focuses on practical skills. This means that the skills given by the course are the one that are not acquired through a pure study of substantive law but which are necessary in order to carry out a legal profession. This easily gives you the opportunity to discuss with a law firm a possible partnership on this project or ask advice for the kind of skills that can be developed through a practical course.
3. Make sure that the topic is attractive, accessible, and useful and that the sessions are as much as interactive as possible. The goal is that the participants can put in practice the topics learnt, by performing different kind of tasks. For example, sessions can be related to contract drafting.
4. As it is regulated, the legal course should consist of a minimum of six hours divided into at least three sessions. If the event you organise does not fit this rule then it cannot be classified as a legal course in ELSA. This is to assure a minimum quality of the event and uniformity in different National and Local groups of ELSA. However, it is also important to understand that this can be a long-term initiative, divided in different sessions during a longer period of time.
5. Cooperation with universities, NGOs and law firms seems to be one of the most efficient ways to implement a legal course. These institutions have the experts that can deliver the sessions.

Lawyers at work events, L@W

L@W events aim at allowing law students and young lawyers an insight view into the legal profession. L@W events are an opportunity for law students and young lawyers to receive career information from those working in various professions which are open to law graduates.

Introduction

The aim of organising a L@W event is to provide students and young graduates with the opportunity to understand the different career opportunities that are open to law students at the end of their studies. These events give them the opportunity to meet experts in the various professions related to law studies or which are at least open to law graduates even if they are not directly law related careers.

Background

While having an European Lawyer Day at the Council Meeting in Brussels in October 1992 the idea was brought forward to have Lawyers-at-Work Events, so called L@W events. Intentionally for recruitment interest of Law Firms the idea of the L@W events quickly changed to the idea of giving law students an impression of how the work of the various jobs of a lawyer can look like. This way we can contribute to the often very theoretical education we receive at the university.

Motivation

L@W events are a very powerful tool in your hands. You can offer a company or a law firm the opportunity of directly presenting itself to students at a L@W event. Through L@W events you are creating a direct link between students and the professional world and everybody will benefit from it. Students will benefit because they will get their career information directly from the people who work in those professions. Lack of information on the opportunities that exist is often the main obstacle in finding a job. Institutions and companies also benefit from the exercise because by dedicating time to young people they are investing in their own future.

Your tasks as a Local or National AA officer

The main task within this area is to organise events, but also to inform other Local and National Groups about your activities and to inform your members about activities in other ELSA Groups. When needed also to fill in the forms that the National Board or International Board needs.

There are different ways of how to arrange a L@W event. You may decide to have these meetings on a regular basis or have just one major event. If you choose to have one of these events once a month you could invite an expert or two from different professions on each occasion covering as many professions as possible.

The other possibility is to bring all these people together at one time giving the students the opportunity to hear about the profession or professions in which they are most interested within a short period of time.

The idea behind these meetings is to allow students to know all the possibilities that studying law opens up to them and that is why these meetings should be more practical and concrete than theoretical. A considerable amount of time should be set aside to allow for direct questions from the students.

When you consider who to invite to speak to the students remember that you are looking for people who can transmit their experiences in a very pleasant and fascinating manner. You will soon realise that someone who enjoys his job very much can prove to be more valuable than a very famous expert.

In organising a L@W event the key words that should guide you must be attractive, interesting and unusual.

If you organise a L@W event think about if it is possible to have it in English, so exchange students in your town/country can participate.

A good starting point would be to contact your local or national Bar Association or Chamber of Advocates. Very often they will be able to suggest appropriate people for your needs. Inviting the President of these associations, if he is a good speaker, could add prestige and credibility to your L@W events. Your university professors could also be a good source of information.

In either case do not be shy to directly contact the expert who you think can help you even if he or she is very famous. Often these sorts of people enjoy direct contact with young people and fresh minds. So just pick up the phone and call or send an e-mail to that famous diplomat or the President of The Bar Association.

Job fair/career day

A way to organise L@W event is to organise a “job fair”. You bring different law firms, governmental institutions and NGOs together at one place for a day.

Each organisation can have an info stand, to which students can go and talk to representatives of different professions and organisations. This is a good way to give the students a possibility to compare different career possibilities it also might give the students useful contacts and the companies are able to meet future employees.

In connection to the fair you can organise other events:

- Different lectures, since many organisations are in place, there probably will be no problems to find interesting lecturer. You can work together with the VPS&C of your group.
- Small MCC or Case competitions, probably some of the participating law firms at the job fair can offer judges, cases and prizes, for instance short internship for the winners.
- Social activities for instance a dinner where students and professionals can meet.
- Make a publication/brochure, in which you introduce all the participating organisations/companies, so it is easy for the students to compare the different participants and so they know who will be there at the day of the job fair. You can also have articles with interesting professionals. To get more money you can sell advertisements in it.
- Interviews, ask the law firms if they want to have CVs from the last year students, interested in working at their firm, collect CV's from interested students and make it possible for the law firms to have some room, where they can have interviews.

Benefits of a job fair:

- Many organisations and students at one place, both the students and organisations will benefit from the meeting.
- A way to get money for your ELSA Group, with this money you can fund other activities such as participating at NCMs, ICMs and go on study visits to other ELSA Groups. The money comes from participating fees from the organisations and from advertisements in the marketing material. Make different offers that the companies can choose from.

The daily work at law firms and institutions

Another possible way to organise a L@W event is to go to the office of a law firm, NGO or a governmental institution. However, keep in mind that this should not be a study visit as organised in S&C. It is expected that it is interactive.

Benefits:

- You do not need to organise a venue.
- You do not need to organise catering or social events in connection to the event.
- Normally the students cannot visit the law firm and institutions themselves, so here is a clear need for an organisation like ELSA.

One of the ideas could be to organise a “Lawyer for a Day” event. During one day a student could work at the law firm or other legal organisation, together with professionals. This is a very dynamic and interesting way to show how the daily work at the law firm is, what the tasks are and topics discussed and researched.

At your faculty

A single local session is probably one of the easiest way to organise an ELSA-event. You just have to find and invite an interesting person to talk about his/her work. Then you need a venue and some marketing.

