



ROLE Rule of Law
Education

elsa

The European Law Students' Association

FINAL REPORT

2023/2024



ELSA ALUMNI
TOWARDS A JUST WORLD - LEADING BY EXAMPLE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



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FORWARD

Dear Network,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first edition of the **Rule of Law Education Programme Final Report!** In the following pages, we have outlined the efforts made this year by ELSA International regarding the ROLE project. Our goal was to provide you with a comprehensive overview of everything we implemented and engaged with throughout the year.

This journey would not have been possible without the enthusiastic engagement and support of you, the Network. Your dedication has been invaluable, and as a testament to this, you will find testimonials from highly dedicated officers who were deeply involved in the project on a National Level. Their insights and experiences highlight the collaborative spirit that has driven the success of the ROLE project.

Thank you once again for your incredible commitment and hard work. Your dedication has enabled a relatively new project to grow and thrive significantly. As we reflect on this year's achievements, we look forward to continuing our journey together, fostering the Rule of Law and Social Responsibility across our Network.

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1. ROLE: An Introduction

The Rule of Law Education (ROLE) Programme is dedicated to fostering a profound understanding of integrity and equity within systems among secondary school students, aged 15-18, through highlighting the main principles of the Rule of Law. By promoting these values, ROLE aims to cultivate a sense of active citizenship, equipping young individuals with the confidence and skills needed to engage in and advocate for the enhancement of the rule of law within their communities.

The ROLE curriculum consists of 10 interactive lessons, which can be delivered by law students and young legal professionals from across Europe. These lessons cover essential Rule of Law principles, including access to justice and the importance of an impartial judiciary. Through a non-formal educational approach, the initiative seeks to empower youth with the knowledge and abilities necessary to champion improvements in the Rule of Law.

Secondary school students participating in the ROLE programme engage in collaborative projects that use the Rule of Law as a tool to address injustices within their communities. These projects often focus on aiding marginalised groups in accessing justice, providing practical applications of the principles learned and fostering a real-world impact.

By the end of the programme, students not only gain a deeper understanding of the Rule of Law but also develop a proactive mindset, ready to contribute positively to their societies and advocate for justice and equity.

Law students, on the other hand, become acquainted with the art of non-formal education and facilitation. Across the ELSA Network, law students and young lawyers visit secondary schools to deliver the curriculum.

The ROLE Train the Facilitators Conference brings together law students, young lawyers, from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering a global exchange of perspectives. This conference provides a supportive environment for participants to share information and strategies for facilitating the ROLE materials, uniting individuals committed to advancing Rule of Law education worldwide. Furthermore, this international event supports national chapters within the ELSA Network by facilitating communication about common implementation challenges in the project with their peers from other countries.

The Rule of Law Education (ROLE) Programme is more than a series of lessons; it is a holistic initiative aimed at inspiring and equipping the next generation of active citizens. In the following pages, we will provide a detailed overview of ELSA International's efforts this year, along with the engagement and contributions of the Network.

1. Our Journey

This term, our focus was on the coordination of the ROLE project across our Network. Our primary objective was not only to incentivise National Groups to implement the project but also to advocate for the Rule of Law within the context of Social Responsibility. Like every journey, this one had its ups and downs. Given the novelty of the ROLE project, it required close supervision from our side and continuous effort to provide support and guidance to the Network.

We employed various strategies to keep the project in the spotlight. Through social media promotion, testimonials from officers involved in ROLE last year, and the establishment of the ROLE coaching system, we ensured that the project received the attention it deserved. Our approach was more coordinated and unified, focusing on effective knowledge management and clear directions.

In addition to our efforts to establish ROLE within our Network, we organised the third edition of the Train the Facilitators Conference in Brussels. This event aimed to train 35 law students from across Europe, familiarising them with the art of non-formal education and facilitation.

Despite the challenges, our commitment to the ROLE project and the principles it stands for remained unwavering. Our journey, with its highs and lows, has been a testament to our dedication to fostering the Rule of Law and Social Responsibility within our Network.

