

STRATEGIC PLAN YEARLY REPORT

2023/2024

elsa

The European Law Students' Association

Foreword

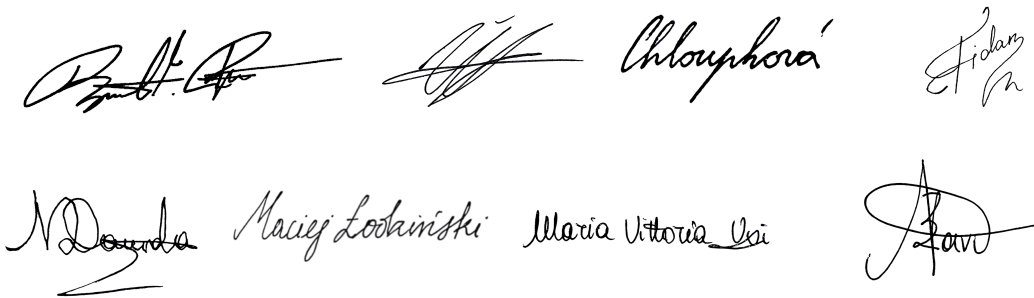
Dear Network,

In the following pages we have summarised the efforts undertaken by the International Board of ELSA 2023/2024 to implement the goals set out in the Strategic Plan 2023-2028. Significant work has been done to advance each Strategic Goal, and it is with great pleasure that we report notable advancement in each field. It bears mentioning that this was the first year of implementation, and as such no prior reporting has been concluded on the progress of the implementation. This poses some difficulty as pertains to critical comparison between years.

Strategic Planning was at the forefront this year, as it saw the conclusion of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 with the publication of the [Strategic Plan Final Report](#), and the first steps towards carrying out the Goals of the current Strategic Plan, primarily through the drafting and publication of an extensive [Strategic Goals Implementation Handbook](#). Moreover, a more rigid approach was taken to the topics and structure of the International Strategy Meeting, providing the International Board with invaluable insights and groundwork which became the base of many initiatives throughout the term.

We hope this report proves informative, and provides inspiration to those who wish to engage with the Strategic Goals and further their implementation on all levels of the Association.

ELSAfully yours,



The image shows seven handwritten signatures in black ink, arranged in two rows. The top row contains four signatures, and the bottom row contains three. The signatures are: Bjarki, Yordan, Adéla, Fidan, Nadia, Maciej, Maria Vittoria, and Xanthi.

Bjarki, Yordan, Adéla, Fidan, Nadia, Maciej, Maria Vittoria and Xanthi
International Board of ELSA 2023/2024

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
General.....	3
Foundations of the Strategic Plan.....	3
Relevant Materials.....	3
Strategic Goal 1 - Accessibility	4
Financial Accessibility.....	4
Code of Conduct and Welfare.....	6
Access to Knowledge Management.....	7
Strategic Goal 2 - Structure	9
Embrace Technological Innovation.....	9
Data Protection Compliance.....	10
Coherent Regulations.....	12
Human Resources.....	12
Quality of International Internal Meetings.....	15
Public Relations.....	16
Strategic Goal 3 - Direction	18
Advocacy.....	18
Human Rights.....	19
5.3. Legal Education.....	20
Strategic Goals Implementation Handbook	21
Strategic Planning Cycle (ISM)	21

Introduction

General

The Strategic Plan 2023-2028 was adopted at the 83rd International Council Meeting Malta in Spring 2023, and as such the term 2023/2024 was the first in which it was implemented. Great strides have been made, encompassing regulatory amendments, engagement of the Network, and concerted efforts on behalf of ELSA International. The Strategic Plan Yearly Report for the term 2023/2024 will outline the actions taken by the International Board in pursuit of achieving and advancing the Strategic Goals of ELSA, as well as other highlights of Strategic Planning throughout the term. The Report is structured in such a way that each of the overarching goals is outlined, followed respectively by an overview of the efforts undertaken to achieve subgoals, an evaluation of where we stand, and finally recommendations for further action where relevant.

Foundations of the Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Goals have three pillars upon which the more concrete goals stand, namely Accessibility, Structure and Direction. These overarching topics represent the focal points of potential that the Association has for improvement over the coming years. It is the responsibility of the International Board of ELSA to see these goals fulfilled, as well as to promote their implementation throughout the Network.

Relevant Materials

[International Council Meeting Decision Book \(Part 1., Chapter 2. - Strategic Plan 2023-2028\)](#)

[Strategic Goals Implementation Handbook 2023-2028](#)

Strategic Goal 1 - Accessibility

As our events and initiatives keep expanding in scope, and we strive to improve our Human Resources in terms of recruitment and retention, it is vital that we work toward a more accessible Association. The Strategic Goal embraces this in three main ways, namely from the perspective of financial accessibility and inclusivity, welfare, and knowledge management. Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of all three facets of this goal, including several regulatory reforms, significant deliberations, and the implementation of practical solutions, which balance positive impact on participants and organisers of projects and events alike.

Financial Accessibility

The goal is focused primarily on increasing the ability of members and third parties to engage in the projects and initiatives of ELSA, as well as to make engaging in the internal work of the Association more tenable for prospective members of the International Board and ELSA International Team.

Outline of the implementation efforts

Significant discussions were held during the 84th International Council Meeting Tbilisi, the 4th International Strategy Meeting Brno, and the 85th International Council Meeting Thessaloniki, regarding the quality standards of our International Internal Meetings, their attainability and affordability as weighed against efforts to ensure that they are compelling to attend, and the direction in which we as an Association wish to take in that regard. To that effect, several regulatory proposals were introduced in Tbilisi and Thessaloniki respectively.

A particular focal point in the context of this Strategic Goal was ELSA Law Schools. This year revolved around evaluating the current status of our ELSA Law Schools and discussing their financial stability and sustainability. After concerns raised by National Groups, the ELSA Law Schools Team proceeded with an extensive research and comparison of the financial situation of Summer ELSA Law Schools of the two previous terms (2021/2022 and 2022/2023). The conclusion the Team drew after this research was that there was a need for a fee raise. At the same time, the Team acknowledged that there are many National Groups in the Network that are interested in the project but don't take the decision to organise it due to financial reservations. This, together with other factors led to the creation of a system where the costs that come together with organising an ELSA Law School would play a role in the price. There would now be three categories of countries, the fees of which would gradually increase.

