

# INTERNATIONAL FOCUS PROGRAMME OUTLINE

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*elsa*

The European Law Students' Association

# 1. Foreword

Dear Network,

We are honoured to present this Outline for the third and last year of this cycle of the International Focus Programme on Environmental Law.

The topic was chosen with the reasoning that the environment is at the base of our existence. There is no way to preserve human rights, and most importantly, humanity in general, if we cannot protect our own surroundings. Environmental Law seeks to secure a future for us, our rights and our climate.

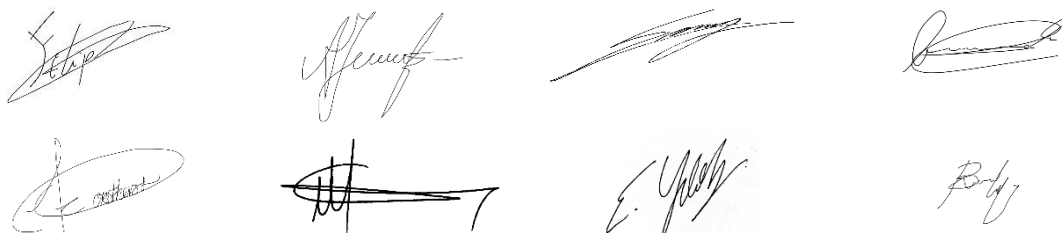
There is an increasing awareness in the legal field for the protection of the Environment, and most International Environmental Law has been created recently, or at least, relatively so in the scope of International Law. This provides the perfect area for the entirety of the European Law Students' Association to focus on, as a young and developing, yet urgently needed, field in International Law.

Environmental Law provides many interesting partners for ELSA, from ministerial departments to small citizen initiatives and from academics to big Energy Law practitioners. The topic is also interesting for students to expand their experience and knowledge, as very little people realise how much Environmental Law impacts daily business.

Upon the beginning of this cycle, the IFP Handbook was created. In order to support ELSA's Network and facilitate the changing needs of IFP event organisers, we have created this Outline Document. Though some parts of the Handbook and the Outline overlap, the Handbook gives a much broader and in-depth view of the material, whereas this outline is focused more on the practical side of things.

We encourage the entire Network to concentrate their efforts on Environmental Law – not just during the IFP Week and Month (see para.6), but during the entire year. The third and final year of this IFP Cycle is counting down, and we look forward to closing the Cycle with a bang!

Looking forward to writing ELSA's history with you,



**Filipe, Akvile, Loup, Matteo, Eva, George, Ezgi and Barlascan**  
International Board of ELSA 2018/19

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## 2. What is the IFP?

IFP stands for International Focus Programme: a hot legal topic chosen by ELSA's members in order to concentrate the potential of the ELSA Network on raising awareness in and interest for that topic.

When done properly, this can become a major factor in forming the general opinion and mindset of young lawyers and Law students. Most notably, it can help ensure that problematic issues of a certain topic are treated from a legal point of view.

The International Focus Programme was introduced in 1995 and has covered topic such as Intellectual Property Law, Health Law, and Media Law. If you are curious about the history of the IFP: the complete list of topics is available on [ELSA's website](#).

The current topic, as chosen in 2016, is Environmental Law. We are now in the last year of the current cycle. This means that we already started the final and last year of the **International Focus Programme on Environmental Law**.

## 3. How is the IFP organised?

Every ELSA Group (from International to Local level) can organise IFP events. To make the process easier, ELSA International oversees supervision of the International Focus Programme and leads by example, through organising Environmental Law events as well.

All National Groups have to identify a **'National Coordinator'** in charge of the supervising the implementation of the International Focus Programme in their National Group, until the end of the term. The role of the National Coordinator is:

- to assist the respective Local officers in the preparation of their event and provide support when difficulties are encountered;
- facilitate the connection with the International level;
- supervise and/or organise an IFP Event at the National Level;
- ensure that the IFP Specification Forms and the IFP Evaluation Forms have been filled in.

In order to help you, ELSA provides you with some materials that could aid your event's organisation. You could refer to the 'IFP Handbook', which goes into more depth than this Outline. Of course, there are also specific handbooks for most types of event (Institutional Visit Handbook, ELSA Negotiation Competition Handbook, et cetera). You will also receive Marketing materials and packages in preparation for your event. All those documentation are available online on the [Officers' Portal](#).

## 4. The Topic: Environmental Law

On 24th December 1968, one astronaut of the Apollo 8 mission took *Earthrise*. A photograph of our planet from outer space, in the Moon's orbit. This picture is associated to the birth of the environmental protection movement that was made legally concrete in 1972. In that year, the Stockholm Declaration on Human Environment established the foundations of International Environmental Law.

From then on, the legal environmental protection continued to develop itself without any decline. To avoid ecological damages and perturbation of the human environment, all stakeholders have to maintain a close dialogue between each other and with the environmental institutions and work hard to follow the technical regulations.

