



The European Law Students' Association

S&C DEVELOPMENT GOALS | 2026-2029

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES 2025/2026



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FOREWORD

Dear S&C Officers,

It is our pleasure to present to you the S&C Development Goals for the period of the following three years (2026-2029). The Goals should guide the S&C Officers across the Network whilst planning their terms and S&C projects. These Goals showcase the current needs of the area and propose solutions to current problems. The content of these Goals is a result of the joint work of the S&C Officers representing different National Groups, different experiences, perspectives and expectations towards the area. Taking that into consideration, we believe the Goals correspond to the needs of the area on the international level, as well as the needs of each and every National Group.

Following the discussions at the International Council Meeting in Helsinki in 2025, the Working Group decided to focus on challenges and weaknesses of all S&C projects by creating a development strategy for them. Thus, the Goals are structured into a general part and project-specific parts. When planning any future S&C event, we advise using these Goals as an example of how strategic planning for projects should be done.

We hope you will enjoy reading these Goals and implement them in your Local and National Groups!

Created by:

Rodrigo Prelhaz

Vice President in charge of Seminars and Conferences
International Board of ELSA 2025/2026

Lodovica Bellora

Chair of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Adamantia Lora

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Alik Portosalte

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Chiara Pezzotta

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Costanza Calandrino

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Florian Steinkamp

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Mariam Gorgaslidze

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

Stefania Vryoni

Member of the Working Group on S&C Development Goals

S&C Development Goals 2026/2029

1. General

Seminars and Conferences is one of the oldest areas of ELSA. Its creation matches the founding of our Association. The Area of Seminars & Conferences aims to contribute to mutual understanding and legal education of law students and young lawyers by organising projects that focus on cultural exchange, developing cooperation and personal contacts, and legal knowledge. Throughout the years, S&C Officers have been refining our Projects, making them more engaging and impactful to several law students and young lawyers.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Deconstruct the complexity of more complex events, allowing less experienced Officers to engage with them.
- b. Create more tools to ensure a complete transition of S&C Officers.
- c. Update regularly the S&C materials on the Officers' Portal.
- d. Incentivise the Network to engage with all projects within the S&C area.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Ensure that all information about S&C Projects reaches their Local Officers.
- b. Ensure that transition is provided to incoming Local Officers.
- c. Translate the materials provided to ELSA International into their national languages.
- d. Search for equitable partnerships for long-standing S&C Projects.
- e. Incentivise Local Officers to engage with all projects within the S&C area.

Comments:

Seminars and Conferences benefits from the **largest Officer numbers in the Network** and the widest range of projects, offering diverse opportunities that combine academic, social, and cultural aspects in its projects. Its flexibility allows events to connect local, national, and international dimensions while promoting networking, internationality, and professional development. The variety of projects also creates strong promotional potential and helps attract members by providing multidimensional experiences such as trips, conferences, and cultural exchanges.

However, organisational complexity and resource demands can limit participation in planning and execution. Large or innovative projects often require significant human, financial, and logistical resources, which may discourage Local Groups, **especially smaller ones**, from organising ambitious events (e.g.: ELSA Law Schools, International Conferences of ELSA). A lack of general knowledge, limited transition between Officers, and weak coordination with supporting areas can also reduce diversification and lead many Groups to rely on familiar, smaller-scale projects rather than experimenting with new formats.

At the same time, Seminars and Conferences presents significant opportunities for growth and impact. Expanding the academic focus could attract new audiences, while hybrid formats, strategic partnerships, and more interactive activities could increase engagement and funding potential. Nevertheless, several risks remain, including rising travel costs, limited human resources, inconsistent commitment to larger projects, and possible reputational issues if standards are not maintained. Without continuous innovation and knowledge sharing, the Area may stagnate and struggle to fully use its creative and academic potential.

