



The European Law Students' Association

LAWYERS AT WORK

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2025/2026



Foreword

This Handbook is written as a result of the codification of the portfolio of Professional Development projects in the International Council Meeting Decision Book, during the 87th International Council Meeting Malta. Following this codification and introduction of further PD projects, there was a need for concrete materials provided from ELSA International on how to conduct the established projects. This is the final handbook in this series, so following the release of this handbook, all the established projects in the Professional Development Part of the International Council Meeting Decision Book now have materials.

This Handbook aims to define the Lawyers at Work event, its scope and aims, as well as explain how a Professional Development Officer may approach organising a Lawyers at Work. Lawyers at Work events are in addition to the PD Workshops a logistically easier event to organise, making it possible for a PD officer to organise a multitude of these events even in a single term. This Handbook also aims to broaden the horizon and understanding of the different approaches to the format and the content of what such an event may offer. It is important to remember that while the Handbooks provide guidelines, it is up to the National and Local PD Officer to figure out how best to organise the event in their respective group.

If you have any questions regarding organising Professional Development Workshops after reading this Handbook, or questions about this Handbook itself, do not hesitate to contact the Vice President in charge of Professional Development of the International Board of ELSA for your term, at the email professionaldevelopment@elsa.org.

Best of luck organising your event!

Created by (2025):

Hedin Ragnfred Indregård
Vice President in charge of Professional
Development of ELSA International
2025/2026

İpek Seyhan
Assistant for ELSA Traineeships for ELSA
International
2025/2026

Krzysztof Pawelec
Assistant for Fundraising for Professional
Development for ELSA International
2025/2026

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Table of Contents	2
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Definition	3
1.2 Purpose	3
1.3 Benefits	4
2. How to organise a Lawyers at Work-Event?	4
2. 1 Choosing a Partner	4
2.2 Choosing a topic	5
2.3 Preparation and Planning	6
2.4 Marketing and Registration of Students	7
3 Implementation	7
3.1 Format	7
3.2 Content	8
4 Evaluation	9
5 Annexes	11
5.1 Checklist	11
5.2 Organising Sheet	13

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition

Lawyers at Work is a Professional Development initiative that enables law students and young lawyers to **gain first-hand insight into the working cultures and environments of the legal profession**. The primary aim of the event is to provide participants with a **clearer understanding of how lawyers and other legal professionals operate in practice**, thereby offering a more concrete and realistic perspective on the various legal careers available after graduation.

A Lawyers at Work event focuses on practical exposure rather than the academic theory you achieve through other initiatives or in law school. By engaging directly with legal professionals in their workplace, participants are able to observe how legal knowledge is applied in real professional contexts, how legal work is structured on a daily basis, and how different roles function within an organisation such as a law firm.

The format and scope of a Lawyers at Work event may vary significantly. This depends both on the objectives set by the Professional Development Officer and on the type of insight that the hosting organisation or law firm is willing and able to provide. Factors such as the nature of the organisation, its field of practice, and the existing relationship with ELSA may influence the structure, content, and level of interaction of the event.

Lawyers at Work is further defined in the [International Council Meeting Decision Book, Part 8, Chapter 4, Article 2](#).

They are also mentioned in the [Professional Development Handbook \(2023\) Chapter 6, page 15](#).

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of Lawyers at Work events is to provide law students and young lawyers with an in-depth understanding of the realities of professional legal life. In many respects, the event serves as **a bridge between academic studies and professional practice** by transforming theoretical knowledge into real legal work environment experience.

This objective is achieved through **direct exposure to the working environment of practising legal professionals**. By visiting legal workplaces and engaging with professionals, participants gain insight into daily routines, professional responsibilities, work culture, and the expectations for lawyers in different sectors.

Another important purpose of the Lawyers at Work event is to facilitate promoting different legal careers. By presenting a variety of legal career paths, including those that may not be addressed directly during legal studies, **the event allows participants to explore professional opportunities beyond traditional legal workplaces**. When multiple Lawyers at Work events

are organised, it is **therefore an advantage to cover a broad range of legal fields** and different professional environments.

