

# HUMAN RIGHTS HANDBOOK

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2015

*elsa*

The European Law Students' Association



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# Human Rights Handbook

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

August 2015

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## Foreword

Dear Human Rights Enthusiasts,

ELSA's philosophy statement allows everyone to immediately apprehend that ELSA has a strong focus on Human Rights throughout its work. This handbook aims at clarifying this commitment that ELSA has to Human Rights. What does it entail for a local Academic Activities officer? And what about a local STEPer? Are Human Rights in ELSA present only in our philosophy statement? How did this commitment evolve throughout history? Does ELSA International have a special role in our focus on Human Rights? What does our non-political status mean for the commitment to Human Rights?

Answers to these questions will be provided for as much as possible. In addition to that, a list of hot topics in the area of Human Rights is provided, as it might be useful for officers organizing activities. Different sources of information, such as publications and websites, are also provided. Also, the role of a Director for Human Rights is explored, with possible tasks, suggestions and helpful tips to make its work as fruitful for the network as possible.

ELSA has an immense potential in Human Rights and it is YOUR job to make the most out of it. There are so many possibilities that it would be impossible to mention them all. Go beyond what is asked from you, contribute to a better world and try to take the most out of your experience in ELSA.

With commitment to our vision,

*Adriana, Ana-Maria, Felix, Marie- H el ene, Stefanos, Olav and Antonia*

## Table of Contents

1	What are human rights?.....	5
1.1	The Council of Europe.....	5
2	Presence of Human Rights in ELSA’s history.....	6
3	Potential of Human Rights in ELSA.....	6
3.1	The ELSA Philosophy Statement .....	7
3.2	The need for Human Rights Education.....	7
4	The non-political status of ELSA: influence in its Human Rights focus? .....	8
5	The ELSA Day .....	8
6	Presence of Human Rights in ELSA: current affairs.....	9
7	Hot topics and useful suggestions .....	10
8	Human Rights in the Key Areas .....	11
8.1	Human Rights in Academic Activities.....	11
8.1.1	Getting hot topics.....	11
8.1.2	Essay competitions and other academic competitions.....	11
8.1.3	Law Review .....	12
8.1.4	Legal Research Groups.....	12
8.1.5	Legal Debates .....	12
8.1.6	Legal Courses .....	12
8.1.7	Lawyers at work events and Job fair/career day .....	13
8.1.8	Moot Court Competitions.....	13
8.2	Human Rights in S&C.....	13
8.2.1	Seminars & Conferences .....	14
8.2.2	Institutional Visits.....	14
8.2.3	Study Visits .....	14
8.2.4	International Summer Law Schools .....	14
8.2.5	Delegations .....	14

8.2.6	Communication with the other officers: Sharing is Caring! .....	14
8.3	Human Rights in STEP .....	15
8.3.1	Job Hunting.....	15
8.3.2	Reception.....	15
9	Role of the Director for Human Rights .....	15
9.1	Being informed.....	16
9.2	Informing others .....	16
9.3	Working throughout the year.....	16
10	Suggested sources of information.....	16
10.1	Institutions/NGOs .....	16
10.2	Press Online .....	17
10.3	Blogs.....	17
10.4	Publications: .....	18

# 1 What are human rights?

As defined by the United Nations, human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Human rights are, in this sense, the basis of human existence, of law and of the realities we know. At this point in time, Human Rights are massively codified in international Conventions as well as national Constitutions and laws. The framework of international instruments for the enforcement of Human Rights law is, however, still developing and improving. Human Rights provisions in international and national law are being brought to national courts more frequently and through many creative ways. Consequently, litigation based on Human Rights is often successful, providing redress for victims and also propelling changes in legislation, policy and practice.

These facts show us that it is essential for anyone dealing with law to study Human Rights. It is undeniable that any law student needs to be familiar with Human Rights law in order to perform well in its future professional activity. ELSA has a special role in demonstrating this to law students.

The founding document of international human rights law is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly. Although not a legally binding document, most of its provisions are considered as customary international law, due to the worldwide implementation of its rights through treaties, national laws and jurisprudence. The UDHR endorses the universality of human rights, meaning that rights should be recognized universally to all human beings.

