

# ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

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***elsa***

The European Law Students' Association



The European Law Students' Association

## Academic Activities Handbook

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

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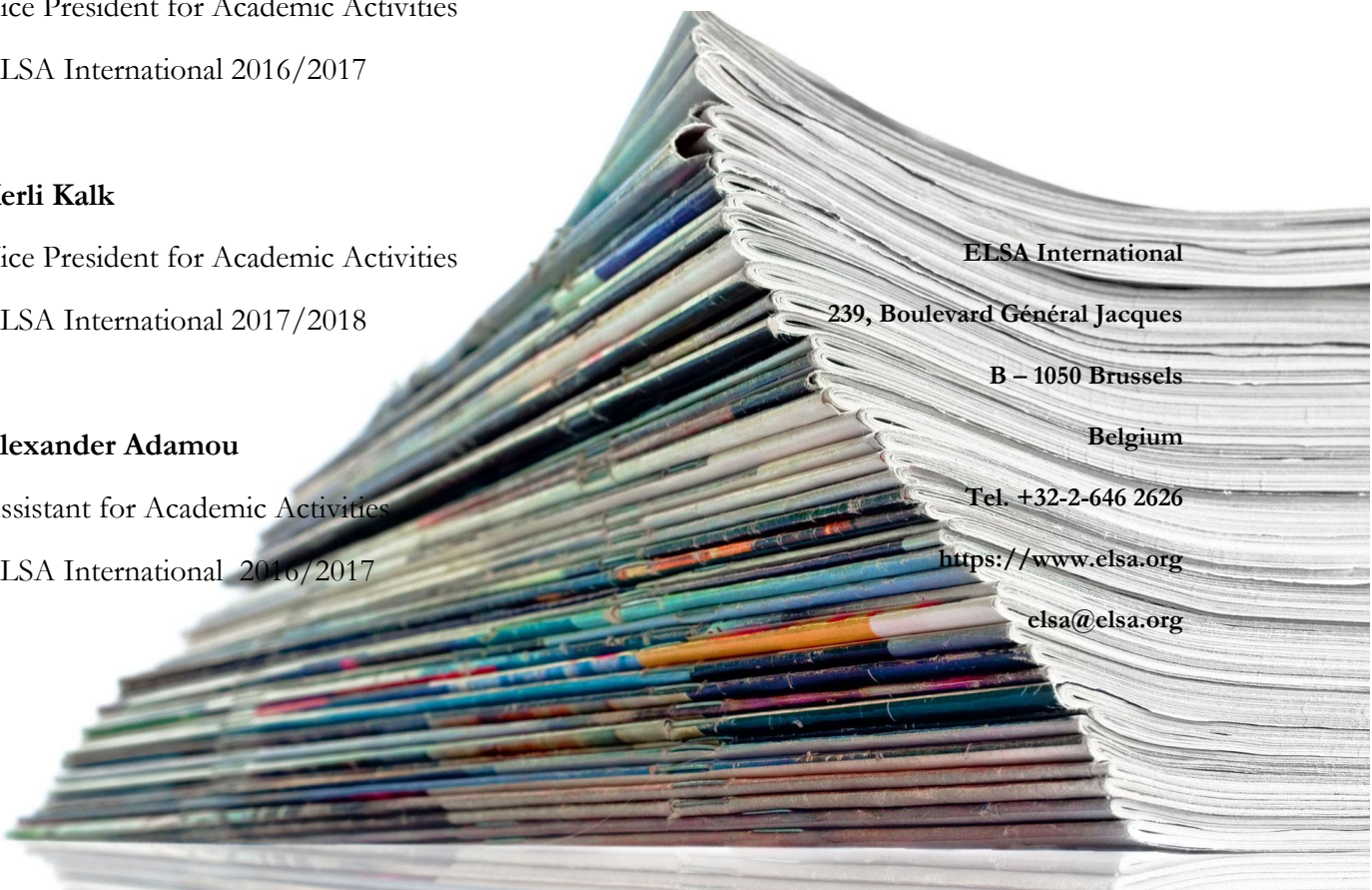
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## FOREWORD

**Welcome to the Academic Activities (AA) world!**

Being a member of the AA Team is sometimes a great challenge but it gives you a rewarding experience in the end. Hundreds of students all over Europe dedicate their time for ELSA and its incredible projects.

Some of them are AA'ers. This Handbook was originally created to “help you become the best AA officer ever”. The AA Handbook will allow you to learn the basics of organising Academic Activities in your ELSA group.

You are reading an updated version of the AA Handbook, that includes the latest developments in AA between 2014-2017 including developments in Academic Competitions, Studies Abroad Projects and Legal Research Groups. Moreover, in this Handbook we reflect the changes adopted during the latest ICM in Prague.

Academic Activities offers an infinite number of possibilities when it comes to projects. Innovation, creativity and interactivity are some of the keywords that define our area and our work the most. And all of this while combining legal education, internationality and legal 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 role as an AA officer. With the support of this document, coupled with the improvement of communication between the AA officers and shared experience we hope to achieve huge AA success all over the network.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the dedicated AA officers, who helped me to put the content of this handbook together, namely my assistant Alex Adamou and my Absolutely Amazing successor Kerli Kalk.

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

AAfully yours,



**Jakub Čája**

Vice President Academic Activities

ELSA International 2016/2017

# **1. Short introduction to ELSA and the Academic Activities area**

## **I. Introduction**

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 within Europe.

### **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.

Since the beginning of ELSA's history, Academic Activities has been one of our fundamental areas. Academic Activities has faced 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 within our network.

Through Academic Activities, ELSA makes a direct contribution to legal education. In AA projects, participants acquire legal skills by means of practical and (inter)active learning methods. It also directly provides law students and young lawyers with opportunities to learn about other cultures, and use their professional skills.

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.

## II. Differences between AA and S&C

At times it can be hard to distinguish between AA and S&C events, here are some key points to remember:

- AA projects focus on an extraordinary practical and interactive learning.
- AA projects aim at improving the participants' practical legal skills.
- AA projects allow law students and young lawyers to use their legal knowledge in a practical way.
- AA projects often focus on topics which are more relevant for curricula of universities.
- AA projects represent an opportunity for law students and young lawyers to receive career information about various professions which are open to law graduates.
  
- In S&C events, participants acquire legal knowledge by means of passive learning methods.
- S&C events have a tendency to focus on the participant and giving him/her the opportunity to learn and discuss different topics that are not usually included in the curricula of universities. Hereby contributing to a better legal, cultural and social education.
- S&C events provide a high quality scientific and cultural programme.
- S&C events aim to promote intercultural exchange, allowing participants to experience other countries and cultures.

