

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES TRANSITION CHECKLIST

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES
2019/2020



elsa

The European Law Students' Association

FOREWORD

Dear reader,

We are proud to present the updated AA Transition Checklist. This checklist serves as an excellent tool for local and national officers providing transition as well as an overview for those who did not receive transition.

Transition is essential to ensuring proper management and development of knowledge in ELSA. Every year, many officers retire from their positions, and unless proper transition is conducted, the ELSA Network risks losing valuable knowledge.

The first AA Handbook was created in 2017 by Jakub Caja, Vice President in charge of Academic Activities ELSA International 2016/2017, and Kerli Kalk, Vice President in charge of Academic Activities ELSA International 2017/2018. While this substantial work conducted by our predecessors has enormous importance to the conceptualisation and development of Academic Activities, we felt that a new and updated checklist was needed.

This checklist is the result of a collaborative effort of several members of the AA team and therefore we owe our gratitude to Elene Ghudushauri, Matea Golem, Nikola Ćirić, Oļegs Sedjamins and Tinatin Oboladze.

We hope this checklist serves the Network well.

Best wishes,

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1. Introduction to the AA area

The European Law Students' Association (ELSA) is a non-political, non-profit, non-governmental association run by and for law students across Europe. ELSA offers educational opportunities for its members on three levels: Local, National and International and across three key areas: Seminars & Conferences, Academic Activities and Student Trainee exchange Programme (STEP).

Academic Activities (AA) is one of the Key Areas at ELSA that aims to contribute to the legal education of law students and young lawyers through **interactive practical activities** by means of critical dialogue and academic cooperation. The first Academic Activities project was established in 1989 as the ELSA Law Review offering students a possibility to get internationally published.

Academic Activities comprises a vast number of programmes and projects. For more information and concrete tasks of an AA Officer, please consult the updated [AA Handbook](#).

2. How to use the checklist

This checklist serves as a tool to use during local or national transition. It contains points for transition of both general and specific ELSA knowledge. Each table contains items which it is suggested that you discuss with your successor. You will then assess whether the discussion has been sufficient by ticking “**Passed without issues**” or “**Done**”. If more discussion is needed, you will find further explanation of each item in section 4 as well as links to websites and/or handbook with more detail.

Please note, that this checklist is generic and cannot encompass the specific of each National and Local Group of ELSA. Therefore, you may need to alter the checklist to reflect the details of your group. You may find an editable word version of the checklist [here](#) so you can adapt it to your needs.

3. The checklist

3.1 General information about ELSA

Item	Passed without issues	Further discussion and reading needed
Founding and explanation of the history in AA		
Philosophy statement		
Useful abbreviations		
Levels in the association: Local, National, International		
Structure of the Board		
National Internal Meetings		

International Internal Meetings		
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3.2 Regulations of ELSA

Item	Passed without issues	Further discussion and reading needed
International: Statutes		
International: Standing Orders		
International: Decision Book		
International: Relationship between SSO and DB		
National regulations 1		
National regulations 2		
National regulations 3		

3.3 Local/National Group Specifics

Item	Passed without issues	Further discussion and reading needed
Structure of the board		
National network		

3.4 Communication

Item	Passed without issues	Further discussion and reading needed
AA Mailing list		
How to contact the International Board		
Cooperation with other National Groups		
Facebook Groups		
National AA mailing lists (if they exist)		
Communication with Local Groups		
Useful Tools		
Slack (if applicable)		
Facebook (if applicable)		

G-Suite (if applicable)		
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3.5 Specifics about AA Projects

Item	Passed without issues	Further discussion and reading needed
EHRMCC		
JHJMCC		
ILRG		
ELR		
ENC		
National project 1		
National project 2		
National project 3		
National project 4		
National project 5		

3.6 Project Management

Item	Done	Further discussion needed
Regular events		
Evaluation of the events organised		
Typical challenges and problems		
Plan/Schedule of the upcoming events		

3.7 Contacts

Item	Done	Further discussion needed
General Partners		
Project Partners		
Other contacts <i>Judges, Academic Boards, speakers etc.</i>		

4. Further explanations

4.1 General information about ELSA

4.1.1 History: Founding and explanation of the history in AA

ELSA was founded on 4 May 1981. 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.

