



The European Law Students' Association

<Annual Human
Rights Campaign>



ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

FINAL REPORT 2023/2024

FOREWORD

Dear Network,

As the term draws to a close, so does this year's Annual Human Rights Campaign focused on "Corruption and Human Rights." We are filled with immense pride and gratitude as we reflect on the incredible journey we have undertaken together. Your dedication has been nothing short of extraordinary. With over 150 events held across Europe, regular sharing of Supporting Materials every four months, and a dynamic marketing campaign featuring more than 10 posts and videos on international days, we have achieved a truly remarkable year.

This success is a testament to your unwavering commitment and passion. Every event organised, every piece of material shared, and every post published has contributed to raising awareness and making a significant impact. Without your efforts, none of this would have been possible.

We are thrilled to share with you the first Final Report of the Annual Human Rights Campaign. This report is not just a summary of our activities but a celebration of our collective achievements. It highlights the profound impact we have made together as a united Network.

We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to the Council of Europe and the Group of States against Corruption. Their invaluable contributions and outstanding collaboration have been pivotal to our success this year. We are especially grateful for their support in providing the prize for the winners of the Campaign.

Thank you all for your remarkable participation and for making this campaign an unforgettable journey. Together, we have made a difference, and we look forward to see what the future holds.

With heartfelt appreciation,

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Annual Human Rights Campaign

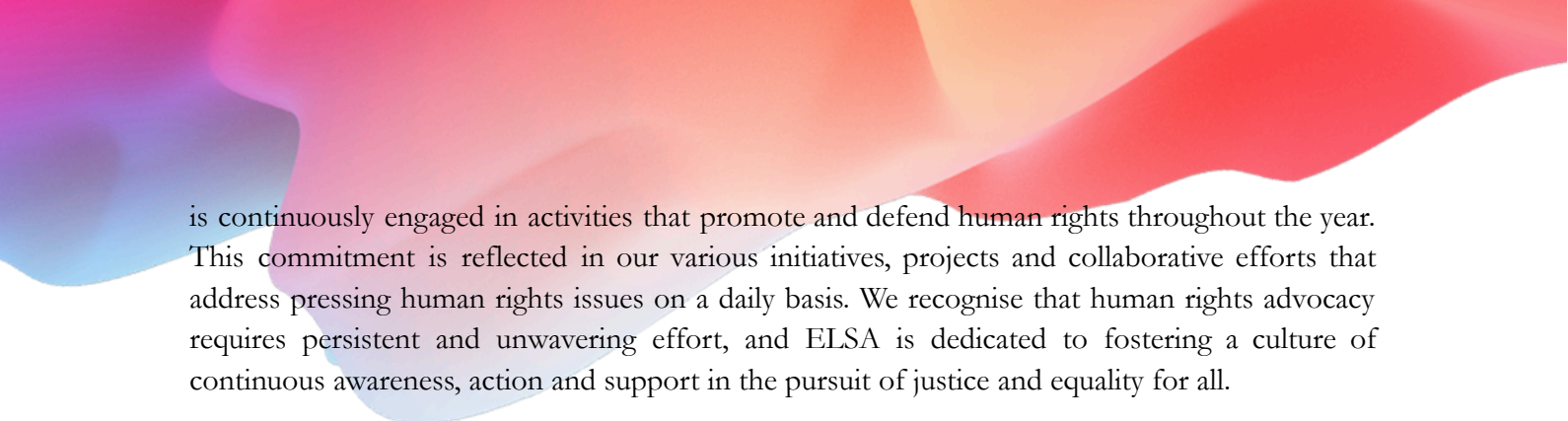
The Annual Human Rights Campaign is a European-wide initiative dedicated to fostering legal education on a specified human rights topic each year. Its primary aim is to unify the Network in raising awareness about the critical importance of human rights. By doing so, it encourages National and Local Groups across Europe to organise coordinated events that highlight both national and international standards of human rights protection and implementation. This campaign serves as a vital platform for disseminating knowledge, promoting dialogue, and encouraging action towards the advancement of human rights.