L@W lectures can also be part of an S&C-event. If your ELSA group organise a Seminar on a specific topic, you can invite someone working within this field of law to talk about his work with the topic “in real life”.

Studies Abroad Projects

Studies abroad projects are informative events about different possibilities of studying abroad as well as reception activities for incoming foreign students.

The AA officer shall organise events aimed to involve and integrate international students.

Background

Studies Abroad Projects result of the modification of the former ELSA Studies Abroad Programme (SAP). This programme intended to provide opportunities to learn about other cultures and legal systems and to be internationally minded by supporting students who study abroad. It was one of the oldest programmes in AA and, originally, was intended to be a sister program to STEP. While STEP dealt with students going abroad to work, Studies Abroad would deal with students going abroad to study.

Initially the SAP was based on three main areas:

- Information. Used to be provided by the Guide to Legal Studies in Europe (universities where to study law).
- Outgoing Students/ Information Meetings. Students who are going to spend a long term in a foreign country and, probably foreign culture, should be told what to expect.

Incoming Students/ Reception. Students might prepare themselves for a foreign country by reading guidebooks, however there is nothing like having a reception programme – helping them find accommodation, fill in the necessary paperwork and also help them integrate fully in the society.

Due to the cancelation of the Guide to Legal Studies in Europe in 2001, during several years there have been discussions in how to improve the programme, however, without any success. This is why during the ICM Cologne 2013, the AA officers decided to keep the concept behind the programme through the Studies Abroad Projects, to be organised at the local level.

Mentor Program/ Exchange student's reception

In some ELSA countries the Local Boards have an agreement with the University for a mentor/mentee programme for the international exchange students arriving each semester.

The mentor program is a really good way of making ELSA more international on a Local level for the members.

The idea of the program is that each exchange student gets appointed a mentor. The mentor is then responsible for welcoming and integrating the foreign student to the law faculty, the city and life in another country.

You can also offer L@W events and legal debates, especially for foreign students at your University. They are usually very interested in getting to know how the legal system works in practice in your country.

Motivation

The mentors will get in touch with another culture, improve or practice their foreign language skills and broaden their personal network. As for the mentees, they will get a personal guide, and someone to ask questions and become more integrated in the new culture.

It is also something that is good to have on your CV, showing that you are internationally minded. The ELSA group should issue a diploma for the mentor.

How to start a Mentor Program

- Ask the University if they have a mentor program.
- If not, ask if they are interested in one (be sure to tell them about the great opportunities you have experienced through your international ELSA network)
- If they have a program – ask who is responsible and see what they are doing, maybe you can enter into cooperation?

Other Studies Abroad Projects

The Studies Abroad Projects are meant to be dynamic and to allow the contact between the members of your group with foreign students and studies programmes abroad. Some excellent initiatives have been developed throughout the years by some ELSA Groups. A good example is the “Buddy Week” and “ELSA Lingua”, interactive projects that enhance cultural diversity and international exchange.

Other AA projects

AA is a very dynamic area. Different activities are created every day by officers all over Europe. The reason behind our diversity is the fact that any project or event that aims at providing an interactive and practical experience to participants can be considered as being part of AA. During ICM Cologne 2013 it was agreed that there is a need to recall article 3.3. of the Statutes of ELSA to include within the area any project that is related to this definition.

This means that if you are planning a brand new activity that fits this idea, you should not be afraid to do it as AA officer. Keep in mind that there is a need to adapt initiatives to the reality of the different ELSA groups and that fulfilling your tasks as Local or National officer depends a lot on your creativity. However, please pay always attention to the AA regulations as stated on our Decision Book. There are activities that do not fall under the scope of ELSA and that shall be avoided.

AA in different levels

International: Academic Activities are international when attended by participants that have different national and legal backgrounds and who arrive in the country of venue primarily for the purpose of taking part in the international event.

National: Academic Activities are national when attended by participants from two or more cities from the same country.

Local: Academic Activities are local when attended by participants from the same city, unless there is only one Law Faculty in the respective country, in which case the event shall be considered as national.

International Focus Programme, IFP

Introduction

The International Focus Programme (IFP) was introduced in 1994 to provide the network with an opportunity to work together on a “hot legal topic”. In the IFP framework Local and National Groups work together with ELSA International and legal institutions to build a concrete knowledge base and to organise events, such as seminars, conferences, legal research groups, debates, moot court competitions, L@W, publications and traineeships, that will have an impact on law students, society and the international community. The IFP shall be implemented in all Key Areas.

The Topic

The theme reflects a ‘hot legal topic’ in Europe and the world, thereby enabling ELSA as the largest independent law students’ organisation in the world by using the unique ELSA network to create awareness amongst today’s law students, young lawyers, society and the international community. The chosen theme considers that we, as law students and young lawyers, can have an impact on the environment we are living in, on the development of our own countries, Europe and even the world by giving law students and young lawyers all over Europe a voice and gathering all their diverse opinions and ideas and execute them through our projects.

The Council at the ICM decides the topic, its duration and its Final IFP result. The topic shall be:

- versatile internationally relevant
- with academic discussion potential, thereby representing ELSA’s cultural diversity
- with an impact on everyday life, thereby generating interest towards the topic
- attractive to sponsors at all levels.

Previous IFP themes include:

- “A Just World: A new role for lawyers, legal education and law in development” (1995-1997)
- “The Law of Peace in the Year 2000 - current violations and effective enforcement of international law; the reform of international organizations” (1997-1999)
- “Information Society - the Legal Challenges: Application of New Technologies, Protection of Individuals and the Legislative Response.” (2000-2002)
- “Trade Law - a Way for Sustainable Development” (2003-2005)
- “25 Years of Legal Development” (2006-2007)

- “Intellectual Property Law” (2007-2010)
- “Health Law” (2010-2013)

The current IFP topic is Health Law, the duration is 1st August 2010 until 31st July 2013. The final result of the IFP will be a conference and a publication. The upcoming IFP topic is Media Law and it will be implemented from the 1st August 2013 until the 31st July 2016.

Implementation of the IFP is solely a recommendation to the Network, and cannot, in any way, be enforced. However, ELSA International is responsible for making sure the Network is stimulated and informed to implement the IFP in all key areas. The Network therefore is responsible for promotion of the IFP and organising activities as much as possible and feasible.