## 2. Abbreviations and acronyms in ELSA

AA	Academic Activities
AA PSF	AA Project Specification Form
AA PEF	AA Project Evaluation Form
CIC	Client Interviewing Competition
DB	Decision Book
EC	Essay Competition
EI	ELSA International
ENC	ELSA Negotiation Competition
HOC	Head of Organising Committee
IFP	International Focus Programme
ICM	International Council Meeting
KAM	Key Area Meeting
L@W	Lawyers at Work events
LR	Law Review
LRG	Legal Research Group
MCC	Moot Court Competition
MKT	Marketing
OC	Organising Committee
OYOP	One Year Operation Plan
SAP	Studies Abroad Projects
SSO	Statutes and Standing Orders
VP AA	Vice President for Academic Activities
WM	Working Materials
WS	Workshop



### **3. Academic Activities projects**

#### **I. Focus in AA**

The general focus of AA projects is legal writing and academic competitions as defined below.

In addition to these projects, AA officers are welcome to organise other activities that aim at providing law students and young lawyers with practical skills or that allow law students and young lawyers to use their legal knowledge in a practical way. Examples include interactive legal student debates or simulations of an assembly of an international or national institution.

When deciding on the topic of an AA project, officers are highly encouraged to focus on topics that relate to human rights, the current International Focus Programme or topics with clear international aspects. ELSA's commitment to social responsibility shall be taken into account and entails awareness when organising Academic Activities projects.

#### **II. Academic Competitions**

##### **A. Moot Court Competitions**

A Moot Court Competition is a simulated hearing of court proceedings in a particular area of law. It aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice by giving law students the chance to act as representatives of two opposing parties in a case in court and to negotiate a fictitious case written by an expert in the area in front of a qualified Jury/Panel. The first stage of a Moot Court should consist of written submissions by both parties followed by oral pleadings. Moot Court Competitions (MCC) are a great chance to improve student's legal knowledge, as well as to prepare and train them for proper and successful acting in court. This includes the use of rhetoric, gestures, speaking without notes, increasing self-confidence and intellectual flexibility. Although these skills are rarely learnt at University they are however expected from students, especially from future employers.

If you are interested in establishing a Moot Court Competition, find more information and a detailed guideline in the [MCC Handbook](#) available on [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

##### **EMC2**

One of the biggest flagship projects in ELSA's network is the ELSA Moot Court Competition on WTO- law (EMC2) in co-operation with the World Trade Organization. Teams from all over the world submit their written submissions and subsequently compete against each other in five Regional Rounds, this takes the form of a simulated hearing of the WTO dispute settlement system. The best teams get the chance to plead in front of experts of the WTO at

the headquarters in Geneva. For more information, visit <https://emc2.elsa.org>.

## **EHRMCC**

Another flagship project of ELSA is the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC), organized in co-operation with the Council of Europe in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The European wide competition is a simulation of a hearing concerning the violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and allows the best teams to plead in front of judges at the ECHR. For more information, visit <https://ehrmcc.elsa.org>.

## **B. Essay Competitions**

### **Introduction**

An Essay Competition is an organised event in which law students and young lawyers compete through their essays on a given topic. It aims at preparing the participants for the specialised forms of written communication that are required within the legal profession. Writing legal essays is different from writing in other genres mostly because legal writing is more technical and may require more nuance depending the national language involved. 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 panel of judges/ markers, and a comprehensive set of rules.

In the assessment of the essays the panel 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.

### **Planning an Essay Competition**

To plan an Essay Competition a few steps should be followed. The following intends to give some suggestions on how to plan an essay competition.

1. Firstly discuss with your board what your Legal Writing options are as well as the objectives.
2. Choose the topic your competition will be focused on.
  - Suggestion: always think about what is attractive for your members/students as well as for the potential partners.

3. Research and contact the possible partners and members of the panel. In an ideal case, your partner can provide you the judges, otherwise you can contact professors or lawyers who teach or work in a specific topic of law the EC is focused on.
  - Suggestion: contact a professors/partners who previously helped your ELSA Group with other projects.
4. Create a draft of the EC Rules and present it to the judges.
5. Prepare a feasible and realistic timeline for the project.
6. Think about and prepare an attractive prize for the winner (money/ traineeship/ publications).
7. Develop a promotion plan and the Marketing Materials with the VP MKT.
8. Launch the competition.
9. Think about some possible Follow-up projects and events in order to get the best out of it.
  - Suggestion: if you have a Law Review or some other publication, you can for example publish the best essay there.

This is just one of the basic ways of planning an essay competition.

### **Local and National Essay Competitions**

If you are launching an EC, don't limit yourself in thinking only locally. As a local AA officer you have the possibility to launch an essay competition for your local members but keep in mind the possibility to open the competition on a national level or even to accept international participants. All these options should be discussed with the VP AA in the national board and the VP AA of ELSA International (if necessary).

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

### **Essay Competitions' Outcome**

Sometimes students seem to be more interested in seeing a practical result of their research rather than being awarded with a monetary prize. For a law student or young lawyer, having their essays published is very attractive. For most legal professionals it is rare to have the opportunity to publish their work. 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 ways to achieve this goal are to have those essays published in your university law review or your own Law Review if you are publishing one.

Another option is to publish the essay online in your local or national group website or even in your university website together with a press release about the project. 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 the academic institution.

### **C. The ELSA Negotiation Competition (ENC)**

The ELSA Negotiation Competition (ENC) is a simulation of a negotiation process between different parties. Two teams each consisting of two law students represent a client or a party to a legal dispute. All negotiations will be held in English.

The simulations will be observed and evaluated by a panel of three judges, who shall be legal practitioners allowing participants to obtain advanced skills in the field of negotiation and exercise public speaking.

Organizing a round of the ENC can be done by every ELSA Group. Therefore ELSA International provides an ENC package including the rules of the competition in detail, a tutorial for the organisation, a judge pack, a model scenario, a media card and marketing materials. Negotiation Cases and Scenarios are provided by ELSA International upon an individual request. You can find the ENC package as well as an [ENC Handbook](#) in the [ELSA Officers Portal](#). Scenarios for the negotiation could be provided by ELSA International.

If you are interested in the ENC and want to get more information about the competition, contact the VPAA of ELSA International at [academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org).

Participating in the ENC will also prepare the teams for a potential participation in the International Negotiation Competition (INC) which is hosted by the American Bar Association on an annual basis. For more information about the international round visit [http://www.lawbility.ch/en/offer/international\\_negotiation\\_competition](http://www.lawbility.ch/en/offer/international_negotiation_competition) or contact the VPAA of ELSA International at [academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org).