2. ELSA Law Schools

ELSA Law Schools is one of the oldest Flagship Projects. The oldest (Summer) ELSA Law School is celebrating its 26th edition this year. This project has inspired multiple generations of law students in their future professional careers, but also to start their own ELSA Careers. After the unification of 2016, the project grew rapidly. A few years later, the Winter Cycle was created, and for the past few years, we have been counting on an average of 50 ELSA Law Schools every term.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Regularly review and discuss with the Network the ELSA Law Schools Quality Standards.
- b. Emphasise the importance of tools that help ELSA Groups that are interested in hosting an ELSA Law School for the first time, such as the ELSA Law Schools Mentorship Programme.
- c. Discuss the ELSA Law Schools Participation Fees with the Network, at least, every two years.
- d. Help Organisers to find suitable Academic Partners for their ELSA Law Schools.
- e. Explore possibilities to ensure that every organiser has a good number of applications, especially for the Winter Cycle.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Aid Local Groups that aim to organise an ELSA Law School for the first time.
- b. Help Local Groups to achieve financial sustainability, exploring national grants.
- c. Consult their Local Organisers to assess the impact of the ELSA Law Schools Participation Fees on the organisation of the ELSA Law School.
- d. Help Local Organisers to find suitable Academic Partners for their ELSA Law Schools.

Comments:

ELSA Law Schools is one of the most well-known and attractive initiatives in the Network, widely recognised both internally and by external partners. It consistently attracts international participants and offers an overall experience by combining an Academic Programme with social and cultural activities.

Despite its success, the project also faces **organisational and financial challenges**. Participation and organisation can be costly, which may limit accessibility for students and discourage some Local Groups from hosting a first edition. The organisational workload is high and requires experienced teams, strong coordination and reliable sponsors or partners. In addition, managing Organising Committees and meeting Quality Standards can be demanding, particularly for less experienced Groups, while participants who pay higher fees may develop expectations that exceed the capacities of a student-run Association.

At the same time, the project offers important opportunities for growth and visibility. Alumni networks, partnerships and innovative academic topics can strengthen its reputation and attract new participants, while interactive formats such as workshops or case studies enhance the educational value of the experience. However, external pressures remain, including rising travel and accommodation costs, financial sustainability concerns and competition from similar programmes. Differences in local costs and resources can also make it difficult to maintain consistent standards across editions, which may affect participant expectations and the overall perception of the project.

3. ELSA Delegations

ELSA Delegations is another S&C Flagship Project of ELSA. Some might say, the most prestigious project of ELSA. Throughout the years, ELSA has allowed countless law students to participate in sessions of numerous International Organisations. Furthermore, ELSA Delegations allowed our Association to contribute to historical moments, such as the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Pay close attention to the rise of the usage of Artificial Intelligence in applications.
- b. Search for grants or other financial assistance means to help ELSA Delegates.
- c. Provide more detailed information about the Selection Criteria of ELSA Delegations.
- d. Improve the preparation of the ELSA Delegates by introducing practical training.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Search for national grants or other financial assistance means to help ELSA Delegates.
- b. Increase the promotion of the project within their National Network.
- c. Translate the promotional materials into their native languages.
- d. Emphasise the importance of promoting ELSA Delegations to their respective Local Officers.

Comments:

ELSA Delegations offers participants the unique opportunity to attend sessions of major international institutions and observe global decision-making processes. It provides high academic and professional value while enabling students to develop advocacy skills, gain first-hand insight into international law and build meaningful networks. Its reputation, strong structure and connections with global organisations also enhance the visibility of the association and make the programme particularly attractive for both members and potential new recruits.

Nevertheless, several structural challenges limit accessibility and participation. The project is **expensive to attend**, particularly for destinations requiring long-distance travel, which makes funding a significant obstacle for many participants and National Groups. In addition, a lack of clear information and understanding of the selection process can discourage applications or create misconceptions, including the perception that personal connections influence results. Limited awareness among Local Groups, as well as the complexity of the travel-heavy format involving visas, scheduling and funding, further reduces engagement with the project.

At the same time, the initiative presents considerable opportunities for growth and strategic development. Expanding partnerships with international institutions could increase the number of placements and strengthen the organisation's global visibility, while the project can serve as an entry point for new members interested in international law and advocacy. However, there are also emerging risks, including rising travel costs, declining application quality, and the increasing use of AI-generated application materials. Without improved communication, funding support and balanced participation between experienced officers and new members, the project risks appearing inaccessible or elitist despite its strong potential and prestige.