How to work with IFP within the AA area

The reference to IFP in AA Part of the Decision Book appears almost in the beginning. Please check point 4 of Quality in Academic Activities. It is said that the One-Year Operational Plan of every officer in charge of the AA Area shall take in special consideration the International Focus Programme in force. The organisation of activities related to IFP shall be encouraged and supported by the National Officers, and implemented by Local Officers.

There are a million things you can do in the ELSA Network either at a Local, National or even International level. And the IFP topic can fit in each and every one of them. The advisory assistance and good contacts are important factors for the success of your events. If you have problems finding such support, contact your

National Board, the International Board or the Director for IFP and someone of them maybe can help you with contacts and inputs.

AA-project, in which it is easy to incorporate IFP:

- MCC with the IFP topic, a local, national or an international one.
- Essay Competitions and Publications, a local, national or an international one.
- L@W, you can invite professionals working within the field of law, that are the IFP topic at the moment.
- LRG, you can work to find members for a LRG that can work with the IFP topic.

Your tasks as a Local or National AA officer

- Implement the IFP by organising events within AA
- Inform and advice members as well as other interested persons about the IFP events and available opportunities within the IFP
- Contribute to the Final IFP Result (if any)

- Submit the completed AA Evaluation Form and other relevant information to your National VP AA and/or ELSA International at the end of each event organised.
- Submit a summary for the IFP publication about the main results of the IFP event organised to your National Board and/or the International Board.
- Promote the IFP: the Final IFP Results, the Events organised throughout the entire network and stimulation of implementation of the IFP.
- Provide necessary formation, information and other assistance to Local Groups to organise IFP events.
- Participate in the research for finding the best “hot legal topic” and subtopics for the next IFP.

More information about the IFP and the implementation of the IFP

Take a look at the IFP Handbook. The advisory assistance and good contacts are important factors for the success of your events. If you have problems finding such support, contact your National Board, the International Board or the Director for IFP (if existent) and someone of them maybe can help you with contacts and inputs.

Human Rights

“A just world where there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”

This is ELSA's Vision, part of our Philosophy Statement and it is not hard to see the strive for Human Rights in our work.

Introduction

Human Rights is the main treasure and value of mankind, therefore the implementation of Human Rights as a topic in our activities is an emphasize of the network, giving special importance to Human Rights Law and promoting the respect for Human Rights. The sum of ELSA activities including Human Rights in their quality, variety and quantity makes an invaluable contribution to Human Rights education as a tool to increase the awareness of Human Rights.

ELSA shall be continuously committed to Human Rights awareness, Human Rights education, and the respect of the Rule of Law. ELSA shall strive to be recognised for a strictly legal, academic and impartial approach to Human Rights.

The History

- Rome October 1993: 'ELSA is to investigate the creation of a new Area of Activity (Key Area Activity), dealing with Human Rights and Social Solidarity.
- Malta October 1994: Approval of a one year pilot-phase in the field of Human Rights running from the Malta CM to the Nottingham CM.
- Nottingham September 1995: 'Human Rights will be permanently included within the ELSA activities.
- Rome 10-1998 and Warsaw 03-2000: 'ELSA shall be continuously committed to HR awareness, HR education, and the respect of the Rule of Law.

Implementation

Human Rights shall be implemented in all key area activities. The cooperation with the institutions contributing to Human Rights by attending their events and making common projects are some of the ways to take part in the creation, development and evolvement of Human Rights education and implementation.

Your task as an AA officer

- Implement the Human Rights by organising events within the topic;
- Inform and advice members as well as other interested persons about ELSA's focus on Human Rights;

- Promote events organised throughout the entire Network and stimulate implementation of Human Rights;
- Provide necessary formation, information and other assistance to Local Groups to organise Human Rights events.

Human Rights in Moot Court Competitions

Human Rights issues are often brilliant topics for a moot court. Human Rights Law is a good topic for learning litigation and legal argumentation. Everybody can relate to the topics and they invite an easy and logical approach. At the same time Human Rights Law inspires thorough legal research. A moot court on a Human Rights case requires challenging and interesting argumentation with references to international and national legislation, case law, international and national legal theory, philosophy of law and cultural practices.

In order to provide law students with an opportunity to gain practical experience in the field, ELSA organises a European wide moot court competition on the European Convention on Human Rights in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The competition simulates the procedure of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights.

For further information regarding the European Courts on Human Rights: <http://www.humanrightsmootcourt.org/>

Legal Research Groups on Human Rights

Legal Research Groups provide the structure for investigating thoroughly a legal topic together with other students and producing an outcome of the joint efforts of the research and analysis of the topic. You could co-operate with the AA Officer to contact the professors at your university who are specialised in this field for advice and guidance to the LRG. Maybe you can also ask your contacts established in the field of Human Rights to provide help and materials for the LRG.

The last 2 international LRG organised by the ELSA Network were very focused on Human Rights issues: Children Rights and Online Hate Speech.

Lawyers at work event, L@W

Events at legal institutions, firms and organisations working with Human Rights. Through your contacts you can get inspiration and a practical opportunity to organise excursions to Human Rights related institutions. This could be done locally, to Law Firms specialised in Human Rights or local offices of Human Rights institutions or organisations.

Also, an event at an international head office in another country could be organised, for instance to the UN and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia in The Hague or some of the many organisations based in Brussels (where you could also visit the ELSA House!). The list really is endless!

Responsibilities for Human Rights

Acknowledging the fact that Human Rights shall be implemented in all key areas, the responsibilities of ELSA International and the responsibilities of the National and Local Groups are equal to the responsibilities of the International Focus Programme.

Motivation

It can be a good idea to gather people particularly interested in Human Rights and motivated to work for ELSA in this area. You can start a 'Human Rights Team' or just get some people to help you on specific tasks. This is a very good way of getting people involved in Human Rights and in ELSA in general. First of all, one of the most fruitful ways to learn about Human Rights is to work with the topics in a practical way as in participating in the organising of an ELSA event on the subject. Also, this is a good way of attracting more people to ELSA, since the Human Rights activities might interest new people that would not otherwise be aware of the dazzling world of ELSA.