It was agreed that right after a Covenant was to be implemented that together with the UDHR would make up the *International Bill of Human Rights*. In the end, the Cold War and the decolonisation process resulted in two separate Covenants, both adopted in 1966: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

## 1.1 The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe was created in 1949 and is the continent's leading human rights organization. With the purpose of defending the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and covering at the moment 820 million citizens, the Council of Europe is undoubtedly the primary body in setting standards for human rights. The European Convention of Human Rights, adopted in 1950, is a prerequisite for any state willing to join the Organisation. The Convention protects several rights, namely the right to life, security, freedom of expression, of thought, conscience and religion, the right to a fair trial, the respect for private and family life, among others. Regarding social rights the Council of Europe has adopted the European Social Charter in 1961, which is a international agreement that recognizes rights that concern all individuals in their daily lives, in the main areas of housing, health, education, employment, social and legal protection, free movement of persons and non-discrimination.

A major feature of the Council of Europe's human rights system is the European Court of Human Rights. With 47 judges, one for each Member State, the Court allows individual complaints for violations of the rights set forth in the Convention. Its impressive body of case law, with over 50,000 new applications

being lodged every year, is constantly shaping the protection of human rights in Europe and influencing other systems.

## 2 Presence of Human Rights in ELSA's history

The key role that human rights play in ELSA is a result of years of intense work of the network and decisions taken by previous officers.

- **The 12th of October 1992:** the first step in including human rights as a major part of our association is taken. The philosophy statement is adopted, which states that the vision of ELSA is “A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”.
- **October 1993 (Rome):** here it was decided that ‘ELSA is to investigate the creation of a new Area of Activity (Key Area Activity), dealing with Human Rights and Social Solidarity.’
- **October 1994 (Malta):** there was the approval of a one year pilot-phase in the field of Human Rights running from the ICM Malta to the ICM Nottingham.
- **September 1995 (Nottingham):** it was finally decided that ‘Human Rights will be permanently included within the ELSA activities.’
- **October 1998 (Rome) and March 2000 (Warsaw):** it was established that ‘ELSA shall be continuously committed to Human Rights awareness, Human Rights education, and the respect of the Rule of Law.’
- **2008:** ELSA signed a Human Rights Partnership agreement with the Council of Europe and strongly strengthened the ties to the organisation.
- **2011:** it was decided that the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (EHRMCC) of ELSA would finally be a reality. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, this yearly MCC responds to the need for an English language Moot Court Competition on Human Rights expressed by students across Europe. This competition simulates the procedure of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights, where teams examine a fictive case and draft written submissions for each party.
- **March 2013:** the date to remember as the first edition of the ELSA Day as a huge well-organized forum of various human-right-related events. On this day the ELSA network comes together to organize human rights events across Europe with a focus each year. The aim of the ELSA Day is to jointly demonstrate our human rights engagement by providing our members with legal education that enables them to be independent and critically minded individuals.

## 3 Potential of Human Rights in ELSA

ELSA is the largest international organisation of law students and young lawyers in the world. ELSA spans the entire European continent and is represented at around 300 Universities in 43 countries. Uniting around 40,000 law students, ELSA is fully aware of its responsibility and potential to shape the world of tomorrow. With Human Rights projects in ELSA we are not only educating law students but also future lawyers, attorneys, judges, civil servants, NGOs' workers and similar. So do not forget: Your project may influence a court decision, a governmental regulation, a change of policies or whatever you can think of!

### 3.1 The ELSA Philosophy Statement

ELSA has a philosophy statement with a vision that unites all members of the association and drives our work. The philosophy statement 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 cooperation.
- 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.

Two important parts in working for the vision are ‘to encourage law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society’ and ‘to contribute to legal education’. Encouraging law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society clearly implies promoting Human Rights and providing Human Rights education. In our efforts to contribute to legal education we need to take up the challenges that our formal education does not provide us with. One challenge lacking in many Law Faculties is the thorough study of Human Rights Law and the connection with the real world.