Despite the fact that prices would indeed increase, the Team found that the new system would give a push towards the sustainability of the project, it would maintain its quality and potentially increase the engagement of the Network in these projects, thus providing more options for law students and young lawyers around the ELSA Network and beyond.

It is important to note that while fees will increase in some countries, there are several ELSA Law Schools whose fees will remain unchanged. Additionally, a reevaluation clause has been introduced, ensuring that both the Network and ELSA International closely monitor the status of ELSA Law Schools. Data will be compared annually, and after three terms, the topic of ELSA Law School fees will be revisited for further discussion.

Another important aspect of the implementation of the Financial Accessibility Goal is the reform concerning the minimum remuneration for the ELSA Traineeships. Throughout the year,

several discussions were held to identify the ideal way to adopt a minimum remuneration for trainees who undertake internships abroad and for those who most often do not receive a fair compensation that can cover the costs they will have to face. It must therefore be taken into account that ELSA is formed by 43 National Groups in which the minimum costs of living are different and therefore the expenses that a trainee has to face are very different on the basis of where they will go. A caveat which must be addressed at this stage is that minimum remuneration was already adopted into the regulations at the 83rd ICM Malta, however this encompassed something close to full remuneration, including the full costs of accommodation, transportation to the place to which the trainee would move, etc. The effort this year was to have the regulation reflect the reality of the situation in a way that is relevant and most importantly enforceable.

As such, the solution needed to cover the specific needs of every country while finding a way to establish a common minimum remuneration - the formulation of a [database](#) of minimum remuneration across the ELSA Network. The database, which will enter into force in the 2024/2025 term, is divided into a global overview of all 43 countries, and is further divided into specific sections dedicated to each National Group in which it will be possible to update the numbers based on the different National Statistics Agency that gather the cost of living information for each country.

The data present in the database will be used as minimum remuneration numbers for the traineeships that in turn would be required to cover at least half of the minimum cost of living for that country. The implementation is just the first step to having traineeships accessible and sustainable for all the members of ELSA, especially the ones that cannot afford to undertake a job opportunity that is not paid.

Reverting back to our Internal Meetings, a notable effort which had an immediate positive effect on our membership was the increasing of the number of scholarships for International Council Meetings, provided by ELSA Alumni, from four to eight. It is by means such as these that we can ensure the equal representation of the Network in decision-making on the highest level. On a final but separate note regarding the International Internal Meetings, questions on financial aspects are now included in the evaluation forms of our meetings which are sent out to participants, in order to gather further insights into the financial viability of these events from the participants perspective.

New member benefits have been introduced, most notably through the newly signed partnership with UNITAR. Efforts have been made to retain and further develop existing Member Benefits, particularly with regard to educational opportunities and travel, which is also in line with the One Year Operational Plan of the International Board of ELSA.

A final notable effort this year was to re-evaluate the approach which had previously been approved when it comes to the reimbursements of the members of the International Board. During the 2022/2023 term, in an effort to ensure full compliance with all relevant laws and based on information obtained at that point in time, the remuneration system was reformed into a reimbursement scheme, wherein members of the International Board needed to reclaim actual expenses, rather than having the amount stipulated by the International Council Meeting Decision Book wired to their account on a monthly basis as had previously been the case. This year, a new approach was identified, namely that the members of the International Board from the 2024/2025 term onwards would receive a Grant of Relocation, which serves to alleviate the financial burden placed on those who choose to serve the Association by granting them a lump sum allocated to their shift of domicile, and in turn making the prospect of running for the

International Board more accessible from the financial perspective. It is to be noted that the amounts in question have remained unchanged for many years and do not adequately reflect the needs of International Board members with regard to the cost of living and the unavoidable expenses incurred in the process of relocating to Belgium and living there under reasonably comfortable conditions throughout the term in office. Therefore further prospects must be looked into within this regard, including such addressing the long overdue diversification of ELSA's income, as well as its needed increase.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on financial support towards the International Board of ELSA, as well as the ELSA International Team. The aspect of the Strategic Goal that relates to increasing the reimbursement of EIT members has seen little concrete development this year, largely due to budgetary constraints. On a more general note, it is to be recommended that the above mentioned mechanisms put in place this year to increase the financial accessibility of our projects and events are given time to develop, and as such that any alterations to them be made on the basis of absolute need, as they are set in place as long-term solutions to accessibility issues, as well as safeguarding the balance between affordability and the quality of the projects.

Furthermore, a systemic approach should be adopted with regards to the evaluation of data concerning financial accessibility, based on the obtained information from International Internal Meetings and Key Area Projects, which have over the past years implemented questions dedicated to this topic within their Evaluation Forms. This would ensure that any further action taken in line with the Strategic Goals is reflective of the reality surrounding these projects.

Code of Conduct and Welfare

The goal envisions a more welcoming Association, that places an emphasis on the well-being of ELSA Officers, participants in events under the auspices of ELSA, as well as the volunteers who contribute to the events and initiatives of ELSA through the employment of the Code of Conduct of ELSA, implementation of Codes of Conduct throughout the Network, and other welfare mechanisms. The goal also encompasses the comprehensibility and accessibility of ELSA for both current and potential future members.

Outline of the implementation efforts

The [Code of Conduct of ELSA](#) underwent significant reforms, both prior to and during the 85th International Council Meeting Thessaloniki. These reforms, which were initiated via a preliminary input paper in the 84th International Council Meeting Tbilisi, resulted in a more comprehensive guideline with a clearer scope of applicability, ensuring that the Code of Conduct is relevant and enforceable regardless of the context of the event it is applied in. The robustness of integrated welfare mechanisms was strengthened, while simultaneously the clarity and scope of existing definitions of unacceptable behaviour was improved. A notable aspect of the revision was the close involvement of the ELSA Network, which took a keen interest in the process, reflecting a collaborative approach to the development of these all-important guidelines.