Strategic Goals and AA

Introduction

During the ICM in Lisbon, Spring 2008, the network decided upon a five year plan, based on the goal to improve and widen the network. These goals shall be reached by Spring ICM 2013.

During ICM Cologne, Spring 2013, new Strategic Goals were voted upon and approved by ELSA Network.

A Strategic Plan is:

An important tool to guide the work of an organisation in a united direction. It will help to maintain a focused, long-term vision of the organisation's purpose, and to aid decisions about the allocation of human and financial resources. In many organisations, this is viewed as a process for determining where an organisation is going over the next year or more -typically 3 to 5 years.

In the previous Strategic Goals there were specific recommendations concerning AA. However, this is not what happens with the new plan that has focus areas that are not necessarily the areas in ELSA. That is why we would recommend you to have a look at the new Strategic Goals to see how to fulfill them in the best way possible.

Communication, the different levels in ELSA and benefits of the Network

One of the things that make ELSA special is the Network. This is one of the major things that makes your ELSA group special when comparing it with other local or national law students' associations.

So when you work with the AA-area remember there are other Local and National VP AAs in the Network probably working on the same thing and facing the same challenges.

Use the net-work to get help, ideas and inputs on your work and to improve one of the key areas in ELSA. Use the AA mailing list to easily get in touch with the rest of the network, see more info further down.

Also remember that the National Board of your country is there to help and support the Local Groups and that the International Board is there to help and work for the whole network. Ask them for help, if you have ideas for changes – make proposals to the NCMs or ICMs, if you have solutions for problems or ideas how to one better can work with the AA-area – tell the network.

The AA part of the Decision Book also regulates some of the most important rules of communication. They concern the ELSA AA-list, the Event Specification Form and the Evaluation Form.

ELSA AA-list: discussion and information list

The ELSA-AA is an email-list on which all VP AAs (National and Local) should be subscribed to. This mailing list is only used for AA related information and it is administrated by ELSA International.

It is also the responsibility of ELSA International to make sure that all the national AA officers' emails are subscribed or that at least all the National Groups are informed about the process of registration. On the other hand, it is responsibility of all national officers to maintain the discussion and information list active and to participate in discussions.

You can subscribe to the ELSA-AA by sending an email to VP AA ELSA International, vpaa@elsa.org, explaining that you are National/Local AA Officer and that you would like to be subscribed to the ELSA AA-list. Please note that the local officers should be given the possibility to join the international AA discussion and information list as observers upon request of the national officer.

When to use the list:

- If you have information for the network about an event, organised in your country;
- If you want input from other VP AAs on your ideas and/or projects;

- If you want to discuss proposals before the ICM;
- If you want to discuss the direction and development of different AA-areas;
- If you need information or have information about International AA events.

How to use the list:

When you want to send a message to all the VP AAs, who are at the AA-list, write to ELSA-AA@listserv.elsa.org.

When not to use the list:

You should only send emails that concerns or should be interesting to a large number of subscribers. If your email only concerns a specific person, eg. an answer to a question from the VP AA of ELSA International, please send your e-mail direct to the interested person. To answer VP AA of ELSA International, it is better to write to vpaa@elsa.org, instead of answering on the list. Although, when you send activity report or something similar, it is very good to use the list, so that the other officers can be inspired and updated.

Avoid sending large files to the list as this might block some people's mailboxes.

AA at Internal Meetings

AA at the International Council Meeting, ICM

The International Council Meeting (ICM) is the highest decision making body in ELSA. During the ICM an AA-Workshop takes place in which changes to be made and the future of the programmes are discussed.

At the end of the ICM the results of the Workshop are presented during a final plenary session. The proposals of the workshop and of the countries are decided by the council and after being approved are put in force. The proposals are collected in the Decision Book.

Each Country should send participants to the workshop to present the opinion of the National Board. If a National Group has more than one participant, the NG still has only one vote.

Working Materials for the Workshop are available 30 days before the ICM so you shall prepare yourself for the Workshop.

After each ICM the minutes of the Workshop and the plenary are put online, so you can archive them and use them to prepare for the next ICM. Minutes are a referendum of every statement that was made during the week. In each workshop there is a representative from the International Board, a chair, a vice chair and two secretaries.

AA at the Key Area Meeting, KAM

The Key Area Meeting of ELSA is an internal meeting organised each year that gathers the Key Area officers (AA, S&C and STEP) in the same place to have workshops and discussions about their areas.

The first edition took place in September 2012 in Brno, Czech Republic. The second edition will take place in September 2013 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic.

State of the Network Report, SotN

Before every ICM, every National Group has to fill in the SotN, there are sections for each area. In the AA-area there are some questions about what kind of activities that have been organised in the country on local, national and international level. It is the responsibility of the National VP AA to make sure that the AA-part of the SotN is done, but it is impossible for the National VP AA to do this if the Local VP AA does not send in information about their activities.

Since the ELSA network is so big, it is hard to keep track of all the different activities that are held from local level to national and international level in all countries. Therefore we have the SotN, so that we can see in which direction the network is going and what kind of activities within the area are prioritised or not and why.

AA at the National Council Meeting, NCM

How the NCM's are organised depends on the numbers of LGs and tradition of the National ELSA group. The NCM is normally the highest decision making body within the National Group. On the NCM there can be special AA workshops, where AA-questions will be discussed.

If you have the possibility you should go to the NCMs, there you can get new ideas and inputs how to organise AA-events, you will also meet many other active ELSA-members that can help you with organising your events. In many National Groups it is mandatory for an AA officer to attend the NCM.

Cooperation between different National Groups and Local Groups

The key to success lies in the word communication.

Local Officer & other Local Officer

As a Local AA-officer it is also very important to keep in touch with the other local AA-officers in your country. It is important to keep in touch about the events your organising. You want to make sure that you are not planning similar events around the same time. You could also decide to plan an event such as a study-visit or Moot Court together. Two groups know more than one and together you have more possibilities. This kind of co-operation can also come in handy when you are having problems getting enough participants for an event. Besides these benefits there are also the same benefits as there are on the other levels. You can help each other out

because you are working on the same things and possibly facing the same problems. The easiest and most fun way to get in touch with the other local officers is of course by attending the NCM. Try to create a communication stream and keep it going. Try to meet up with the other local officers outside of the NCM's.