### 3.2 The need for Human Rights Education

In great contrast to this professional need to learn about Human Rights, and in great contrast to the Human Rights violations committed all over the world every day, many law faculties do not pay the necessary attention to this basic field of law. It is a natural task of ELSA to compensate for this gap with the activities we organise.

In a general way, we can say that ELSA has two main reasons that compels its commitment to Human Rights. One reason for the commitment to Human Rights may be the feeling of moral obligation and the wish to create a more just and humane society. For this, the promotion and strengthening of Human Rights is needed. ELSA’s effort to achieve this is mirrored in several activities. One example is the ELSA Day, specifically created for the promotion of Human Rights. Moreover, ELSA Delegations to meetings of UN Bodies and the EHRMCC have a huge impact with regards to Human Rights. The other reason can be seen as the need of qualified and progressive professionals who work in the field of Human Rights Law. ELSA takes part in this by educating Law Students through different kinds of projects such as Legal Research Groups, Conferences, Law Schools or Human Rights related STEP Traineeships.

## **4 The non-political status of ELSA: influence in its Human Rights focus?**

In the last years the non-political status of ELSA has been the centre of several discussions. What implications does the non-political status have with regard to the local and national officers? What does it really entail? Does it clash with our commitment to Human Rights? Are officers forbidden from making political statements?

Firstly, some documents should be looked at regarding these aspects. The most important is the “Guidelines on non-political status” (January 2014), followed by the Decision Book that is regularly updated to reflect the views of the network.

As stated in our purpose, ELSA officers should aim in our work to contribute to legal education, foster mutual understanding and promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers. This means that our role with regard to Human Rights is educational, providing students with a platform of discussion which will enable them to gather knowledge and take a specific direction in their future. A representation of both (or the various) sides with respect to a specific human rights-related situation is essential. It is important to provide everyone with the opportunity to make their point, ensuring at the same time that students are then in the best position to formulate their own opinion. To provide Human Rights education can also be an important task of ELSA, especially when formal university programmes do not include such a component. Nevertheless, we recognise that, depending from country to country, there are Human Rights that can be more controversial or more sensitive. Not necessarily meaning that these topics cannot be discussed, the local or national group should have some leeway and a margin of appreciation when deciding how to approach these specific topics.

It seems that at the moment the ELSA network identifies more with the idea of a non-partisan association, rather than non-political. Nevertheless, this should not drive us away from the main aims and core ideas of ELSA: to educate and to promote mutual understanding. ELSA brings change through education. We should not forget that, although the non-political status imposes some barriers on the groups when it comes to advocating human rights changes or condemning human rights violations (either in Europe or other continents), our neutrality and inclusiveness has been a price worth paying that made ELSA the association that it is now. The academic and neutral focus of ELSA allows us to expand the association and establish partnerships that would otherwise not be a reality. This growth translates into better opportunities for our members to get in touch with Human Rights realities and further strengthen interest in the area.

It is our opinion that the non-political status should not be a shield to groups when organising activities regarding Human Rights. Our status is there to remind us of our bigger goal and the way we chose to effect change in society, which is through education.

## **5 The ELSA Day**

The ELSA Day as big Human Rights forum was first introduced to the ELSA Network in 2012. Since then, we have had three editions: the first edition was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2013, the second edition on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, and the third edition on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. During the last edition there were 136 Human Rights events in 33 countries! The first and the second edition gathered 144 and 173 events respectively; numbers that show the impact this activity has on our network. Over the years the ELSA Day project has gained high popularity and recognition and it has been established as the biggest and most

influential event across the whole ELSA Network. At the ICM in Malta in 2014, it was decided that the event will take place on the last Wednesday of November each year.

The aim of the ELSA Day is to jointly demonstrate our Human Rights commitment by providing legal education and opportunities that enable law students to be independent and critical members of society. The event is also dedicated to raise awareness of human dignity and cultural diversity. During the ELSA Day, the entire ELSA Network, throughout 43 countries and more than 300 local groups, works together to realise a unique Human Rights forum, where our members have the opportunity to discuss national and international standards of protection and implementation of Human Rights. The forum consists of coordinated ELSA events falling back on ELSA's vision, with the slogan "all different, all together".

