BEE TOOLKIT

EXTERNAL RELATIONS MANUAL

The European Law Students' Association

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External Relations Manual

FOREWORD

Dear BEE Officers,

This document is intended to help you in your pursuit to find steady and mutually beneficial partnerships. Both contacting and cooperating with a professional party can seem daunting but remember that you are a representative of a large international association that engages with law students and young lawyers all around Europe and offers academic and personal development opportunities.

Obtaining and maintaining partnerships is a constant cycle of focused efforts and communication, and there is no set answer for how to do it successfully.

Good luck!

Yours sincerely,

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I. Introduction

In this document ELSA International has created a guide you can follow from start to finish, to get you started in finding your own path as an external relations officer. You are free to deviate from it so that you find your own strategy and tactics. Always remember that creating a strategy with concrete steps is a success setter. Try to keep the following in mind and you're set for success: after the negotiations have been concluded the external should, regardless of whether the approach ended in a partnership or not, be left with the impression that ELSA is a professional association with External Relations Officers that are attentive to the needs of its partners.

II. Before the approach

1.1. Deciding who you want to approach

When evaluating whether you need more partners, the first step is to consider why exactly you would need one. A partner can offer various things and before finding who to approach you should be clear on what you expect/want from a potential partner.

Examples of what a partner can provide you:

- Money;
- Academic support;
- Publicity;
- Credibility;
- Knowledge / experience sharing;
- Advocacy.

There are many types of sponsorship that you can suggest to a potential partner; for instance, an educational partnership, project partnership, IFP partnership, advocacy partnership etc. The contents of the partnership, what you receive and what you provide, should reflect what the needs of you and your partner are.

1.2. Defining contacts in two big categories

When you have decided on what kind of partnership you want, you should start researching who to approach. Only your imagination sets the boundaries in your research for potential partners. Try to think outside the box. Map out what your ELSA group can offer a potential partner and then find partners that could benefit from what you have to offer. One could separate the types of externals to approach in two big categories:

1.2.1. Corporate contacts

- ✓ Law firms;
- ✓ Consultancy companies;
- ✓ Auditing companies;
- ✓ Other companies;
- ✓ Hotel / hostel chains;
- ✓ Airline companies;
- ✓ Software companies;
- ✓ Publication Houses;
- ✓ For-profit associations;
- ✓ Universities (colleges).

1.2.2. Institutional contacts

- ✓ State owned companies;
- ✓ Departments of state/ municipalities;
- ✓ Universities;
- ✓ Organisations;
- ✓ Foundations;
- ✓ NGOs;
- ✓ Other associations;
- ✓ Student associations at your faculty;
- ✓ Student associations that cater to other fields of study;
- ✓ Associations for legal professionals;
- ✓ Associations whose focus areas coincide with the focus areas of ELSA (i.e. fintech, legal tech etc.).

1.3. Searching for a specific partner

1.3.1. Finding the external online

Before approaching a potential partner, research them online. Their website and LinkedIn are recommended platforms to conduct your research. In general, your research can start with the following steps/platforms:

- ✓ Google;
- ✓ LinkedIn;
- ✓ The news (electronic and printed media);
- ✓ Talk to existing partners;
- ✓ Talk to your board;
- ✓ Talk to the other external relations officers in the network;
- ✓ Look through your groups archive of previous partners;
- ✓ Fairs and other networking events;
- ✓ Approach alumni.

1.3.2 Finding the right person to contact

When contacting a potential partner, you need to know which individual will most likely be able to help you. Relevant areas in a firm to look for a contact person could be HR, management, or the specific field of law you have a project on. When you have found the person you believe is the best to contact, it can be advised to check with the reception whether said person can indeed answer your questions or has the authority to initiate a negotiation.

III. The approach

1.1. How do you approach a partner for a meeting?

When you have found a partner you wish to contact, you should decide on how to approach them. If you are already acquainted with the potential partner through personal or professional connections, you must assess what would be the best way to take that contact further. The following will be aimed at contacting a partner with whom you have no current relations. Four types of "first communication" are presented. It is up to you to consider which one better suits your needs.

1.1.1. LinkedIn

- When do you contact someone on LinkedIn?
    - In many countries, LinkedIn is the form of contact that most frequently yields results. After having researched who to contact, you add said person to your network on LinkedIn and write them a message.

- The pros of using LinkedIn:
    - The contact is more personal.
    - It is an easy way to make first contact.