National Board & Local Board

On the national level it is very important to keep track of all the Local Groups and their work. Be there to support, help, push forward and give positive and negative criticism. A possible way of communication is to make an e-mail list or a Facebook/Google group.

It is also a good idea to try to travel around to the different Local Groups so that the Local VP AA's have a face on you. It is always easier to pick up the phone when you know who you are talking to.

National Board & other National Board & International Board

It is also very important to communicate with the other NG's in the network as well as the VP AA of ELSA International.

Most of them are facing the same problems and can give you feed-back on proposals or help you start up a new event. Use your good and bad experiences to help the others. If an event went really good, write it to the AA list and tell the others what you did different this time. We only want to repeat our success and not our mistakes!

AA Team Facebook Group

The AA officers can be part of the AA Team Facebook Group on Facebook. This group is an informal platform of communication between officers, where events can be promoted and information and common topics can be discussed. In case you want to be added to this group contact the VPAA of ELSA International.

Organising an AA project

Check points when organising a project

There are a lot of things to remember when planning and organising projects and events. Here follows some guidelines that can be helpful to follow. We hope to read about many successful events in Synergy/national members magazine, on the AA-list and to hear about them at future ICM/NCM.

Goal and motivation for organising AA projects

The reasons for organising academic activities can be many, eg.: to provide opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific co-operation; to assist law students and young lawyers to be internationally minded and professionally skilled and to encourage law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

By organising different AA-events the different ELSA Groups contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers.

By organising events you will also improve your own soft skills such as project management and presentation. You will also learn a lot about the topic you choose for the event, get contacts with professionals within this field, have a lot of fun together with your team when organising and also meet a lot of participants interested in the same area as you.

Planning

The most important tool for a successful event is the planning. Here you set out your expectations and needs. Basically how to get from A to B, start to ending.

Here follows some questions to consider during the first brainstorming period:

What kind of event

- Discuss your idea with the rest of the board
- Within which AA-area, what kind of event eg. Job fair, MCC or an Essay Competition?
- Topic? Why this topic and who will be interested in funding it and participate?
- How many participants?
- What kind of participants? Eg. all students, only first-year students or only master-level students?
- Language?

- On which level, local, national or international?
- Will you need Hotel/Hostel accommodation for participants and lecturer, judges etc.?
- Inform other Local and/or National Groups about your plan, they might plan the same kind of event on the same topic. You could then organise it together, help each other or at least try to not organise your event at the same event.
- Will there be some social activities in connection to the event?

Who will help with organising?

- How many people are needed for the Organising Committee (OC)? Who will be Head of OC? How many is needed for helping the OC?
- Who in your board will help you and what are their responsibilities?
- Does anyone in your ELSA Group have any useful contacts? Who should be contacted?
- Does the event need a moderator, who is specially invited?
- Could professors, the University, friends, partners/sponsors of the ELSA Group help?
- Remember to check with your NB or IB if you want to contact their co-operation partners. IF you want to contact professors at another university, remember to contact the Local ELSA Group there first.
- Could the National VP AA or ELSA International help with inputs or contacts?
- Old ELSA-members, is someone working with the topic you chosen?

Timeline (the 7 steps)

To be efficient and save time at the end, it is important to plan the time, when should you do what and when is the latest point of time to be able to change your plan.

Decide where and when you have your critical points. Critical points are important goals that have to be reached to complete the event in time and correctly.

It can be a sponsorship, application deadline and/or OC.

The Seven steps:

1. Clarify the assignment and target group
2. Define the objectives
3. Search for options (brainstorming)

4. Choose the best option
5. Set up steps of the process
6. Execute your plan, employ control mechanisms
7. Evaluate outcomes and efficiency of the process

Remember to use a coordinator and to always keep track of time!!!

Remember a plan is just a plan and therefore very possible to change, when you see the need for changes.

What about an international AA project?

There are several models possible. Take a look at this example.

12 months prior to the event: starting with the making of a project plan by setting a date and researching the field of the project.

11 months prior to the event: make a fundraising strategy and start hunting for sponsors and speakers

10 months prior to the event: send the details of the event to the marketer for producing the promotion materials and send in the Event Specification Form (ESF) to ELSA International. Remember that there is a separate deadline for the Events' Calendar in Synergy.

9 months prior to the event: The marketing materials should now be ready for distribution on Local and National level and if possible, they should also be sent to ELSA International who will publish it on www.elsa.org. Remember to send the promotion messages to the international mailing lists

8 months prior to the event: promote your event through other National Groups and all marketing channels like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, university, professors, magazines etc.

6 months prior to the event: the application opens. Critical check point!

3 months prior to the event: this is the first and only official application deadline. At this point you review if an extension of the application deadline is needed.

2 months prior to the event: this is the unofficial second application deadline, meaning if you saw the need to extend the first application deadline you have made this one official.

1 month prior to the event: everything should be settled. Here you can send additional settled information to the participants to ensure their awareness and attendance in the event.

Event!

1 month after the event: Do not forget about thanking academics and sponsors for their attendance.

Budget

With bigger project it is important to discuss with the whole board at the beginning of the planning phase. Who is responsible for what kind of fundraising and for paying costs? What happens if you do not get enough incomes? When do you need to know if you get enough money? At what point can you still cancel the event?

- Costs, when will they rise and how large
- Depend on event and country, but here some general points to think about:
- Academic advisor, professors, judges etc. Travel and living;
- Living and transport for the participants;
- Catering;
- Venue;
- Working material;
- Telephone or mobile phone;
- Marketing material;
- Gifts;
- Prizes.