In addition, Lawyers at Work contributes to professional socialisation. The event provides a platform for learning about workplace culture, professional ethics, and expectations within the legal profession. It may also serve as an opportunity to develop soft skills such as professional communication, teamwork awareness, and networking in a practical and accessible setting.

1.3 Benefits

For participants, Lawyers at Work offers **valuable insight into the practical realities of professional legal life**. This includes exposure to everyday legal work, task management, and professional responsibilities. The event also provides an accessible setting for early professional networking and enables participants to ask questions and **engage in dialogue with legal professionals in a low-threshold and informal environment**.

For ELSA groups, Lawyers at Work serves as an **effective tool for strengthening relationships with local and national law firms, institutions, and organisations**. The informal and interactive nature of the event benefits not only participants, but also organising officers, by facilitating closer contact with partners. This may lead to the establishment of new partnerships or the further development of existing cooperation.

For hosting organisations and law firms, Lawyers at Work events **offer an opportunity to engage directly with motivated law students and young lawyers**. The event allows organisations to present their working culture, values, and areas of practice, while contributing to legal education and professional development. In addition, it may increase visibility among potential future candidates and enhance the organisation's professional reputation.

2. How to organise a Lawyers at Work-Event?

Organising a Lawyers at Work Event requires careful planning, clear responsibilities, and good communication with both partners and participants. This following guide will help you through each step, from choosing a partner to marketing, registration, and follow-up evaluation after the event.

2.1 Choosing a Partner

The first step in organising a Lawyers at Work Event is identifying a suitable partner. The choice of partner has a direct impact on the educational quality, attractiveness and overall success of the event, as **participants often decide to apply based on the organisation involved**.

You should first analyse which employers or institutions are the most relevant for your members. Think about organisations that operate in fields of law that are popular among students, have a

strong professional reputation and are known for engaging with young professionals, for example through internships or graduate programmes.

Potential partners may include law firms of different sizes, in-house legal departments of corporations, banks and financial institutions, consulting firms, international organisations, as well as public institutions employing legal professionals. While large international law firms may appear particularly attractive, **smaller or boutique firms should not be overlooked**. They often provide a more personal perspective and specialise in a specific law area. Therefore employ professionals who are experts in the respective fields.

When evaluating a potential partner, several aspects should be taken into account. You need to remember that ELSA should cooperate only with partners that have a good reputation. Their credibility can increase the prestige of your event and make it more appealing to participants. It is best to avoid firms involved in scandals or handling suspicious clients.

Previous cooperation with ELSA such as previous project- or general partners can also be an advantage, as organisations familiar with the association tend to understand the concept of student-oriented events better and may be more open to collaboration. Existing contacts play an especially important role. Alumni networks, academic staff, former speakers, or members who have interned in the organisation can significantly facilitate the first approach and increase the chances of receiving a positive response.

Equally important is assessing the partner's willingness to engage with participants in an interactive manner. Some organisations may prefer to give a formal presentation, while others are open to workshops, case studies or informal discussions. Selecting the right partner should therefore not be based solely on prestige. The primary goal is to establish cooperation that provides **educational and career value to participants** while allowing the partner to present their work in a meaningful and engaging way.

2.2 Choosing a topic

After identifying a potential partner, the next step is defining the topic of the event. In some cases, the topic may already be suggested by the partner's area of expertise, but it should always be discussed and agreed upon together to ensure that it is suitable for both the organisation and the target group.

A well-chosen topic should be relevant to law students, closely connected to the partner's professional practice and oriented towards practical aspects of legal work rather than purely theoretical considerations. When the theme reflects the real daily activities of the partner's lawyers, the event becomes more authentic and valuable for participants. The range of possible topics is broad and can reflect current developments in the legal and economic environment. These may include areas such as business and corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, technology law, intellectual property, data protection, cybersecurity, aviation law, energy and environmental law, migration and asylum law, or dispute resolution and arbitration. The specific choice should depend on the partner's expertise as well as the interests of your members.