## **D. Client Interviewing Competition**

The Client Interviewing Competition (CIC) constitutes an academic competition that simulates a client meeting. For this purpose, teams consisting of two law students step into the role of lawyers attending a client meeting. The main task of the teams is to get to know the situation of their client's problems and his expectations of the meeting by asking the right questions and evaluating the report of the client.

Participating in the CIC provides an opportunity for law students to learn and practice interviewing and counselling skills as well as to get in touch with practicing lawyers and experts with which could be cooperated during this competition.

Participating in a round of the CIC also prepares the participants for potential further competitions such as the Louis M. Brown and Forest S. Mosten International Client Consultation Competition (ICCC).

If you are interested in getting more information, contacts and materials about the Client Interviewing Competition, contact the VP AA of ELSA International at [academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org).

## **E. Legal Debate**

A legal debate is a discussion of a particular subject of Law, organised in a form of a competition. 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 a panel of judges, 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 soft skills and hone their analytical abilities. Important to mention is, that this kind of a project is strengthening knowledge and skills of all the involved parties: participants, moderators, judges and audience.

This kind of event is easy to pull off as it does not require a substantial economic effort and yet has immediate benefit for both the participants and audience. It is suggested that you read the AA materials and contact the more experienced officers when organizing this type of event.

If you are interested in getting more information and materials about Legal Debates, contact the VP AA of ELSA International at [academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org).

### **III. Legal Writing**

#### **A. 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. The legal research group's conclusions shall be publicly accessible in the form of a final report.

Through the Legal Research Groups, ELSA has contributed to the adoption of the Statute of Rome and the establishment of the International Criminal Court. In the recent years, ELSA has cooperated on Legal Research Groups with the Council of Europe, Missing Children Europe and the International Labour Organization.

If you are interested in establishing a Legal Research Group in your ELSA Group, find more information and a detailed guideline in the [Legal Research Group Handbook](http://officers.elsa.org) available on [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

#### **B. Law Reviews**

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.

The AA officer shall ensure that the Law Review has a comprehensive Editorial Policy and a set of requirements for the contributions.

The possible contributions to the Law Review are:

- a) Articles
- b) Essays
- c) Comments
- d) Case Notes

If you are interested in establishing a Law Review, find more information, detailed guidelines and requirements in the [Law Review Handbook](#) available on [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

## IV. Other AA projects

### A. Lawyers at Work Events (L@W)

L@W events aim at allowing law students and young lawyers an insight 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. L@W events involve a practical inside view into the legal profession and shall therefore involve interactive learning opportunities such as for example case solving, legal courses or job interview and CV trainings.

L@W events are a very powerful tool. 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. Institutions and companies also benefit from the exercise because by dedicating time to young people they are investing in their own future.

#### 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.

In connection to the fair you can organise other events:

- **Lectures** from some of the organisations presenting at your fair.
- **Case Study competitions.** 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 example a dinner/reception where students and professionals can mingle.
- **Interview/Interview Simulations.** Ask the law firms if they want to have CVs of

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 conduct interviews.

- **Make a brochure**, in which you **introduce** all the **participating organisations/firms**, so it is easy for the students to get an overview of the event.

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. A benefit of job fairs is that these potential employers don't hesitate to pay for the opportunity to present themselves in front of the students. Therefore, it can serve as a fundraising tool for your ELSA group.

### **Open Days at Law Firms/Institutions**

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

One idea 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 associates are expected to carry out and topics discussed and researched.

### **Legal Workshops**

A single local session at your University 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.

If your ELSA group organises this kind of an event, you can invite someone working within a specific field of law to talk about his work with the topic “in real life”.

## **B. Studies Abroad Projects (SAP)**

Studies abroad projects are informative events about different possibilities of studying abroad as well as introductory sessions for incoming foreign students. Moreover, it is strongly recommended, not only for AA officers but also for all other ELSA officers, to actively recruit and include international exchange students as either participants or as organisers of ELSA activities (e. g. L@W events, SV/ISV, Legal Debates, Moot Court Competitions etc.).



## **Mentor Programs**

In some ELSA countries the Local Boards have an agreement with the University for a mentoring programme relating to the international exchange students arriving each semester. 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. The mentor program is a really good way of making ELSA more international on a Local level for the members.

## **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 study programmes abroad. Some excellent initiatives have been developed throughout the years by some ELSA Groups. A good example is “ELSA Lingua”, interactive projects that enhance cultural diversity and international exchange.

For more detailed information about and guidelines on how to run Studies Abroad Projects, read the [Manual for Studies Abroad Projects](http://officers.elsa.org) available at [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

## **C. Legal Courses**

A legal course is an interactive scheme that aims to deepen practical knowledge and develop skills to supplement the academic curriculum.

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

Legal courses focus on practical skills that are not acquired purely through the study of substantive law but which are necessary in order to carry out a career in law. Legal Courses shall be planned to include practical 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:

- Legal English;
- Analytical Reasoning;

- Legal Writing;
- Legal Research;
- Negotiation;
- Pleading;
- Client Service;
- Management;
- Technological Legal Tools(databases etc.);
- Time Management and Organisation;
- Teamwork.

### **Motivation - why organise a Legal Course?**

You may not realise it at first, but Legal Courses can be a very powerful tool in the hands of your group. They are an opportunity for you to attract more participants by providing students with the chance to take part in a course linked to other projects and focused on relevant topics. They will hopefully be more prepared to participate in Essay Competitions, Law Reviews, Legal Research Groups, etc... as a result of your courses.

Legal Courses can help the AA officers to reach a larger number of students and increase the number of participants and teams in different projects organised within our Association.

The reasons for implementation of the Legal Courses are numerous:

- It is a project easily planned and managed;
- It does not necessarily need any financial investment;
- Legal Courses bring a potential to involve law firms, companies, other NGOs, universities and training organisations. Therefore it is a good opportunity to improve the external relations and to get new partners;
- The Legal Course can be provided to ELSA members for any of the referred institutions. It shall be academically and administratively prepared by ELSA.

### **Important to remember**

- It was already said that a legal course focuses on practical skills. This easily gives you the opportunity to discuss with a law firm possible cooperation or advice for the kind of skills that can be developed through a practical course.
- You should ask yourself what are the skills that members from your group would like to develop and adapt the project accordingly. Make sure that the topic is attractive, accessible, and useful and that the sessions are as interactive as possible. The goal is that the participants can put into practice the topics they learn by performing different kinds of tasks.
- As recommended, the legal course should consist of a minimum of six hours divided into at least three sessions. 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.
- 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.