Fundraising and when will the money come

Depends on event and country, but here some general points to think about:

- Your general sponsors/partners;
- Sponsors/partners just for the event;
- Law firms;
- Institutions working with the topic;
- University;
- Companies working within the field of the topic of the event;
- Funds for the topic, for cooperation between some countries etc.;

- Ask the National Board or International Board, they could have ideas where you can try to fundraise, they could also have useful contacts;
- Ask other Local or National VP AAs, they can have ideas or contacts;
- ELSA Development Foundation, EDF.
-

Do not always have to be money. Can also be free or discount on:

- Food;
- Marketing materials;
- Lecturer paying their own travel costs;
- Prices for essay competitions or MCC;
- Venue.
- Just ask, worse thing that can happen is that they say no.

The following is a brief outline when seeking sponsorship:

1. Identify the potential sponsor;
2. Identify the possible donation;
3. Identify who a sponsorship request should be directed to. (If there are special forms to complete and the likely time period of response);
4. Ensure that if you are requesting sponsorship by letter, that you include a comprehensive package so the reader can understand your project and specific request;
5. Talk to the contact or visit the contact, but be very polite and aware of the individuals work load;
6. A preferable strategy would be to arrange a meeting between the sponsorship person and your team, so you may present the project.

ELSA Development Foundation, EDF

The ELSA Development Foundation is created towards financially support the core activities of ELSA. The modes of support available through EDF are regulated under the Financial Management part of the Decision Book. While the most conventional applicants for EDF are

National Groups, there are certain instances where Local Groups are eligible to apply; such as inexistence or persistent refusal from the National Group to offer their support.

EDF cannot cover all the cost of an event but is able to co-finance a project within the scopes of the foundation laid down in the ELSA Decision Book. The EDF Application Form can be send upon request to the Treasurer of ELSA International. Please notice the Application Form has to be handled in to ELSA International three weeks prior to the event.

Being Head of OC

Depends of the size of the event. For smaller events you probably do not need an OC.

If you have an OC, the Head of OC need to remember following:

Fundamentals

- Make a Timeline (remember the 7 steps) so everybody knows the different deadlines (start early with fundraising and marketing).
- Follow the budget and do not spend money you do not have.

Communication

- Make sure that all the different members of the OC receive all necessary information;
- Have regular OC meetings where you keep each other updated and co-ordinate your efforts;
- Inform ELSA International if you want the event added to the list of events (Events poster, Synergy, the AA-list);
- Do not panic if things do not go as planned, stay calm, improvise and make the best out of the situation;
- Make sure that your Marketer follows the logo and other relevant ELSA Rules, if you have questions contact the VP marketing of ELSA International.

Responsibility

- Remember to help the weaker parts;
- Remember that externals and participants do not differ between the different members of the OC and in the end you all share the credit and the criticism;
- Make sure everybody knows the names of the sponsors and that they keep an eye out for them if they are attending your event. Make one person responsible, thereby ensuring that all promises will be kept (e.g. exposure of the correct logo in your marketing material, power point projector and extension cord for their presentation and so on).

Team Spirit

- Do team building exercises in the beginning of the planning;
- Have gatherings, parties and training sessions for the OC.

Preparations

After you have done the first brainstorming it is time to make use of your plan.

Contact with external/ academic advisor/ judge/ Professor and places to visit

Decide who in the OC will be responsible for which contact and if possible let this person be the one contacting the person with all questions from the OC.

The way to contact the external will of course depend on the country and kind of event and if someone already know the lecturer or not, nevertheless follows here some points how one can contact an external:

1. First contact: letter or e-mail. Presentation of project and questions if the person wants to participate as lecturer, judge etc. Keep it short and simple. Say that you will call next week.
2. Make the phone call. Maybe they haven't had the time to read your letter/e-mail. Offer to send it again and make an appointment for a phone call a few days later.
3. If you get a negative answer, say thanks for their time, you might need the contact in the future so be polite.
4. If you get a positive answer, write a confirmation with date, location, number of expected participants, name of other academic, judges etc., contact information for responsible person in the OC, who can answer questions.
5. Call before the event and make sure that everything is clear and ask if there are some more wishes or questions. Decide were to meet the person and if the person needs transport.
6. Confirm your phone call with a short e-mail or letter.
7. Remember to decide who within the OC will be responsible for writing the thank you to the Professor, judge etc.

While contacting any externals please keep in mind the External Relation regulations that can be found in the BEE part of the Decision Book. These regulations are of great importance. Make sure you read them!

Venue

The question of venue must be solved on an early stage. If possible before you get the external and if not at least at the same time.

Points to think about when choosing venue:

- Location, how far from public transport, is there a need for arranging transport for participants.
- Cost, is it possible to get it for free.
- Technical things, what do you need and what is already at the venue, what can you bring with you.
- Who will participate, do they have special needs.
- How many rooms do you need?

Marketing

- It is now time to think about how to make it a big success.
- Good organisation is one pole and good promotion is the other. Giving the network enough time to put your event in its agenda is important. People do not usually travel from other ELSA Groups on a spontaneous decision.
- Every event is different and has its very own special needs but here are some general points to think about:

International events:

- Do not forget to register your event with the ELSA International website: vpmarketing@elsa.org
- Communicate your events on the international mailing lists.
- Setting up a dedicated website would boost your publicity.
- Check archives for certificates, poster templates and other materials.

National events:

- Do not forget to register your event at your national ELSA website.
- Communicate your events on the national mailing lists, if there is any.
- Flyers, posters, invitations and ads to national magazines and newspapers for students might also work.

- Make sure that all Local Groups in your country goes out to lectures at the law faculty and tell the students about the event.

Local Events:

- If you have a local website make sure that correct information about your event is on it.
- Flyers, posters, invitations and ads to local magazines and newspapers might also work
- Tell professors at your university teaching in the topic your event has, they can then tell their students about your event.
- Go out and talk about the event at lectures at the university.

Event Specification Form

Every AA event shall be specified in the AA Event Specification Form (AA ESF). The AA ESF is available online at ELSA Officers' Portal: officers.elsa.org.

Every organising group shall send the complete information in the AA ESF to:

- ELSA International and
- National Group,
- at least 3 weeks prior to the event.

The information submitted to ELSA International should at least contain:

- a Title of the event;
- b Dates or at least month of the event;
- c Language of the event;
- d Registration deadline;
- e Contact details.

As you might understand, ELSA International receives a lot of requests for publication of events on its website. That is why ELSA International shall give priority to the events that can be of the interest of the entire Network:

- international AA events;
- especially the ones concerning IFP and Human Rights.