4.1.2 Philosophy Statement

The Philosophy Statement sets out the guiding principles for all ELSA's activities and it is therefore essential that all ESA Officers are familiar with it. It may be found in Article 3 of the Statutes of ELSA and reads as follows:

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.

4.1.3 Useful abbreviations

There are many abbreviations being thrown around every day in ELSA, and as a new officer, this may seem intimidating. Therefore, we have created a list of some of the most useful abbreviations below:

- AA: Academic Activities
- CIC: Client Interviewing Competition
- DB: Decision Book (often referring to the International Council Meeting Decision Book)
- EC: Essay Competition
- EI: ELSA International
- EHRMCC: European Human Rights Moot Court Competition
- ELD: ELSA Legal Debates
- ELR: ELSA Law Review
- ENC: ELSA Negotiation Competition
- HOC: Head of Organising Committee
- ICM: International Council Meeting
- IFP: International Focus Programme
- ILRG: International Legal Research Group
- 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
- SSO: Statutes and Standing Orders
- VP AA: Vice President for Academic Activities
- WM: Working Materials
- WS: Workshop

4.1.4 Levels in the association: Local, National, International

ELSA functions on three different levels: Local, Nation and International.

- ELSA is represented at more than 300 law faculties across Europe. This local representation is done by the **Local Groups** of ELSA.
- ELSA has 44 **National Groups** under which the Local Groups are founded. National Groups are the members of ELSA and may vote (if fulfilling the criteria) at International Council Meetings.
- Internationally ELSA is represented by the **International Board** which works from the ELSA House in Brussels, Belgium.

4.1.5 Structure of the Board

The number of board positions and divisions of tasks vary from group to group. It is important to understand who is responsible for what in your group and know who you will be working with.

On international level, the board consists of eight positions, namely:

- the President;
- the Secretary General;
- the Treasurer;
- the Vice President in charge of Marketing;
- the Vice President in charge of Academic Activities;
- the Vice President in charge of Moot Court Competitions;
- the Vice President in charge of Seminars and Conferences;
- the Vice President in charge of the Student Trainee Exchange Programme.

4.1.6 National Internal Meetings

National meetings are essential for knowledge management, decision making and team bonding. Therefore, new officers must know which meetings are held in the respective National Group, when and where the meetings will take place and who will be attending the meetings.

The most common national meetings are National Council Meetings and National Officers Meetings.

4.1.6.1 National Council Meeting (NCM)

A National Council Meeting (NCM) is the most important national meeting. NCM includes participants (both speakers/judges and participants) from two or more different cities/LGs in the same country. 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.

4.1.6.2 National Officers Meeting (NOM)

A National Officers Meeting (NOM) is a great opportunity for the ELSA officers to share their knowledge and experience with each other. The NOM provides the development of the Association by discussing important issues of the ELSA future.

4.1.7 International Internal Meetings

4.1.7.1 International Council Meeting (ICM)

An ICM is a decision-making meeting of ELSA in which the International Council (i.e. the National Groups) gathers. The ICM consists of plenaries and workshops.

During the plenary, the International Council shapes the association by amending the regulations, elects International Board Officers etc.

During the ICM AA Workshops, the relevant officers will discuss the status and future of the area. Each National Group should send participants to the workshop to present the opinion of the National Group.

The first ICM of the term takes place in autumn, 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.

The second ICM of the term is 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.

4.1.7.2 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. The last Key Area Meeting of ELSA was scheduled to take place in Pilsen in September 2020.