If we could agree on the fact that the environment is grasp by the law, it is however a real challenge to have a unanimous definition of the notion. Some will focus on the economic side of Environmental law and pretend that it is a way to implement a sustainable development. Some other will tell that its human side is the most crucial and that every human-being benefit from a right to live in a healthy environment whereas others will claim that the natural environment deserve more considerations. Let say it is a little of each of these all in once. However, it is possible to get on the fact that Environmental law is based on prevention and that this logic governs all the area. Thus, a generic definition of Environmental law could be: « the regulations enacted and the dedicated institutions that prevent the human and natural environment from pollutions ». To reach this goal, all the human activities need to be concerned. Of course, in case of the realization of an ecological damage a core of environmental responsibilities rules has to take over.

Environmental law is a colossus that integrates hundreds of treaties, thousands of statutes and hundreds of thousands of cases. The protection of the environment may now be found in International, European and domestic legal spheres. It also entered all the branches of private and public law – this brings us to say, without taking a big risk, that Environmental law can be found everywhere. To be more complete, Environmental law is constructed through a sectorial approach: the *modus operandi* in its general part and particular regulations related to each natural element (water, atmosphere, landscape, etc.) in its special part.

Environmental law is governed by the principles of the areas (civil, criminal, administrative, commercial, etc.), in which it is incorporated, but is, at the same time, an autonomous area with its own special legal techniques.

To resume, it is impossible to present exhaustively all the facets of Environmental law - because it could be what you want to be, depending on your interests. That's what defines all the richness of the International Focus Programme on Environmental Law.

Climate justice, governance and corporate social responsibility, protection of future generations, globalisation, green wars and ecocide, Energy law, ecological compensation – these are for example some of the key issues that could be pointed out.

## 5. What events could be organised?

Though the aim of the IFP is to bring the entire Network together on one specific topic, we encourage officers to be as creative as you want in the **kind** of event you organise. Think about what you'd like to see if you were a member of your ELSA Group! Consider the following ideas:

### 5.1 Conferences and Seminars

Conferences and seminars have two advantages: they are relatively simple to organise and can have rather high influence, depending on the speakers. It is the perfect opportunity to zoom in on a particular topic and spread the word about the Environmental Law in your University. In addition, it could be followed by a discussion to facilitate the interaction and thereby benefit from the invited panellists' expertise.

### 5.2 Webinars

ELSA Webinars is a new project that ELSA embarked on. A webinar is a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the web using video conferencing software. Through a webinar we are aiming at bringing legal education to the homes of ordinary students and young lawyers, taking away barriers that would normally hold people back from attending.

### 5.3 L@W Events

A Lawyers at Work Event is the best way to discover a legal profession from an inside perspective. In this case, a small group of students would have the possibility to get in touch with an Environmental Law specialist and observe their daily business.

### 5.4 Academic Competitions

There are two ways to bring Environmental Law into an Academic Competition. You could decide to implement a competition dealing exclusively on Environmental Law problematics or, more flexibly, you could integrate some Environmental Law aspects into your (perhaps already established) competition's scenarios.

### 5.5 Legal Writing

Though verbal skills are important, a legal practitioner must also practice their written skills. Environmental Law is a very extensive field of law that could require a high legal analysis – it could be the perfect opportunity to challenge your members in academic research and/or for an ELSA Law Review.

### 5.6 Charity

You could host a charity event both as a complementary aspect to another activity, or as an activity in its' own right. For example, planting trees (by virtue of donations) in your university's park, helping to clean the streets of your city, et cetera.

## 6. The IFP Week/Month

Similarly to ELSA Day, the IFP Month was created to give the entire Network the opportunity to gather our strength to focus on Environmental Law for the month. Your National Group only needs to decide which week of April you appoint as your IFP Week – all that is then left, is to organise some IFP events during this week!

The IFP Week is a way to implement one of the objectives of the International Focus Programme: to facilitate a forum around a ‘hot legal topic’. Therefore, you can consider your IFP Week a success when it creates an open platform for discussion on Environmental Law in your country, university or network. The IFP Week could be summarised as aiming to create a ‘snowball effect’.

You could engage your entire Board for the week and brainstorm for a complete programme. For an extreme example, you could imagine to host an opening seminar on Monday, plan a L@W Event on Tuesday, followed by a second conference on Wednesday, an Institutional Visit on Thursday and to conclude the week, a public presentation of the outcomes of a Legal Research Group on Environmental Law or the launching of your ELSA Law Review on Environmental Law on Friday, followed by a eco-friendly cocktail.

Before your IFP Week starts, do not forget to fill in the IFP Specification Form, available on [officers.elsa.org](http://officers.elsa.org), and once your events have passed, do not forget to fill in the IFP Evaluation Form. This five minutes’ formality is essential for ELSA to have knowledge and oversight of the Network’s effort and evaluate our current IFP cycle.

## 7. Last reminder

Keep in mind ELSA’s non-political status when organising the International Focus Programme. If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact ELSA International. Furthermore, please, bear ELSA’s Philosophy Statement in mind when preparing for the IFP Week. If this week can get us closer to the fulfilment of our beautiful Vision, it is definitely worth to call it a success!