The Annual Human Rights Campaign commences on the 1st of August and concludes on the 31st of July the following year. This continuous and comprehensive engagement with the selected human rights topic ensures that the Campaign is a dynamic and evolving initiative. A significant highlight within this timeframe is ELSA Day, which is observed every last Wednesday of November. As highlighted during the LXII International Council Meeting (ICM) in Batumi, Georgia, ELSA Day holds particular significance as it unifies the efforts of the entire Network on a single, impactful event, reinforcing the unity and collaborative spirit of ELSA. This collective action not only strengthens the internal cohesion of ELSA but also demonstrates to partners and potential collaborators that ELSA is a distinguished organisation in the field of human rights and legal education.

The concept of ELSA Day is significant for several reasons. Firstly, by having the entire Network work together on the same large-scale event, it strengthens the sense of community and solidarity within ELSA. This unified approach not only enhances the visibility and impact of the campaign but also demonstrates to external partners and potential collaborators that ELSA is capable of organising and executing significant, cohesive initiatives across multiple countries. This kind of coordinated effort is crucial in distinguishing ELSA as a leading organisation in the domain of human rights and legal education.

Moreover, promoting ELSA Day among international institutions boosts ELSA's image and credibility on a global scale. Involving our human rights partner - the Council of Europe - underscores ELSA's commitment to human rights and can lead to further engagement and support from these institutions. Additionally, collaboration with other important institutions can expand ELSA's network and enhance future cooperation opportunities. This collaborative spirit not only amplifies the impact of the Annual Human Rights Campaign but also establishes ELSA as a key player in the field, dedicated to fostering legal education and advocating for human rights across Europe.

While ELSA Day is a highlight of our Annual Human Rights Campaign, our commitment to human rights advocacy extends far beyond this single day. ELSA, through its extensive network,



is continuously engaged in activities that promote and defend human rights throughout the year. This commitment is reflected in our various initiatives, projects and collaborative efforts that address pressing human rights issues on a daily basis. We recognise that human rights advocacy requires persistent and unwavering effort, and ELSA is dedicated to fostering a culture of continuous awareness, action and support in the pursuit of justice and equality for all.

1.2. Objectives of this year's Annual Human Rights Campaign

This year's Annual Human Rights Campaign was centred on the theme of corruption and human rights. The primary objective was to raise awareness of the ways in which corruption undermines human rights and to educate various audiences on the importance of combating corruption to protect and promote human rights. By addressing this theme, the campaign aimed to highlight the intricate link between corruption and the erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Another objective of the Annual Human Rights Campaign was to offer comprehensive legal education on the mechanisms for preventing and combating corruption within the context of human rights law. To achieve this objective, in addition to a webinar in collaboration with the Council of Europe, ELSA provided educational materials that served as a foundation for various projects conducted by the National and Local Groups. These projects aimed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and tools to identify, report, and challenge corrupt practices. The objective of the campaign was to empower individuals and communities to play an active role in the fight against corruption.

Furthermore, the Campaign sought to facilitate collaboration and dialogue between National and Local Groups, institutions, international organisations, and civil society. The campaign aimed to create a unified front against corruption by bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders. This objective was to be achieved by the promotion of best practices for transparency, accountability, and good governance. The collaborative approach was designed to reinforce networks and enhance the collective impact of efforts to combat corruption. To that end, throughout the course of the year, ELSA disseminated and promoted the aforementioned best practices for transparency, accountability, and good governance through the distribution and dissemination of supporting materials.

1.3. Relevance of the theme: Corruption and Human Rights

In the course of this year, we have been engaged in an investigation of the interconnections between corruption and human rights. Our findings have demonstrated that corruption has a profoundly detrimental impact on the protection and realisation of fundamental rights. The discussion has centred on the ways in which corruption undermines the foundations of democratic institutions and the rule of law, resulting in the misallocation of resources, inequality and injustice. By examining the impact of corrupt practices by public officials, it has been demonstrated that essential services such as healthcare, education, and social welfare are compromised, depriving individuals of their basic rights.