### **D. More opportunities in AA**

In addition to the abovementioned projects, AA officers are welcome to organise any other activities that aim at providing law students and young lawyers with practical skills or that allow law students and young lawyers to use their legal knowledge in a practical way. Examples include interactive simulations of an assembly of an international or national institution (Model United Nations, Model European/National Parliament etc.) or the development of a new tool that helps to improve legal knowledge (e. g. the Legal Translator App by ELSA Malta).

## 4. AA in different levels

### I. International events

- are attended by participants (both speakers/judges and participants) that:
  - a. Have **different national and legal backgrounds** and
  - b. Came to the country of venue **primarily for the purpose of attending the international event.**

(National background is not nationality, but it is determined by the person's subjective opinion.)  
(Legal background means the country where a person has received the basic legal education.)

### II. National events

- are attended by participants (both speakers/judges and participants) from two or more different cities/LGs in the same country.
  - a. Note that in some countries the academic society may define them not on the basis of cities but by research centres. Thus it may be necessary to have representatives from different research centers even if they are in the same city.
  - b. Note that the minimum amount of cities or research centres may vary for the requirements for scholarships or academic achievements.

### III. Local events

- are attended by participants (both speakers/judges and participants) from the same city.
  - a. If there is only one law faculty in the respective country, the event shall be considered as a national event.
  - b. Note that, in some countries the participants would have to be from the same research centre, so for example from one faculty.

## **5. Human Rights**

### **I. Introduction**

“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 how our work strives to promote human rights. It is recommended to implement Human Rights in some form in all key area activities. This means that Human Rights should firstly be respected in all activities of ELSA, and also, that Human Rights topics should be included in S&C, AA and STEP.

As an AA officer, you can organise a Legal Workshop or a Moot Court Competition related to Human Rights. Another option would be an Essay Competition or a Legal Research Group with an institution whose work is connected with Human Rights.

### **II. ELSA Day**

The most important of ELSA’s project referring to Human Rights is ELSA Day. It is a huge forum of various human-rights-related events organised by all Local Groups of ELSA on the last Wednesday of November. The aim of the ELSA Day is to jointly demonstrate our human rights engagement by providing legal education and opportunities that enable law students to be independent and critical members of society. The general topic of the forum is Human Rights, which is relatively broad – for this reason each year we draw attention to a particular topic.

If you are interested in organising an AA event on Human Rights, for more ideas and specific information check the updated version of [Human Rights Handbook](https://officers.elsa.org) available at [officers.elsa.org](https://officers.elsa.org).

## **6. International Focus Programme, IFP**

### **I. 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”. 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 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. This is done 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.

## II. Topic

The current IFP topic is Environmental Law (duration: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019).

## III. IFP Week

The IFP Week is a new concept in the ELSA Network. The main goal of it is to unite the whole Network in organising different projects referring to the topic of the International Focus Programme. The IFP Week contributes to raising awareness about the importance of the topic and aims at providing students with the knowledge necessary to tackle the problems facing society. Moreover, thanks to the growth of IFP-related events in one week, ELSA's commitment can have even bigger impact on the world. Use the experience that the organisers of previous IFP events have, and be a part of a larger project – the International Focus Programme.

The IFP Week is an annual project and the first edition concerning Environmental Law took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

If you are interested in organising an AA event on the IFP Topic, for more ideas, specific information and your tasks as a Local or a National Officer, read the [IFP: Environmental Law Handbook](#).

## 7. Strategic Goals and AA

During ICM Cologne, Spring 2013, new Strategic Goals 2018 were voted upon and approved by ELSA Network.

The complete Strategic Goals for 2018 can be found in the Decision Book on pages 6-8, as well as at the Officer's Portal. Many of these goals are the goals of a general nature of related to other areas. However, some of them, such as those regarding ELSA Day and Human Rights are more relevant for the AA area. Therefore, as an AA officer, you should pay more attention to them.

You can find the current Strategic Goals on the front page of the Officers Portal

[officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org)

## **8. Organising an AA project**

### **I. Introduction**

As noted in 'AA Projects' part, there is a variety of projects organised within ELSA, which allow for different time frames and types of project (local, national, international). There are a lot of things to remember when planning and organising AA projects and events. The aim of this part of the handbook is to focus on the following stages of organising projects and share universal tips for successful organisation.

### **II. Motivation**

The reasons for organising Academic Activities can be many. By organising different AA-events ELSA Groups contribute to legal education, foster mutual understanding and 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.

### **III. The research and planning stage**

The most important tool for a successful event is a good planning. This should not be underestimated. The time you spend on the planning is not a waste of time. You will discover that the more time you spend on the planning, the more you will save later. When you start planning, keep in mind the steps that should be followed throughout the organisation:

1. Define the objectives
2. Clarify the assignment and target groups
3. Research the options (brainstorming)
4. Choose the best option
5. Setup steps of the process

6. Execute your plan, use control mechanisms
  
7. Evaluate outcomes and efficiency of the process of organisation

In order to plan the project successfully, you need to have an idea about the project itself. Discuss your idea with the rest of your board and find answers for the following questions:

- What kind of project eg. Job fair, MCC, LRG or an Essay Competition to organise?
- Who will be responsible for organising the project?
- Why this topic and who will be interested in funding it and participate?
- How many participants?
- What kind of participants? What is the target group? All students, only first-year students or only master-level students?
- What language? On which level, local, national or international?
- Will you need any Venues or an Accommodation for participants and the judges/other externals?
- Will there be some social activities in connection to the event?

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 to compete with them.

## **A. The main project idea**

### **What type of a project to organise?**

Of course, the first thing you have to decide upon is what kind of a project are you actually going to organise. As you know, in the AA area, you have a number of opportunities of what to offer to your members and partners.

You should always take into account:

- demand of your market;
- what opportunities are already available;
- what could potential partners be interested in to contribute to.

Obviously, if your faculties or other societies/entities already offer opportunities to participate in moot court competitions and there is no market for another one, it is perhaps not the best option for you right now. On the other hand if you see demand for certain activities, such as writing essays or meeting and mingling with lawyers, then these may be the type of project to



focus on. It is always worth considering the various external relations opportunities, which is linked with fundraising.

## **B. Human Resources**

Human resources is one of the most important aspects of organising any event. A well organised OC can make your life much easier, even when the things go a bit off the track. Therefore, the first step in organisation of an AA project is to form the OC. When it comes to the human resources part of organising events in general, you should keep in mind the following questions:

- How many people are needed for the Organising Committee (OC)?
- Who will be Head of OC?
- How many is needed for helping the OC?
- What will be the division of the tasks?

What is unique about AA, is that the composition of the OC varies from project to project, and therefore it is difficult to set up an universal structure of the OC.