4. Study Visits

Study Visits are an extremely popular project amongst S&C Officers, especially Local Officers. It represents the objectives of our Area in perfection: promoting legal education while fostering mutual understanding and cultural diversity.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Clarify the differences between Institutional Visits, Lawyers at Work and Study Visits, by developing these projects in workshops and Open Calls.
- b. Foment the usage of the Study Visits Portal.
- c. Emphasise the importance of signing a Study Visit Hosting Agreement.
- d. Clarify the differentiation between Unilateral, Bilateral and Multilateral Study Visits.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Clarify the differences between Institutional Visits, Lawyers at Work and Study Visits to their Local Officers.
- b. Emphasise the importance of using the Study Visit Portal and signing a Study Visit Hosting Agreement to their Local Officers.
- c. Instruct their Local Officers to have an Academic Programme in their Study Visits.
- d. Explore granting options to facilitate the participation of members.
- e. Clarify the differentiation between Unilateral, Bilateral and Multilateral Study Visits with their Local Officers.

Comments:

Study Visits reflect the core spirit of the network, combining academic learning with social and cultural exchange between Local and National Groups. It allows students to visit institutions, gain insight into legal practice and strengthen international cooperation within the association. With clear quality standards and a relatively flexible structure, it can be organised with a small team while still offering meaningful networking opportunities and an engaging academic programme, making it particularly attractive for new members.

However, several organisational and communication challenges limit its effectiveness. Many officers and participants are not fully aware of the differences between various formats or confuse it with institutional visits, which can create unclear expectations. **The Study Visit Portal is still underused**, and agreements between hosting and visiting groups are not always signed or clearly followed. In addition, responsibilities between the groups are sometimes poorly defined, and the academic component is occasionally overlooked, leading to variations in quality and experience.

Despite these issues, the project offers important opportunities for strengthening cooperation across the Network. It can serve as an accessible entry point for international engagement, help Local Groups attract new members and encourage long-term partnerships between different groups. Expanding formats such as multilateral or thematic visits could further increase its impact. Nevertheless, rising travel costs, limited knowledge of procedures and potential misunderstandings between participating groups remain risks that could affect organisation and participant satisfaction if not addressed.

5. Institutional Visits

Institutional Visits remain as well as one of the most popular projects to organise amongst Local Officers. Due to its simplicity, this project is a good entry point for many Officers at the beginning of their ELSA Careers. Additionally, after the COVID-19 pandemic, we have observed the return of international Institutional Visits.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Clarify the differences between Study Visits, Lawyers at Work and Institutional Visits by developing these projects in workshops and Open Calls.
- b. Create a database of contacts of institutions to be visited.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Clarify the differences between Study Visits, Lawyers at Work and Institutional Visits to their Local Officers.
- b. Foster the diversity of Institutions Visits amongst their Local Officers.
- c. Search for national grants to help the participation of members, especially to international Institutional Visits.

Comments:

Institutional Visits provide valuable practical learning experiences by allowing students to see how legal institutions operate in practice. They offer first-hand insight into potential career paths and create opportunities for interaction with professionals. The format is flexible and relatively easy to organise, particularly at the local level, which makes it one of the most popular and accessible activities for members. Institutional Visits can also strengthen team building within organising groups and can be combined with other projects to create broader academic and professional experiences.

However, several limitations affect their organisation and development. **Communication with institutions can be slow or unreliable, and confirmations may take a long time or even be cancelled shortly before the visit.** When organised abroad, the complexity increases due to additional logistical and financial requirements. In addition, some organisers and participants struggle to clearly differentiate Institutional Visits from other similar activities, which can lead to unclear expectations or confusion about the project's purpose.

Despite these challenges, the project offers important opportunities for growth and engagement. Institutional Visits are highly effective in attracting new members and can easily be integrated into other initiatives such as conferences or educational programmes. Expanding partnerships with institutions could further increase their academic value and diversity. Nevertheless, risks remain, including repeated visits to the same institutions, limited access in certain cities, and the possibility that the educational purpose of the visit is overshadowed by the social aspects if the programme is not carefully structured.

