

# ROLE Handbook 2023/2024



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## Foreword

Dear Network,

It is our great pleasure to present to you the first Rule of Law Education Programme (ROLE) Handbook. ROLE is a young but promising project. The purpose of this handbook is to create an organisers overview and an implementation guide for National and Local Groups, in order to take active steps towards the implementation of the project. We hope that it will serve as a comprehensive guide to this innovative and empowering initiative.

As you read through the following pages, you will come across two fundamental concepts: the Rule of Law and the realm of non-formal education. The Rule of Law safeguards justice and rights, while non-formal education imparts practical wisdom beyond traditional settings.

ROLE stands as a transformative tool that equips both, our members and secondary school pupils, with comprehensive insights into the principles and mechanisms of the Rule of Law. ROLE empowers all involved parties to effectively address legal and ethical challenges within societies, while simultaneously encouraging active citizenship, honesty and fairness.

This handbook is the result of a collaborative effort of several Academic Activities Officers and therefore we owe our gratitude to **Maria Monge-Navarro Otero, Anđela Bakula and Niko Anzulović Mirošević.**

Best wishes,

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Defining ROLE

The Rule of Law Education Programme (ROLE) is an international ELSA project that is carried out by National Groups. It is an educational initiative designed to provide non-formal education on the Rule of Law and leadership to high school students around Europe.

The Curriculum, taught by law students and young legal professionals, covers various aspects of the Rule of Law, including access to justice, equality before the law, and an independent judiciary. Through the practice of non-formal education, the goal is to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to actively advocate for the improvement of the Rule of Law in their respective communities.

ROLE has already been implemented in many different countries, including Serbia, Finland, the Netherlands, and Croatia. However, with its 43 member countries and nearly 350 local groups, ELSA aims to reach a minimum of 35,000 students across Europe in the upcoming years through the ROLE project. National Boards in any country are encouraged to organise ROLE with the support of the International Board and ELSA Alumni, as long as there are no legal restrictions prohibiting the organisation of the project.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. Purpose

ELSA's purpose reads: *To contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility among law students and young lawyers.* Thus, ROLE carries out ELSA's purpose as an association by actively contributing to youth-to-youth education on Rule of Law principles and advocating for social responsibility on a larger scale. Note that ROLE maintains a politically neutral position towards Rule of Law principles, and in contrast emphasises avenues for justice. This approach aims to empower the youth to gain more agency over their rights and allows them to engage in active discussion without entertaining politically-charged debates.

Therefore, through ROLE, ELSA aims to:

1. Educate high school students on the Rule of Law;
2. Advocate for social responsibility at a National scale; and
3. Inspire the youth to gain more agency over their rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the fact that law students are not formally qualified teachers should not stand in your way. The need for teachers to be formally qualified is present in most countries. However, this has been resolved by having a formal teacher in the room while ROLE is being facilitated by ELSA members.



### 1.3. Benefits

The organisation of ROLE can bring many benefits to ELSA members, law students and legal professionals. It has proven to be an excellent entry point into institutions and companies looking for improved Rule of Law in their country, such as the EU representation Ombudsman, companies and law firms. The Programme is a wonderful networking opportunity for law students, as oftentimes facilitators are recruited at a national level, and thus may come from various educational and cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, non-formal education which is practised through ROLE, plays a crucial role in fostering facilitation skills, experiential learning, and personal development that often fall outside the scope of traditional university settings. It empowers individuals to explore diverse interests, adapt to real-world challenges, and cultivate a well-rounded skill set essential for success in an ever-evolving society.

Finally legal professionals can also benefit from their involvement within ROLE as it provides them with an opportunity to have a meaningful impact in the lives of the youth outside their daily routine. ROLE usually fits within the activities carried out by many NGOs or the pro bono activities at law firms. In this sense, ROLE can also help outside stakeholders achieve some of their goals relating to social responsibility.