2. Coaching System

2.1. What is the coaching system?

This year, we have instituted a coaching system to assist national groups in implementing ROLE. Our goals were to: 1) provide motivational support; 2) provide centralised direction for sharing documents and managing the programme; and, 3) facilitate the sharing of diverse experiences from different groups. The coaching system offers direct assistance to national groups, supplying them with the necessary documents, and resources. It provides a centralised platform for document sharing, overall programme management, and motivational support. By encouraging the exchange of experiences and best practices, it fosters a collaborative environment among different groups and creates an enhanced communication system between national groups and the international team. The system also ensures a consistent organisation of ROLE across all groups and collects data to track and monitor the effective implementation of the programme. Through these efforts, the coaching system aims to create a cohesive and well-supported network of national groups, ensuring the programme is implemented uniformly and effectively across all participating groups. It also encourages groups to participate in ROLE by ensuring that they are supported throughout the whole process.

2.2. How does it work?

Each national group is assigned a coach from the ELSA International Team, who becomes their main contact point. At the beginning of the year, each coach organised an introductory call with each coaching group, where we evaluated the state of the programme in their country and provided them with tailored advice. For the remainder of the year, we responded to their questions as they arose and communicated the most important information to them. Additionally, we organised an open call in April to enable them to share their experiences among each other. Like this, not only were coaching groups able to benefit from the support of their respective coaches, but they were also able to benefit from each other's experiences. We also got into contact with groups interested in the programme, where we explained the necessary steps that need to be taken to implement ROLE successfully and to evaluate how feasible it was in their specific situation.

2.3. Impact of Coaching

The ontological rationale behind the coaching system is to ensure that all national groups can have access to relevant information on the organisation and implementation of ROLE, while also feeling supported throughout the process. The impact can be quantified in the number of countries which have started engaging with ROLE compared to the previous year. At the end of the term in 2023, there were 5 countries involved in ROLE; whereas at the end of the term in 2024 there are 11 countries either implementing ROLE or starting the implementation process. As a relatively new project, bridging the communication gap between the national and international officers is crucial to ensure the growth and effective implementation of the project.

Although this growth cannot be wholly credited to the coaching system, it did have an impact on the perception of the project and in motivating officers to get more involved.

3. Train the Facilitators Conference

3.1. What is the TtF Conference?

The Train the Facilitators Conference (hereinafter ‘the Conference’) took place in Brussels from the 29th of February to the 3rd of March and seeks to train ELSA members who wish to facilitate the curriculum for 15 to 18 years old students or be involved in the organisation of the project in their own country. The primary objective was the training of ELSA members to enhance their facilitation and communication skills when delivering the curriculum. There were 35 participants in total, from 18 different nationalities and all under 30 years old. The 9 Trainers were also young people under 30, out of which half of them were participants from last year’s Conference.



3.2. Conference Journey

The ROLE division of the ELSA International Team worked tirelessly to make this Conference a success. After the VP AA at ELSA International secured the grant from the European Youth Foundation at the Council of Europe, we opened applications for the Conference and promptly selected participants based on their knowledge of ROLE, passion for the rule of law, and their motivation to participate in the Conference – all the while making sure that we chose participants from a variety of ELSA groups, ensuring we could welcome as many members from different national groups as possible. Meanwhile, we also researched and secured accommodation, a venue, and food options for our participants.

The organisation was a challenging journey, since all of the ELSA International Team members were not physically present in Brussels, making communication with restaurants in particular, quite difficult. In this sense, the execution stage was characterised by a much more personal and humanised approach where problems that arose were communicated personally and more promptly than before, and therefore, were also solved more efficiently. Even though there were some technical difficulties with the hotel and the distribution of the rooms for the participants, overall the execution of the Conference was smooth and faced few obstacles for its success.