We decided to use as an example the general structure of the OC:

- **Head of OC (Team leader):**  
Co-ordination, motivation, “source of ideas”, “information centre”, risk management.
- **Responsible for Academic Programme:**  
The academic programme, cases, speakers, judges, follow-ups.
- **Responsible for Social and Cultural Programme:**  
Sightseeing, parties, receptions, visits, cultural programme.
- **Responsible for Finances:**  
Set up a budget, approve payments, receive payments, do the accounts, grant applications.

- **Responsible for Marketing**  
Material and prospects for sponsors, posters, fliers, website, application forms, media contact, fundraising (research and contact with partners and sponsors all the time).
- **Responsible for Logistics:**  
Venues, accommodation of participants, meals and drinks, transportation, prizes.
- **Responsible for Participants:**  
Taking care of the application forms, patronages, writing invitation letters for visas, communication with the participants.

As the Head of OC you need to remember, that constant communication is very important for maintaining a well organised OC. The crucial thing is, as the Head of OC, you always need to be updated about the work of the other members, whether the tasks are completed and deadlines are followed. A way to go is to have regular OC meetings where you keep each other updated and make sure that everybody has all the necessary information and to co-ordinate the tasks. This helps to keep general good relations in the OC. YOU can also do team building exercises in the beginning of the planning stage as well as have gatherings and parties with the whole OC. Try to remember not to panic if things do not go as planned. Stay calm, positive, and make the best out of the situation.

## C. Project specifics

After you have chosen the OC, you can start the first brainstorming about your perfect AA project. Gather the people in a nice place in order to make them feeling comfortable and ready to start sharing the ideas. Go through the different parts in organising a project and explain the aim of it. Split the responsibilities among the OC, having in mind all the stages of organising the project and set the first tasks and deadlines. After you have done the first brainstorming it is time to make use of your plan.

### What topic to choose?

Before choosing a topic, make sure you are aware of everything that is linked with choosing the right subject.

How do we find it? Go through various options and choose the one that fits the most your current objectives and needs.

- First, consider ELSA’s core fields. Check the Human Rights and IFP Handbooks for inspiration!
- Research current legal hot topics and look for something that may be unique.
- Market Research - find out what are the most attractive topics of your fellow students, it will be easier to get more participants.
- Consider the project’s financial potential. If there is a possibility to get a new partner/sponsor for the project, consider topics, the most of law firms and companies are engaged with.
- Keep in mind, what restrictions might affect the participants. Therefore it is important to have a clear idea of your target groups. Will they be only law students, so that it can be strictly legal? Or is the event meant for a wider group like students from other areas, non-students etc.
- Has the subject been dealt with in other projects/events before? It is not necessarily a reason to avoid such a topic. As opposite, use it as an opportunity to express that the project is based on continual basis.

After considering all the circumstances, you should end up with a short list of topics to choose from. Discuss the list within the OC/ your board and show it to the university and potential partners. They will appreciate that you take into account their opinion. It is crucial to have academic support for your project at the very early stage. The final version of a topic should be compact and exact in order to make an interesting title, sometimes in the form of a question.

### **To whom do we address our project?**

Obviously, projects are organised for students. However, there are some points to clarify:

- Is the event meant to be for “freshmen” students, or for those who are in a higher level of studies?
- Do we want only law students as participants, or does the project concern also students of other disciplines and therefore they should have the opportunity to participate (interdisciplinary projects)?

- Do we want to limit the amount of participants? If yes, how many do we accept? Do we accept them on a first come, first serve rule, or do we choose the ones that fulfil the established criteria the most?
- Is the participation free of charge or is there any participation fee?
- Is it a local, national or international project?
- What language do we want the project to be held in?

The target group affects the topic of the event. If the project is international, remember that a subject of international interest would have more appeal than an event of national interest.

### **The date of the event**

There is a big number of events organise in the ELSA Network, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, there is a chance of clash between events of similar nature/topic organised at the same time (in the same timeframe). We do recommend to not to compete with other ELSA Groups, since this may in the end harm your own project by having a lack of applicants. Discuss the options with the VP AA of your NG or VP AA EI when deciding the date/timeline in order to avoid this issue. In addition to that, try to choose the date that is does not clash with any other event organised by the University or other student societies.

## **D. Timeline**

In order to be efficient and save time at the end, it is important to plan a timetable including flexibility should things go wrong.

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. Remember to always think of a Plan B, so that when something comes up unexpected and ruins your plans, you remain calm and exchange problem into the solution.

Remember that the Head of OC always needs to keep track of the tasks and the time!

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

There are several models of a timeline of the organisation of a project possible. Take a look at this example.

- **9 months prior to the event:** starting with the making of a project plan by setting a date and researching the field of the project.
- **8 months prior to the event:** make a fundraising strategy and start hunting for sponsors and speakers
- **4 months prior to the event:** send the details of the event to the marketer for producing the promotion materials and submit the Project Specification Form (AA PSF) to ELSA International.
- **3 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](http://www.elsa.org). Remember to send the promotion messages to the international mailing lists; promote your event through other National Groups and all marketing channels like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, university, professors, magazines etc.
- **2,5 months prior to the event:** the application opens. Critical point!
- **1,5 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.
- **1 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 can have this as the official one.
- **2 weeks prior to the event:** everything should be settled. Here you can send additional 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.

## IV. Planning and Organising Stage

### A. The programme

#### i. Academic part (the core)

The academic part is the most significant. Therefore it is important to start early to manage all of the logistical obligations associated with running an event. The first step of planning an event is doing research on the topic. Having an overview of the subject matter of the case is always a plus. The following step is contacting a professor or a specialist on this field. The easiest way is to contact a professor at your university; consequently, it will be easier to communicate with him/her. Additional involvement of legal professionals, such as attorneys, judges etc... makes the project more attractive, valuable and serious. Having professional academic support, makes it easier to acquire partners and sponsors for your project.

When you are involved in preparing a case for an ENC/MCC, make sure that the cases are complex, involve various legal issues and circumstances. Difficulty level of the respective case shall comply with the competition standards.

### **Contacting the potential academic partners**

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

- 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 would like to follow up with a phone call next week.
- Make a 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.
- If you get a negative answer, say thanks for their time, you might need the contact in the future, so be polite.
- 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.
- Schedule a meeting before the event and make sure that the judges are prepared to undertake the tasks. They need to be aware of the rules, scoring system, all the facts of the case etc., thus the HOC or the Responsible for the Academic Programme should brief the judges. Make sure that everything is clear and ask if there are some more wishes or questions.

### **ii. Social programme**

The social programme is an important part of an event especially if the event lasts more than 1 day, because during free time the participants can get to know each other and learn new things.