4.1.7.3 International Training Meeting

The International Training Meeting was introduced in 2020 and functions as a meeting for training and educating ELSA Officers. The first International Training Meeting will take place in Autumn 2021. The purpose of the meeting is to train new ELSA officers by providing training on ELSA knowledge and soft skills such as project management or strategic planning. The specific content of each International Training Meeting will be decided by the International Board of ELSA. As the content will vary, the meeting is not for specific positions in ELSA, rather National Groups may send three delegates to the International Training Meeting and choose themselves who they wish to send.

4.1.7.4 *International Strategy Meeting*

The International Strategy Meeting was introduced in 2020 and functions as a meeting for laying and developing the strategy of ELSA. The first International Training Meeting will take place in Spring 2021. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan of ELSA as well as develop new strategies. The specific content of each International Strategy Meeting will be decided by the International Board of ELSA. As the content will vary, the meeting is not for specific positions in ELSA, rather National Groups may send three delegates to the International Strategy Meeting and choose themselves who they wish to send.

4.2 Regulations

ELSA is regulated on international, national and local levels, and it is relevant for officers of all levels to be familiar with ELSA's regulation. If you are a local officer, you should look into your local regulation and the relevant parts of your national regulation. The regulation on international level does not apply to Local Groups. National officers should familiarise themselves thoroughly with their national regulation as well as the relevant parts of the international regulation. While the local regulation will not apply to them, it is still advisable to have a broad overview of these.

Below, the reader may find an outline of the international regulations.

4.2.1 *Statutes and Standing Orders*

The Statutes of ELSA are the founding document of the association and set out the overall regulation of ELSA. They regulate the scope of the association, members and observers (i.e. National Groups), Organs, the International Council, the International Board, finances, amendments, hierarchy, dispute resolution and dissolution.

The Standing Orders regulate in more detail the items of the Statutes. Should there be a conflict between the Statutes and the Standing Orders, the Statutes will prevail.

The 2020 version of the Statutes and Standing Orders may be found [here](#).

4.2.2 *The International Council Meeting Decision Book*

The International Council Meeting Decision Book commonly known as the Decision Book or the DB outlines all decisions taken by the International Council (i.e. National Groups) at International Council Meetings. This regulation is the most relevant for Academic Activities officers, as it regulates projects falling under Academic Activities. The most relevant parts are (the numbers below are taken from the 52nd version of the International Council Meeting Decision Book):

– **In Part 1: General:**

- **Chapter 2: Strategic Plan 2019-2023.** This chapter outlines the Strategic Plan of ELSA which should be implemented by all ELSA officers on all levels.
- **Chapter 4: Human Rights.** This chapter regulates how ELSA works with human rights, including the annual human rights campaign.
- **Chapter 5: International Focus Programme.** This chapter sets out the topic and implementation of the current IFP.

- **In Part 2: Board Management, External Relations and Expansion (BEE):**
 - o **Chapter 3: External Relations.** This chapter regulates the procedure of approaching external relations and should be known by all officers of ELSA.
- **In Part 6. Academic Activities (AA) and Moot Court Competitions (MCC):**
 - o **Chapter 1: Definitions.** This chapter defines the area of Academic Activities.
 - o **Chapter 2: Responsibilities.** This chapter sets out the responsibilities of ELSA International and National Groups as regards Academic Activities.
 - o **Chapter 3: Academic Competitions.** This chapter defines Academic Competitions and regulates the ELSA Negotiation Competition as well as ELSA Legal Debates.
 - o **Chapter 4: Legal Writing.** This chapter regulates Legal Research Groups in general as well as the International Legal Research Groups specifically, it also regulates Law Reviews, the ELSA Law Review and Essay Competitions.
 - o **Chapter 5: Professional Development.** This chapter regulates Lawyers at Work events.
 - o **Chapter 6: Moot Court Competitions.** This chapter regulates moot courts including the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition and the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition.

The 52nd version of the International Council Meeting Decision Book may be found [here](#).

4.3 LG/NG specifics

Every Local/National Group has its own way of functioning; thus, it is important to make sure that newly elected officers are familiar with their group's specificities.