Topics can also be inspired by ELSA's focus programmes, such as the Annual Human Rights Campaign or the International Focus Programme. You should always be aware of the

current topics because they might also be relevant to you and not only your colleague who handles the IFP on your board. Integrating these themes into the content of the event allows you to connect practical legal experience with broader social or international issues and aligns the event with ELSA's strategic priorities.

Ultimately, the topic should clearly communicate the added value for participants. They should leave the event with a better understanding of a specific field of law, insight into real professional practice, clearer career orientation or even the development of practical skills. A well-defined, practice-oriented theme significantly increases participant engagement and makes the Lawyers at Work Event more memorable and impactful. For more information about the different formats of the event please see Section 3.

2.3 Preparation and Planning

Once a partner and topic have been agreed upon, **the next step is to establish contact in a professional and concise manner.** If you have not previously met the contact person at an event, career fair or similar occasion, you will need to initiate the first approach yourself. In this initial communication, it is important to briefly introduce yourself, present your role within ELSA and clearly explain the concept of Lawyers at Work Events. Since not all organisations may be familiar with ELSA, **you should also include a short explanation of the association, its objectives and its international student network.**

When contacting the organisation by email, it is advisable not only to present the idea of the event but also to suggest a follow-up conversation, such as a phone call, video meeting or in-person discussion. **This helps to establish a more direct connection and allows both sides to clarify expectations more efficiently.** Your National Group may already have promotional materials or short descriptions of ELSA that can support you in presenting the association in a professional way.

During planning, clarify all essential details with the partner, including:

- Event date, start time and end time,
- Estimated number of participants,
- Topics covered and the event format,
- Catering arrangements (if you plan to present catering),
- GDPR related topics to ensure compliance.

Final preparations should focus on providing participants with all practical information they need. This includes the meeting point, travel arrangements where relevant, and the expected **dress code, which is usually business casual unless stated otherwise.** Participants should receive a reminder shortly before the event, for example via email, and, if suitable, through a group chat used for organisational purposes. Often WhatsApp groups are created for better and more personal communication. Clear communication helps ensure that everyone arrives on time

and is properly prepared. **Consider if you should send the partner organisation the final list of participants in advance.**

2.4 Marketing and Registration of Students

Effective marketing plays a crucial role in ensuring strong participation. Communication should begin early in order to provide students with sufficient time to register and plan their attendance. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok can be valuable tools for promotion, provided that your Local or National Group actively uses them. When preparing promotional materials, **ensure that they include information about the partner organisation, the topic of the event, the date, the location, and the registration procedure.**

The registration process should be simple and accessible. A short and user friendly registration form is usually sufficient and should collect only the information that is genuinely necessary for organisational purposes. This may include contact details, level of study, and dietary requirements if refreshments are to be provided. **Keeping the process straightforward reduces barriers to participation and improves the overall participant experience.** Make sure that all forms created are compliant with the GDPR regulations applicable to ELSAs forms.

Marketing efforts should not be directed solely at students. Maintaining a positive and professional relationship with the partner organisation is equally important. The manner in which ELSA communicates, organises, and follows up on the event contributes to the association's long term reputation. **As a gesture of appreciation, it is recommended to offer a small thank you gift to speakers and, where appropriate, to organisational contacts such as HR representatives.** Such gestures help to build goodwill and increase the likelihood of future cooperation, ensuring that partners associate ELSA with professionalism and respect.

3 Implementation

3.1 Format

Lawyers at Work events may be organised in a variety of formats depending on the objectives of the event, the partner organisation, and the capacity of the organising Local or National Group. **The chosen format should always encourage interaction and provide participants with meaningful practical exposure to professional legal life.**

A physical visit is generally preferred, as it allows participants to experience the working environment of legal professionals first hand and promotes direct engagement. In its most common form, a Lawyers at Work event consists of a visit to a single law firm or organisation, during which participants spend a defined period engaging with legal professionals and learning about their daily work.

