

What is ELSA?

General Presentation - Lesson 2
BEE Tutorials

elsa

The European Law Students' Association

Structure

ELSA is:

- An Association;
- A Network;
- An NGO.

Composed of:

- Law students;
- Young Lawyers.

Stats:

- 43 Countries (check them [here](#));
- More than 400 law faculties;
- More than 60.000 individual members.

We are divided in:

- Local Groups: law-faculty based and the ones closest to our members;
- National Groups: national representatives of ELSA that coordinate the Local Groups and serve as a bridge to the international Network;
- ELSA International: the international structure of ELSA that joins together all National Groups of ELSA. The supreme executive body is the International Board of ELSA with its office in Brussels.

Goals

ELSA has a Philosophy Statement that guides what we do:

Vision - A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity.

Purpose - To contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers.

Means:

- To provide opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific co-operation;
- To assist law students and young lawyers to be internationally minded and professionally skilled;
- To encourage law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

Fields of Activities

The Philosophy Statement being ELSA's reason to exist, we have the following fields of activity in order to make it come to life:

- Academic Activities (AA), involving the development of legal knowledge through guided practical activities;
- Competitions (C), simulating the practice of law to develop the necessary skills and to complement theoretical knowledge;
- Seminars and Conferences (S&C), involving the acquisition of knowledge through exposure to professionals and foreign cultures;
- Professional Development (PD), supporting law students and young lawyers in developing and improving the necessary skills to access the professional world and providing them with opportunities to advance in their career path.

Areas

With that Philosophy Statement and with those fields of activities, our Boards are structured in a similar way. With that in mind we have:

Key Areas - Focused on the practical implementation of the fields of activities:

- 1) Vice President in charge of Academic Activities;
- 2) Vice President in charge of Competitions;
- 3) Vice President in charge of Professional Development;
- 4) Vice President in charge of Seminars & Conferences

On the other hand, the Key Areas need support in order to ensure their projects come to fruition. That is why we have:

Supporting Areas - Focused on providing assistance to all other Areas and for ensuring the sustainable functioning of the Group:

- 1) President;
- 2) Secretary General;
- 3) Treasurer;
- 4) Vice President in charge of Marketing

Even if this is the standards structure, some Groups have adopted slight deviations.

Areas

Those being the eight Areas in a Board, here is generally what they are in charge of:

President - Board Management, External Relations, Expansion

Secretary General - Administration, internal meetings and regulations, GDPR, Training, Human Resources

Treasurer - Accounting, budgeting, grant applications

Vice President in charge of Marketing - Graphic design, social media, corporate identity, brand development

Vice President in charge of Academic Activities - Legal Writing, Social Responsibility

Vice President in charge of Competitions - Competitions

Vice President in charge of Professional Development - ELSA Traineeships, career development projects

Vice President in charge of Seminars & Conferences - Passive learning activities (ex. ELSA Law Schools, ELSA Delegations, International Conferences of ELSA, ELSA Webinar Academies)

Means of Communication

To manage an European-wide network, we have created multiple internal channels of communication. With that in mind, it is important for you and your board to be aware of:

- Mailing Lists: each Area has their own mailing list, where official information is provided either by the International Board or the National Groups. If you or any of your Board Members are not included, contact the International Board of ELSA.
- [Officers' Portal](#): this is our main Knowledge Management tool. Here you will find information regarding every Area to help every Officer, from the Freshers to the most experienced ones.
- [ELSA Wiki](#): Here you can find easy and user-friendly information about ELSA. If you need any trivia or you are in need to have quick information about ELSA, the ELSA wiki is the place to go

International Internal Meetings

Besides the everyday contact we have with each other through the tools mentioned in the previous slide, in ELSA we organise International Internal Meetings in order to discuss the important topics of our Network.