However, the social programme should only play an ancillary role, not the main one. The social programme can consist of receptions, parties, theatre, etc. Remember that you don't need to have something extraordinary every day; a theme party at the hostel can be sometimes more fun than the most expensive club in town. When the event is national/international, sightseeing should always be a part of the programme. During an international event the participants get the chance to experience a different culture. Traditional food and drinks are very welcomed.

### iii. Outcome

The most successful projects usually provide a measurable benefit as a result. These *benefits* can be described as long-term changes or specific tangible *benefits* for which the project was organised. For example:

- After an Essay Competition you can organise a Workshop/Discussion where the best essays are discussed or where the topic of the essays are analysed;
- After a Legal Course on Legal Writing can be a short guideline with the main tips and tricks on how to write a thesis/work with the sources etc.;
- As a result of a parliamentary simulation, the documents compiled by the participants would be used in an upcoming parliamentary session by politicians themselves;
- Traineeship for a winner of an EC/ENC/MCC etc.

## B. Budget

With a bigger project it is important to discuss a budget with the whole board at the beginning of the planning phase. It is extremely important to have the finances planned in advance and to keep track on your income and expenses throughout the whole organisation of the project. What happens if you do not get enough income? When do you need to know if you have enough money? At what point can you still cancel the event? All these questions need to be considered when creating the budget.

Possible sources of income:

- Money from Sponsors and Partners (at the beginning maybe undefined);
- Grants;
- Financial support from the University and other Institutions;
- Participation fees;
- ELSA Development Foundation (EDF)

General expenses linked to the projects and events:

- Travels and accommodation of the academic advisors, professors, judges etc.;
- Travels and accommodation for the participants;
- Catering;
- Venues;
- Production and printing of Marketing and Working materials
- Telephone or mobile phone;
- Gifts;
- Prizes.

## **C. Fundraising**

Fundraising is an aspect you have to keep in mind from the very beginning. In order to have enough money to cover the expenses of the event, usually it is necessary to fundraise money from various sources.

### **Overview of the main possible ways of fundraising**

The main fundraising opportunities:

- Your general sponsors/partners;
- Project partners;
- Law firms Institutions, NGOs, University/ies, Companies working within the field of the topic of the event;
- Funds for the topic, for cooperation between some countries etc.;
- Grants (local, regional, governmental and inter-governmental funds)
- Ask the National Board or International Board, they could have ideas where you can try to fundraise, they could also have useful contacts;
- Other Local or National Partners(need to request a permission)
- ELSA Development Foundation, EDF.

Purely financial support is however not the only thing you can ask the potential partners for. Can also be free or discount on certain things you need for the event(in-kind partners):

- Food;
- Marketing materials;
- Prizes for participants;
- Venues.

### **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 according to the EDF application cycles.



## **The tasks in fundraising**

The following is a brief outline of tasks when seeking partnership and sponsorship:

- Identify the potential partners;
- Identify the possibilities of donation;
- Identify who a sponsorship request should be directed to. (If there are special forms to complete and the likely time period of response);
- Ensure that if you are requesting sponsorship by letter, that you include a comprehensive package of materials so the reader can understand your project and specific request;
- Make sure you meet with a potential partner personally or at least you have a phone call;
- A preferable strategy would be to arrange a meeting between the sponsorship person and your team, so you may present the project and all the general promotional benefits ELSA provides;
- Always have a back-up fundraising plan in case, that the previous attempts would not work as planned.

## **D. Logistics**

### **Venues**

The question of venue must be solved on an early stage. The reality is, the closer the arrangements are to each other, the easier it is to organise! If possible before you get the external and if not at least at the same time.

Points to think about when choosing and organising the venue:

- Location: how far from public transport, is there a need for arranging transport for participants;
- Gather all the possible information about transport and provide it to the participants; such as maps, contacts etc. If possible, try to arrange a discount;
- Distance between the Workshop/Court rooms, accommodation and a meals provider;
- Costs, if possible try to get it for free;
- Technical equipment, what do you need and what is already at the venue, what can you bring with you;

- Special needs of participants/partners;
- How many rooms do you need?

## **E. Marketing**

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. Therefore marketing is of crucial importance.

The person responsible for marketing should of course possess knowledge about marketing and experience from previous events. What is very important is that it needs to be full of creativity and enthusiasm! The VP Marketing of your group is the most obvious person to be in charge but you should think of involving other people from the marketing team (if you have one). The marketers are responsible for promotion and public relations.

The aim of promotion is to attract potential partners, sponsors and participants to get involved in the project. Remember that in this process you promote ELSA in general, too. When you plan the promotion, you must define the possible marketing tools and the visual part of the event. This will give the specific project identity.

In order for the ELSA Network to appear unified all over Europe and in order for the ELSA officers to have professional promotion materials even with little knowledge, ELSA has a special Corporate Identity. This includes certain colours and fonts that should always be used when promoting ELSA events. Remember always to use the ELSA logo in accordance with the regulations in the Marketing part of the Council Meeting Decision Book. You can find more information in the [ELSA Corporate Identity Handbook](#), and the templates for MKT materials are available on the Officers' Portal.

Every event is different and has its very own special needs but here are some basic ways of promotion:

### **Posters and Fliers**

Posters and fliers should promote the project, stating the basic information. They are also important tools for fundraising – sponsors can put their logos on the posters and in return we get financial (and/or other support). Posters have to be “teasers”, catching people’s interest. Spread them at universities or any other place where it can attract some attention. For national or international projects, we recommend to distribute them at NCMs and ICMs to make sure students from different universities in the ELSA Network know about it.

## **Magazines and newspapers**

It is very beneficial to use this option if your faculty or university issues a student magazines and newspapers. Prepare a small banner with the project information (designed similarly to fliers), so it can be placed in there as an advertisement. You can also write an article about the event. Publication of an article about your AA project will help to raise awareness about the project itself and about ELSA in general.

## **Logo**

If you organise a big and long-term project or a series of events, it should have its own specific visual project identity. The best way to achieve this is to design a logo for the event that you can use on all marketing materials. It should symbolise the event.

## **Online promotion**

### *Social media*

One of the most efficient ways to promote your projects is to use Social Media, mainly Facebook. If you have all the information about the project, you need to spread the word. Things you can do to promote your event are:

- Create a Facebook Event. Invite your friends, share the link through your personal account, ELSA Group's page and in different Facebook groups (e.g. university study groups, other societies, dorms etc.).
- Prepare a promotion strategy (e.g. teasers, information about the prizes, speakers/judges, interesting facts, testimonials etc.).
- Always refer to a project webpage for more information;
- Use also other social media, like YouTube, Twitter, Instagram;
- With big projects, create promotional videos – they are great tools to present the basic information about the project, introduce the OC, or just to present the general idea of the project to drag attention (you can use footage from previous editions of the project, or something new and original) → watch [this](#) and [this](#) promotional video as an example;
- Analyse the aim of the event, choose the right tools and try to be innovative.