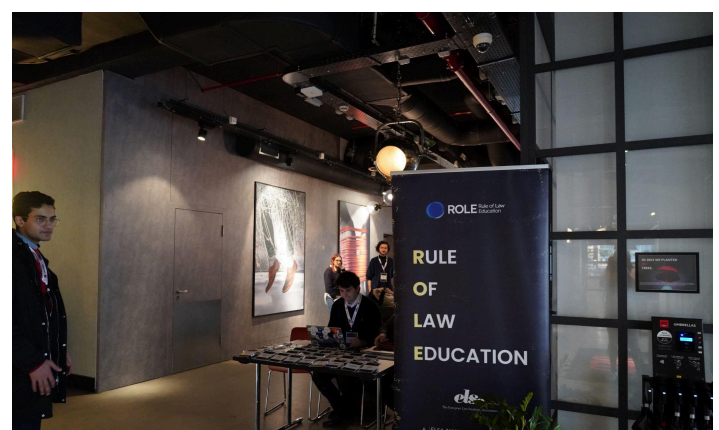


3.3. The Conference in Action

The duration of the Conference was four days long, and each day was packed with a series of activities designed to develop the facilitation skills of participants, all the while helping them understand the content of the curriculum. On the first day, professional, experienced trainers conducted three workshops on facilitation and public speaking skills, laying the theoretical groundwork for the entire conference. Concepts and ideas learned on the first day were then put into practice on the second and third days.

During the second and third days, there were six one-hour sessions in total, out of which each was focused on one lesson of the curriculum. During each session, two participants would stand up and facilitate a lesson from the curriculum to the rest of the participants and their trainers, who would sit and engage as they let the participants facilitate the content they were assigned. After the lesson ended, each participant and trainer gave constructive feedback to the participants which had facilitated that lesson. Each session brought an opportunity for participants to reflect on what effective non-formal education looks like.

On the last day, there was a workshop on the topic of implementing ROLE from an organiser's perspective which was delivered by two experienced VP AAs with experience organising the project. Overall the Conference presented the participants to engage with different dimensions of the ROLE project, including: 1) the content of the curriculum; 2) the delivery of the curriculum; 3) facilitation methods; and 4) the organisation and coordination of the project.



3.4. Trainers' perspective

From the trainer's perspective, it was wonderful to see the level of engagement and enthusiasm that all participants brought to the floor whenever facilitating a lesson. Overall the level of facilitation was impressive, and participants responded well to feedback and worked on their weaknesses. Training the participants was also an instructive experience for us, the trainers, since we were also able to learn from participants and their different communication styles. The feedback provided by the participants at the end of the Conference was also helpful in improving our approach when communicating with an audience in the future.

3.5. Impact

The Conference not only helped the participants develop their communication and facilitation skills but also helped raise awareness on the content of the curriculum itself and how ROLE can be implemented from an organiser's perspective. After the Conference, a range of countries reached out to the ELSA International Team coaches inquiring about ROLE and how to get started. These groups were later added to the coaching system and were the necessary advice and support to help them with their plans to implement ROLE. In sum, the Conference was a space which enabled participants to develop transferable skills, but also a space where participants could become more involved in this project – overall, it contributed to the *growth* of ROLE.



4. Network Communication

4.1. Open Calls

The effectiveness of Open Calls was twofold: on the one hand, the ELSA International Team was able to communicate important information and developments related to ROLE; on the other, the national groups interested in implementing ROLE were able to engage and communicate with other groups which were at different stages of the implementation process. Our first open call was held in October and aimed to introduce the ROLE team and outline our goals for the upcoming year. During the call, we provided an overview of the programme, explained the coaching system we were implementing, and presented the conference and curriculum. Additionally, we discussed how to organise ROLE effectively.

In April we organised an Open Call with all the coaching groups which promoted constructive dialogue between groups, where some less experienced groups were able to ask questions and learn from other more experienced groups, who were happy to share their approach and how they overcame a wide range of obstacles.

4.2. ITM Workshops

During the ITM, we held a workshop on ROLE. After presenting the programme and its differences from ELSA4Schools, we outlined our goals for the year. The second part of the workshop focused on the actual organisation, where we discussed the challenges, presented the initial steps, and offered some advice and key points to keep in mind. The remaining parts were dedicated to an extensive presentation of the curriculum, an introduction to the coaching system, and an overview of the Conference to be held in March 2024. This workshop also provided an opportunity to present the team and its work to a broader audience, including officers not really active in or interested in the programme.