Additionally, continuous efforts have been made to educate the ELSA Network, including participants in various events, about the Code of Conduct. This initiative is crucial in strengthening the welfare mechanisms and ensuring widespread awareness of the CoC's existence and importance. The fact that the welfare mechanisms have been put to the fore in the

context of events such as the International Council Meeting (ICM), International Strategy Meeting (ISM), Regional Rounds and Final Oral Rounds of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition (JHJMCC) and Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition (HPMCC), as well as the ROLE Train the Facilitators Conference (TtF), highlights the organisation's commitment to the cause of ensuring the well-being of all ELSA Officers, as well as those who participate in the various activities of ELSA.

In line with the aforementioned efforts, ELSA has also released a [Model Code of Conduct for National Groups](#). This model serves as a template to guide those Officers who are responsible for welfare on the National Level in developing their own Codes of Conduct, ensuring consistency and adherence to high standards across the Network.

Future prospects

It is recommended that further steps be taken to implement the last subgoal, namely that of making ELSA more comprehensible and accessible to third parties, as there has been an emphasis on the implementation of the subgoals regarding the Code of Conduct and Welfare during the past term. Notwithstanding that, it shall be kept in mind that the CoC and Welfare Mechanisms should be continuously at the forefront in every event and initiative undertaken by ELSA and its National and Local Groups.

Access to Knowledge Management

The goal is aimed at strengthening the pillars of knowledge on which the work of the Association rests, namely by ensuring that Local and National officers are provided with all relevant materials in a manner that is easily accessible and comprehensible, as well as to disseminate information in a wider variety of ways. Moreover, the goal stipulates the creation of a new archiving system, as well as a Network-wide Transition framework.

Outline of the implementation efforts

Throughout the term, the ELSA International Team worked on developing a new Officers Portal, primarily by identifying the underlying structural issues in the current version and issues with the organisation of materials. This led to the creation of a structure for the future version of the Portal, which aims to make the materials hosted more easily accessible. Separately to this, a system has been put in place to categorise materials available on the current Officers Portal based on their relevance and how up-to-date they are. The objective of this is to ensure the appropriate upkeep of the Officers' Portal in the future.

As of now, work on the development of a consistent archiving system is ongoing. This system will primarily address the needs of ELSA International when it comes to ensuring easy access to documents that are of importance and relevance to the preservation of history and retention of knowledge. As a first major step in these efforts, a new Archiving Guideline, consisting of an Archiving Checklist and recommendations for best practices, was developed and implemented for the International Board of ELSA. This effort has already made a positive impact on the state of our archives.

Transition of knowledge is an essential part of the development of our Association, and ensures that important information does not get lost between generations of ELSA Officers. ELSA International aims to lead by example in this regard, and as such, two programmes were implemented to facilitate transition in specific Areas, namely BEE and IM. The BEE Academy

Transition Sessions consisted of three Open Calls over a period of two months, aiming to address firstly the generalities of a good BEE Transition, secondly the intricacies of the position for those who are about to undertake it, and lastly the ways in which experience in ELSA can be leveraged for future prospects for those whose time in the Association is coming to a close. For IM, four Network Wide Transition Sessions were conducted, focused on topics which either require particular expertise, or have a common framework across the whole Network. The purpose of these sessions was to provide incoming Secretaries General and other IM Officers from across the Network with a level-playing field when it comes to these specific areas of transition, with the view to developing their skill set efficiently for the term ahead.

Lastly, a common Transition Framework was established for the ELSA International Team, as it is of vital importance that not only the Officers of the International Board receive a structured, comprehensive Transition, but rather that this applies to all Officers on the International level of ELSA.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that further emphasis be placed on continuing and completing the work initiated during this term as pertains to the Officers Portal and standard of archiving, as this is instrumental to the retention of knowledge and accessibility of information.

Strategic Goal 2 - Structure

The second of the Strategic Goals addresses a wide variety of structural challenges and unrealised opportunities for organisational development. The implementation of the sub-goals is primarily contingent on efforts within the Internal Management Area and coordination of other Areas in that regard, with the notable exception of Public Relations. Concretely the Strategic Goal encompasses seven pillars, namely: the development and management of technological infrastructure; compliance with all relevant data protection ordinances and employment of best practices in that regard; the consolidation of our Regulations with an aim of making them more coherent; a more comprehensive strategic approach to Human Resources with an emphasis on the development of Officers and recognition of their efforts; the improved quality and environmental sustainability of International Internal Meetings, achieved by attracting hosts on the basis of increasing feasibility of hosting; and lastly the need for a more comprehensive strategic approach to Public Relations through media engagement and Network-wide support. The Strategic Goal in most respects encompasses specific actionable items, and as such the evaluation of its implementation can be done on a comparatively concrete basis. Significant progress has been made, particularly when it comes to the pillars of Data Protection and Human Resources. As pertains to the other pillars, many advancements have been made that have either led to partial implementation, or provided concrete groundwork for further implementation efforts.

Embrace Technological Innovation

ELSA maintains many websites that are a fundamental part of our external presentation and serve as primary points of interaction for all those who wish to engage in our projects and initiatives. Moreover, they are amongst our primary platforms for partner promotion. As such, their appearance and functionality are of utmost importance. In the same vein, we must ensure that the Network has the tools and resources to build their own online presence and sustain it for years to come.

Outline of the implementation efforts

Work on the development of a new website has commenced, identifying how to proceed with fundamental elements such as selecting hosting providers. However, progress has been hampered by a lack of funding and ongoing issues with the ELSA Traineeships Portal, which continue to pose significant challenges respectively. Despite these setbacks, the groundwork has been laid and the primary challenges have been identified, awaiting resolution of the financial and technical hurdles within the upcoming terms of the Strategic Plan. These require as a first fundamental step the acquiring of comprehensive structural funding which would assist ELSA with the transition to a new website and hosting provider, while ideally also collaborating with external experts in the IT field.