The general topic of the ELSA Day is Human Rights and this is a relatively broad field. It is easy to get lost if we do not focus on something more specific and for this reason, each year we draw our attention to a particular topic. Examples of previous ELSA Day topics include 'Human Rights on the Internet' and 'Human Rights and Social Responsibility' and the one of 2015 is 'Gender Equality'.

The type of the ELSA Day event is left to the discretion of each ELSA local group. During the past three editions, students have organised panel discussions, legal debates, seminars, conferences, lectures, moot court competitions, institutional visits, charity events, photo contests, movie screenings with discussion, human libraries, among other types of creative events.

## **6 Presence of Human Rights in ELSA: current affairs**

ELSA, as a lively and active association run by aspiring young lawyers and law students, always keeps up to date with current legal affairs.

In the context of ELSA Day, several events have been organised to show our Association's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. The protection of children rights, human trafficking, migration and cultural diversity were topical issues during the first edition of the project in 2013. In the following years, due to the recent developments of law and society, it was deemed necessary to draw our attention to the protection of human rights on the Internet and media. Many events have been organised on online hate speech, the right to freedom of expression, the protection of human rights in the digital age, human rights in a democratic society and balancing competing human rights such as freedom of expression with freedom of religion. Of course, most of these topics are some of the biggest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to which the law needs to find answers and solutions.

In 2014/15, a turn towards the responsibility we owe to society and how society can benefit from our activities and actions was sought. In the wider framework of Social Responsibility, events were organised on corporate social responsibility, international humanitarian law and armed conflicts, multiculturalism, the right to education and many other related topics.

In the same time, a big effort to raise awareness towards contemporary Human Rights issues is put within our members' magazine, Synergy. Among the variety of articles and interviews there is always a special focus on the human-right-related ones and the contribution of CoE to that is recognizable.

Since Human Rights, by nature, are part of our lives and societies, these issues will remain topical and of utmost importance. They have been proven very challenging and ELSA members throughout Europe have been fascinated about studying them. For these reasons, we would like to encourage all ELSA groups to organise and participate in events on such current affairs and everlasting topical issues, so that we, as the ELSA network, serve our vision and make a difference in society.

## 7 Hot topics and useful suggestions

ELSA officers have explored very interesting human rights topics. Notwithstanding, new problems arise every day and ELSA can have a special role in investigating and spreading the word through its activities. Below you can find a list of themes that were used in past projects and also suggestions of themes for future ELSA projects, which work towards our vision and purpose on what concerns Human Rights:

- The **right to education** for all as the basis for the enjoyment of all other human rights
- Human Rights begin with **children's rights**
- **Asylum seekers** and the social responsibility of the countries receiving them
- **Violence against women**
- The special needs of **disabled people**
- Enjoyment of fundamental rights by **prisoners**
- Should **voting** be seen as a compulsory act rather than a right?
- The right to **privacy** and the disclosure of the parties' names in judicial decisions
- The impact of **internet surveillance** in the right to privacy and other fundamental rights
- What is the social responsibility of **social media**?
- **Corporate Social Responsibility**: what is expected from enterprises in the current globalized world?
- The impact of **austerity measures** and financial crises in democracy
- Legal status of economic, social and cultural rights: are they **justiciable**?
- **International trade liberalization** and its role in raising the standard of living of populations in developing countries
- The problem of **land grabbing**
- Women in **Islam**: a matter of religion only?
- The relation between **medical experiments** and Human Rights
- **Female genital mutilation** and how to eradicate the practice
- The legality of **targeted killings** in the context of international humanitarian law and human rights law
- **Torture** and inhumane treatment: unjustified in every situation?
- **Counter-terrorism** and the response from governments to terrorist threats
- Are the **enforcement mechanisms** available for human rights effective?
- The discussion regarding the **universality of human rights** and the idea of cultural relativism
- The protection accorded to **Human Rights defenders**
- The **politicisation of human rights monitoring** as a serious threat to the efficacy of such procedures
- **Reservations** in human rights treaties: should they be allowed?