It has been demonstrated that corruption has a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society, which in turn exacerbates poverty and inequality. The discussions of the National and Local Groups have centred on the ways in which corruption creates obstacles to accessing justice and public services, thereby perpetuating discrimination and social exclusion. It has been observed that individuals are compelled to make payments in the form of bribes in order to receive medical treatment, legal representation, or education. This practice violates their fundamental rights to health, a fair trial, and education.

Furthermore, we have been examining the ways in which corruption erodes public trust in government and institutions, resulting in a lack of accountability and transparency. This erosion of trust can have a destabilising effect on societies and hinder efforts to achieve sustainable development and good governance. By focusing on the intersection of human rights and corruption, our objective is to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in both the public and private sectors.

A holistic approach to combating corruption within the framework of human rights has been a key focus of our work. The discussions have led to the development and enforcement of robust legal frameworks and mechanisms that protect human rights while addressing corrupt practices.

2. CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND COORDINATION

2.1. Planning process and timeline

In accordance with the provisions of the Book of Decisions of the International Council Meeting, ELSA International commenced the process of selecting the theme for the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024 on 27 February 2023 and concluded this process on 15 March 2023. Following the submission of proposals by the National Groups, ELSA International conducted a comprehensive evaluation of all proposals received. The relevance of the topic and the expertise of the Council of Europe were key considerations in selecting the topic for the Annual Campaign for Human Rights 2023/2024: Corruption and Human Rights. This topic was officially announced during the ICM Malta.

On 5 September 2023, ELSA International published the Annual Human Rights Campaign Outline, which provides a comprehensive overview of the current topic, as well as ideas for the events that National and Local Groups could organise.

On the same date, the call for the selection of National Coordinators for the AHRC was initiated. The call for applications remained open until 5 October 2023. During the specified period, only 23 of the 43 National Groups submitted the name of the National Coordinator selected by them as the point of contact regarding the Annual Human Rights Campaign.

Meanwhile, on 12 September 2023, ELSA International published the Specification Form, which allows National Groups to submit all events that they and their Local Groups intend or plan to organise throughout the year, as well as other descriptive data for each activity. The initial

deadline for all National Groups wishing to compete for Council of Europe visibility materials was 9 October 2023. However, due to the high level of interest from National Groups, this deadline was extended to 13 October 2023. Within the stipulated deadline, 17 National Groups competed with approximately 123 activities. The 40 most outstanding events were selected and organised by 12 different National Groups, either by the National Group itself or by Local Groups. Meanwhile, the other National Groups were afforded the opportunity to submit the requisite documentation by 20 October 2023.

Meanwhile, 29 November 2023 marked the occasion of ELSA Day, during which at least 69 events were organised in 19 different National Groups, including their Local Groups. The initial deadline for submission of the Evaluation Form was scheduled for 1 March 2024. However, in order to afford all National Groups an opportunity to participate in the AHRC Competition, the International Board has decided to postpone the deadline until 10 March 2024.

Following the conclusion of this period, ELSA undertook a comprehensive review of all Evaluation Forms, taking into account the Forms and Specifications. This included an assessment of the number of events organised, with particular consideration given to the ratio between events organised on ELSA Day and those held outside of this day. Additionally, the academic quality of the activities, the social impact of the activities and creativity were evaluated. In collaboration with the Council of Europe, this process enabled the selection of the winner of the Competition. Consequently, at the ICM Thessaloniki, ELSA Portugal was announced as the winner of the AHRC 2023/2024 Competition.