### *Webpage*

- The project webpage needs to be designed attractively;
- There needs to be a clear structure, so any information won't get lost;
- Include all the necessary information and the available documents, application forms etc.;
- Include FAQ section, so you avoid answering the most basic question;

- If possible, ask your faculty/university to publish basic information about the project on their official webpage.

## **Promotion on different levels**

### *International projects:*

- Do not forget to submit [AA PSF](#) and fill in [this form](#), in order to publish your project on [elsa.org](http://elsa.org) [event calendar](#);
- Send an e-mail via “ELSA-AA” international mailing lists, to spread the information;
- Promote the event, for example, on the “ELSA IB” and “AA & MCC Team” Facebook groups. This is the easiest way of reaching almost all ELSA members to inform;
- Set up a professional and structured website to boost your publicity.
- Make sure to comply with the strategy and use the materials provided by ELSA International, especially in EHRMCC, EMC2 and LRGs.

### *National projects:*

- Do not forget to put your event at your national ELSA webpage.
- Communicate your events on the national mailing lists, if there is one.
- Flyers, posters, invitations and ads to national magazines and student newspapers.
- Make sure that all your Local Groups and inform students about the event.
- Hold a workshop at an NCM about the project.

### *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.
- Ask professors at your university to help you with the promotion during their lectures.
- Lecture talks at your university.

## **F. Some days before the event**

### **Specification**

AA projects shall be specified in the AA Project Specification Form (AA PSF), to be sent at least 10 days prior to the event through the online form that can be found in the Officers’ Portal [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org). However, we do recommend to do this earlier for the Marketing purposes. The

title, date, type, participation number, language, fees of the event and the some other information such as description and contact details should be filled in the form. For more information see the Specification and Evaluation policies in AA under Section 8 of this Handbook.

### **Last tasks**

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 the OC know their responsibilities and tasks for the next day.
- If someone is ill, take care of a replacement of the person.
- Organise some gifts for the externals involved.
- Prepare all the marketing materials (ELSA and partners' rollups etc.);
- If you have the list of participants, create the name tags/badges.
- Make sure that there will be an information desk, and that all the information/working materials will be available there for the participants.

## **G. The Event Day**

- Make sure that the participants and externals get to the venue;
- Make sure that there is always a person at the Information desk;
- Finalise the preparations of the venue (keys, the technical facility works, rollups on their place, name tags etc.);
- Prepare refreshments and catering for the participants and externals;
- Take care of academics, sponsors and other official guests;
- Be prepared to open the event, give a welcome speech, present the partners, and to close the event as well as to thank the externals and all the people involved;
- Make sure that the MKT responsible is ready to take pictures;
- Organise the cleaning with the OC after the event.

## **H. After the event**

The work relating to the event is 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-events.

- Write “thank you” letters to your sponsors, judges etc. and other helpers;
- Follow up with the partners, might continue the cooperation;
- Write an activity report about the project and send it to partners; fill in the ELSA 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;
- (for more information see the section Specification and Evaluation policies in AA);
- If a larger event, write an article for Synergy or your national magazine. Send a copy of the article to the lecturer and sponsors.

## **Evaluation**

AA projects shall be evaluated through the AA Project Evaluation Form (AA PEF) within 3 weeks after the project was/has been concluded through the online form that can be found in the Officers' Portal [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org). The purpose of the EFs is to provide an overview of the project organised as well as its strengths and weaknesses in order to avoid similar mistakes in the future and to develop strategies for the improvement in the AA area. For more information see the "Specification and Evaluation policies in AA" under Section 8 of this Handbook.

## 9. AA Quality Standards

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. However, during the ICM Prague, Spring 2017, these QS have been removed and creation of the new, more concrete Quality Standards concerning specific AA projects is in progress. Quality Standards listed below are QS of the general nature, applicable amongst all the AA projects.

### I. Project Participation Policies

#### A. 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.

#### B. 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.

### **C. 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:

- Basic knowledge about ELSA;
- Their responsibilities as a participant (as well as information about cost, visa, insurance, and all other legal requirements, if applicable to the event);
- 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.



## D. 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:

- 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.
- 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.

## II. Specification and Evaluation Policies

### A. Specification Policies

Every AA event should be specified in the [AA Project Specification Form](#) (AA PSF). The AA PSF is available online at ELSA Officers' Portal: [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

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

- ELSA International (through the Form above);
- National Group

at least 3 weeks prior to the event.

If you want your event to be published at ELSA International's website, fill in the Form [available here](#). Since we do receive a lot of requests, the event publication requests are reviewed by the VP Marketing of ELSA International. The priority is given to the events that can be of the interest of the entire Network, such as:

- international AA events;
- events 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 therefore only proper information shall be provided.

## **B. Evaluation Policies**

### **Participants' evaluation**

To assure that evaluation is done in a proper way, the project needs to be evaluated by all the parties involved. Therefore, every participant in an AA event should be invited, upon completion of the event provide evaluation to the organising group. When conducting the evaluation by the participants, take into consideration the type of the project you organised.

### **Organising group's evaluation**

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

- Evaluate the AA event with the participants and the partners involved in the event;
- Submit to ELSA International the [AA Project Evaluation Form](#) – especially in IFP, Human Rights and International Projects;
- Evaluation of every other event shall be submitted upon the request of the National Group or ELSA International.

### **National Group's responsibilities**

Quality in evaluation shall be ensured by the National Groups. They are responsible by checking that all local groups submit the completed AA Project Evaluation Form 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 next year in order to improve AA.

### **The Role of ELSA International**

ELSA International on its side shall archive all the information received from the Local and National Groups and use them in order to improve the AA area.

### **III. Dispute Resolution**

The AA Policies and Quality Standards should be implemented and referred to when in doubt of how a case should be handled.

In case the organising group has problems with organisational issues of the AA event, the dispute shall be solved by reaching a friendly agreement. In case the parties cannot reach a mutual agreement, the case should be referred to ELSA International and, if agreed, also for advice to the AA mailing list.

In case of complaints by participants about low quality of an AA event, the conflict can be solved by reaching a friendly agreement between the parties involved. In case the parties cannot reach a mutual agreement amongst themselves the case can be referred to ELSA International.

## **10. Communication in AA**

The crucial part of the organisation of every AA event, as well as your work as the AA officer in general, is communication. Another important aspect when it comes to communication is the ELSA network, which makes our organisation and our work unique.