4.3. ICM Workshops

During the two ICMs, we had the opportunity to present two workshops on ROLE. In Tbilisi, we used this chance to delve deeper into the programme compared to the ITM and our first open call. The structure was similar but more detailed. The organisational part was presented by the VP AA of ELSA the Netherlands, who had a lot of experience to share in that regard. We also organised an activity for the officers, splitting them into six groups and assigning each group a session of the curriculum to read and discuss. Each group then presented their session, its structure, and its key points.

In Thessaloniki, the workshop was delivered together with an officer from the Human Rights team. We presented the organisational aspects of ROLE and the organisation of a campaign in general. We discussed the key points to consider when organising a campaign and applied them specifically to ROLE. The participants then had the opportunity to practise these points by applying them to the fictive organisation of a ROLE campaign.

5. National Groups and ROLE

5.1. Introduction

Over the past year, we have collaborated extensively with many National Groups to ensure that the essential ideas of the rule of law are communicated easily and timely to 15 to 18 years old students. Each national group has experienced different challenges and possibilities, reflecting the various circumstances in which they work. Our tailored coaching approach has allowed these groups to navigate their specific educational environments, adapting the ROLE Curriculum to be compatible with local cultures and legal systems. This adaptability has been fundamental to our success, allowing the programme to significantly impact various parts of Europe.

We've seen incredible dedication from national group members who have worked relentlessly to implement ROLE in their countries. Their dedication has helped to build a deeper awareness of the rule of law among high school pupils, who are now better prepared to recognise the value of justice, equity, and democratic governance in their society.

The stories and data in this report reflect the hard work and collaborative spirit of everyone involved. As we reflect on the accomplishments of this past year, we stay strong in our commitment to supporting NGs in their goal. We aim to continue increasing ROLE's reach, improving our coaching methods, and enriching the educational experiences of high school students.

5.2. Curriculum

We understand that all national groups execute ROLE in a way that is tailored to their specific circumstances, especially depending on how much time they have to deliver the curriculum. This inevitably impacts the content they are able to deliver to the schools. Because of this, this year we created new and shortened versions of the curriculum as well as ROLE building blocks, to adjust the curriculum to an approach that is better suited to the needs of the network. It is important the curriculum can meet the needs of the network which is why we have fostered a culture of tailor-based innovation when updating the curriculum at the ELSA International Team.



1st Open Call 2023/2024
RULE OF LAW EDUCATION PROGRAMME



5.3. A National Group Perspective

ELSA Iceland:

“The second year of ROLE’s existence in Iceland was marked by growth. Before I had the privilege of becoming an AA Officer and working with Arndís Anna (ROLE project manager), ROLE had been held once for a group of 20 gymnasium students, which were already preparing for future law studies in University (ROLE was on its first year, so the small number is unsurprising, Arndís also created all the slides and working materials that same year).

Our main challenges were a lack of interest and outreach. Many teachers we contacted did not trust this project to enter an already organised semester, and law students in Iceland still have little knowledge of ELSA. After capturing a few willing volunteers and some impromptu meetings with teachers, we got the opportunity to hold ROLE in several schools for various classes. The increased interest was in large part thanks to our developing cooperation with the Icelandic Human Rights Office. Throughout the year we tried to garner publicity, which resulted in us being interviewed by the Student Paper of UI and the Icelandic Broadcasting Corporation (in radio).

I am proud to announce that we visited gymnasiums in all corners of Iceland besides the North, and presented ROLE to over 700 gymnasium students (or 12% of the total in Iceland).”

– *Kjartan Sveinn Guðmundsson, VP in charge of AA ELSA Iceland 2023/2024*

ELSA Sweden:

“This year, me and my Directors for Social Responsibility, Lisa Kronstedt and Georg Beniaminov have started to lay out the foundations for ELSA Sweden to be able to organise ROLE. Georg was appointed as National Coordinator, to which Lisa later was appointed after Georg resigned as NC for personal reasons. ELSA Sweden also participated in the ROLE Coaching system and Lisa participated in the TtF Conference.