6. International Conferences of ELSA

International Conferences of ELSA have been a growing S&C project within the Network in the last few years. Before COVID-19, ICEs thrived, reaching great numbers of participants. Unfortunately, after the pandemic, it has been struggling with applications and participation due to different motives. Nevertheless, International Conferences of ELSA are a unique project within the S&C portfolio, comprising a high-academic programme, emphasising networking as the social component.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Implement the International Conferences of ELSA Cycles.
- b. Assess the effectiveness of the International Conferences of ELSA Cycles, every two years.
- c. Tailoring the International Conferences of ELSA Coaching System to the Cycles.
- d. Draft a promotional strategy in accordance with the timelines of the International Conferences of ELSA Cycles.
- e. Create and update supporting materials for the International Conferences of ELSA Cycles.
- f. Clearly differentiate International Conferences of ELSA and ELSA Law Schools, both internally and externally.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Foster the organisation of International Conferences of ELSA amongst their Local Officers.
- b. Spread knowledge amongst their Local Officers about the changes to the structure of International Conferences of ELSA.
- c. Focus on cross-promotion of International Conferences of ELSA.
- d. Expanding external outreach to young lawyers and non-members.

Comments:

International Conferences of ELSA is a strongly academic initiative with clear thematic depth and networking opportunities, offering participants an intensive educational experience focused on specialised legal topics. With fewer days and more flexible Quality Standards than other S&C Projects, it can be organised by both smaller and larger groups and provides freedom in designing the Academic Programme. It also creates opportunities for meaningful interaction with experts and professionals, making it attractive for participants seeking a more focused and professionally oriented experience.

However, **limited visibility and understanding of the project across the Network remain significant challenges**. Many Local and National Groups are not fully familiar with its purpose or Quality Standards and often perceive it as a smaller or less important version of other established initiatives. This perception, combined with fears of low participation, discourages groups from organising the event. In addition, the benefits offered to participants may appear less extensive than those of larger projects, which can further reduce interest, particularly in cities with higher costs.

At the same time, **the project offers considerable potential for development and expansion.** By emphasising its academic depth and professional orientation, it could attract new target groups such as postgraduate students, young professionals and practitioners. Strengthening promotion, clarifying its distinction from other programmes and building partnerships with experts and institutions could significantly increase its visibility and impact. Nevertheless, risks remain, including financial uncertainty due to low participation, competition with more established projects and continued confusion about the project's role within the network.

7. ELSA Webinars

ELSA Webinars reached their full potential and popularity during the pandemic. However, its organisation quickly declined when the in-person events started being organised again. Nevertheless, in recent years, we have seen an increase in the organisation of ELSA Webinars Academy.

ELSA International shall aim to:

- a. Access the necessity of finding a new streaming platform.
- b. Solve the technical challenges with streaming platforms, such as data protection and cybersecurity issues.
- c. Emphasise the usage of the ELSA Webinars website as a promotional tool.
- d. Organise, at least, one ELSA Webinars Academy per term.

National Groups of ELSA shall aim to:

- a. Foster the organisation of ELSA Webinars and ELSA Webinars Academy amongst their Local Officers.
- b. Emphasise the internationality of this project amongst their Local Officers.

Comments:

ELSA Webinars are **highly accessible and flexible events** that require minimal resources to organise. With no travel costs and limited logistical demands, they allow Groups to involve speakers from around the world and reach a broad international audience. This format makes it easy to organise events quickly, collaborate with other Groups and experiment with new topics while promoting the international and educational character of the Network.

However, **engagement and perceived value remain significant challenges.** Online formats often struggle to create interaction, with participants frequently keeping cameras and microphones off, which can reduce discussion and networking opportunities. ELSA Webinars are sometimes seen as less prestigious than in-person events, particularly since many people associate them with the period of online activities during the pandemic. In addition, speakers may rely on one-way presentations, and attention spans can be limited during long online sessions. ELSA Webinars seem, nevertheless, to be gaining some popularity within the S&C Network.

Despite these challenges, ELSA Webinars present **important opportunities for international cooperation and academic outreach**. They enable collaboration with professional partners, provide a platform for prestigious international speakers and allow events to be recorded for future educational use. Nevertheless, certain risks remain, including declining attendance despite high registration numbers, technical difficulties, data protection concerns when recording sessions and ongoing questions about appropriate participation fees for events with minimal organisational costs.