- The rise of **mediation** and its role in solving conflicts
- Feasibility of the establishment of a **World Court of Human Rights**
- **Extraterritorial jurisdiction** of states when it comes to Human Rights violations
- Strengths and weaknesses of **NGO approaches** to Human Rights

## 8 Human Rights in the Key Areas

The following parts regarding the three key areas take for granted that you already acquired a background in this area. Please have a look at the relevant Handbooks if you do not know the specifics of the different areas.

### 8.1 Human Rights in Academic Activities

As stated in the Academic Activities Handbook, Academic Activities are focused on contributions toward legal education, involving the development of legal knowledge through guided practical activities. Therefore, an AA officer should meet high quality standards when organising AA projects. But what is considered ‘high quality’ is not just a technically well prepared and planned project, but also the choice of the topic that is supposed to be of interest to ELSA members, other law students, partners, institutions and similar. This is the main point of tangency between AA and Human Rights, where Human Rights represent a wide array of potential topics for AA projects.

There are several internationally coordinated activities focusing on Human Rights in our network, such as the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition and the past Legal Research Groups coordinated by ELSA International. Following and promoting these activities is a great start for you to begin with your term as an AA officer, whether you are a fresher and need a source of inspiration or an already experienced AA officer. It is true however that this is not enough: it is also expected from officers to come up with other projects dealing with Human Rights that simultaneously prepare future law professionals. In that spirit, we will provide you with some advice.

#### 8.1.1 Getting hot topics

Picking the right topic is crucial for both the quality of ELSA as a law students’ network and for its popularity in the media. We highly recommend investigating which human rights topics are “hot” in your local community or in your country in general. Smart choices can help the group become attractive to not only potential sponsors and donors but also students, who will be more interested in participating in activities that cover a topic that they know is important in their community or can affect them in any way.

#### 8.1.2 Essay competitions and other academic competitions

It is preferable that academic competitions in general focus on human rights topics. When it comes to negotiation or contract competitions, human rights may not be the obvious main choice of topic. However, you may add some human rights content to another, non-human rights topic. On the other hand, essay competitions and legal trivia events can be easily turned into fun, enriching HR activities.

Furthermore, finding Human Rights experts that can guide and advise the participants or the organisers is an excellent way to ensure the academic quality of your event. Finally, be creative when it comes to award the

winners of the competition! A traineeship in a law firm that works with Human Rights, a NGO, a civil society organisation, a ministry, an Ombudsman office and others that deal with Human Rights are an excellent idea.

To make your job easier, firstly contact the STEP officer in your group to see which contacts she/he already has that might be useful.

### **8.1.3. Law Review**

As far as Law Reviews are concerned you may choose to have an edition focus on a specific field of law related to HR. This way, you can partner with NGOs or other Human Rights association, who may be interested in either helping you with the editing and the reviewing process, or contributing by means of an introductory academic paper. Also, maybe they are able to aid you financially or to distribute the publication so it reaches a bigger network.

### **8.1.4. Legal Research Groups**

The Legal Research Groups that ELSA International has organised in the past years have drawn serious attention and attracted the participation of numerous students. They have all focused on Human Rights: the LRG “ELSA for Children”, the LRG on Online Hate Speech, the LRG “Together against Sexual Exploitation of Children” and most recently the LRG on Social Rights. We encourage you to engage with these annually organised LRGs, as they will most likely relate to Human Rights. Besides promoting it, you should do your best to implement a research group on your local or national level. This is a great opportunity for your members to get in touch with Human Rights at an international level.

Also, you may want to launch your own LRG. We encourage you to focus on Human Rights when deciding on the topic of research. In either case, you may organise a preparation legal course for your researchers (and other students) so that the final outcome is of the highest quality!

### **8.1.5 Legal Debates**

Are you a fresher or just do not have the time to organise a big event? Do not worry, a legal debate is the perfect activity for everyone! Additionally, it is an excellent way to put “human rights in action”, as you will stimulate parties to think about the other side, the other opinion.