The biggest progress was signing the Terms of Use Agreement and translating the ROLE Handbook, the Curriculum and an overview of the Curriculum into Swedish. Lisa also held a workshop about ROLE during NCM Uppsala for local AA: ers. This progress could not have happened without the help of Maria Monge-Navarro Otero and the rest of the ROLE Team. I also want to thank Annina Miettinen from ELSA Finland for sharing her knowledge and ELSA Finland's ROLE Materials and for holding a workshop about ROLE during NOM Stockholm. I also want to thank Nadia Dourida who participated in NOM and shared her knowledge about ROLE with us. Finally, I would like to thank both my Directors for their work and dedication.”

– *Karolina Bergström, VP in charge of AA ELSA Sweden 2023/2024*

ELSA Serbia:

“As a previous pilot NG, we've used our knowledge to extend our reach and influence. This year, our primary focus has been establishing new collaborations with high schools across Serbia and strengthening our current partnerships in Belgrade and Niš. Despite certain obstacles caused by events that impacted our entire country, we were able to successfully implement ROLE among high school pupils from three high schools, and we agreed to continue our collaboration for the following academic year as well.

In Belgrade and Niš, we have seen a marked increase in pupils' participation and interest, highlighting their value and effectiveness. This year, we also laid the groundwork for several promising new partnerships that are set to commence at the end of this calendar year. These forthcoming collaborations are expected to expand the scope and quality of our ROLE project implementation.

We are more than thankful to Andela Bakula, our National Coordinator, for sharing her knowledge with our trainers and advising us on how to approach high schools and potential partners. We are grateful that four of our trainers could attend the TtF Conference in Brussels; their experience helped strengthen the facilitation we provide through ROLE. I am proud of what we accomplished this year, and I hope my successor will take this project to a greater level.”

– *Filip Borisavljević, VP in charge of AA, ELSA Serbia 2023/24*

ELSA Finland :

“The ROLE programme is constantly evolving in Finland. My involvement includes organizing training sessions for national ROLE trainers as well as planning meetings. This year, our primary focus has been on strengthening our collaboration with the Human Rights Centre of Finland, exploring new possibilities for partnership, and making sure our trainers are well-prepared for their roles. Our trainers have visited approximately five Finnish schools this year.

Through the Train of Facilitators conference, we noticed the importance of performance training, which led to us considering introducing such training in the ROLE programme in Finland to further enhance trainers delivery and engagement skills.

I take immense pride in the dedication and progress of our trainers, whose efforts are important in promoting human rights education across Finland.”

- *Salla Turunen, Director for Rule of Law Education, ELSA Finland 2023/24*

ELSA Greece:

“During this academic year, ELSA Greece has proudly implemented the Rule Of Law Education Programme. The Train the Facilitators Conference acted as a motivation to learn

about this project, its structure and importance. Right after the TtF we started planning and organising our very first visits to schools. The ROLE team translated the curriculum to Greek , and made the necessary power points for each lesson. After the positive replies of two schools - one in Thessaloniki and one in Komotini - our team succeeded in facilitating the whole ROLE Curriculum to 50 high school students, who learned about the rule of law values and got inspired by this non formal way of learning. Our team stayed in contact with the schools in order to share the evaluation forms and to plan our next year's visits. Two schools, fifty students and sixteen ROLE lessons later, I can probably tell that ROLE found a breeding ground in Greece and it is going to be one of the fundamental projects of the AA area.”

– *Anastatsios Vavvas, VP in charge of AA, ELSA Greece 2023/24*

ELSA Switzerland:

“This year, the ROLE programme has been successfully implemented in Switzerland. Last year, we had already established the basis for implementation, which made it easier to understand the necessary steps for contacting schools and recruiting facilitators. This groundwork allowed us to streamline the process and ensure smooth coordination. Therefore, we were able to visit both a high school and a middle school, where we facilitated the 90-minute curriculum. The students, the teachers and the facilitators were all very happy with the outcome of the sessions.