Moreover, the ELSA Network also has much to gain from ROLE, including:

1. **Enhanced Practical Skills:** By participating in the project as facilitators, law students gain valuable practical skills in facilitation, public speaking, and communication. These skills are transferable and can be beneficial for their future legal careers.
2. **Deepened Understanding of the Rule of Law:** Through teaching high school students about the Rule of Law, law students deepen their understanding of the fundamental legal principles that make up its foundation. Facilitating lessons requires a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Thus, this project encourages law students to explore different aspects of the Rule of Law and develop a deeper understanding of this area.
3. **Networking and Collaboration Opportunities:** ROLE allows law students to network and collaborate with fellow law students, legal professionals, and other outside stakeholders. These connections can lead to professional opportunities, mentorship, and a broader network within the legal community.
4. **Contributing to Society:** By educating high school students about the Rule of Law, law students contribute to developing a more informed and engaged citizenry. They play a vital role in fostering legal literacy and promoting justice, fairness, and equality.

5. **Personal Growth and Leadership Development:** The responsibility of facilitating and guiding high school students through ROLE helps law students develop leadership skills, gain confidence in their abilities, and improve their capacity to work effectively in a team. These experiences contribute to personal growth and professional development.
6. **Positive Reputation and Publicity:** The ROLE project highlights the dedication and commitment of ELSA as an organisation to promote legal education and Rule of Law principles. It enhances the organisation's reputation and visibility among the legal community and wider society.
7. **Future Recruitment Opportunities:** ROLE can serve as a platform for attracting new members to ELSA. High school students exposed to the project and the organisation's activities may develop an interest in pursuing legal studies and consider joining ELSA once they enter university.

## 1.4. Getting Started

When beginning preparations for ROLE, the following elements must be taken into account:

1. **Search for schools:** This is the starting point – which schools seem a suitable audience for ROLE?; Can you get a contact of staff working at the school?
2. **ROLE Curriculum:** Do you need a translation?; Will you make alterations?
3. **Recruitment of Facilitators:** When and how will you start recruiting facilitators?; How many will you need? Which law firms will you approach for young lawyers?
4. **Train the Facilitators:** How and when will you ensure your facilitators are ready to deliver the Curriculum?
5. **Search for Funding:** How will you fund transportation, accommodation, printing, etc.?; Who should you contact?
6. **Duration of the Programme:** How many days will you go to the school?; How long will each session last?

ROLE can be organised in a myriad of different ways, and these questions should help you envision how the Programme will look like in your country, according to the resources you have at your disposal.

## 2. ROLE Curriculum

### 2.1. Procedure

National Groups interested in implementing the project will be granted access to the Curriculum. The National Coordinator or Vice President in charge of Academic Activities should communicate with ELSA International and sign a "Terms of Use" Agreement for the Curriculum. Subsequently, each National Group will have the flexibility to customise the Curriculum based on the specific requirements of the schools. Recognising that dedicating a full 10 hours to the complete Curriculum might pose challenges for schools, it is natural for certain adaptations to be considered.

## 2.2. Role of Curriculum

The Curriculum serves as a pivotal guide in the educational process of ROLE. The key of the Curriculum is that it is designed to encourage high school students to translate the Rule of Law concepts to their own environment through activities and dialogue. It is essential to include these activities as it makes the experience much more enjoyable and interactive compared to traditional high school teaching.

Most importantly, the Curriculum establishes a framework that brings structure, coherence, and consistency to the delivery of content, while also allowing for flexibility and adaptability to accommodate diverse learning needs and contextual variations. By ensuring alignment with the project's intended learning outcomes, the Curriculum facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to the Rule of Law among high school students.

## 2.3. Content

The Curriculum is built in the following three pillars:

1. Six content lessons that form the heart of the Curriculum (6 hours)
2. Two extra, facultative lessons that can stand on their own: one covering the Rule of Law and the concepts of freedom of speech and opinion online, and the other focusing on the intersection of business and the internet
3. Four lessons helping a class form its own citizenship project or projects (4 hours)

The following are the contents of the six lessons provided by the ROLE Curriculum:

- Lesson 1: What's the deal: Introduction to the Rule of Law
- Lesson 2: Defining the Rule of Law
- Lesson 3: How do we get Independent Judiciary
- Lesson 4: What does it mean to be 'equal before the law'
- Lesson 5: Access to Justice
- Lesson 6: Human Rights and Personal Leadership