These join representatives (locals and nationals) from all over the Network, being:

- International Training Meeting (ITM) - Happening between August and September, this Meeting is focused on training freshers to develop their tasks
- International Strategy Meeting (ISM) - Happening around February, this meeting is focused on discussing the problems that we need to fix in ELSA, on a medium to long term basis, as well as defining a strategy to tackle them;
- International Council Meeting (ICM) - Happening twice a term, these are the decision-making meetings of ELSA, where the Council takes the decisions that shape our Association

National Meetings

If this is the situation on the international level, do not forget that within your national network you may also have your own internal meetings.

Normally, the meeting that every National Group has is the National Council Meeting (NCM), that resembles the ICM.

Besides the NCMs, some National Groups also have National Officers' Meetings (NOMs), Freshers' Weekends, their national versions of ITM and ISM, and so on.

If you are a Local and you wish to participate in any of these, contact your National Board to get more info!

The logo for the European Law Students' Association (elsa) features the word "elsa" in a white, lowercase, serif font. The letters are closely spaced, with the "e" and "l" being particularly prominent.

The European Law Students' Association

History

4th of May 1981 - ELSA was founded by students from:

- West Germany;
- Poland;
- Austria;
- Hungary.

Their purpose was to create an Association that would allow for cultural exchanges in a period where Europe was divided by the iron curtain.

With this goal, the first International Board of ELSA was established, with a simplified structure (Chairmen and Vice Chairmen).

From that moment on, ELSA expanded. Firstly, towards the scandinavian countries, and then to Western Europe, ELSA grew to become the Association we now know.

History

1983 - Our oldest project (STEP, now ELSA Traineeship) starts.

In 1984, ELSA is able to provide the first traineeship and from then on the programme grew all over the network and the world.

1984 - ELSA organised its first seminar in Vienna, with the title “Internationale Konfliktlösungsmechanismen” (Mechanisms for Solving International Conflicts).

1989 - Our printed publications come to life, with Synergy and the ELSA Law Review.

Up until 2019, Synergy was a physical magazine distributed all over the Network. From then to 2021, it was an online magazine which was changed into a blog.

The ELSA Law Review, through constant periods of disappearing and resurfacing, is currently our legal writing Flagship project.

History

1991 - The process for the International Board to get a permanent base starts.

The IB decided to move to Brussels, but only in 1995 did we finally move to the ELSA House we all know in 239 Boulevard Général Jacques.

1992 - The Philosophy Statement is adopted on the 12th of October, 1992, remaining unchanged for 30 years.

1994 - ELSA got involved with the work of the United Nations, where 6 ELSA delegates got invited to participate in the Preparatory Meeting for the World Summit for Social Development in New York. This later led to establishing a cooperation with the UNHCR and UNESCO.

1997 - ELSA was granted Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC and UNCITRAL.

1999 - ELSA attended the Conference for the establishment of the ICC.

2000 - ELSA received Consultative Status with the Council of Europe.

History

1995 - The International Focus Programme was created, to raise awareness on a specific theme over a fixed period of time.

2000 - The International Trainers' Pool was created to deliver trainings to the entire Network

Around 2000 ELSA Summer Schools started being organised by Local Groups who would invite members from other countries.

In 2015, these Schools were unified into Summer ELSA Law Schools (SELS) and later a new cycle was included: the Winter ELSA Law Schools (WELS).

In 2002, ELSA ventured into a new sort of projects: moot courts. With it, the ELSA Moot Court Competition (known as the John H. Jackson Competition since 2019) was created in cooperation with the WTO. By 2011, it was already the biggest project of ELSA.

In 2012, a new moot court was added: The European Human Rights Moot Court Competition, organised in cooperation with the Council of Europe. In 2020, it was also renamed to the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition.

History

2008 - ELSA establishes a formal partnership with the Council of Europe, that lasts until today.

2012 - A new board position was created: the Vice President in charge of Moot Court Competitions

Initially responsible for coordinating both moot courts, this position was recently changed into Vice President in charge of Competitions, being responsible for all Academic Competitions.

2013 - The ELSA Day was created in order for the Network to, during the same day, raise awareness on a specific topic related to human rights, with the motto “All different, all together”.

Now, 2023 awaits us and new accomplishments are there waiting for us!

Lesson 2 done!

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