2.2. Coordination with National and Local Groups

Effective coordination with National and Local Groups was crucial to the success of the campaign. Early on, communication channels were established to facilitate regular updates and information sharing. In addition to the communication channels used for Academic Activities Officers, a single and unique communication channel was used for all National Coordinators of the Annual Human Rights Campaign in order to facilitate and reduce barriers to communication with the Human Rights team.

National and Local Groups were provided with detailed guidelines and resources to help them organise events and activities that aligned with the Campaign's objectives. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions were conducted to address any challenges and to ensure that all groups were supported in their efforts.

We created polls on the Facebook group regarding the timeslot of the open call, topics, and other relevant matters to ensure that the preferences and schedules of the Officers were taken into account. This participatory approach helped in scheduling calls and meetings at convenient times and selecting discussion topics that were most relevant and beneficial to the participants.

During the Open Calls, ELSA International has also encouraged collaboration between different National and Local Groups, pooling their resources and expertise to create larger, more

impactful events. This approach in our opinion would allow for greater reach and visibility, as well as the opportunity to address issues that are particularly relevant to specific areas. In this context, during the examination of the Evaluation Forms, the fact that the National Groups, or the Local Groups that are part of them, have organized projects in cooperation with other National Groups, or with the respective Local Groups, has also been taken into consideration.

2.3. Partnerships and collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations played a pivotal role in amplifying the Campaign's reach and impact. The campaign continued to strengthen its relationship with the Council of Europe, which in its capacity as our Human Rights partner provided invaluable support and resources. Collaborative efforts included joint events, co-branded promotional materials, and expert speakers from the Council of Europe participating in key campaign activities. In this context, the webinar entitled "Whistleblower Protection: A Key to a Just World" was held in collaboration between ELSA and the Council of Europe, during which Stéphane Leyenberger was a guest speaker. During this webinar, we explored the Council of Europe's conventions on corruption, the definitions of whistleblowers, and the protective measures outlined in Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)7.

Furthermore, within the context of collaboration with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Fundamental Rights Agency), ELSA played a role in the organisation of a Master Class on the EU Charter for law students, as part of the Annual EU CharterXChange initiative. This is an annual meeting of the FRA and the European Commission with the objective of increasing the exchange of knowledge and experiences and promoting cooperation between experts, policy makers, and stakeholders through a regular forum dedicated to enhancing the application of the rights enshrined in the EU Charter.

These collaborations not only provided additional resources and expertise but also helped in promoting the campaign on a broader scale, thereby increasing its effectiveness in raising awareness about corruption and human rights.

This structured approach ensured that the campaign was well-organised, effectively communicated, and broadly supported, ultimately contributing to its success in highlighting the critical issue of corruption and its impact on human rights.

3. ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

3.1. Webinars and open calls

On 28 September 2023, the Human Rights Team held the first Open Call for the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024. During this Open Call, the Human Rights Team had the opportunity to address all aspects of the Annual Human Rights Campaign, focusing on the timeline and clarifying the most important deadline for all National Groups. During this Open Call, the Human Rights Team also addressed some practical aspects of a campaign, in particular

suggesting the use of marketing as a tool for campaigning and advocacy for human rights. Throughout this Open Call, the Human Rights Team has also provided guidance on how to include and promote human rights in academic projects.

To mark International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December, we organised a webinar entitled “Whistleblower Protection: A Key to a Just World” in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). The event aimed to highlight the critical role of whistleblowers in promoting transparency and justice, and the importance of robust protection mechanisms to ensure their safety and effectiveness.



On 25 January 2024, the Human Rights Team held the second Open Call for the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024. In contrast to the first Open Call, this Open Call focused mainly on activities and projects organised by National Groups, giving Academic Activities Officers the opportunity not only to share their experiences with other Groups, but also to receive feedback or suggestions from the Human Rights Team. During this Open Call, Supporting Materials for the respective months were also presented, giving practical advice and ideas for different projects or activities for each theme of the Supporting Materials.