If you have submitted already the information and it was posted on the website and, in case there is new information about the event, or details have changed, this should be sent to ELSA International as soon as possible. Keep in mind that the information posted on the ELSA International website reaches a lot of students from all over Europe and proper information shall be provided.

Some days before the event

- Contact the lecturer, judges etc. to see if they have some questions or if something is unclear and to check where you should meet the person.
- Make sure that everyone knows his or her responsibilities and tasks for the next day?
- If someone is ill, who will take their tasks?
- What gifts should be given on the event, to who, and who is responsible to organise them?
- Is there some kind of catering, who is responsible? Is it all clear and organised and ordered?
- Will there be some ELSA information, who is responsible to organise it and bring the information to the venue?
- Do you have to have some information about your sponsors/partners at the event?
- Do you need some information/working material to give to the participants? Who is responsible, is it printed and on place?
- Do you need some information disk?
- Do you need name tags?
- Did you ask for promotional and informative materials from the Council of Europe?
(vpaa@elsa.org)

Day of the event

- Who is responsible for transportation?
- Who is responsible for the venue, that you have keys, and that the equipment works, etc.?
- Is the room prepared?

- Is the catering prepared?
- Are the gifts for the lecturers in place?
- Is there water for the lecturer?
- Is the microphone, power point etc. working?
- Are the places for the OC, lecturers, sponsors reserved?
- Are the name tags prepared?
- Who will meet the academics, sponsors and other official guests?
- Who will give the welcome speech and introduced the eg. lecturer, judges and partners?
- Who takes notes for the report, evaluations forms, articles etc?
- Who take photos?
- Who will thank the lecturer and participants?
- Who will give the word if there is question time at the end of the event?
- Who will help with the cleaning after the event?

After the event

The work with the event is normally not finished directly after the event. There is often some important work still to do. The work will be important for the success of future ELSA-event.

Write “thank you” letters to your sponsors, judges etc. and other helpers. Who is responsible?

If a larger event, write an article for Synergy or your national magazine? Send a copy of the article to the lecturer and sponsors? Who is responsible?

Write an activity report and if needed fill in evaluation forms? Inform your National VP AA about the event, so the National VP AA can use it in the work with SOTN and also with the work with fundraising on national level.

What was good with the event? What was not so good? What have you learned? Write it down, so it can be used at the transition and by future VP AA's so that they do not have to make the same mistakes as you have made and also learn what is working. Write an evaluation report on the event.

Tell other VP AA's about what you learned so they get some inputs and ideas for their projects.

Keep a file/binder with all your materials – these will serve as templates for the next VP AA's that wants to organise a similar event.

Evaluation of the event

As part of the Communication Policies, it is very important to assure a proper use of the Evaluation Policies.

Evaluation has a fundamental importance in ELSA work. Evaluation allows to know if the goals established by the organised were achieved, if the expectations of the participants were met or not and what can be improved in future editions.

Participants' evaluation

To assure that evaluation is done in a proper way different agents involved in the process shall be involved. This justifies that every participant in an AA event shall be invited, upon completion of the event:

- a Fill in the Participation Form, which shall at least include the information indicated on the standard evaluation form;
- b Submit the Participant Evaluation Form to the organising group.

Organising group's evaluation

The same rule applies to the group that organises the AA event. After the event, members of the OC shall:

- a Evaluate the AA event with the participant and the partners involved in the event;
- b Submit to ELSA International or via NG the AA Event Evaluation Form – IFP, Human Rights, International Event;
- c Evaluation of every other event shall be submitted upon request of ELSA International.

National Group's evaluation

Quality in evaluation shall be ensured by the National Groups. They are responsible by checking that all local groups submit the completed AA Evaluation Form within 3 weeks after the AA event to ELSA International.

National Groups should also analyse the information received on the national level through the evaluation forms and establish a development plan for the following year in order to improve Academic Activities. Only by evaluating and implementing a structured answer to the problems, the events can be improved.

ELSA International responsibilities

ELSA International shall evaluate all information received at international level and suggest ways to improve Academic Activities.

One of the ways of supporting the Network as a result of evaluation is the production of the necessary manuals, handbooks and guidelines and the update outdated materials. Also it is also very important that all the tools created to the AA officers are available.

Other of the ways to assure a successful evaluation is to collect the archived material submitted by the national boards in the ELSA AA Archive that can be provided to the next AA'ers of the International Board. This information can be also later provided to the National Groups to inform them about AA events that used to be organised in the previous years.

Quality Standards concerning events' participation

During the ICM Cologne, Spring 2013, AA part of the Decision Book was changed. One of the aims of the introduced changes was to improve the quality of the AA events. Through this new section in the AA Handbook we are going to focus on some of the new regulations and giving brief explanation regarding their implementation.

Selection

Some of the AA projects might involve the process of selection of candidates. As you know, generally the AA events are opened to everybody. Every law student and young lawyer shall have the opportunity to apply for an AA event. However, in case there is the necessity of selecting participants you should keep in mind that it shall be done by:

- The organising group (maybe by member of the OC)
- With the orientation/support of academical or professional figures (ex: a professors, lawyer, partner, ect.)

Also keep in mind that if you are organising some event/project that requires the selection of candidates, then you should make clear what criteria will be used to support the decision since it should be fair. In case this is an AA International Events then this criteria should be as concrete as possible. It shall be decided:

- By the organising group;
- If applicable should be based on the academic background of the applicants.

Notification

Good communication is essential in any task you perform as an ELSA officer. The selection process ends with the communication to the selected applicants about the result.

Firstly, consider that you should communicate the results to everybody involved in the application process, not only the applicants who are selected for your project. Contact the ones who were not selected and if possible/convenient, give some reasons why the selection process had those results.

When communicating to the selected applicants the results, make sure you also contact their respective ELSA Group. This is relevant so that the Local Groups keep information about the events their members attend in other Local Groups in their National Group or abroad. However, please consider that for some reasons sometimes the applicants want complete confidentiality. In this case, you can include in the application form a question about this. Some Groups appreciate the information even to support their members when it comes to travel or accommodation expenses.