Work on the Officers Portal on the other hand has also seen some progress over the past year. The aim is to publish a revised, fully password-protected Officers Portal in the next term. While this aim is deemed achievable, it remains contingent on the absence of further complications. Continuous development efforts aim to ensure that the portal meets the security standards we seek to achieve, as well as it being a more accessible and organised toolbox for the Officers of the Network. Plans have also been developed with regards to its internal restructuring in line with the discussions above, so that it reflects more than just a list of materials, but is conversely truly utilised as a “portal” and common space for ELSA Officers.

In terms of further developments, a new [G-Suite Management Guideline](#) has been published to streamline and standardise the use of G-Suite tools within the Network. Finally, a dedicated and centralised Google Group (it-team@elsa.org) has been established to provide a platform for inquiries and guidance on any IT-related topics. This initiative is designed to facilitate access to support to those ELSA Officers who oversee the management of IT applications.

In order to build capacity when it comes to the IT and website management of the Members of ELSA, multiple information dissemination sessions have been conducted throughout the year. The first of these sessions took place during the International Training Meeting (ITM) and continued during the IM Network Wide Transition sessions. These training sessions aim to equip members of the Network with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage IT resources effectively and contribute to the ongoing development and maintenance of their infrastructure.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that the International Board of ELSA and the ELSA International Team receive professional training on the management and maintenance of IT systems, including websites and portals, in order to ensure the sustainability of the technical infrastructure of ELSA International. It is further recommended that similar training be afforded to the wider ELSA Network, delivered either by the EIT or the same entities that deliver the training to ELSA International.

Data Protection Compliance

The protection of personal data is an ever growing concern for the public sector, private corporations and civil society alike. We aim to be a leading voice amongst Student NGOs on the subject, and as such strives to improve internal procedures and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. ELSA International is, however, not an island in these efforts, and as a result we are dedicated to ensuring that all Member Groups stand on equal footing by providing them with support and knowledge when it comes to improving their own data protection.

Outline of the implementation efforts

In response to the increasing importance of data protection, ELSA International has adopted a professional approach to analysing its compliance status, befitting an organisation of our scope. A professional Data Protection Audit, including a GAP analysis, was conducted to identify the necessary steps to achieve full compliance with the GDPR and other applicable laws and regulations. Subsequent to the conclusion of the GAP analysis began the formulation of a new and updated Record of Processing Activities for ELSA International. This is an ongoing effort, which will yield a full overview of our data processing activity in due course.

The Privacy Policies of ELSA International are currently undergoing a comprehensive update and a selection of over ten of these policies have already been shared with the Network on the Officers Portal. Moreover, ELSA International has provided overarching policies for all events relating to Flagship Projects and International Internal Meetings, relieving the ELSA Groups that undertake the organisation of these events from having to create such policies independently.

Additionally, a revised IT and Cybersecurity Policy has been adopted at the International level, reflecting our commitment to enhancing the security and integrity of our information systems. In tandem with this, a Data Subjects Rights Policy has been created and implemented, ensuring that

the rights of individuals regarding their personal data are protected and upheld across all our operations, while a new Data Breach Response Policy seeks to prepare the Officers of ELSA International appropriately for the response to any breaches of our security and data protection protocols.

In line with the GAP analysis and the establishment of the Record of Processing Activities, this past term also saw the establishment of a new system for the acquisition of consent, both with regard to how we collect and record consent for the processing of data.

We have additionally established comprehensive procedures for sharing personal data with third parties. This includes a thorough revision of existing data processing agreements to ensure they meet all relevant regulatory standards. Additionally, joint controllership agreements have been developed and partially implemented, applicable both within and outside the European Union respectively, to clearly define responsibilities and compliance obligations between ELSA International and the secondary Controller with whom data is shared.

Raising awareness about data protection has not stood back either and has been a key focus throughout the term. Workshops on data protection were conducted at each International Internal Meeting, with the exception of the International Strategy Meeting. These workshops aimed to educate members on the importance of data protection and best practices. Additionally, following the 85th International Council Meeting Thessaloniki, an Open Call was held to further expand on the subject, alongside a Network-Wide IM Transition Session conducted to give a comprehensive overview of the area for incoming IM Officers.

Finally, to guide our data protection efforts moving forward, a Data Protection Roadmap for the years 2024-2026 has been formulated. This roadmap outlines our strategic approach to data protection, setting clear goals and milestones for the months of the incoming 2024/2025 Term, as well as the following one.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that the implementation of the policies and templates that have been created is prioritised above all else. This encompasses open communication with all relevant externals, keeping the processing records and following our own internal procedures that have been set in place to the fullest extent. Moreover, it is to be recommended that adaptable templates are made available to National Groups, starting with these which ELSA International has already established for itself.

A further recommendation is the adaptation of a Network-wide data protection agreement, which is signed by the National Groups on behalf of their respective Local Groups, in the aims of bringing the entire Network into the fold of compliance when it comes to the processing of data relating to particularly complex Flagship Projects - e.g. ELSA Traineeships and ELSA Law Schools.

As for recommendations pertaining to the internal function of ELSA International, firstly a Cookie Banner should be established on the ELSA website. This is already a function on the prototype of the draft new website, but technical limitations hinder implementation on the current version. Secondly, professional advice should be continued to further explore the retention of data in instances of a particularly sensitive nature, such as the legality of retention in

connection to the violations of the Code of Conduct of ELSA. In this regard, balancing effective enforcement with the protection of the data of individuals involved is a fine line to strike.

Coherent Regulations

A core responsibility of the International Board of ELSA as the supreme executive authority of the associations is to ensure that its regulations are in compliance with all applicable law, while making every effort to consolidate the very same regulations, to the effect that they are neither burdensome nor overly restrictive.

Outline of the implementation efforts

A framework of cooperation has been established with the Notary of ELSA, which has led to more effective reviewing of our Statutes. Moreover, effective steps have been taken to stabilise the regulations by consolidating the contents of its Statutes to ensure that only legally required material is included. Furthermore in the course of the past term, ELSA International used for the first time the new power mandated in the 83rd International Council Meeting Malta to make grammatical and structural changes to the Regulations without prior assent of the International Council. This was successful and not objected to by the Network, and thus the current regulations in force were adapted as such. This is a significant step towards the consolidation of our Regulations, and serves as proof that effective change has been implemented in this area. Notably, further efforts have been made when it comes to coherency of regulations, namely by the finalisation of the revised EDF Regulations, which are due to be notarised in the upcoming 2024/2025 term.