3.2. Online campaigns

One of the most pivotal aspects of this year's Annual Human Rights Campaign was the integration of a robust online marketing strategy alongside on-site activities organised by National and Local Groups. This dual approach significantly amplified the campaign's visibility and reach. By leveraging social media platforms, the campaign effectively engaged a broader audience, transcending geographical barriers.

The online campaign employed a multifaceted approach to promote ELSA Day and enhance audience engagement throughout the year. A significant aspect of the campaign was the production and dissemination of a promotional and explanatory video. This video highlighted the significance of ELSA Day, its objectives, and the various activities organised to celebrate it. The video served as an engaging introduction to the campaign, providing a clear and compelling narrative to attract viewers and spark interest.

In addition to the video, a series of monthly posts were developed, each inspired by the supporting materials provided for each period. The posts were carefully crafted to address specific themes related to human rights and corruption, such as education, social justice, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. The objective of each post was to raise awareness, educate the audience and the Network on critical issues, and encourage them to take actionable steps within their communities.

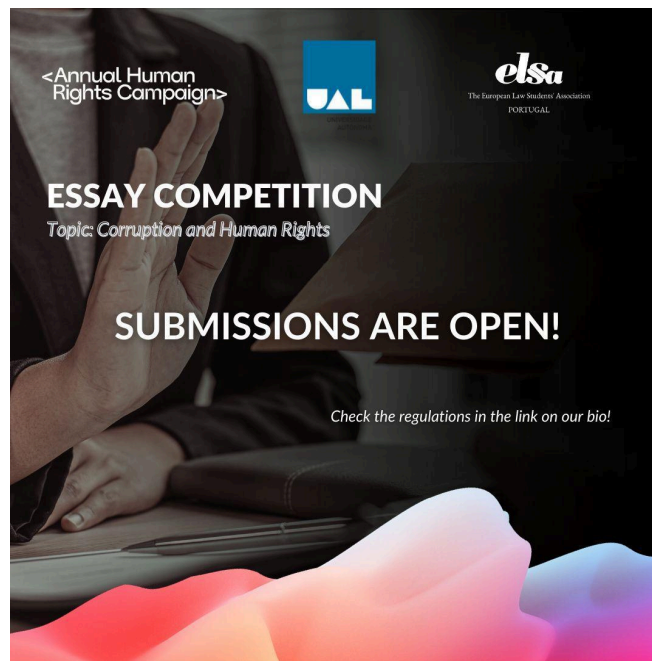
By consistently disseminating informative and thought-provoking content, the campaign succeeded in maintaining a prominent online presence, thereby ensuring that human rights remained a central topic of discussion.

3.3. Highlights from the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024

One of the most important highlights of the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024 was the 10th of December, Human Rights Day, when ELSA International led a network-wide campaign involving all National and Local Groups, which consisted of a mass publication synchronised throughout the Network on Human Rights Day, reminding us once again of our vision of a just world where human dignity and cultural diversity are respected.