Alternative formats are also possible. **Local or National Groups may organise Lawyers at Work trips to another city, where participants visit more than one organisation on the same day.** Such events may be arranged as full day or multi day programmes and may include firm presentations, office tours, thematic discussions, and networking sessions. This approach allows participants to gain comparative insight into different professional environments and legal practices. These events may be planned in coordination with the Seminars and Conferences key area and organised alongside Study Visit activities, ensuring a coherent and complementary programme. **Close cooperation between the relevant areas is encouraged in order to maximise the educational and professional value of the event,** and to provide participants with a well structured and integrated experience.

Alternatively, Lawyers at Work events may be organised in a summit format, **bringing together several legal professionals within a single programme.** Summit style events may include panel discussions, thematic sessions, or parallel activities focusing on specific fields of law, career paths, or professional skills, while maintaining interactive elements through moderated discussions and structured question and answer sessions.

Local and National Groups may also organise online Lawyers at Work events, allowing participation beyond geographical limitations. **Online formats may be particularly suitable for engaging international partners, alumni, or professionals who are unable to attend in person,** while still offering meaningful interaction through virtual discussions. They may also contribute to increased accessibility and inclusivity, particularly for participants who face geographical or logistical constraints.

The recommended minimum duration of a Lawyers at Work event is at minimum 60 minutes. However, the overall duration should remain flexible and depend on the format of the event and the number of participating partners.

The number of participants should be determined by the venue and the format of the event. While summit events may involve a larger audience, smaller groups are generally encouraged, particularly for office visits or short term placements, as they allow for more effective interaction and a more engaging learning experience.

All interactive elements should be discussed and agreed with the partner organisation in advance. Depending on the format and the partner's preferences, Lawyers at Work events may include question and answer sessions, interactive discussions, and networking opportunities. Flexibility and creativity are encouraged when designing the format, provided that the structure of the event aligns with the expectations of the partner organisation.

3.2 Content

The content of a Lawyers at Work event should focus on providing participants with practical insight into professional legal life. **The programme should be developed in cooperation with**

the partner organisation, taking into account both the interests and level of the participants and the professional focus of the partner.

When determining the content, Professional Development Officers are encouraged to set clear objectives for the event and ensure that the programme reflects the practical realities of the legal profession. Possible content elements may include:

- An overview of the daily routines and responsibilities of legal professionals;
- Introductions to specific fields of law or practice areas;
- Information on different career paths within the legal profession;
- Explanations of recruitment processes and employer expectations;
- Discussions on working culture, professional ethics, and work life balance, or;
- Introductions to other Professional Development activities, including skills based training, workshops, or complementary programmes

If the host organisation has a particular focus on certain fields of law, such as arbitration, tax law, or other specialised practice areas, **the event may include an introduction to these areas.** This allows participants to gain insight into the organisation's expertise and to better understand how specialised legal practice operates in a professional setting.

Lawyers at Work events may also be further developed **by integrating them with other Professional Development activities**, such as skills based workshops or training sessions, thereby enhancing the overall educational value of the programme.

The speaker profile may vary depending on the chosen topic, and Lawyers at Work events may include multiple speakers from different professional backgrounds, such as practising lawyers, in house lawyers, and HR representatives. **This approach allows participants to gain a broader and more realistic understanding of the legal profession.**

The content may be delivered through a range of methods depending on the format of the event. These may include presentations, guided office tours, interactive discussions, case studies, or practical examples drawn from professional experience, while always respecting confidentiality obligations.

The expected outcomes of a Lawyers at Work event are to support participants in achieving improved career orientation, gaining practical insight into legal professions, increasing their awareness of professional working life, and enabling direct interaction with legal professionals.

4 Evaluation

After the Lawyers at Work event has concluded, **it is important to conduct a thorough review and evaluation of the project.** This stage enables the organising team to reflect on successes, identify challenges, and gather valuable insights for future initiatives.