Future prospects

It is to be emphasised in the strongest terms that the Statutes of ELSA shall not be further amended or expanded upon, unless such an undertaking is absolutely necessary to ensure compliance with any applicable law. This is a recommendation which follows the advice of the Notary of ELSA and is in line with the final notarisation of the consolidated Statutes over the course of the past 2023/2024 term.

Human Resources

As ELSA evolves into an ever-more professional organisation, the structure of its Human Resources must be put under increased scrutiny. By doing so, we aim to emphasise the development of talent of ELSA Officers, to benefit both themselves and the Association.

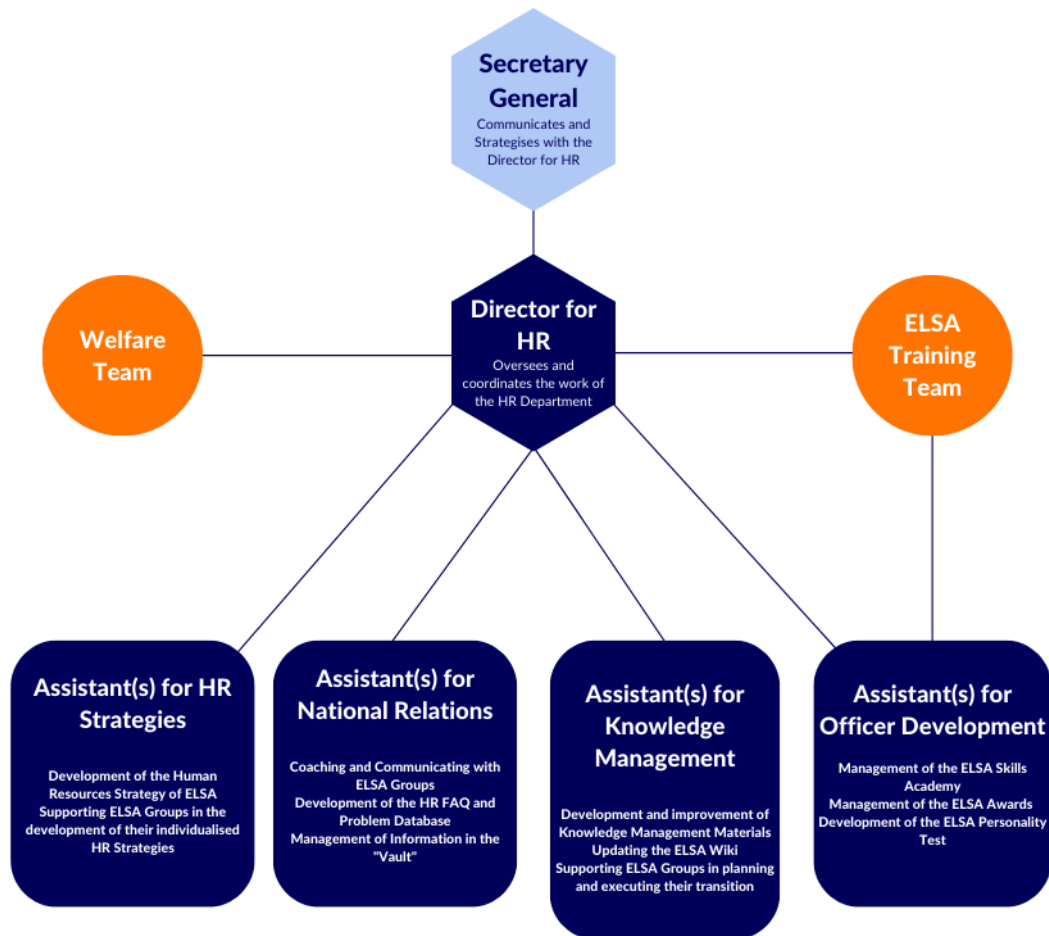
Outline of the implementation efforts

This term saw the creation and publication of a comprehensive [Human Resources Strategy](#) for ELSA International. The aim of the Human Resources Strategy is to align our Human Resources practises with our strategic objectives and to ensure the sustainable management of our Human Resources. The Human Resources Strategy is divided into three main focus areas, which each address a general problem within the organisational and human resources structures of our Association, and will be implemented over the course of three years (2024-2026).

Alongside the Strategy, this year also marks the publication of a new and revised [Human Resources Handbook](#), which among other things includes a guide for National and Local

Groups on how to create their own HR Strategy. This showcases the multiplier effect of the implementation efforts of ELSA International when it comes to this particular Strategic Goal.

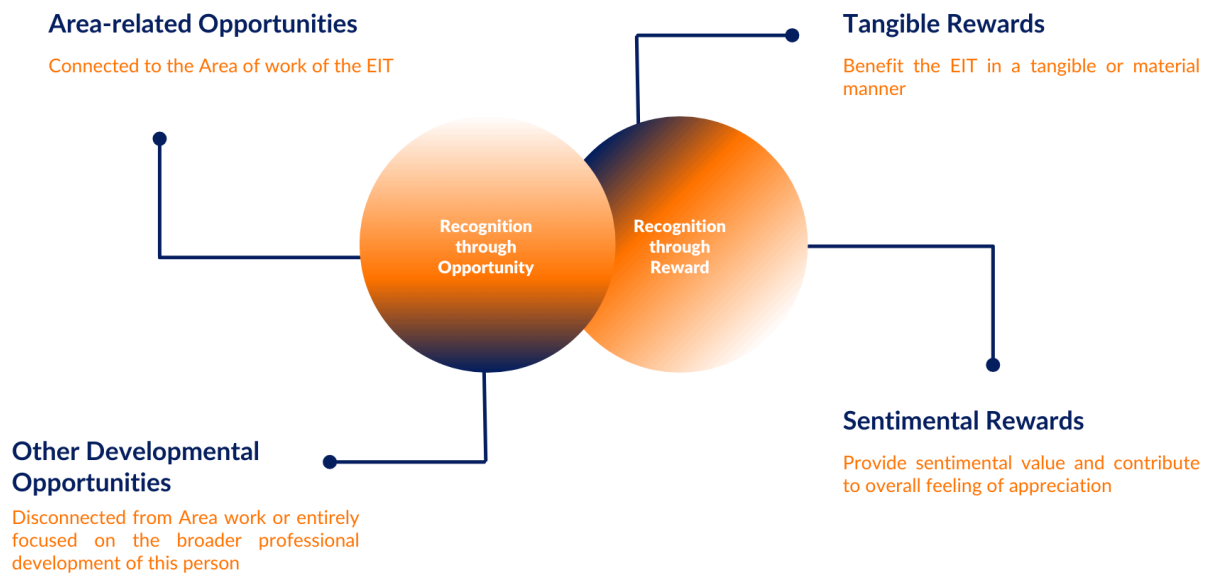
We have also reinforced the existing HR structure created during the past term, ensuring its effectiveness and full utilisation. In that sense, the Human Resources Team is divided in a way that reflects the work, projects and initiatives that it is charged with managing. The following graphic provides an overview of the different tasks which each member of the HR Team is responsible for:



When it comes to recognising ELSA Officers, and in particular the ELSA International Team, the increased emphasis which has been placed on the active role of the EIT Delegation during International Internal Meetings has been invaluable, not least in terms of raising the quality of the meetings and having a broader set of views and knowledge disseminated and communicated to the Network on behalf of ELSA International.

Additionally, the introduction of the Human Resources Newsletter has been instrumental. Namely, the EIT Highlight has been a mainstay of the Newsletter. Through this category, the aim is to provide a closer look at the extraordinary individuals who make up the ELSA International Team. The focus is to share some of the highlights of their EIT journey and showcase the unique possibilities and experiences that ELSA has made possible.

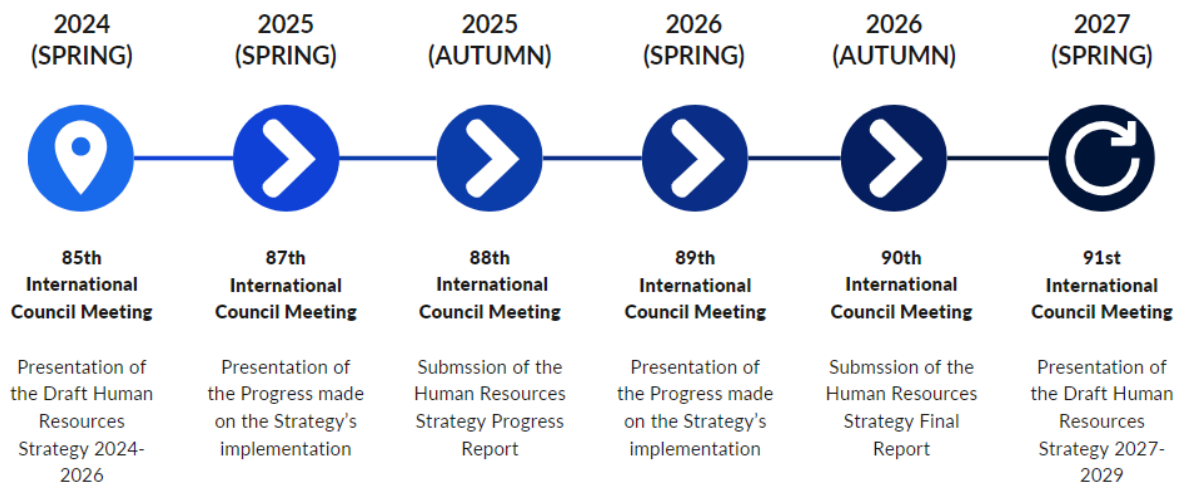
Moreover, to the recognition of the efforts of EIT members, this term saw the drafting and release of an internal EIT Recognition Protocol, a systematic compilation of the different methods which can be employed to recognise the work of the members of the EIT and reward them for their efforts.



In a similar vein, Officer Development projects have expanded. For example an emphasis was placed on the expansion of the ELSA Awards. The outreach of this year's edition has proven the worth of the initiative and the impact it has. Furthermore, promotion of ELSA Training has been maximised, particularly when it comes to the modes of visibility given to the project. Apart from social media visibility, practical visibility through involvement was also utilised. For example, the ELSA International Delegations to each of the International Council Meetings received training by members of the International Trainers' Pool. Namely, a Training on facilitation skills prior to the 84th International Council Meeting Tbilisi, and a Training on teamwork prior to the 85th International Council Meeting Thessaloniki. Lastly in this regard, a Personal Branding Training has been made available for all ELSA Delegates throughout the six calls for ELSA Delegations, which took place this year.

Future prospects

Firstly, it is to be recommended that the Implementation Handbook be deviated from in one particular aspect. Namely, the Handbook recommends the establishment of a Human Resources Working Group to effectively manage and oversee the implementation of this subgoal. The Human Resources Team has proven more than capable of overseeing the clear and effective implementation of the Strategic Goal, and as such the establishment of the aforementioned Working Group is deemed counterproductive under current circumstances. Secondly, it is to be recommended that the Human Resources Strategy is diligently implemented, bearing in mind that the strategy was adopted during the 2023/2024 term and therefore has a separate implementation cycle from the Strategic Plan, namely 2024-2026.



Thirdly, in a similar vein, it is further to be recommended that a Training Strategy is drafted and adopted despite this not being addressed in the Strategic Plan 2023-2028, as it is an outstanding point from the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 which was not implemented, but remains highly relevant to achieving the current Strategic Goal of utilising ELSA Training for the development of ELSA Officers. Efforts in connection to this goal have already been initialised in the 2023/2024 term, but will nevertheless remain in draft format until the end of the term. Lastly, it is to be recommended that the Advisory Body of ELSA is expanded to include former Officers, not only with a view to their backgrounds in ELSA, but also emphasising a broad variety of professional experience which ELSA may benefit from when soliciting their guidance.