We recruited six facilitators, two of whom were trained in Brussels. Both of them joined the VP AA for the school visits. On the administrative side, we translated the various shortened curriculums into French and German, and improved the existing original translations. We adapted the powerpoints for the sessions and created marketing tools to promote ROLE for schools and facilitators.”

– *Gabriel Marti, VP in charge of AA, ELSA Switzerland 2023/24*

ELSA Portugal:

“Following the implementation of ROLE in Portugal during the 2022/2023 academic year, our team aimed to seize this year as an opportunity for the growth and expansion of the project.

With this objective in mind, we organised an open call for facilitators with a geographic strategy, ensuring a dynamic team of facilitators from across the country, proportional to the number of schools enrolled in the programme within each municipality.

Inspired by the Train the Facilitators Conference in Brussels, we convened all our facilitators for four days of training in March. This training encompassed the ROLE curriculum and also addressed soft skills and the fundamentals of classroom management and student engagement during sessions.

We also implemented a different contact strategy when approaching schools. Rather than solely sending a formal email, we reached out to the board of directors of each school and held

meetings with them to present the Programme. This approach enabled a better understanding of the Programme's scope and significance, which, in turn, increased schools' interest in ROLE.

As the National Coordinator, I also actively engaged with facilitators through regular meetings to exchange feedback and foster collaboration.

Overall, we successfully expanded the project to more than 400 students across Portugal, with the support of 12 facilitators.

The coaching system was particularly important in fostering a closer relationship between National Groups and the EIT. It enabled meaningful conversations and the sharing of challenges and solutions. Gabriel was consistently available for contact and demonstrated a keen interest in the progress of the project.

All in all, it was a very rewarding and successful year for ROLE in Portugal.”

– *Leonor C. Ferreira, National Coordinator for ROLE Portugal 2023/24*

ELSA Croatia:

“In the academic year 2023/24, ELSA Croatia, with its 4 local groups, implemented the ROLE (Rule of Law Education) Campaign, for the 2nd year in a row. Each local group chose its own local coordinator. The task of the local coordinator was to contact the schools, coordinate the time of school visits and prepare the project members for a simulated school hour as part of the ROLE Training Weekend in Rijeka.

The first thing that was carried out was the selection of members who applied to participate in the project. Each member, in accordance with the Croatian ROLE curriculum, had to prepare for one simulated school lesson, following the guidelines described in curriculum. They had the opportunity to show their simulated lesson, as well as the comprehension of curriculum, at the ROLE Training Weekend held in Rijeka from December 16th to 17th, where they further expanded their knowledge of the rule of law, as well as the improvement of their presentation skills and transfer of knowledge to high school students.

ELSA Croatia (all local groups together) had 31 ROLE trainers who visited 15 high schools in 10 Croatian cities and were in a total of 37 classes. The lecture on the rule of law was attended by a total of 662 high school students.”

– *Katarina Jurić, VP in charge of AA, ELSA Croatia 2023/24*

ELSA the Netherlands:

“This year, we orchestrated 2 ROLE programmes in the Netherlands.

The first one took place in the Goois Lyceum of Bussum. This programme was a collaboration held together with the Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), and our curriculum was based upon the topic of the rule of law and statelessness. To deliver this programme, 5 university-law students were recruited and trained to teach 4 sessions, during

which students drafted imaginary constitutions, practised rule of law principles, and wrote letters to stateless children across the world.

In our second programme, we drafted 8 different curriculums, all on the rule of law in conjunction with public international law topics. In this programme, 16 trainers were recruited and trained, to teach in 8 different classes for 5 sessions at the International School of Amsterdam. The highlights of this campaign entailed advocacy strategy drafting, as well as real-life simulations of the European Legal system.

We are grateful for our trainer's participation, feedback, and motivation, together with the schools' trust to let us organise ROLE in their schools. We hope to continue these programmes in the coming years!"

– Alice Bigot, VP in charge of AA, ELSA the Netherlands 2023/2024