Since Human Rights are often a topic of discussion, choosing them as the issue in debate is a great opportunity to get the attention of students in your faculty. Challenge and provoke your members to think critically, to develop rhetorical and communication skills and learn about Human Rights!

There are a lot of Universities in the network that have Debate clubs. We advise you to contact them, as this is a good chance for your ELSA group to expand its cooperation.

### **8.1.6 Legal Courses**

This is the perfect way for you to enhance a presence of Human Rights in your University’s agenda, especially if you do not have the time or resources to organise a Law School. Bear in mind that as an Academic Activity a legal course seeks to provide students with practical skills. Therefore, we recommend that you choose a practical skill that you would like to strengthen in your fellow students and shape the course so it tackles the specialties of these skills in the field of Human Rights.

Suggested topics could be mediation in Human Rights, research in the context of Human Rights (this could be organised as a preparation activity before a LRG on Human Rights), legal writing and vocabulary of Human Rights (i.e. think of how important it is when using HR concepts to adhere to those meanings that have attained international agreement).

### **8.1.7 Lawyers at work events and Job fair/career day**

Lawyers at work and Job fairs or career days are great opportunities for you to combine the pleasant with the useful! Here the possibilities are broad:

- Organising these events in the office of a Human Rights organisation, allowing the students to learn how daily work in this field of law and also to interact with their volunteers;
- Inviting HR organisations, NGOs and regular law firms to your faculty (either as an isolated event or in the context of a job fair), allowing students to see the differences between these occupations.

Through these events, you will provide your members with the chance to get a closer look in that area of specialisation and possibly strengthen their interest in it. Also, this can be an excellent way to establish a partnership for future activities.

### **8.1.8 Moot Court Competitions**

In order to provide law students with an opportunity to gain practical experience in the field, ELSA organizes a Europe-wide moot court competition on the European Convention on Human Rights in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The competition simulates the procedure of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights: The teams will examine a fictive case and draft written submissions for each party. The teams will be evaluated based on their written submissions and the best 16 teams will compete in the European Final at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The European Human Rights Moot Court Competition works as a unique contribution to university curricula in helping students understand the principles and implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights. Furthermore, through the competition students gain practical experience that can only be paralleled by pleading a real case in the European Court of Human Rights itself.

The prize for the winner team of the competition “the Council of Europe Prize” is a traineeship at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for a period of one month.

The groups in the network are encouraged to promote this major project and organize local or national moot court competitions on the thematic of human rights.

## **8.2 Human Rights in S&C**

The aim of an S&C Event shall be to provide students with a positive learning experience and make them aware of different social and cultural environments. S&C Events are ideal projects to prepare students towards their responsibilities as legal practitioners as well as citizens of the world.

### **8.2.1 Seminars & Conferences**

Human Rights issues are always an interesting and current topic for your events. They are also a guarantee to have an internationally relevant topic, since Human Rights by definition are connected to international law. In addition, there are various non-governmental organisations and international institutions working with Human Rights and it is easy to find academic partners and speakers for your events.

### **8.2.2 Institutional Visits**

There are numerous possibilities to organise Institutional Visits to international institutions dealing with Human Rights issues. These institutions include, for example, the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, and the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. This list is naturally only the tip of the iceberg! In addition, Institutional Study Visits are not limited to Europe, you can organise visits all over the world – how about visiting the UN Headquarters in New York?

### **8.2.3 Study Visits**

When visiting another ELSA group, a part of the academic programme can be an Institutional Study Visit to a Human Rights organisation. It is interesting to compare the Human Rights situation in different countries and see what kind of problems are current in different parts of Europe.

### **8.2.4 International Summer Law Schools**

It can be interesting to bring a Human Rights' perspective to a Summer Law School, even if it focuses in any business-related subject (M&A, Business Compliance, IP/IT Law, Media Law, Sport Law). Ordinarily, academic programmes are focused on the concepts themselves, but practices are not necessarily questioned. An idea would be to plan a final session aiming at going “beyond the law”: inviting a practitioner, a pro bono counsel or any relevant guest that would take a different position or demonstrate how things work in “real life”, or even challenge a previous speaker during a final round-table debate.