When the applicant is not a member of ELSA, the organising group should inform the applicant of contact details of the applicant's closest ELSA Group according to the applicant's contact address. Every law student and young lawyer applying for an AA event should be encouraged to become a member of ELSA.

For facilitating your work decide upon a deadline to receive the confirmation of the participants.

Preparation

The preparation for an event can play an important role when it comes to the dynamics of it. Unprepared participants can lead to inactive participants. This will decrease the overall quality of the event. This is why all participants should receive the necessary preparation, including:

- a Basic knowledge about ELSA;
- b Their responsibilities as a participant (as well as information about cost, visa, insurance, and all other legal requirements, if applicable to the event);
- c Any other preparation that the organising group deems necessary for the academic quality of the event.

Please understand that the information that the participants will receive beforehand will always depend on the type of event.

Applicants or participants shall be informed of cancellation of the AA event immediately after the event was cancelled.

In case the applicant provided false or inaccurate information in the application, the organising group has the right to reject the application. In case the applicant was already selected, the organising group can suspend the applicant.

Reception

Some events might require reception. In that case, the organising group shall provide the incoming participants with adequate reception and support throughout the duration of the event.

An adequate reception should consist of:

- a Be picked up at the airport/train or bus; or receive detailed guidance as how to get to the place of destination. Additional fees – transportation fees – can be added to the general cost of the event. This is a very usual option in ELSA events.
- b Receive a reception package/booklet – including information about the event, in case the participant is from a foreign country additionally general information about the country and the local environment (public transportation, different services, emergency phone numbers, etc.). In the majority of ELSA events, during the registration at the venue of the event, participants receive an identification badge that contains useful information.

Knowledge Management in Academic Activities

As result of the changes introduced in the AA part of the Decision Book during the ICM Cologne, Spring 2013, new responsibilities were imposed concerning Knowledge Management. For long time it has been discussed how to improve this important part of the ELSA work. The obligations that are now part of the regulations are directed to 2 main agents: the National Groups and ELSA International.

When it comes to the National Groups their main responsibilities are:

- To provide necessary training and information to Local Groups to organise AA events.
- To ensure that all Local Groups archive material and when receiving the material, send it to ELSA International.
- To create national manuals in the respective native language.
- To give transition to the next national officer and also local officers who haven't received it.
- To translate the most important information received from ELSA International and adapt the information to local officers and members.
- To require the support of ELSA International in finding the most suitable strategies to develop this ELSA area.

ELSA International on its side shall provide necessary training and information to National Groups to organise AA events and archive all the information received from the National Groups.

Transition

Task of the former VP AA

To give your successor a good transition is important. It will save her/him a lot of time and she/he doesn't have to make the same mistakes as you made. She/he can also learn from the successful event you organised and perhaps make some of them to annual.

Start with the transition after the election of new one and begin before the new start in office. If possible is it good when if the old VP AA is available for answering questions also after the end of her/his office. Important to tell is what didn't work, what would you do others if you could do it once more. Where do you see the needs for improvements and what kind of.

Please remember your own transition, what was good and what wasn't, try to make your successors transition a better one, than the one you became.

Things to remember to talk about and transfer to the successor

- AA as part of ELSA
- Philosophy Statement
- Strategic Goals
- AA handbook
- AA projects, discuss following points for each one:
 - What has been organised? (if it is a national transition, it is important to transfer information about all activities in LGs and NG)
 - What was successful and why?
 - What was not successful and why?
 - How many participants?
 - What kind of marketing?
 - Useful contact information (National and Local Officers, previous officers, contacts at the University and law firms).
 - Co-operation with other NGs and/or LGs?
 - Co-operation with other organisations and the university?
- Important things to discuss:
 - Essay Competition

- Legal Research Group
- Law Review
- Legal Debate
- Legal Course
- Lawyers at Work Event
- Studies Abroad Projects
- Other AA projects
- Other local or national events?
- IFP, what has been done in National Groups and/or Local Groups
- Human Rights
- OYOP for AA the previous year, which goals are achieved and which are not, and why?
- Communication between different levels
- Work in the board
- Preparations for workshop at ICM and NCM, to participate or organise.

If you didn't get any or a good transition

A transition is important, it will save time and you can learn from the previous VP AA's. You will get useful contacts and hear which events that were successful which were not.

If you did not get a good transition or any at all, there are some things you can do yourself:

See if there is some old archive in your ELSA group and if there is some useful information.

Talk to the old board in your ELSA Group, even if the previous VP AA did not help you, the rest of the old board can perhaps help you with some information, contacts and ideas what worked and what did not work last year within the AA area.

Contact your National VP AA or/and VP AA ELSA International, and ask for help, they might have some information about what has been done in your ELSA Group previous year or contact information to someone that has been active in your ELSA Group before.

Ask other Local or National VP AA's for help, everyone has been new sometime and probably know what kind of information you need in the beginning.

Since you read this, you are already on the right track and hopefully this AA-manual can give you some ideas how to continue your work with AA in your ELSA Group.

Make sure that your successor gets a better transition than the one you have had.

When you are new in office

Try to get an overview of what the AA area is and what your responsibilities are on local or national level.

Try to get an overview on what has been done in your ELSA Group within the AA-area.

Get to know your board, discuss different responsibilities within the board, eg. Who will contact sponsors for events, you or the president? Who will market events, you or the VP Marketing?

If you are a Local VP AA present yourself to the National VP AA and to the other Local VP AA's

If you are National VP AA present yourself to the VP AA ELSA International, your Local VP AA's and other National VP AA's.

Remember to ask others, if you have questions, that is the benefit of the network, there are a lot of other persons working with the same area and probably someone can answer your questions.

Try to go to NCM/ICM/KAM/AA-meetings, you will learn a lot, meet many persons working with the same area as you and probably have a lot of fun and make new friends.

Read the AA-handbook, but do not get scared by the amount of information, read the part you want to know more about. The AA-area is big and contains many very different projects. You will learn by working with them.

Make a One Year Operational Plan (OYOP), where you set the goals for your year and state how you will work to achieve them. Discuss your OYOP with the rest of your board and make sure that the whole board is working in the same direction and that they support your ideas.