When you work with the AA-area, remember that, there are other Local and National VP AAs in the Network probably working on similar events and facing the same challenges. Use the network to get help, ideas and inputs on your work and to improve one of the key areas in ELSA.

In AA, the most of the time, you will be communicating in the different ways explained below.

### **I. Mailing lists**

#### **A. ELSA AA Mailing list: discussion and information list**

The ELSA-AA is an email-list on which all VP AAs (National and Local) should be subscribed. 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 all the National Groups are informed about

the process of registration at least. You can subscribe to the ELSA-AA by sending an email to VP AA ELSA International, [academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org). Please note that the local officers should be given the possibility to join the international AA discussion and information list as observers. However this is upon the request and the approval of the respective 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.

### **B. National Mailing lists**

Many national groups use them as well to communicate within their own network. There might be a single list for all officers, an area-specific list, or both. Make sure that you are subscribed to all relevant list in your national group, so that you do not miss out on important information.

## **II. Facebook Groups**

Since everyone has Facebook nowadays, it is a useful tool to communicate with other ELSA Officers and Members. Therefore, ELSA uses several Facebook Groups and sites to share information with members.

### **A. ELSA International page**

The Facebook page of ELSA provides important information about ELSA's work and current events in the network to members and externals alike. Most importantly, the calls and deadlines for Legal Research Groups, International Moot Court Competitions, STEP, Delegations, Law Schools etc. are posted here. It is therefore recommended that you follow this page in order to be always up to date.

## **B. International AA & MCC Group, IB Group**

Every National AA or MCC Officer should be a Member of this Groups. The VP AA and the VP MCC of the IB will use this group to share information regarding AA projects and updates with their Officers and to remind them all the important deadlines. It is also likely that your National Board created another AA Officers' group for the Officers from your country. If this is the case, you should join this group as well in order to communicate better with your national network. In addition to the AA Group, there is a general ELSA IB Group, where you can see the newest updates about all the projects as well, therefore we suggest to join the [ELSA IB Group](#).

## **III. AA at Internal ELSA Meetings**

### **A. AA at the International Council Meeting (ICM)**

During the ICM an AA-Workshop takes place in which changes to be made and the future of the programmes are discussed.

Each Country should send participants to the workshop to present the opinion of the National Group. If you have the possibility you should go to the ICMs, where you can get new ideas and inputs how to organise AA-events. For you as the AA officers, the best way of acquiring knowledge about the area and all the AA projects is to follow the workshop discussions and to actively take part in it.

Autumn ICMs take place at the relative beginning of the term, when most of the international projects are to be launched. Therefore this is an opportunity for you to take part in the international AA network.

Spring ICMs are mostly focused on the discussion of the progress of the ongoing projects as well as the evaluation of the finished ones. This can serve for you as an opportunity to get an inspiration for your AA work in the next term.

#### **ICM Minutes**

In order to be prepared to follow the Workshop discussion, we recommend to go through the ICM WS Minutes, that are put online after each ICM. Minutes from the previous ICMs are available at [officers.elsa.org/im](http://officers.elsa.org/im).

## **State of the Network Report, SotN**

Before every ICM, every National Group has to fill in the SotN. In the AA-area there are some questions about what kind of activities that have been organised in the country. It is the responsibility of the National VP AA to make sure that the AA-part of the SotN is done. Submit all the relevant information about the AA event in your group to the National VP AA for the purpose of SotN in due time.

## **B. AA at the Key Area Meeting (KAM)**

The Key Area Meeting (KAM) 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.

KAM is the best opportunity for the new AA officers to get a basic overview of the AA work on the international level of ELSA.

KAM usually takes place in the beginning of September, so if you decide to attend it you can receive a motivation boost to implement new ideas and projects right at the beginning of your term!

## **C. 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. At 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 projects.

## 11. Knowledge Management in Academic Activities

As result of the changes introduced in the AA part of the Decision Book during the ICM Prague, Spring 2017, there have been significant changes within the responsibilities in the AA area, including those in Knowledge Management. Several provisions have been removed from the Decision Book, however, we do believe, that they still have a purpose for being in a Handbook. For long time it has been discussed how to improve this important part of the ELSA work. The obligations 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, if necessary.
- To give transition to the next national officer and also local officers who haven't received it.
- To translate, if necessary, 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 shall provide necessary training and information to National and Local Groups to organise AA events, archive all the information received from the National Groups and suggest ways how to improve the AA area.

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. It is very important that all the tools created to the AA officers are available. You can find all the important AA materials at [officers.elsa.org/aa](http://officers.elsa.org/aa).

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.

## 12. Transition

To give your successor a good transition is one of your crucial tasks in the office. It will save her/him a lot of time and she/he doesn't have to repeat the same mistakes you did. She/he can also learn from the successful event you organised and perhaps make some of them annual. Important to share is what didn't work, what would you do differently, if you could do it once more. Where do you see the need for improvements etc. Always try to give a better transition than the one you received a year before.

### I. Points to remember for the transition

Transition with you successors shall always include:

1. Transition of the General and the Specific area knowledge
2. Transition of the Important Materials and Contacts
3. Teambuilding sessions

In order to make sure that you have covered all the important topics in your Transition, you can take a look at the **AA Transition Checklist** ([link here](#)) available at [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org).

### II. If you didn't get a good or any transition

In the ideal case, if you are reading this handbook, you should already have had your transition with your predecessor. However, if you did not receive a detailed or any transition, don't worry, there are several things you can do yourself:

- **Get in touch and talk to the some of the previous VP AAs or other old board members**, they can perhaps help you with some information, contacts, ideas and tips what worked and what did not work in the previous years within the AA area.
- **Speak to your President and/or Secretary General**. As they are responsible for board management, they should have a basic overview of the past AA events and planned projects for the coming term.
- **Contact your National VP AA or/and VP AA of ELSA International**, and ask for



help. They for sure have the information that you need to know about your position and they usually have the direct experience from being local officers themselves. .

- **Ask other Local VP AA's for help**, everyone is most likely new in the office and know what information you need in the beginning.
- **See if there is some old archive in your ELSA group** and search for some useful information there.

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

### **III. When you are new in office**

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 you support each others' ideas.

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

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.

Try to go to NCM/ICM/KAM and to get the most out of it. You will learn more about AA, meet many people working with the same area as you and have a lot of fun whilst making new friends.

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 perhaps someone can answer your questions.

Read this AA Handbook and other AA tools that will help you with your work. Don't get scared by the amount of information, read the part you want to know more about. The AA area is big and contains various projects. You will learn a lot by working on them throughout your term.