

# ACADEMIC PREPARATION HANDBOOK FOR **ELSA DELEGATIONS TO WIPO**

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SEMINARS & CONFERENCES  
2024/2025



ELSA  
Delegations

***elsa***

The European Law Students' Association

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## 1. Introduction

This handbook aims to provide ELSA Delegates with all the necessary information to prepare themselves academically for a respective WIPO session. It is designed to be read alongside the Guidelines for the relevant institution. Any relevant feedback or questions are encouraged to improve this handbook for future ELSA Delegates.

### 1.1. About the European Law Students' Association

The European Law Students' Association (ELSA) is an international, independent, non-political, non-profit organisation run by and for students. It comprises students and recent graduates interested in academic and personal excellence in addition to their studies at their universities. ELSA offers law students a perfect platform to develop their existing skills, acquire new skills and meet fellow students and legal professionals throughout Europe.

Five law students from Austria, Hungary, Poland and West Germany founded ELSA in 1981. Today, ELSA is the world's largest independent law student association, and it is represented at nearly 432 law faculties in 41 countries across Europe with a membership of over 60,000 students and young lawyers.

ELSA's activities comprise a large variety of academic and professional events and projects organised to fulfil the vision of ELSA and to provide our members with opportunities to enhance their skills and interact with each other. Furthermore, ELSA provides law students with opportunities to develop their skills through our traineeship program and publications. Finally, working in the ELSA Network prepares active members of ELSA for their professional life through international experience gained through the association.

#### **Vision**

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

#### **Purpose**

The purpose is to contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers by:

- providing opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific cooperation;

- assisting law students and young lawyers in being internationally minded and professionally skilled;
- encouraging law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

To read more about ELSA, please visit our [website](#).

## **1.2. ELSA and International Organisations**

ELSA has gained a notable reputation in the international community. For many years, thanks to having a special status within a number of different international organisations and institutions, its members and alumni are able to participate in events organised by those institutions.

ELSA has special status and cooperation with:

- UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (since 1994);
- UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) (since 1997);
- UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) (since 1997);
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
- Council of Europe (CoE) (since 2000);
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (since 2005);
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (since 2016);
- Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (since 2022).

ELSA is exploring the possibility of gaining status with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

## **1.3. ELSA Delegations**

ELSA Delegations are regulated in the [International Council Meeting Decision Book](#) under decisions relating to Seminars and Conferences (S&C). The relationship between ELSA and ELSA Delegates is regulated by the [ELSA Delegations Terms and Conditions](#).

To participate in ELSA Delegations, ELSA Members and ELSA Alumni need to fulfil the following requirements:

- The Application Form shall be submitted before the deadline;
- The Application Form shall be written in English;

- All the fields of the Application Form shall be filled.

Please refer to the relevant Guideline for more information on the process of being an ELSA Delegate. You can also find practical information pertaining to your stay in Geneva, and instructions for delegates who will join a delegation remotely. If you have any questions, please contact your coordinator: [dwipo@elsa.org](mailto:dwipo@elsa.org), or the Director for ELSA Delegations: [delegations@elsa.org](mailto:delegations@elsa.org).

## 2. About the Institution

The [Selection Criteria](#) do not require a particular level of education for applicants to attend a delegation. In fact, an applicant's grades are not considered during the selection process. However, we believe that, in order for delegates to represent ELSA to the best of their ability, it is important for them to have a good understanding of the session they will attend and the significance of the institution.

Below, you will find some important information about the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

## 3. Introduction to WIPO<sup>1</sup>

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations. It helps governments, businesses and general society to enjoy the benefits of intellectual property, whilst upholding the rights of the innovators and creators behind the ideas. It ensures that these new ideas reach the market safely, improving lives across the globe.

WIPO provides services that allow for the protection and promotion of intellectual property (IP) on a transnational basis. It is an international forum that develops policies around the fair, balanced use of IP, addresses new and emerging intellectual property issues, provides technical assistance, and provides services for dispute resolution related to IP. WIPO also develops cooperation and capacity-building programs that allow countries to use intellectual property for socio-economic and cultural developments. It is a reference point for intellectual property legislation and services for decision makers and policy creators, as well as to individuals who have created - or wish to use - intellectual property.