Quality of International Internal Meetings

The International Internal Meetings (IIMs) of ELSA serve as the forum of discussion, deliberation and decision making regarding important issues that affect the Association as a whole. As such their value as instruments of democracy can not be overstated. Therefore, it is vital that it is both feasible and attractive for prospective hosts to take on the responsibility of organising IIMs. In this, ELSA International must make every effort to facilitate the process.

Outline of the implementation efforts

As pertains to the International Training Meeting, some progress was made in evaluating its feasibility and effectiveness. Namely, the intermediate reform of shortening it from four to three days was adopted during the 85th International Council Meeting. While this serves to alleviate some of the more immediate issues tied to the meeting, it is to be emphasised that this is not a long term solution. Network wide discussions have been initiated regarding the long term efforts to reform the ITM into an International Training Month. This is to be regarded as the most sustainable solution identified as of now when it comes to the sustainability of the concept.

As pertains to the International Council Meetings, a number of efforts were made to explore potential partnerships with hotels and congress hosts. However, this initiative has broadly been deemed unfeasible for the time being due to budgetary constraints. Furthermore, multiple mechanisms were implemented over the past term in order to enhance the experience of IIM hosts. These included the introduction of evaluation forms to ascertain a concrete appraisal of their experience, issues encountered, and points of particular success. In the same vein, exit calls were held with IIM hosts after the conclusion of each meeting in the aim of gathering further

feedback and deriving recommendations as to how to improve future editions. As a further point on improving the hosting experience, and in order to promote hosting as a more attractive prospect to Members of ELSA, a comprehensive hosting package was created, consisting of an application template, a recording of an informational session on hosting, a Quality Standards Outline, a budget template, and an overarching Privacy Policy. These materials are put forth in the aim of ensuring that all Members of ELSA have equal footing when it comes to hosting prospects, regardless of prior experience in that regard. In the same vein, template marketing materials have been developed for National Groups to facilitate the opening of applications for ICM Delegations. Moreover, ELSA International has commenced the drafting of a comprehensive Handbook on the hosting of IIMs, aimed at providing detailed guidance and an outline of best practices for future hosts. Lastly in this regard, the 2023/2024 term saw the re-establishment of the ICM Mentorship Programme initiated in 2021/2022, where former hosts are matched with appointed Groups, either on the basis of a common geographical region, or other particularly relevant criteria.

As pertains to the International Strategy Meeting, great strides have been made during the term, particularly with regard to its effectiveness. As the structure and content of the ISM are largely unregulated, past editions have varied when it comes to concrete output and purposefulness. The IV ISM Brno saw the introduction of a rotating workshop system, wherein all participants were afforded the same opportunity to engage in each workshop as delivered by the same Officers of ELSA International, under the same pretenses. Moreover, the topics of discussion were decided upon in a narrow and structured manner to ensure that the perceived outcome could be reached, namely by ascertaining the opinions of the Network in a more specific way. This proved an unmitigated success and the recommendations from the ISM informed the decision-making of the International Board throughout the remainder of the term.

Future prospects

A caveat that bears addressing is that not all efforts at implementation of this Strategic Goal have been in line with the Implementation Handbook, but rather addressing pressing issues and important topics identified throughout the year as being in need of particular attention. It is to be recommended that the foundations which have been laid in this regard be utilised where possible to further implement the Strategic Goal in line with the guidance provided by the Handbook, while maintaining a vigilant outlook towards challenges and threats that may present themselves.

Public Relations

In an ever more connected world, where information is constantly made available and the image of organisations such as ours is largely tied to their Public Relations efforts, it is instrumental that we place a high emphasis on development in the field.

Outline of the implementation efforts

Open calls were held on the subject, as well as two dedicated workshops in each of the International Council Meetings of the term to educate ELSA Officers about Public Relations. In the same vein, Individual calls have been delivered upon request to explain the approach of ELSA International and best practices in PR in general. In terms of involvement of the media, no concentrated efforts have been made. Primarily the involvement of the media was relevant to the promotion of certain Regional Rounds of the John H. Jackson Moot Court Competition (JHJMCC), where local and national media outlets took interest in the Competition and covered

it. Lastly, the hosts of International Internal Meetings have received support and guidance on the topic of Public Relations upon request in such instances that it was required.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that further effort be made in creating and implementing Public Relations Strategies across the Network, emphasising the work done this year. Moreover, it is to be emphasised that continued research is done as pertains to the incorporation of traditional media in our Public Relations.

Strategic Goal 3 - Direction

The sections in this Goal represent the three pillars that founded ELSA: Advocacy, Human Rights, and Legal Education. The aim of this Goal is for us to go back to our roots and again find that focus that gives us strength and meaning. When it comes to the implementation of this Strategic Goal, a great deal of work has been done, but due to the specific and task-oriented nature of many of the subgoals, the effects may not be seen as directly achieving the goals, but rather serving as groundwork which makes further advancement of the Strategic Goals in question possible.

Advocacy

Advocacy has long been a divisive topic in ELSA, but throughout the years the Association has always strived to speak out on matters of legal and societal importance. The Strategic Goal outlines concrete and specific points of action to be taken. It is to be addressed that only one of those objectives was partially realised this year, the need to lay further foundations was identified as a higher priority, especially in light of the fact that Advocacy was not regulated under the Decision Book, and no concerted effort had been made in the immediate previous terms to gauge the opinion of the Network or build consensus on the limitations of Advocacy in ELSA.

Outline of the implementation efforts

During the term, several significant efforts were made. First amongst these was the release of the Advocacy Questionnaire, which served as a tool to gain understanding of the Network's stance on Advocacy, their engagement with the topic, and where ELSA International can better provide support. The responses to the questionnaire served as a base for the ICM Decision Book proposal on Advocacy which was adopted at the 85th ICM Thessaloniki, as well as the draft Advocacy Guideline. This new regulatory basis for Advocacy in ELSA poses an obligation to the International Board of ELSA to provide the Network with various materials to aid them in their Advocacy engagement. Whereas no Advocacy Strategy was drafted, and no systematic approach for defining focus points for Advocacy was set in place, it was deemed more relevant to establish a regulatory framework, in order to introduce more stability and certainty on the topic. In conclusion, a notable effort towards utilising the Advocacy potential in existing projects. Chief amongst these efforts was the introduction of a thematic Human Rights Day during the 2024 Career Launch, where Human Rights organisations were at the forefront, presenting their work alongside usual career opportunities. On a more general note, the International Board of ELSA decided to prioritise Advocacy, as is reflected in its One Year Operational Plan. This reflected our collective commitment to bringing ELSA back to its prior status as an Advocating Human Rights Association, and thus every effort was made to set an example and provide guidance to the Network in order for the Members of ELSA to confidently engage in Advocacy themselves. This will further be elaborated on with respect to the Strategic Goal on Human Rights.