- The cons of using LinkedIn:
    - The contact might not be highly active on LinkedIn and therefore not see it.
    - Some people might prefer the official way via phone call or email.

- First Communications Tool

1.1.2. E-mail

- When do you contact someone through e-mail?
    - If you have reason to believe a formal approach by e-mail will be the most successful.
    - If you could not find a contact person and must send your request to the general company e-mail.
    - To follow up after a first approach through other forms of communication.

- The pros of sending an e-mail:
    - You have time to specify and phrase what you wish to say.
    - You can include a lot of information.

- The cons of sending an email:
    - You risk sending too much information and consequently overwhelm the partner, resulting in them ignoring the email.
    - An email is easy to ignore or forget.

- **Email tips and tricks**
- **First Communications Tool**

1.1.3. Phone

- When do you contact someone through a phone call?
    - To initiate a first contact / alert them to the fact you are going to send them an email.
    - If the potential partner has not answered to your email or another approach.

- The pros of calling:
    - You achieve quick and direct contact.
    - You can convey a lot in a short time.
    - If you are good with people you can show charm and personality, which is harder to convey in an email.

- You can be more flexible in your pitch and react to your counterparts.

- The cons of calling:
  - You must plan what you are going to say. You have a little time to convey your message and it must be structured.
  - It can be perceived as intrusive.

- **Telephone Tips and Tricks**

1.1.4. Networking events

Another great opportunity to meet and connect with potential supporters are networking events. Covid-19 has reminded us strongly their value and importance. Networking might not be the easiest thing for every one of us. However, there are concrete ways in which one can achieve a lot through networking events. Some tips and tricks are:

- Always have some business cards with you;
- Avoid losing your attention on your phone;
- Know the topic of the event you are attending;
- Search the attendees of the event in advance (if a list exists);
- Focus on already existing acquaintances and try to get introduced to their connections;
- Be attentive on the participants placards, so that you know which organisation/company they are working for;
- Do not hesitate to start conversations and greet people that might be interesting to connect with.

IV. Before the Meeting

1.1. Do further research into the potential partner

Make sure you have the latest information on the potential partner and maybe some general information on the person you will be meeting with. Doing some quick reading on some of their latest projects and prominent cases might be useful both to see where cooperation with ELSA might be possible but also for small talk.

Understand who you are speaking with. For example, a representative who is a legal professional might be more interested in the academic content of the cooperation while an HR employee might be more interested in the recruiting possibilities the cooperation may offer.

1.2. Prepare a concept note

If you have not already done so upon initiating contact, send over your concept note so that the partner can read up on ELSA and what you have to offer. The concept note should be short and concise with only the most essential information that is needed to become acquainted with ELSA, the respective ELSA Group and a possible partnership

i. In the concept note you should have

- ELSA related information
  - Membership (number of members, age, gender, how many countries if international)
  - Social media infographics (Instagram, Facebook, Website) – ELSA Website analytics;
  - Projects – Publications that are interesting to the external you are approaching;
- The reason you have approached the respective external for cooperation:
  - Field of work;
  - Expertise;
  - Type of cooperation
- Your proposal
  - If the proposal explain the non-profit nature of ELSA and the importance of the funds in order to support the sustainability of a project or the association. Additionally, you should explain the form of partnership that the respective amount will give to the partner (also called as a partnership package).

1.3. Lay a strategy for the meeting

i. Decide if you will be attending the meeting alone or with another ELSA Officer.

- Pros of going alone – if you do not have the time to plan a strategy with another person, going alone will minimize the risk of a messy presentation
- Pros of going with another ELSA Officers
  - Negotiations are usually easier in pairs of two as you can divide roles, e.g. one can take notes and consider the reactions of the partner while the other can do most of the talking
  - If the potential partner is a project partner, it is always a good idea to bring the VP/Director responsible for the project. A natural way to divide the talking will be for the president to present the association as a whole and for the VP/Director to present the more project specific information
- If you are going with one or more members of your board, always agree on a strategy beforehand. It does not need to be complicated, just enough for the partner to perceive you as organised.

ii. Check the contact person you are meeting online, preferably on their personal LinkedIn, or on the website of their organisation. Knowing some facts of the person you are meeting is going to help you make them feel more comfortable around you.

iii. Prepare your pitch in a paper or laptop and practise your words and presentation for some time;

V. The meeting

1.1. The time

- Keep it short and simple. A successful meeting should not last more than 45 minutes.