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<sup>1</sup> [Source](#).

WIPO has two goals: 1) to promote intellectual property protection across the globe, and 2) to ensure there is administrative cooperation between the various organs and Unions created by the treaties WIPO conducts.

### 3.1. About WIPO<sup>2</sup>

WIPO was established by the WIPO Convention in 1967. The Convention entered into force in 1970. WIPO became a specialised agency for the United Nations in 1974.

The foundations for WIPO were laid in 1883 and 1886, upon the signing of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works and the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. These Conventions established two separate “International Bureaus” that merged in 1893, functioning as one Bureau until the WIPO Convention formed the World Intellectual Property Organisation as we know it.

### 3.2. Key Developments and History

Since the 1800s, a number of events have shaped WIPO today:<sup>3</sup>

- **1891 Madrid Agreement** - the Madrid System for the international registration of marks was the first international filing service for Intellectual Property;
- **1893 United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property (BIRPI)** - the two secretariats of the Berne Convention and the Paris Convention combined into one office, based in Berne (Switzerland). This later became WIPO when the WIPO Convention entered into force;
- **1978 - PCT international patent system launched**- now the world’s largest international filing system for IP;
- **1994 - WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (AMC) established** - an alternative dispute resolution centre for private, commercial disputes of an international nature;
- **1998 - WIPO Academy established** - provides courses on Intellectual Property (specialised and general);
- **2007 - WIPO Development Agenda adopted** - ensures development issues are considered in all of WIPO’s work.

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<sup>2</sup>[Source 1](#); [Source 2](#).

<sup>3</sup>[Source](#).

### 3.3. Permanent Members

WIPO has 193 Member States as of December 2024. Approximately 250 NGOs and intergovernmental organisations have observer status.

Delegates can find a list of WIPO's Member States [here](#).

### 3.4. Headquarters

World Intellectual Property Organization,  
34, chemin des Colombettes,  
CH-1211 Geneva 20,  
Switzerland.

### 3.5. Useful Links

This section contains some helpful links that delegates can use to learn more about WIPO:

- [Main Website](#);
- [Decision-Making and Negotiation Bodies](#);
- [Resources and Materials](#);
- [Berne Convention](#);
- [Paris Convention](#);
- [WIPO Convention](#).

## 4. Inside WIPO

### 4.1. Types of Committees

Member States and Observers to WIPO convene in regular sessions. There are four main types of committees and decision-making bodies: Governing Bodies, Permanent Committees, Standing Committees, and Diplomatic Conferences.



## 4.2. Sessions

<sup>4</sup>Each Committee and Governing Body holds a number of sessions each year that work on a specific area of Intellectual Property law. Below is a section of the work of each entity, and a list of the sessions that ELSA Delegates regularly attend.

- **Standing Committees.** These are ad hoc committees of experts created for a specific purpose;
- **Diplomatic Conferences.** These sessions are held whenever a Standing Committee or Permanent Committee is ready to adopt a formal treaty. These sessions are always aimed at finalising treaty provisions;
- **Governing Bodies.** These are the highest levels of decision-making within WIPO. Their sessions bring together all of WIPO's Member States to review progress and decide the direction of future policies;
- **Permanent Committees.** These are established by Governing Bodies to work on specific aspects of Intellectual Property, such as WIPO's budget (Program and Budget Committee), future development (Committee on Development and Intellectual Property) or enforcement of WIPO's instruments (Advisory Committee on Enforcement), among others.

## 4.3. Sessions that ELSA Delegates regularly attend

### Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE)<sup>5</sup>

ACE is empowered to conduct technical assistance and coordination for the implementation and enforcement of WIPO's work. Its mandate explicitly excludes norm-making. ACE's work includes, but is not limited to, public education, the coordination of various training programmes for stakeholders, and acting as a forum to facilitate the exchange of information.

More information can be found on ACE's webpage: [ACE](#).

### Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> All information in this section is taken from WIPO's 'Decision-making and Negotiating Bodies' webpage, available at <https://www.wipo.int/policy/en/>.