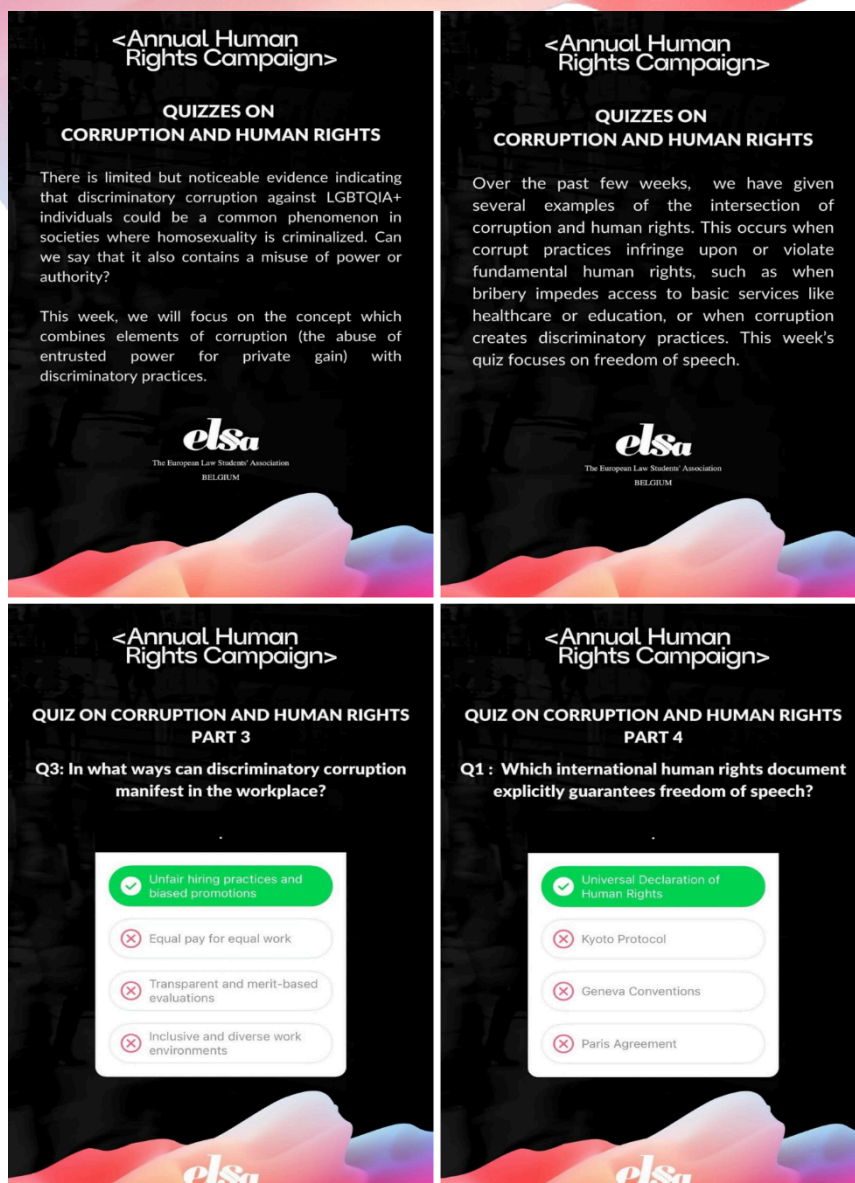
ELSA Portugal - as the winner of the AHRC 2023/2024 competition - has not only organised a series of webinars on corruption and human rights, but also recently an essay competition open to all students, regardless of where they live. In parallel with these activities and those organised by the local groups, ELSA Portugal has developed an online campaign that has broadened the focus of the themes explored beyond those suggested by ELSA International.



On 2 December, ELSA Switzerland began publishing the Advent Human Rights Crown, which served as a beacon of knowledge and awareness throughout the Advent season, highlighting important issues where corruption intersects with human rights. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, ELSA Switzerland highlighted various aspects of this critical issue, particularly in the context of Switzerland. Their contributions provided insightful reflections, practical insights and engaging discussions that contributed to a deeper understanding of these pressing issues.



Another interesting highlight of the 2023/2024 Human Rights Campaign was the series of polls conducted by ELSA Belgium. Over the course of several weeks, ELSA Belgium conducted various polls on corruption and human rights using social media platforms. These polls mainly focused on thematic issues previously covered in the supporting materials, and encouraged active participation and dialogue among the audience.



4. TOOLKITS

After the first implementation during the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2022/2023, ELSA continued the publication of Supporting Materials during the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024. However, this year, in order to plan activities earlier, the Supporting Materials were published every four months in three different volumes.