4.3.1 Structure

The board structure and division of the tasks within the board is very important for the newly elected officers, so make sure that the new VP AA is familiar with it, as well as with the structure of your National/Local Team. Furthermore, the relationship with the university is crucial for the Local Groups. Additionally, introduce your successor to your partners and make sure that this person is aware of all important contacts in the city/country.

4.3.2 National network

Although AA is a Key Area, it is important to know your Local/National Group history. ELSA was founded on 4 May 1981 in Vienna and has since then grown to a network of more 65,000 students across 44 countries. Academic Activities is the second oldest area of ELSA, since its first project, ELSA Law Review, was launched in 1989. Certainly, your National and Local Groups have interesting history, hence talk about it with your successor. Mark all the important dates in your calendar and think about how your most important projects have developed over the years!

Besides the project dates in your calendar, it is equally important to set dates for your Board Meetings. National Boards should have weekly Board Meetings, while Local Groups should have them every two weeks or more often if needed. Finally, every National Group may organise National Internal Meetings and you can find more details in the National Meetings part of the Checklist.

4.4 Communication

Since officers change every year, it is important to change passwords for all your ELSA accounts at least once a year. Ask the Secretary General of your National/Local Group to reset your email password, set a new one and protect the security of your account this way. In addition, set your email signature. For inspiration, you can copy the signature of the VP AA of the International Board and just change your name and National/Local Group and make sure that your email font is set to Garamond, size large, since this is the official font for drafting emails in ELSA.

4.4.1 International network

4.4.1.1 AA Mailing List

ELSA AA Mailing list should be created at the beginning of the term. The ELSA AA mailing list is a mailing list on which all National and Local AA Officers should be subscribed. If your email is not on the mailing list, do not hesitate to contact VP AA of the International Board (academicactivities@elsa.org) and you will be added to the mailing list as soon as possible.

4.4.1.2 How to contact the international board

Communication with your respective officer in the International Board is of the utmost importance throughout the year. You can contact your respective International Board member via email, which is the most advised way of contacting International Board. Area Facebook groups are usually created at the beginning of the term; however, it depends on the current VP AA/VP MCC and how they envisioned informal communication with the international AA/MCC network.

However, it is important to remember that International Board is a job like any other, so keep in mind working hours of your respective International Board member when contacting them.

4.4.1.3 Cooperation with other national groups

When it comes to the communication with other National AA Officers, we highly encourage you to use official Facebook group/group chat. This way, the entire International network can be up to date with all that is going on in AA area. Additionally, do not hesitate to share your projects on the ELSA AA mailing list.

4.4.1.4 Facebook Groups

As previously mentioned, area Facebook groups are usually created at the beginning of the term, however, it depends on the current VP AA/VP MCC and how they envisioned informal communication with the international AA/MCC network. Besides your area Facebook group, joining the ELSA IB Group is highly recommended, since all the newest information about ELSA's activities on the international level will be updated there. In addition to ELSA International groups, some project specific groups (e.g. Facebook group for National Coordinators for the ILRG) will be established throughout the year.

4.4.2 National network

Communication with your National network is equally important as communication with the International Board. We suggest that you use the same channels of communication with your National network as used within the ELSA network.

4.4.2.1 National AA mailing list (if applicable)

Mailing lists are handy tools when you need to send an email to the entire network. At the beginning of the term, consult the Secretary General of your National/Local Group to get informed about your National Group's specific mailing lists.

4.4.2.2 Communication with Local Groups

Using AA/MCC Facebook group with your Local officers is highly recommended, thus we suggest that you use the same channels of communication with your Local groups as used within the ELSA International network. Do not forget to frequently update your Local officers about the development of your national projects and to send them reminders about important deadlines (e.g. deadlines for National Internal Meetings, deadlines for project application, etc.)

4.4.2.3 Useful tools

ELSA is an international association and most of our communication is done via online platforms. ELSA International utilises **Slack** for all internal communication, hence using Slack within your National Board and **Facebook groups** for the communication with your Local groups is highly recommended.