Future prospects

Now that there are two complementing sets of obligations in place regarding Advocacy, namely the strategic approach as defined in the Strategic Goals, and the one pertaining to the creation, regular revision and dissemination of Knowledge Management materials, it is to be recommended that both instruments are observed equally, and that further exploration of potential synergies between the two is attempted, e.g. with regard to creating ad-hoc guidelines to compliment specific short-term topics as they are identified under the systematic approach stipulated in the Strategic Goal.

Human Rights

One of the many faces of ELSA is the one of a Human Rights organisation. As such we must continuously focus on our commitment to speaking out on Human Rights and raising awareness of them among the Network by strengthening our instruments such as the Annual Human Rights Campaign, and establishing meaningful collaborations with relevant externals.

Outline of the implementation efforts

As pertains to the revision of the Annual Human Rights Campaign, significant strides were made throughout the year. With a critical eye, the Human Rights Team set out to identify the potential areas of reform and expansion, resulting in a more engaging and effective AHRC. This year saw the introduction of a coordinated Social Media campaign, which emphasised among other things international days and thematic ties with the topic of the AHRC - Corruption and Human Rights. According to the definition of the United Nations, international days are occasions to educate the general public on issues of concern, to mobilise political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity. These posts were well received and widely engaged with. Moreover, ELSA International in collaboration with the Council of Europe and GRECO, held a Webinar titled “Whistleblower Protection: The Key to a Just World”. The Webinar took place on December 9th, International Anti-Corruption Day, and was a highlight of the Campaign. In regard to direct structural reform of the Campaign, the first notable aspect is regarding the supporting materials, which were relayed to the Network every four months instead of on a monthly basis. This decision was based on general sentiment expressed by the National Groups, as the previous model made it hard for National Groups to adequately plan and implement the materials they were provided with. This effectively emphasised the consolidation of materials in order to ensure the quality of the Campaign and made it more accessible and comprehensible to National Groups. The second notable aspect was the increased emphasis on engaging National Coordinators of the AHRC. The role of National Coordinators existed prior to the term, but was not utilised to the fullest extent. During the term, the Human Rights Team made enormous efforts at reaching out to National Coordinators, invigilating them through encouragement and guidance. Moreover, the Team reached out to National Groups to encourage them to participate in the Campaign. The third and final aspect is the publication of the first AHRC Annual Report. The report outlines the progress of the Campaign throughout the year, along with highlights and conclusions. Those interested in reading about the many successes of this year's edition can find the report [here](#).

As pertains to the creation of Guidelines for Human Rights that apply to all Key Areas, the drafting process was not initiated during this term. However, a step towards achieving this Strategic Goal was the comprehensive revision of the Human Rights Handbook, which serves as a guiding light for all those members of ELSA that wish to fulfil our vision by promoting Human Rights, irrespective of their position in the Association.

As pertains to raising awareness of Human Rights amongst the Network, a highlight of this year were the various Social Media posts on the topic. These are inadvertently tied to the AHRC and our Advocacy efforts respectively. In this sense ELSA International published several posts on Social Media highlighting Humanitarian Crises, in the aim of promoting the protection of Human Rights. By doing so, an example was set for the Network on how to effectively speak out on Human Rights.

As pertains to establishing collaborations with Human Rights organisations, there is one notable success to report, namely the ongoing discussions with UNESCO. A representative of the

Agency held the Keynote Speech of the Annual Reception of ELSA on the topic of Freedom of Expression to counter corruption and promote other Human Rights. This collaboration remains promising, and ongoing efforts will be upheld when it comes to developing it further.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that continued emphasis is placed on the use of online platforms in the promotion of the AHRC, as the coordinated campaign this year proved most impactful. In terms of the Campaign, it is further to be recommended that continued coordination and cooperation between Groups is increasingly fostered by ELSA International. Lastly, it is to be recommended that more tangible rewards are introduced for National Groups engaging with the Campaign.

5.3. Legal Education

Legal Education has been at the heart of ELSA since the founding. It is therefore vital to bring to to the forefront of our operations once again, ensuring that stagnation does not set in so the projects may remain relevant and interesting. A central element of these efforts is strengthening Legal Writing as an aspect of Legal Education.

Outline of the implementation efforts

This goal saw real progress over the term insofar as Legal Writing is concerned, namely with the continuation of the International Legal Research Group on Law and Sustainability started within the previous term and conducted in collaboration with Wuppertal Institute. The ILRG will be published on the platform of Wuppertal, and is a mark of revitalisation of our Legal Writing projects after years of challenges in that field.

Future prospects

It is to be recommended that further efforts will be made when it comes to approaching externals that may collaborate with ELSA in a similar way as the Wuppertal Institute, providing technical and academic support. Moreover, it is to be recommended that a strategic approach will be employed when it comes to diversification of topics, particularly as relates to making them relevant to the professional prospects of the ELSA members which engage with them.

Strategic Goals Implementation Handbook

As previously addressed, the past term saw the conclusion of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028. As such, a major effort was made in the drafting of the [Implementation Handbook](#). The Handbook serves as a guiding light in the implementation of the Strategic Goals, but also provides elaboration on the specific Goals. This document is of exceptional quality, and will be instrumental in the implementation of the Strategic Goals over the subsequent years.

Strategic Planning Cycle (ISM)

A new structure was introduced to the Implementation of the Strategic Goals by adopting the Strategic Planning Cycle. The SPC regulates the content of the International Strategy Meetings that fall within the five year term in force of each Strategic Plan. By doing so, the purpose of each ISM is also made clear, as the perceived outcome is known at the outset.



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