## 8. Contact

Please find listed the contacts to remember. Keep in mind that we are here to help and work together, so do not hesitate to contact us!

**Director for International Focus Programme, Joris Fontaine**

[ifp@elsa.org](mailto:ifp@elsa.org) - for general inquiries.

**Vice President for Academic Activities, Eva te Dorsthorst**

[academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org) – for questions specifically about AA and the EHRMCC

**Vice President for Seminars and Conferences, Ezgi Yildiz**

[seminarsconferences@elsa.org](mailto:seminarsconferences@elsa.org) – for questions specifically about S&C

**Vice President for Student Trainee Exchange Programme, Barlascan Alphan**

[step@elsa.org](mailto:step@elsa.org) – for questions specifically about STEP

**Vice President for ELSA Moot Court Competitions, George Manikas**

[mootcourts@elsa.org](mailto:mootcourts@elsa.org) – for questions specifically about MCCs and the John H. Jackson MCC

## Annex 1: IFP Timeline

<b>December 2018</b>	Call for Working Group on IFP
	Appointment of Working Group
<b>January 2019</b>	Release of IFP Outline
	Call for proposed topics of the next IFP cycle
	Call for National Coordinators of the IFP
<b>February 2019</b>	Appointment of National Coordinators of the IFP
<b>March 2019</b>	Release of International Council Meeting (ICM) Working Materials with proposed topics
	ICM Baku, the election of shortlisted potential topics
	<b>Deadline to fill in IFP Specification Forms</b>
<b>April 2019</b>	<b>IFP Month!</b>
	IFP Webinars organised by the International Board
<b>May 2019</b>	<b>Deadline to fill in IFP Evaluation Forms</b>
	Final IFP Conference in Brussels (2 – 5 May 2019)
<b>June 2019 – September 2019</b>	Creation of Guidelines for all shortlisted potential topics
<b>October 2019 – November 2019</b>	Election of new IFP topic in ICM Bucharest

## Annex 2: International Projects related to IFP

### Legal Research Group (LRG)

ELSA's Legal Research Groups are internationally acknowledged legal publications, written and organised by students. Together with Academic Partners such as the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organisation and the International Criminal Court, ELSA creates a framework of questions that students from all 44 National Groups can answer on behalf of their state. The final product is a valuable source of legal knowledge, and is professionally published and purchasable online. This year's LRG will be on Renewable Energy, and the final outcome will be presented at the Final IFP Conference.

**Application period:** 16 November 2018 – 30 December 2018

**More information:** [legalresearch.elsa.org](http://legalresearch.elsa.org)



## International Conference (Final IFP Conference)

In order to complete the current cycle of the International Focus Programme, a conference will be organised so we can look back on these three years we had with environmental law and close the cycle with conclusions with the inputs of professionals in the area.

**Application period:** to be announced!

**More information:** to be announced, follow our [Facebook page](#) for the latest updates!

## ELSA Law Review (ELR)

The ELSA Law Review is one of ELSA's oldest projects, dating back as far as 1985. Having been recently re-established, the ELSA Law Review is created by and for students all over the European continent. The ELSA Law Review of 2019 shall focus on Environmental Law and encourages those who have been impacted by the IFP in the past years to write about that topic! The Articles will be professionally peer reviewed by our Academic Partner and published in a physical and digital copy of the ELR 2019, again, purchasable online.

**Application period:** call for Articles will open May 2019

**More information:** [elsa.org/law-review/](http://elsa.org/law-review/)

## Student Trainee Exchange Programme (STEP)

Student Trainee Exchange Programme (STEP) was established at 1984 and it is the oldest project of ELSA which enables law students and young lawyers to gain first hand legal and cultural experience from other countries located inside and outside of Europe. Each year STEP provides around 550 traineeship opportunities around the world. Last year out of these 550 traineeship opportunities 80 of them were IFP related provided by around 50 different traineeship providers. As STEP, we provide these IFP related traineeship providers information with other areas, hence they can contact them and find speakers, jurors, partners for their IFP events.

**Application period:** 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 – 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2019

**More information:** [step.elsa.org](http://step.elsa.org)

## Moot Court Competitions (MCCs)

ELSA's International Moot Court Competitions can be split up in two: the European Human Rights Moot Court Competition (a simulation of the European Court of Human Rights) and the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition (a simulation of the World Trade Organisation dispute settlement mechanism). Though the topics of the MCCs vary immensely throughout the years to prevent predictability, this year, the case of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition focusses on the charging points of electric vehicles. The EHRMCC previously had a case concerning the damages in health and freedoms of inhabitants near an environmentally unfriendly mine.

**Application period:** for both the EHRMCC and the Jackson, applications have been closed for this year, but will open in September 2019 for the next edition. It is however possible to join the Organising Committee of either MCC in Spring 2019.

**More information:** [ehrmcc.elsa.org](http://ehrmcc.elsa.org) and [johnhacksonmoot.elsa.org](http://johnhacksonmoot.elsa.org)