- Lesson 7: Choosing your challenge
- Lesson 8: Shared vision, barriers & enablers identification
- Lesson 9: Research
- Lesson 10: Make a project proposal

## 2.4. Translations

Currently, the ROLE Curriculum is available in the following languages:

1. English
2. Serbian
3. Croatian
4. Dutch

Additionally, under a preparatory phase, there are the following translations coming up:

1. Danish
2. Polish
3. Norwegian
4. Italian
5. Greek

If you cannot find an official translation of the ROLE Curriculum in your respective language you can look for qualified translators that will help you with the process. People you may contact include: partners at law firms, professors and assistants employed at universities, or other qualified professionals. Through ELSA Alumni, ELSA has access to efficient translating services which may provide a good starting point for National Groups that seek translations. Please contact the Vice President in charge of Academic Activities of the International Board ([academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org)) if you would like a translation in your language. Such translation would still need to be checked by someone to ensure it follows the intent of the Programme.

## 2.5. Changing the curriculum

The Curriculum is property of ELSA Alumni, which entails that National Groups be conscientious of this when altering the Curriculum. It is important that the core substance of the content as well as the lesson objectives remain within the new Curriculum, as this ensures uniformity with the way that ROLE is being conducted across the different European countries.

It is understandable that some National Groups will have to adapt the Curriculum to fit within the needs and wishes of the school that they are working with. However, always when adapting the Curriculum, ensure that the newly-created content is consistent with the original



version, and that lesson objectives remain at the core. It is also possible to shorten the Curriculum in case schools cannot host the National Groups for several days or hours at a time. This has been done previously by other National Groups, and has been implemented successfully. Please contact the Vice President in charge of Academic Activities of the International Board ([academicactivities@elsa.org](mailto:academicactivities@elsa.org)) if you would like assistance on altering the curriculum.

### 3. ROLE Facilitators

#### 3.1. Who can be a ROLE Facilitator?

As a youth-to-youth education initiative, it is important that the role of facilitators is carried out by a combination of university students and young legal professionals. Having students and professionals who are closer to the audiences' age helps establish a closer connection between those who are teaching and those being taught and ensures that the students are effectively engaging with the materials.

#### 3.2. Training the Facilitators

Training the facilitators is an essential step for the successful execution of ROLE as this is the element that will ensure:

1. The facilitators are comfortable facilitating the Curriculum to younger students;
2. The facilitators understand what is expected of them during the Programme.

Please keep in mind that ROLE's primary approach is facilitation, not teaching. Facilitation is a skill quite different from teaching or lecturing which needs to be practised consistently to be comfortable with it. In facilitation, a concept is provided and then the audience is encouraged to develop their own meaning and relevance of such concept through dialogue and activities. Facilitators ask questions, as provided in the Curriculum, but they rarely provide answers, as that stops the internalisation process. Rule of Law leadership follows such an internalisation process.

The training in itself is not standardised, and the way it is carried out, including the content and duration, is based on the discretion of the organising committee of the ELSA group. It is advised that the training focus both, on the content of the Curriculum and the pedagogy (i.e. facilitation methods, learning activities, etc.)

Some of the goals you can aim for in your training session are the following:

1. Facilitators feel comfortable with the materials and facilitation;

2. Facilitators understand which are the adequate facilitation methods to use with their audience;
3. Facilitators engaged and worked together efficiently with their team-mates.

The training can also be done in the form of a conference, where the facilitators gather in a venue for a fixed number of days to attend workshops and guest lectures on the Rule of Law. Please note that organising a conference for the training phase is not something required, and will mostly depend on the budget of the National Group.

Keep in mind that the facilitators are not trained teaching professionals. Therefore, it is advised that in every classroom there are teachers from the school present for support.

### 3.3. Train the Facilitators Conference (ELSA International)

Train the Facilitators Conference (TtF) provides participants with the tools to deliver ROLE sessions confidently and successfully to secondary school pupils. The first TtF took place in 2023 and provided participants with first-hand knowledge and skills. ROLE knowledge was provided by ELSA Alumni, who created the Curriculum. Additionally, participants practised their facilitation skills by studying pedagogical basics and performing mock sessions under the supervision of world-class facilitation trainers. ELSA International aims to regularly organise the TtF Conference in order to help National and Local Groups with ROLE implementation through unified and quality training and sharing good practices across Europe.