### **8.2.5 Delegations**

ELSA offers members the opportunity to represent the Association at several Delegations announced throughout each year. ELSA enjoys a special consultative status within several United Nations bodies, especially United Nations Human Rights bodies such as the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, inter alia.

This gives an opportunity to ELSA members to experience international decision-making on the highest level, given these Institutions' unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights.

### **8.2.6 Communication with the other officers: Sharing is Caring!**

Our Network is what makes ELSA special when comparing it with other local or national law students' associations. When you work with the S&C area, please remember that there are other Local and National S&C officers in the Network, probably working with the same thing 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. Use the S&C mailing list to easily get in touch with the rest of the Network, make proposals to the NCMs or ICMs.

Do not hesitate to approach any ELSA member interested in the field of Human Rights. They can become the next Director of Human Rights of the local group, for example. These interested members can also provide you with some ideas and contacts, take part in the group as a Director for S&C, AA or STEP, or just as an occasional active member. Their contribution is valuable to the group as well as to their own development. So, network, network, network!<sup>1</sup>

## **8.3 Human Rights in STEP**

### **8.3.1 Job Hunting**

When you have already established good contact with a law firm, institution, organisation or ministry, you will have an idea of whether there would be an opportunity to get a Human Rights related STEP Traineeship there. Inform the STEP officer of such possibilities, which he or she might not otherwise know about or think of. And as a STEPer: think of such possibilities!

ELSA local groups in the past have managed to obtain STEP traineeships in local offices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Human Rights related research positions in their universities, faculties, and also traineeships in many Human Rights NGOs (even as far away as New York!).

Even though many traineeships in international/national institutions or NGOs are unpaid remember this: according to the Decision Book, STEP Traineeships may be unpaid at international institutions at the discretion of ELSA International if the benefit for the ELSA member outweighs the lack of payment or if the National or Local Group provides the trainee with accommodation and, if possible with food, or if they provide the compensation themselves. So think about the possibility of your local group to provide accommodation or compensation for the STEP Trainee.

### **8.3.2 Reception**

Do not forget the STEP Trainee during the Traineeship in your city! Invite the Trainee to Human Rights Events you organise during this time. Maybe she or he can give you and your local group a view on how the commitment to Human Rights is in her/his country. You can take the STEP trainee on a visit to ministries, courts, offices of NGOs or international institutions in your city that are connected with Human Rights.

## **9 Role of the Director for Human Rights**

We saw already that Human Rights should be implemented in all key area activities. The added value of the Director of Human Rights is the coordination of Human Rights themes, events and partnerships among AA, S&C and STEP officers. A Key Area officer may ask the Director for specific information, delegate some tasks and elaborate on the OYOP amongst others things. Cooperation with institutions that contribute to Human Rights is expected as well, through attendance to their events or organising common projects.

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<sup>1</sup> All these tips regarding communication apply to the other key areas.

## 9.1 Being informed

One of the tasks of the Director for Human Rights is to stay informed and up to date about news that could raise Human Rights issues, Human Rights events, Human Rights publications, inter alia. This simply means keeping your eyes and ears open, watching the news and checking newsletters from the numerous institutions that work with Human Rights.

## 9.2 Informing others

As the Director for Human Rights, it is important to keep your members updated. Use a website, mailing lists or other tools to spread the word about important news regarding human rights. One idea is to implement a Human Rights Newsletter, where you summarize the important events that have taken place in some time span, as long as you think that this is interesting and appealing to your members. Another possibility is to use a free tool of curation to have information easily accessible and up to date. For this the options are many: scoop.it, paper.li, feedly.com, among others.

## 9.3 Working throughout the year

The Director for Human Rights must keep in touch with the Key Area Officers. The Director needs to contact and encourage the officers regularly to build partnerships with Human Rights professionals such as specialised lawyers, NGOs, Human Rights lobbyists, specialised academic professors (constitutional law, Human Rights law, Public International Law) and specialised journalists for example. The Director may also suggest activities or topics for activities and assist in the organisation.