<sup>5</sup> All information for ACE was found on its webpage.

<sup>6</sup> All information for CDIP was found on its webpage.

CDIP is a Permanent Committee of WIPO, established to oversee the implementation of WIPO's Development Agenda recommendations, monitor and review every recommendation put forward by WIPO's bodies, and discuss issues related to the development of intellectual property. CDIP also makes recommendations to the General Assembly every year.

More information can be found on CDIP's webpage: [CDIP](#).

### **Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)<sup>7</sup>**

CWS provides a framework for the use of information contained in intellectual property documents. This includes substantive documents (copyright, trademarks, industrial designs, etc), prosecution related to IP matters, and ensuring that data can be read by machines for the creation of digital IP applications. CWS meets annually to revise the WIPO Standards, which are then used in IP offices across the globe to harmonise IP and make it more effective.

The list of WIPO Standards can be found here: [WIPO Standards](#).

### **Patent Cooperation Treaty Working Group (PCT)<sup>8</sup>**

PCT focuses on reviewing and updating the International Patent System. This System helps entities who are looking to patent their inventions, assists patent offices tasked with granting decisions on patent applications, and allows the public to access technical information related to patented inventions. By filing a patent under the International Patent System, protection can be obtained in many countries at once.

More information can be found on the PCT webpage: [PCT](#)

### **Special Union for the International Patent Classification (IPC Union)<sup>9</sup>**

IPC Union meets regularly to deal with issues related to the International Patent Classification. Established in 1971, this Classification organises symbols to identify the classification of patents and utility models, depending on the area of technology they are part of. This system is independent of language, so it can be understood by anyone across the globe. The current version of IPC can

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<sup>7</sup> All information taken from WIPO's website, available here: [About WIPO Standards](#).

<sup>8</sup> All information taken from PCT's webpage.

<sup>9</sup> All information taken from the IPC Union webpage, available at: [Source](#).

be viewed [here](#). There are two main sessions of IPC that ELSA Delegates have attended over the past years:

- **Committee of Experts (IPC/CE):** a committee of experts dedicated to reviewing and discussing the IPC;
- **Revision Working Groups (IPC/WG):** working Groups tasked with considering new proposals to change or amend the IPC, and improving the IPC so it can encompass new technologies and rapidly-developing areas of innovation.

### **Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR)<sup>10</sup>**

SCCR is a Standing Committee that focuses on specific substantive areas of IP, namely copyright and related rights. It makes recommendations for improvements to international laws around these areas. As of January 2025, SCCR is looking to work on the limitations and exceptions to copyright and related rights, and broadcasting organisations. It is currently in the process of reviewing artists' resale rights, copyright in the digital environment, and the protection of theatre directors' rights. These topics change every few years.

More information can be found on SCCR's webpage: [SCCR](#).

### **Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP)<sup>11</sup>**

SCP is a Standing Committee dedicated to reviewing, coordinating, and guiding States on matters related to patent law. It deals with multiple areas of patent law at a time, rather than focusing on one topic in turn, which facilitates discussion and improvement of the international patent system.

More information can be found on SCP's webpage: [SCP](#).

### **Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT)<sup>12</sup>**

SCT is a Standing Committee focused on discussing, improving, and providing guidance on matters related to trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications. Trademarks are signs that distinguish one entity's goods or services from another entity's.<sup>13</sup> Industrial designs are particular

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<sup>10</sup> All information taken from the SCCR webpage.

<sup>11</sup> All information taken from the SCP webpage.

<sup>12</sup> All information taken from SCT's webpage, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>13</sup> [Source](#).

characteristics or features of a product that make it recognisable from other products, for example, shape, colour, or markings.<sup>14</sup> Geographical indications are signs used on items that come from a specific geographical area, with specific qualities due to that geographical origin.<sup>15</sup>

More information can be found on SCT's webpage: [SCT](#).

### **Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC)**

IGC (Also referred to as GRTKF/IC) is an intergovernmental committee that aims at negotiating an international instrument for the recognition, protection and development of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources.

More information can be found on ICG's webpage: [ICG](#).