Once you have installed Slack on your computer, you can create channels for each area or project and you may write direct messages to one or more people from your team. We recommend connecting the slack workspace to your **Google drive** as that makes it easier to import documents etc.

Additionally, you will most probably receive your email account and password from your predecessor.

Please log into this email via the **G-suite** and change the password upon your first login. This account also gives you access to the drive, which is recommended to use within your National Board, so the entire Board is informed about the state of your projects.

4.5 Project management

One of the most important parts of being part of ELSA and participating in AA is the opportunity to build-up project management skills. Organising a project for the first time is not easy and this checklist will make understanding of ELSA project management easier for your successor.

4.5.1 Regular events

Create a list and explain to your successor all regularly organised events in your Local/National Group. Introduce your successor to the project partners and discuss the potential yearly calendar.

4.5.2 Evaluation of the events organised

After every project you organise, inform your Board about the outcome, and hold an evaluation meeting with the OC and the partners. Every project can be improved, thus do not hesitate to share what went wrong and what should be kept the way it is with your successor. Uploading a couple of pictures on your National/Local Group's social media channels is always a nice way to conclude a project.

4.5.3 Typical challenges and problems

If you want for your project to pass as smoothly as possible, it is important to think about how you can avoid a project management crisis. Typical problem with numerous AA projects is lack of materials (rules,

score sheets, guidelines, etc.), which means that AA officers often need to create all the materials necessary for their projects.

As an AA officer, you will be working on a couple of projects at the same time, thus task division and creation of a realistic project calendar is necessary.

Finally, promoting events and finding participants for your projects can be challenging. Prepare side events, project presentations or even an afterwork as an info session about your project. When you finally have your project planned, one of the most common problems when organising a physical event are partners and participants dropping out last minute. Prepare a plan B agenda before every event in order to avoid last minute problems.

4.5.4 Plan/Schedule of the upcoming events

Start planning your year within the first few days of the term. Create the timeline of all the projects you want to organise and discuss the marketing strategy with the VP MKT. As mentioned, creating materials such as scoring criteria and score sheets for the Academic Competitions or an Academic Framework for an LRG can be challenging, hence is better to create materials as early as possible, as well as marketing materials.

Once you thought of the structure of your event, organise regular event team meetings and find partners of the event and the venue, if the event will be held physically. Finally, always prepare plan B and C in order to avoid unplanned problems on the day of the event.

4.6 Specifics about AA projects MR

4.6.1 International

4.6.1.1 European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC)

The European Human Rights Moot Court Competition is a simulated hearing of the European Court of Human Rights. The competition is Europe-wide and open to all those currently studying in ELSA countries or countries that are members of the Council of Europe. EHRMCC is organised in co-operation with the Council of Europe in the European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter, "ECHR"). The competition consists of three phases - Written Submissions, Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round, which is held in Strasbourg every year. Every member of the Winning Team is invited for the traineeship at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, and the best Orator of the Grand Final is invited for a traineeship at the Council of Europe's Liaison Office in Brussels.

4.6.1.2 John. H. Jackson Moot Court Competition (JHJMCC)

The John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition is a simulated hearing of the World Trade Organisation (hereinafter, "WTO") dispute settlement system, formerly known as the ELSA Moot Court Competition on WTO Law (EMC²). The Competition is global, and the participants usually come from more than 35 different countries. The Competition is held entirely in English.

The JHJMCC consists of three phases - Written Submissions, Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round, which is held in Geneva every year.

4.1.6.3 International Legal Research Group (ILRG)

An International Legal Research Group (ILRG) is a group of law students and/or young lawyers carrying out research on a specified topic of law with the aim to make their conclusions internationally accessible. The International Board of ELSA chooses ILRG topic which usually falls under the current IFP topic.

Every ILRG is coordinated by ELSA International and every National Group needs to appoint a National Coordinator in order to participate in the ILRG with its National Research Team. National Research team drafts a National report, which is later incorporated into the Final Report of the ILRG. Every National Research Team shall consist of the National Coordinator, National researchers, Linguistic editors and Technical editors, while Academic Supervisor is recommended, but not mandatory.