## 4. Process & Planning

### 4.1. Timeline

Planning the timeline for ROLE is not clear-cut, and many factors may influence the way your plans will develop. Consider the following factors:

1. **School:** the school will determine the frequency and length of ROLE, as you will have to adapt to their school schedule and availability.
2. **Facilitators:** the number of facilitators will be determined by the number of students in the school and how many students there are per classroom. It is advised to have three facilitators per class where two can deliver the lesson, and one can observe. This way, the facilitators will have the flexibility to swap roles and will be able to back each other up in cases of unforeseen circumstances. It is also recommended that more facilitators than the amount strictly needed are recruited, in case of last-minute cancellations.

3. **Duration of the Programme:** this will be an agreement between the school and the ELSA group. Here it is important to keep the financial aspect in mind, including transportation and accommodation costs.
4. **Alterations of Curriculum:** if alterations need to be made, the content needs to be determined in close communication with the school as soon as possible. Altering the Curriculum may take time and effort, and it is important it can be sent to the facilitators in a timely manner, so that they may have time to prepare before the Programme begins. It is advised to make as few alterations as possible to the teaching sheets, as they are very well thought out.
5. **Training the Facilitators:** you need to consider the scheduling. Do you want to have it a month, or a week before the Programme begins?
6. **Finance:** you need to consider the costs that will arise during the Programme, i.e. transportation costs; hotel costs; merchandise; name tags, etc. It is important to begin looking for funding from the start of the preparation process – finances will affect many factors, including how the Programme is carried out.

## 4.2. Team Structure

The team structure will vary depending on the number of schools participating in ROLE, and how many students there are per classroom. It is recommended that there are at least three facilitators per classroom.

Keep in mind some of the potential challenges or barriers that may arise in establishing and maintaining an effective team structure during ROLE and how they can be addressed:

1. **Communication:** Communication gaps between team members can hinder collaboration and coordination. To address this, establish regular team meetings, utilise communication tools, and encourage open and transparent communication among team members. Given the importance of communication with external stakeholders, you could consider appointing a marketing officer within the organising committee;
2. **Time Management:** Balancing academic commitments, and the ROLE project can pose challenges for team members. Develop a clear schedule and timeline, provide adequate resources and support, and encourage effective time management strategies among team members;
3. **Not having enough team members:** Adjust the project scope to align with the available team members. If necessary, consider scaling down certain aspects, or if this is not a possibility, consider re-opening a call for facilitators.

## 4.3. External Stakeholders

External stakeholders also can play a role in the preparation of ROLE, including ELSA Alumni and partners:

1. **ELSA Alumni:** The ELSA Alumni network can serve as mentors or advisors to current team members and provide guidance as well as help by sharing their own experiences. They can also contribute by volunteering their time to assist with specific project activities or sessions.
2. **Law firms:** Legal experts can provide subject matter expertise, contribute to Curriculum development, and young lawyers can participate as facilitators.
3. **Other sponsors**

#### 4.4. Information transparency

External stakeholders will oftentimes be unaware of what ROLE, or even ELSA, is and what it stands for. Information transparency is key to compel schools to participate in ROLE and grow ELSA's visibility in the professional world. It is important to clearly explain what ELSA is and what it stands for as an association, to ensure that schools will trust ELSA when visiting the schools and interacting with their students. It is also important to clearly communicate what ROLE is and why it can be an appealing project for schools to implement.

The same can be done for other stakeholders such as law firms, NGOs, or other organisations that may add value to ROLE, whether it's through the training process, or through the execution of the Programme.

### 5. Funding

#### 5.1. Choosing & attracting partners

When seeking to organise any project, funding is always a key factor to keep in mind. As you might already know, funding opportunities vary from project to project. In the context of ROLE, it is important to keep in mind the main values the project stands for, and consequently, what makes it an appealing project for external stakeholders. Being a project that heavily promotes the Rule of Law, it naturally catches the interest of national and international institutions that share similar values within the realm of human rights and the Rule of Law.