- Time your presentation and be prepared to be interrupted.

1.2. The attitude

- Always remember; politeness is free of charge and wins people.
- First impressions last – be friendly and professional.
- Small talk and introductions – Introduce yourself and your position. If possible, try to create a relaxed atmosphere with small talk. Some brief personal words may help build a relation between you and your counterpart.
- Remember you are equals exploring the possibilities of a cooperation. Do not wait for you counterpart to take the word and lead the meeting. Be confident and take initiative.

1.3. The tools

- Bring a printed version of a media card or an ELSA booklet to present to the external.
- You can use a power point presentation if you have prepared one. Keep in mind, that your counterpart most likely does not know ELSA so try to explain it in easy and short terms.

1.3. The structure

- There are three pillars you need to always focus on:

    - The introduction of ELSA and its strengths;
    - The reason you have approached the specific firm;
    - The exact request you have (monetary, academic, or another type of support).

1.4. The closing

- Always give the opportunity to the external to ask you questions and try to understand ELSA and your proposal better.
- Try to wrap-up the meeting with the proposal of a follow-up, where you will recap what has been discussed and the proposal you have made.

VI. After the meeting

1.1. The follow-up

- Prepare or finalise the concept note of your proposal to the external and share it with them so that they can decide on their support.
- Please try to follow-up the latest **during the next five working days**, so that you do not lose their attention. A follow-up within **two days** would be ideal.
- Do not hesitate to remind them in case you do not receive an answer on your first effort.

1.2. In case of negative answer

- Thank the external for the time they have devoted. Please always share with them that you stay at their disposal and you will get back to them in case you organise an interesting project for them.
- Keep in touch on LinkedIn in case new opportunities appear.
- Transition the contact to your successor. A new year can bring new opportunities and your successor needs to be aware of all the connections you have made.

1.3. In case the answer is positive:

- Thank them for their investment (time and possibly money) and express your enthusiasm for the cooperation.
- Proceed with the agreed plan. Either that means promotion and visibility, or cooperation in a project, set from the start specific responsibilities inside your team and introduce the external to key persons of your board.
- **Remember to celebrate!** You have added a valuable partnership to your partnership structure!

VII. Maintaining a partnership

1.1. Concrete ways to keep a partner "happy"

i. Adhere to the partnership agreement/contract and make sure you follow up and do what you committed to.

- Remember to always be honest and transparent.
- Make clear the responsibilities between you and your team members for the maintenance of the partnership (e.g. VP in charge of Marketing, or VPs in charge of projects).

ii. Strive for often updates and communication:

- Offer evaluation reports to your partner (e.g. social media analysis of a marketing campaign, proposals for future cooperation during the academic year). It is important that these evaluation reports are created at least once a year.
- Be honest about both what has gone well and what has not gone well; It is uncomfortable informing a partner that something has gone wrong, but it is vital that you are professional enough to admit when something did not go according to plan. When informing a partner that something has gone wrong, always come prepared with options to remedy the situation.

iii. Include them in ELSA's activities

- Invite them to social events/networking events where it would be natural for a partner to participate
- Include them in your National Council Meetings or General Assemblies. Partners can participate in the social event after the meetings or even be invited to speak or just attend.
- Invite them to participate in academic events (moot courts, conferences, legal writing initiatives, law schools, seminars, conferences, webinars etc.) as active academic experts or as audience; do not forget to invite them to any potential banquette/gala at the end of the event.
- If your board sends season greetings cards send one to each partner.

1.2. Include the partnerships in your transition

i. To maintain a partnership, it is important to transition the partnership to your successor. This includes giving your successor thorough information on the partnership and setting up a meeting to introduce the successor.

ii. It is important that the partner feels a continuity in the relationship and not that they must start from scratch every new term. The purpose of these meetings would be recapping the success and challenges from the past year, and plans for the next academic year.

H. Summary of helpful links

i. **Email Tips and Tricks**
ii. **Telephone Tips and Tricks**
iii. **First Communications Tool**
   - LinkedIn
   - General Email
   - ELSA Law School Email
iv. **Editable Partnership Booklet of ELSA International**
v. **General Sponsorship Editable Packages**
vi. **Project Sponsorship Editable Packages**
vii. **BEE handbook**

Additional helpful information on the projects can be found on the **ELSA Officers Portal** under the respective fields.