## **4.4. Topics**

### **4.4.1. What is Intellectual Property Law (IP)?**

Intellectual Property is intangible property resulting from creations of the mind.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) allow owners-creators as inventors or artists, or any rights holders, to decide how, when and where their creations are used and/or exploited.<sup>16</sup>

They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.<sup>17</sup>

### **4.4.2. What are the types of intellectual property?**

Intellectual property rights are customarily divided into two main areas:

#### **1) Copyright and rights related to copyright**

- The rights of authors of literary and artistic works (such as books and other writings, musical compositions, paintings, sculpture, computer programs and films) are protected by copyright, for a minimum period of 50 years after the death of the author;

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<sup>14</sup> [Source](#).

<sup>15</sup> [Source](#).

<sup>16</sup> [Source](#).

<sup>17</sup> [Source](#).

- Also protected through copyright and related (sometimes referred to as “neighbouring”) rights are the rights of performers (e.g. actors, singers and musicians), producers of phonograms (sound recordings) and broadcasting organisations.

## 2) Industrial property

Industrial property can usefully be divided into two main areas:

- One area can be characterised as the **protection of distinctive signs**, in particular trademarks (which distinguish the goods or services of one undertaking from those of other undertakings) and geographical indications (which identify a good as originating in a place where a given characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin);
- Other types of industrial property are protected primarily to **stimulate innovation**, design and the creation of technology. In this category fall inventions (protected by patents), industrial designs and trade secrets<sup>18</sup>.

### 4.4.3. Who uses IP?

IP is relevant for everyone everywhere, as IPRs are used to protect almost every category of tangible and intangible goods and services available, and stakeholders range from individual inventors to large enterprises, from indigenous groups to international organisations, from courts to law firms and offices.

More information on the goods and stakeholders covered by IP can be found at the [WTO's Website](#).

### 4.4.4. Why is IP important?

Intellectual and industrial property is fundamental in our society and economy for a multitude of reasons, depending on the specific type of IPR:

- It stimulates and ensures fair competition and protects consumers by enabling them to make informed choices between various goods and services;
- It provides protection for the results of investment in the development of new technology, thus giving the incentive and means to finance research and development activities;

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<sup>18</sup> [Source](#).

- It facilitates the transfer of technology in the form of foreign direct investment, joint ventures and licensing;
- It encourages and rewards creative work by giving authors not only recognition for their efforts, but also economic and moral rights over their creations.

#### 4.4.5. What policy areas overlap with IP?

IPRs help lawmakers, scholars, and courts address the world's most pressing issues, such as global health, gender equality, climate change, economics and many others.

More information on the areas whose policies are largely intertwined with IPRs can be found at [WIPO's Website](#).

## 5. Relevant Documents

### 5.1. Past Documents

WIPO's database of Meetings and Documents can be accessed [here](#).

### 5.2. Explanatory Videos

- [Information and Resources](#);
- [Seminars, Webinars and Workshops](#).

## 6. Treaties and Legislation

### 6.1. Key Treaties and Conventions

The following Conventions form the basis for Intellectual Property laws and regulations today:

- **Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886)** - protection of works and the rights of their authors. Covers musicians, painters, authors, etc. It allows authors control over how their work is used, who can use it, and on what terms;
- **Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883)** - protection of industrial property (trademarks, industrial designs, patents, service marks, geographical indications, trade names, utility models);

- **Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organisation (1967)** - constituent instrument of WIPO.

## 6.2. Recent Developments

- **WIPO Design Law Treaty (DLT)**, adopted November 22, 2024;
- **WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge**, adopted March 24, 2024;
- **Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled**, adopted 28 June 2013;
- **Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performance**, adopted 24 June 2012.

You can find WIPO's database on intellectual property laws, treaties, and judgments [here](#).

You can stay up to date on global IP legislation [here](#).

## 7. Rules of Procedure

- [General Rules of Procedure](#);
- [Special Rules of Procedure](#);
- [Special Rules of Procedure for Standing Committees](#).

## 8. HoD Reports

If available, the Coordinator for WIPO will share the HoD Reports from previous sessions of that Delegation's committee.

## 9. Archives

WIPO Archives can be viewed [here](#).