Make sure to collaborate closely with your President and BEE officers before and during your interactions with external stakeholders. They will ensure the communication procedures align with ELSA's strategic goals and regulations, including but not limited to the External Relations procedure.

## 5.2. Potential National partners

An exemplary candidate for a potential partnership with ROLE is the ombudsman body within your country. Ombudsman institutions are by definition dedicated to promoting human rights and the Rule of Law. Since the ombudsman's purpose is visibly aligned with the values promoted by ROLE, it is recommended to establish communication and engagement with them, integrating their participation into the program in a suitable manner.

In addition to these avenues, most countries host non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to human rights and the Rule of Law. Such entities are often drawn to initiatives of this nature. Furthermore, governmental bodies and related entities also represent promising collaborative prospects for ROLE, aligning with its objectives and purposes.

## 5.3. Potential International partners

Whether you are operating within an EU member state or beyond, it is important to recognize that the EU maintains a strong commitment to advancing the principles of the Rule of Law and human rights – a mission that closely mirrors the essence of ROLE's objectives. This correspondence extends to the program's relaxed and conversational approach.

For this reason, national and local representations of EU bodies, like the European Commission or Parliament in your country, along with Europe Direct centres and similar entities, could be great partners to help organise and support your ROLE Programme. They often have their own initiatives focused on promoting values and communication. It is an excellent idea to research their activities in order to understand how your ROLE Programme aligns with their goals. This will help you approach them with relevant information and increase your chances of success.

When reaching out to any EU body or international contact, it's highly advisable to first consult with your BEE officers, National President, and submit a Contact Approval Form to ELSA International. Make sure to coordinate your approach with them before initiating any contact.

## 6. Transparency: Annual Report

## 6.1. Evaluation

After the execution of ROLE it is important to evaluate the success of the Programme. This will help you and your team understand what things can be improved for future editions and help you mitigate the repetition of past mistakes. In order to do this it is recommended that officers collect and record the experiences of all the stakeholders involved in ROLE including:

1. The **high school students**, as the audience: For this, please ensure you use the online questionnaire available in english through the following [link](#), to enable aggregate reporting.
2. The **school's staff and teachers**, as the observers;
3. The **facilitators**, as the executors;
4. The **organising committee**, as the organisers.

All this information can then be brought together to assess the success of the Programme and to identify which aspects can be improved. This can be condensed in the form of an Annual Report. After completion, this Report can be sent to all the above-listed stakeholders, and be made public in the ELSA website or social media.

Reporting and recording will help make ROLE more transparent and accountable to all stakeholders involved. This can also be presented to other prospective schools and partners, and therefore serve as an effective partnership tool which will enhance the visibility and legitimacy of the Programme.

## 6.2 Marketing

Make sure that when delivering ROLE, enough visual and written statements are collected for social media platforms. This is very important for sponsors, participating law firms and the organising ELSA group, to ensure continuity of relations and the ROLE Programme.

Think of taking pictures, making short videos, asking for impressions or even appointing two school students as “journalists” to do it for you. Please keep in mind GDPR compliance, and that you always need to ask for permission from the school before taking pictures. The same is applicable before taking pictures of the facilitators and any other external stakeholders.



## 7. Additional Materials

### 7.1. Organisational Checklist

| Task                                      | Task description  | Who will be in charge?                   | Tick when completed |
|---|---|--|---------------------|
| <b>Finding schools</b>                    | Your first step should be reaching out to schools and signing them up for ROLE.   | <i>i.e. Head of organising committee</i> | ✓                   |
| <b>Recruiting facilitators</b>            | Almost immediately after finding a school you will need to start the recruitment process. Ensure you have more facilitators than you actually need.   |  |                     |
| <b>Finding young legal professionals</b>  | You will need to find young legal professionals to help with the facilitation. Start contacting partners at an early stage so you secure a partnership early on.  |  |                     |
| <b>Funding &amp; Sponsors</b>             | Once you know where the Programme will take place and how many people will participate it is important to set a budget. Even though this is the time when your expenses become clearer, it is recommended you start conducting research on funding at an earlier stage. |  |                     |
| <b>Marketing</b>                          | Ensure the Programme is being marketed effectively. Please refer to the Officer's portal for the <a href="#">ROLE Marketing Kit</a> .   |  |                     |
| <b>Curriculum</b>                         | After talking to the school, will you need to make slight alterations to the Curriculum? Ensure these are ready at an early stage as well, so you can provide the facilitators with the Curriculum as soon as possible.   |  |                     |
| <b>Define the duration and scheduling</b> | This will be negotiated between you, the school and the facilitators.. Keep in mind holidays and exam periods.  |  |                     |
| <b>Train the Facilitators</b>             | Ensure you train your facilitators before the beginning of the Programme.   |  |                     |
| <b>Evaluation</b>                         | After the Programme has been executed, ensure you evaluate how ROLE went. Please make sure you take into consideration the experiences of all stakeholders involved and condense this   |  |                     |