Supporting Materials for September – December 2023, published on 12 September 2023, provide essential guidelines for addressing pressing issues related to democracy and corruption. During these months, ELSA International emphasises the need for National and Local Groups to focus on the detrimental effects of corruption on democratic institutions and processes. Key areas of concern include the erosion of integrity, transparency and accountability within governments and public institutions. The materials highlight how corruption undermines freedom of expression by compromising the independence of the media and enabling the spread

of misinformation. They also highlight the wider human rights implications, as corruption weakens the rule of law and equitable access to justice. By focusing on these challenges, ELSA International aimed to promote a deeper understanding of the relationship between corruption and the health of democracy, and to encourage proactive measures in the fight against corruption and the promotion of democratic values and human rights.

On 18 December 2023, ELSA International published the second volume of Supporting Materials for the period January to April 2024. This volume focuses on the impact of corruption on education, social justice, gender inequality, and innovation. The materials elucidate the ways in which corruption compromises the quality and accessibility of education, intensifies social inequalities, and perpetuates gender discrimination by impeding access to essential services and justice for women. Furthermore, corruption impedes innovation by discouraging investment and competition. ELSA International sought to provide National and Local Groups with the requisite knowledge to address these critical issues, thereby promoting transparency and advocating for reforms designed to mitigate the effects of corruption on these issues.


On 6 May 2024, ELSA International published the third and final volume of Supporting Materials for the Annual Human Rights Campaign 2023/2024. This volume emphasises the impact of corruption on sexual orientation, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, and the relationship between corruption and international criminal justice. This volume elucidates the manner in which corruption exasperates discrimination against individuals belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, compromises environmental protection initiatives, and disrupts the implementation of fair governance practices. Furthermore, the text examines the ways in which corruption impedes international criminal justice, hindering the prosecution of crimes and the enforcement of laws. By addressing these issues, ELSA International's objective was to raise awareness and encourage action to combat the pervasive influence of corruption on human rights and justice systems globally.

Finally, in addition to this Annual Report on the Annual Human Rights Campaign, ELSA International will shortly publish a new Handbook on the Annual Human Rights Campaign. This will assist both National and Local Groups in their organisation and involvement in this campaign, thereby demonstrating our commitment to human rights.

5. IMPACT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This year's Annual Human Rights Campaign witnessed a notable increase in participation across Europe, with the organisation of over 141 events by National and Local Groups. This represents the highest number of events organised since 2017, indicating a significant increase in engagement and activity within the campaign.

The campaign generated significant engagement on social media platforms, reaching over 50,000 individuals through likes, shares and comments. This digital footprint underlined the widespread interest and interaction with the Campaign content, reflecting increased awareness and active participation in discussions on human rights and corruption.



In addition, the webinars organised by ELSA International saw significant participation and interaction. These sessions provided a platform for in-depth discussions, knowledge sharing and skill building on the campaign theme. Participants from diverse backgrounds and regions actively engaged with expert speakers, contributing to a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives.

The success of the webinars and social media engagement confirmed the effectiveness of the campaign in using digital platforms to foster dialogue, educate participants and mobilise action against corruption while promoting human rights. These interactive elements not only extended the reach of the campaign, but also deepened its impact by empowering individuals and organisations to actively address critical issues within their communities and beyond.

Looking ahead, there are several key directions and recommendations to build on the success of this year's Annual Human Rights Campaign and further increase its impact and reach.

First, it is essential that future campaigns continue to use digital tools and platforms to increase engagement and accessibility. Improving the Campaign's social media strategy can include targeted content creation and interactive campaigns. This approach will not only maintain current levels of engagement, but also attract new audiences and spread the Campaign's message widely.

In addition, improving coordination and cooperation between National and Local groups remains crucial. Strengthening communication channels, providing comprehensive support and fostering cross-border partnerships will increase Groups' capacity to organise high-impact events and initiatives. By fostering a Network of empowered Officers, the Annual Human Rights Campaign can effectively drive systemic change and advocacy in diverse communities.

There should also be an emphasis on the inclusion of human rights in all initiatives and projects, demonstrating our commitment as a human rights association that is the voice of all law students in Europe.