The Final Report consists of all the reports drafted by participating countries. In addition to the Final Report, ELSA International shall publish the Concluding Report, which aims to summarise all the National reports. Both Final Report and Concluding Report are published by Wolf Legal Publishers and have its own ISSN number.

4.1.6.4 ELSA Law Review (ELR)

The ELSA Law Review is a bi-annual, student-edited and peer-reviewed law journal published by the European Law Students' Association (ELSA). It aims to provide law students and young lawyers, as well as the wider legal profession, with a source of critical commentary that is outside the scope of the typical legal curriculum. The ELSA Law Review was founded in 1989 and it was published twice per year until 1996. It was re-established in 2015. The ELR is a valid publication and it is recognised in the academic world since it is professionally published by Wolf Legal Publishers and it has its own ISSN number.

In addition to the printed ELR, ELR Blog has been established in 2020.

4.1.6.5 ELSA Negotiation Competition (ENC)

The ELSA Negotiation Competition (ENC) is an interactive competition which simulates a negotiation process between two teams consisting of two students. The participants act as the legal representatives of two hypothetical parties who – despite opposing interests – try to find a common ground for a contract or a dispute.

The ENC consists of mandatory National Rounds and the European Final Round, which will be organised in 2022 for the first time. Local Groups can also organise Local Rounds, as qualification rounds for the National Round of the ENC.

In order to have a team from your National Group in the European Final Round, the following quality standards need to be met:

- National Round must be held in English;
- Educational sessions on legal English and/or negotiation must be provided;
- Every simulation must be judged by at least 3 judges.

For more information, visit the [ENC Website](#).

4.6.2 National and Local projects

Every National Group organises different events, thus we encourage you to use the editable version of the Checklist for this part. Remember to explain to your successor which projects are organised in your Local/National Group. Create a list of project partners, timeline for each project and materials needed for the execution of the project.

4.7 Contacts

4.7.1 General Partners

Although AA officers are responsible mainly for projects, they do a lot of external communication with partners. Creating a document with your President with all general partners of your Local/National Group at the beginning of the term is highly recommended, since all general partners may be interested in some specific projects organised by your ELSA Group.

4.7.2 Project Partners

In addition to General Partners of your ELSA Groups, some projects might have specific project partners. Introduce your successor to the project partners during transition, since this person will closely work with them during their term. Keep a database of partners and we recommend to have evaluation meetings with them at the end of the term, since partners' suggestions are beneficial for the evolution of your projects.

4.7.3 Other contacts

Other contacts mainly refer to the University (especially in the case of Local Groups) and/or your Academic Partners (e.g. judges for the competition, Academic Boards, etc.). Update regularly your contact database and make sure you introduced your successor to all the contact necessary for them to execute their term the best possible way.

5. List of useful materials

- [AA Handbook](#): Providing a general overview of the area.
- [MCC Handbook](#): Providing guidance on organising moot courts.
- [LRG Handbook](#) and [Package](#): Providing guidance on organising legal research groups as well as templates for supporting materials.
- [Law Review Handbook](#) and [Package](#): Providing guidance on creating a law review as well as templates for supporting materials.
- [Academic Competitions Handbook](#): Providing guidance on organising the ELSA Negotiation Competition, ELSA Legal Debates, the Client Interviewing Competition and the Witness Interviewing Competition.

- [ENC Package](#): Contains useful documents for organising the ELSA Negotiation Competition, such as rules, cases and score sheets.
- [ELD Package](#): Contains useful documents for organising an ELSA Legal Debate, such as rules, cases and score sheets.
- [ELSA4Schools Handbook](#) and [Package](#): Providing guidance on organising ELSA4Schools projects as well as templates for supporting materials.
- [IFP Handbook](#): Explains the topic and implementation of the International Focus Programme on Law and Technology.
- [Human Rights Handbook](#): Explains how and why ELSA works on human rights.