|  |                            |  |  |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|
|  | information into a Report. |  |  |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|

## 7.2. Contacting schools template

Here is a template you may use to contact schools for ROLE:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing to you to offer the opportunity to [SCHOOL] to participate in the Rule of Law Education Programme as organised by the national chapters of the European Law Students' Association (ELSA). ELSA is the largest independent law students' association, which is characterised by its non-political and non-profit nature. The vision of ELSA is as follows: *a just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity*. Therefore, three of the focus points of ELSA are human rights, cultural diversity and the importance of social responsibility.

Within the Rule of Law Education Programme (ROLE), law students and legal professionals work together to provide lessons to high school students from age 16 and upwards on both the theoretical and practical side of the Rule of Law. The importance of education on the concept of the Rule of Law has been acknowledged by the international community, which is why ELSA wishes to provide this to high school students free of charge. While this Programme focuses on the legal side rather than the political ideals that might surround the Rule of Law, it is useful for students both interested and neutral towards the legal profession to critically think and discuss the concept, as they will soon take their place within society.

With this email, I extend an invitation to [SCHOOL] to participate in the ROLE Programme, which is executed all over Europe. Below I also provide you with a booklet on the ROLE Programme which contains more information on ELSA, the ROLE Programme and the Lesson Objectives.

Should you have any further inquiries, or wish to set up a meeting, feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you!

### 7.3. Connecting legal professionals / partners template

Here is a template you may use to contact legal professionals, or other partners:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing to you to offer the opportunity to [LAW FIRM/you] to participate in the Rule of Law Education Programme as organised by the national chapters of the European Law Students' Association (ELSA). ELSA is the largest independent law students' association, which is characterised by its non-political and non-profit nature. The vision of ELSA is as follows: *a just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity*. Three of the focus points of ELSA are, therefore, human rights, cultural diversity and the importance of social responsibility.

The Rule of Law Education Programme (ROLE) unites law students and legal professionals to teach high school students aged 16 and upwards about both the theoretical and practical side of the Rule of Law. The importance of education on the concept of the Rule of Law has been acknowledged by the international community, which is why ELSA wishes to provide this to high school students free of charge. The goal of this Programme is to introduce high school students to the legal side of the Rule of Law rather than the political ideals surrounding the concept and to introduce them to the importance of the law within society by using a two-day lesson package.

Legal professionals are essential for the ROLE Programme for the following four reasons. Firstly, legal professionals have both extensive knowledge and more life experience than students. This is crucial as it results in a more varied view as to what the Rule of Law is and how society actually reacts to this, which cannot be presented if only law students would be part of the Programme. Secondly, having legal professionals present in the lessons provided to the high school students would introduce them to the importance of the legal field and might inspire them to pursue a future in said field. Additionally, having legal professionals present would emphasize the importance of the Rule of Law within society. Thirdly, it is of massive benefit for law students to work with professionals, as it provides them with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills. Finally, the Programme can be of benefit to legal professionals, as it provides them with the ability to step out of their day-to-day professional lives and shape young minds.

With this email, I extend an invitation to [FIRM/you] to participate in the ROLE Programme, which is executed all over Europe. Below I also provide you with a booklet on the ROLE Programme which contains more information on ELSA, the ROLE Programme and the Lesson Objectives.

Should you have any further inquiries, or wish to set up a meeting, feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you!