The Director for Human Rights should ask the marketer of the group to promote the Human Rights events that are organised throughout the whole Network. They can work with a calendar, where all officers can include future events that should be publicized.

If you are organising a Human Rights related activity, fill in the appropriate forms to make sure that ELSA International is updated on what the network is focusing at the moment. If you are unclear about how to do this, just contact your National Group or ELSA International, in case your group is not available.

If for the purpose of organising a new activity you came up with a list of interesting human rights topics, do not forget to share them with the network. The topics you might have crossed out for whatever reason can be helpful for a successful activity in another group.

Also, as an officer you can inform your board members on what is going on at the international level and encourage people to get involved. Human rights are the fuel of our association and we should not ignore them in our work.

## 10 Suggested sources of information

It is very difficult to limit relevant Human Rights sources to a one-page list. Here you can find several suggestions that should help you in the preparation of a Human Rights event.

### 10.1 Institutions/NGOs

- United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>

- European Court of Human Rights  
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home>
- Human Rights Watch  
<http://www.hrw.org/>
- The International Criminal Court Forum  
<http://iccforum.com>
- ICC – International Criminal Court  
[http://www.icc-cpi.int/EN\\_Menus/icc/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.icc-cpi.int/EN_Menus/icc/Pages/default.aspx)
- Amnesty International  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/>
- International Committee of the Red Cross  
<https://www.icrc.org/en>
- International Labour Organization  
<http://www.ilo.org/>
- UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund  
<http://www.unicef.org/>
- International Federation for Human Rights  
<http://www.fidh.org/>
- World Health Organization  
<http://www.who.int/>
- International Court of Justice  
<http://www.icj.org/>
- ETO – Extraterritorial Obligations Consortium  
<http://www.etoconsortium.org/>
- REDRESS  
<http://www.redress.org/>

## 10.2 Press Online

- <http://www.theguardian.com/law/human-rights>

## 10.3 Blogs

- <http://journals.sas.ac.uk/jhrc/index> – **Journal of Human Rights in the Commonwealth**- - An electronic peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal which covers a vast range of issues relating to human rights in the Commonwealth of Nations including, but not limited to: human rights and the law, democracy and governance, development, poverty, conflict, transitional justice, climate change, equality and discrimination.-

- <http://ukhumanrightsblog.com> – **UK Human Rights Blog**: Aiming to provide a free, comprehensive and balanced legal update service. Blog’s intention is not to campaign on any particular issue, but rather to present both sides of the argument on issues which are often highly controversial.

- <http://nzhumanrightsblog.com>

- <http://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk> – **Oxford Human Rights Hub**: Blog aims to bring together academics, practitioners, and policy-makers from across the globe to advance the understanding and protection of human rights and equality.

- <http://humanrightsdoctorate.blogspot.fr> - **Human Rights Doctorate**: A weblog for students engaged in doctoral studies in the field of human rights. It is intended to provide information about contemporary developments, references to new publications and material of a practical nature.
- <http://hrp.law.harvard.edu/areas-of-focus/> - **Human Rights @ Harvard Law**: The Human Rights Program of Harvard Law helps students, advocates and scholars deepen and disseminate their knowledge of human rights by advancing discussions and critical reflection on several areas of this field of law.
- <http://echrblog.blogspot.fr> - **ECHR Blog**: A blog offering an in-depth analysis of recent developments on Human Rights, information about new ECHR publications and updates on Human Rights related events, such as summer schools and conferences.
- <http://eulawanalysis.blogspot.fr/2014/12/the-cjeu-and-eus-accession-to-echr.html>

#### 10.4 Publications:

- I. Bantekas and L. Oette, *International Human Rights Law and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 2013
- Clapham, *Human Rights – A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2007
- D. Moeckli, S. Shah & S. Sivakumaran (eds), *International Human Rights Law*, Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 2014
- O. De Schutter, *International Human Rights Law*, Cambridge University Press, 2010
- P. Alston, R. Goodman (eds.), *International Human Rights – Texts and Materials*, Oxford University Press, 2013
- D. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, 3rd edition, 2012