Key elements of the evaluation include:

- Collecting feedback from participants regarding their experience, learning outcomes, and suggestions for improvement, for example through an online feedback form
- Gathering input from the partner organisation on the quality of cooperation, the level of student engagement, and any areas for improvement
- Analysing what worked well and what could have been handled differently, both in terms of organisation and execution
- Documenting lessons learned and recommendations to support the planning of future Lawyers at Work events

The evaluation and feedback collected should preferably be shared with ELSA International so that the experiences gained from organising the event can contribute to the further development of the project.

Feedback may be sent to ELSA International via:

- Vice President in charge of Professional Development of the International Board at: professionaldevelopment@elsa.org
- Director for Professional Development of ELSA International at: director.professionaldevelopment@elsa.org

Organising Professional Development Officers should also provide participants with Certificates of Participation. These certificates should include the name of the project, the date of the event, and the logo of the partner organisation.

5 Annexes

5.1 Checklist

Initiation

- ☐ Identify the need or interest for organising a Lawyers at Work-Events within the Local or National Group.
- ☐ Identify potential partner organisations (e.g. law firms, in-house legal departments).
- ☐ Review existing contacts, alumni networks, previous ELSA partners or personal connections.
- ☐ Decide on the most suitable format:
 - ☐ physical visit to one law firm or legal institution;
 - ☐ law trip to another city with visits to more than one firm;
 - ☐ summit event with several legal professionals;
 - ☐ online Lawyers at Work-Events;
- ☐ Propose a meeting or call to discuss possible cooperation.

Choosing the Format

- ☐ Discuss possible formats with the partner organisation.
- ☐ Consider accessibility and inclusivity aspects (online participation, language, physical accessibility).
- ☐ Ensure that the chosen format prioritises interaction.
- ☐ Confirm that the format aligns with the partner's expectations and logistical possibilities.

Planning the Event

- ☐ Agree with the partner organisation on the topic and main objectives of the event.
- ☐ Agree on the date, start time and estimated duration (recommended minimum: 60 minutes).
- ☐ Decide on the expected number of participants, taking into account the venue and format.
- ☐ Discuss and agree on possible interactive elements (Q&A, discussions, networking).
- ☐ Address GDPR related matters and confidentiality considerations, if applicable.
- ☐ Prepare a clear programme outline and confirm all details with the partner.

Content Definition

- ☐ Define the content together with the partner organisation.
- ☐ Include relevant content elements, such as:
 - ☐ daily work routines and responsibilities;
 - ☐ introductions to specific fields of law or practice areas;
 - ☐ career paths and recruitment processes;
 - ☐ working culture, professional ethics and work-life balance;
- ☐ If applicable, include a short introduction to the partner's specific practice areas (e.g. arbitration, tax law).

Marketing and Registration

- ☐ Coordinate with the Marketing Team to prepare promotional materials for the event;
- ☐ Promote the event through the Group's communication channels;
- ☐ Provide clear information on the topic, format, date, location and registration process;
- ☐ Create a registration form collecting only necessary information;
- ☐ Set clear registration deadlines;
- ☐ Share the final list of participants with the partner organisation in advance.

Final Preparation

- ☐ Send practical information to participants (meeting point, dress code, timing);
- ☐ Send a reminder shortly before the event;

Evaluation and Follow Ups

- ☐ Collect feedback from participants (e.g. via an evaluation form);
- ☐ Request feedback from the partner organisation;
- ☐ Reflect on the organisation and execution of the event and document lessons learned;
- ☐ Prepare and deliver Certificates of Participation;
- ☐ Share relevant feedback with ELSA International, where appropriate.

5.2 Organising Sheet

Lawyers at Work Organising Sheet

Partner Firm: _____

Topic and Agenda:

Format: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Task	Responsible	Deadline	Completed?
1. Choosing a Partner			☐
2. Choosing a Topic			☐
3. Defining the content			☐
4. Marketing the event			☐
5. Conducting the event			☐
6. Evaluation			☐

Desired outcome: