



The European Law Students' Association

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Helga Pedersen
Moot Court Competition



RULES

HELGA PEDERSEN
MOOT COURT COMPETITION



14th EDITION | 2025 - 2026

PREFACE

The European Court of Human Rights is an international court based in Strasbourg. It consists of a number of judges equal to the number of member states of the Council of Europe that have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights. Currently, there are forty-six member states. The Court's judges sit in their individual capacity and do not represent any state.

The European Convention on Human Rights is an international treaty, which only member states of the Council of Europe may sign. The Convention, which establishes the Court and regulates how it is to function, contains a list of rights and freedoms which the states have undertaken to respect.

The European Law Students' Association is the world's largest independent, non-profit, non-political association run by and for law students and young lawyers. The ELSA Vision is: "A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity". Contributing to legal education and promoting Human Rights awareness are among the central aims of the association. Through various academically focused projects and events, ELSA provides opportunities for law students and young lawyers to apply theory in practice and to learn about other legal systems.

The Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition is a simulated hearing of the European Court of Human Rights. The competition is Europe-wide and open to all those currently studying in ELSA countries or countries that are members of the Council of Europe. The competition is held in English.

The aims of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition are:

- 1. To encourage law students to develop their legal skills;*
- 2. To develop law students' knowledge and to raise their awareness on human rights; and*
- 3. To contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding human rights.*

We wish the best of luck to all participating teams,

Inês Ribeiro

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Vice President in charge of Competitions

International Board of ELSA 2025/2026

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Definitions

In these Rules:

“Academic Board”	means the body responsible for the high quality of the Competition by advising ELSA International (Rule 1.2.5).
“Applicant”	means the person applying to the court.
“Bench Memorandum”	means a confidential document for exclusive use by the Judges of the Competition, containing an outline of the anticipated principal arguments to be used by the competitors.
“Bench”	means a group of Judges scoring a particular Oral Pleading session.
“Case”	means the fictitious scenario forming the basis of the Competition and involving alleged violations of human rights as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.
“Clarification Questions”	means the inquiries that Teams may submit to seek additional information or clarification about the Case facts.
“Competition”	means the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition.
“ELSA International”	means the International Board of ELSA and the relevant members of the ELSA International Team.

Rules of the 14th Edition of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition

“Final Oral Round”	means the third phase of the Competition, in which the qualifying Teams must present their Oral Pleadings (section 7).
“Judges”	means the human rights experts selected by ELSA International in consultation with the Academic Board (Rule 5.6.1).
“Main Oral Pleadings”	means the principal phase of the Oral Pleadings, where each Team has 35 minutes to present its legal arguments (Rule 5.3)
“Moot”	means the simulated court proceeding where participants present legal arguments on hypothetical cases before judges.
“Oral Pleadings”	means the spoken presentation of legal arguments by the Teams (section 5).
“Plagiarism”	means the dishonest presentation of non-original work or ideas as one's own, regardless of intent (Rule 10.2).
“President”	means the lead Judge of each Bench (Rule 5.6.2).
“Rebuttal”	means the phase in the Oral Pleadings where the Applicant team has 5 minutes to respond to the arguments presented by the Respondent in their Main Oral Pleadings (Rule 5.4).
“Regional Rounds”	means the second phase of the Competition, in which the Teams must present their Oral Pleadings (section 6).

Rules of the 14th Edition of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition

“Respondent”	means the state responding before the Court.
“Rules”	means the current set of regulations governing the Competition.
“Sur-Rebuttal”	means the phase in the Oral Pleadings where the Respondent team has 5 minutes to address the points raised in the Applicant's Rebuttal (Rule 5.4).
“Team”	means the group of participants who compete together as a single unit in the Competition (section 3).
“Team Score”	means the overall score of the Oral Pleadings of a Team.
“Timekeeper”	means the person responsible for monitoring and indicating the elapsed time during the Oral Pleadings.
“Timeline”	means the document that outlines all relevant deadlines and important dates for the competition (Rule 2.3).
“University”	means law schools, law faculties and institutions offering a law degree programme.
“Website”	means the website helgapedersenmoot.elsa.org , maintained by ELSA International for the purposes of the Competition.

Rules of the 14th Edition of the Helga Pedersen Moot Court Competition

“Written Round”	means the first phase of the Competition, in which Teams must submit their Written Submissions (section 4).
“Written Submissions”	means the document that Teams must prepare and submit (Rules 4.2 and 4.3).

1. General Remarks

1.1 Regulations

- 1.1.1 These Rules govern the Competition and shall be published with the launch of each new edition. The Rules may be revised or updated at any time and modifications shall be applicable as soon as they are published on the website. The Vice President in charge of Competitions of the International Board of ELSA has the discretion to interpret the existing Rules, in cooperation with the Academic Board.
- 1.1.2 The Guidelines for Written Submissions, the Guidelines for Oral Pleadings, the Timeline as well as the Appendixes form an integral part of the Rules and thus must be followed.

1.2 Responsible Organs

- 1.2.1 ELSA International is responsible for the organisation of the Competition. The responsibility is exercised by the Vice President in charge of Competitions of the International Board of ELSA.
- 1.2.2 The Vice President in charge of Competitions, acting on behalf of the International Board of ELSA, will be overall responsible for organising the Final Oral Round in cooperation with an International Organising Committee.
- 1.2.3 The International Board of ELSA will be responsible for the decision whether to organise any Regional Round or the Final Oral Round in either person or virtually after consultation with the Academic Board and for the Final Oral Round, the Council of Europe.
- 1.2.4 The Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights offer organisational and academic support to the Competition.
- 1.2.5 The Academic Board is responsible for the high quality of the Competition by advising ELSA International. It is appointed by the International Board of ELSA and is composed of experts with demonstrated experience in the field of human rights. More specifically, its responsibilities include:
 - a) Assisting in the development, revision and interpretation of the Rules, Guidelines for Written Submissions, Guidelines for Oral Pleadings, and the Guidelines for Scoring;

- b) Advising ELSA International on the appointment of the case authors and the Judges;
- c) Reviewing the Case and Bench Memorandum and
- d) Assisting the resolution of disputes and recommending penalties to ELSA International.

1.2.6. The Academic Board may be seized by Teams, Competition organisers, or Judges in matters related to allegations of breach of the Rules or other conduct which may lead, or be perceived to lead, to securing an undue advantage in the Competition. The Academic Board shall hear the parties and, if necessary, the competent Competition officials, members of ELSA International, the Organising Committee, and any other appointed person who ensures the Competition's Rules and procedures are followed correctly and render a summary ruling.

The Academic Board may impose one or more of the following penalties:

- a) Verbal or written warning against the misconducting Team;
- b) Deduction of points from the Team Score of the misconducting Team;
- c) Recommendation to ELSA International that the misconducting Team be disqualified.

1.2.7. In case a member of the Academic Board is involved in a dispute or has a conflict of interest, that member must recuse themselves from the resolution of the matter.

1.3 Structure and Language of the Competition

- 1.3.1 The Competition consists of three phases; the Written Round, the Regional Rounds, and the Final Oral Round.
- 1.3.2 Registration to the Competition consists of the registration form on the Website for the whole Team and paying the registration fee specified in Rule 1.5.1.
- 1.3.3 To be eligible for participation in the further phases of the Competition, Teams are obliged to submit two Written Submissions; one on behalf of the Applicant and one on behalf of the Respondent.
- 1.3.4 Teams having submitted both Written Submissions within the deadline determined by the Timeline shall be eligible to participate in their assigned Regional Round.
- 1.3.5 The qualifying Teams from the Regional Rounds are eligible to participate in the Final Oral Round.

1.3.6 The language of the Competition is English.

1.4 Fees of the Competition

1.4.1 Upon registration, each Team is liable to pay a registration fee of €100 to ELSA International. The registration is not complete until the fee has been paid.

1.4.2 The participation fee for the Regional Round is €100 per Team member and €120 per Team coach and shall be paid to the organisers of the Regional Rounds.

1.4.3 The participation fee for the Final Oral Round is €160 per Team member and €185 per Team coach and shall be paid to ELSA International.

1.4.4 The participation fees in Rules 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 cover the following:

- a) Refreshments, lunches and dinners;
- b) Ceremonies;
- c) Welcome packages.

2. Documents

2.1 Case and Launch

2.1.1 The Competition is based on a fictitious case prepared by the authors each year in cooperation with ELSA International and the Academic Board. The Case concerns alleged violations of human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.

2.1.2 ELSA International is responsible for uploading the Case to the Website when the Competition is launched.

2.1.3 ELSA International is responsible for uploading the following additional documents and materials to the Website when the Competition is launched:

- a) Guidelines for Written Submissions;
- b) Guidelines for Oral Pleadings;
- c) Template for Written Submissions;
- d) Timeline;
- e) Declaration of honour;
- f) Form for Clarification Questions;
- g) Form for submitting the Written Submissions.

2.2 Clarification Questions

- 2.2.1 Teams may submit up to three clarification questions each, prior to the deadline as set out in the Timeline as referred to in Rule 2.3. The questions must be submitted via the relevant form on the Website.
- 2.2.2 The case authors may refuse to answer clarification questions if they are deemed to be unrealistic or irrelevant or dealing with matters which the Teams may reasonably be expected to work out for themselves in the context of the Competition.
- 2.2.3 The answers to the Clarification Questions shall be published on the Website, following the Timeline as referred to in Rule 2.3.

2.3 Timeline

- 2.3.1 ELSA International is responsible for uploading a timeline to the Website when the Competition is launched. The Timeline shall contain all relevant deadlines for the Competition.
- 2.3.2 Any penalties related to deadlines are based on the deadlines specified in the Timeline.

2.4 Intellectual Property

- 2.4.1 All materials developed by ELSA International for the Competition, including but not limited to the Rules, the Guidelines for Written Submissions, the Guidelines for Oral Pleadings, the Scoring Guidelines, the Case and the Written Submissions, shall be the property of ELSA International.
- 2.4.2 Each Team retains the intellectual property rights to their Written Submissions. However, by submitting their Written Submissions to the Competition, each Team grants ELSA International a non-exclusive right to use, reproduce, publish, distribute, and display the Written Submissions for educational, promotional, or any other non-commercial purposes. The Team will be informed if ELSA International makes use of this right. This right shall not restrict the Teams from using their Written Submissions for their own academic, professional, or personal purposes.

3. Teams

3.1 Team Eligibility

- 3.1.1 Any university with a law degree programme located in an ELSA country or a Member State of the Council of Europe is eligible to participate in the Competition. If a university with a law degree programme that is located in a Member State of ELSA or of the Council of Europe has an additional campus located outside the borders of a Member State of ELSA or of the Council of Europe, such a campus is nonetheless allowed to participate in the Competition on behalf of the University.
- 3.1.2 Only one Team per university is allowed to participate. If different independent universities are located in the same city, each may send a separate Team. However, all team members must be from the same university or law faculty. If more than one Team per university or law faculty will register, the university or law faculty shall select the participating Team within five (5) working days after being notified by ELSA. Should the university not wish to do so or fail to inform ELSA International of its selected team within the deadline, the first Team to register from that university shall be eligible to participate. The final decision in such cases will be made by the International Board of ELSA.
- 3.1.3 Under exceptional circumstances, and prior authorisation by the International Board of ELSA and the Academic Board, a national Team might be composed of members from two different universities of the same country.

3.2 Team Member Eligibility

- 3.2.1 Students are eligible to participate in the Competition if they:
- a) Are enrolled in bachelor's, master's or equivalent studies in law at an eligible university at the time of registration;
 - b) Are not and have not been working as a practising lawyer/jurist/judge or been similarly engaged in professional law practice in the field of human rights. Work experience such as internships/traineeships are acceptable, except if they took place at the Council of Europe or the European Court of Human Rights and assisting roles. In case of a dispute, ELSA International shall make the final decision as to the eligibility of the Team member;

- c) Are not involved in the organisation of the current edition of the Competition;
 - d) Have not previously participated in the Final Oral Round of the Competition, except if a Team has previously advanced to the Final Oral Round, but a Team member was prevented from participating because of external difficulties (e.g. force majeure, visa issues, etc.), they may nevertheless participate in the current edition of the Competition; and
 - e) Have not previously acted as a Judge of the Competition.
- 3.2.2 Students being on exchange in another country are eligible to participate as part of their foreign university.

3.3 Team Composition

- 3.3.1 The Team shall consist of 2 to 4 law students.
- 3.3.2 Each Team shall have a Team captain who shall be one of the team members and shall be responsible for general communication with ELSA International.
- 3.3.3 Teams may not change their composition after the registration deadline. Before the deadline for Written Submissions, a Team may request a change to its composition by presenting exceptional circumstances that justify the request. After the deadline for Written Submissions, ELSA International will only consider requests for changes to the Team composition if the continuation of the Teams' participation would otherwise be impossible. ELSA International has the discretion to allow or deny the request.

3.4 Registration and Identification

- 3.4.1 Teams wishing to register for the Competition must complete the registration procedure published on the Website following Rule 1.4.2. The registration must be submitted prior to the deadline for registration as set out in the timeline as referred to in Rule 2.3.
- 3.4.2 Following the registration deadline, ELSA International will issue a team number for the Team and confirm the registration. All further communication must be made with reference to this team number only.
- 3.4.3 During the Pleading, Teams should refer to themselves before the Judges primarily by their designated Team numbers, avoiding disclosing to the Judges (not including

other Teams, coaches, or self-marketing on social media platforms) any details or information regarding their universities or law faculties.

3.4.4 Teams are allowed to announce their participation in the Competition in printed and online media. If they do, they must, however, keep their Team number confidential.

3.4.5 Rules 3.4.3 and 3.4.4 apply as long as the Team is still in the Competition; no such prohibition applies to Teams that have been eliminated.

3.5 Coaches

3.5.1 A team coach may only assist in general discussions concerning the case, linguistic matters and presentational skills. They shall provide no substantive advice on the legal issues arising in the case and should not participate in the preparation of the Written Submissions or the Oral Pleadings.

3.5.2 Each Team may have a maximum of two Team coaches.

3.5.3 Team coaches may not simultaneously hold the position of Team captain.

3.5.4 Teams may not change their coaches after the registration deadline.

3.5.5 The team coaches may attend the Oral Pleadings of their Team, but may not communicate with other Teams, Timekeepers or Judges.

3.5.6 During the Oral Pleadings of their Teams, team coaches may not be seated with or near their Teams, to ensure that there is no direct or immediate interaction or influence.

3.5.7 The Teams and Team coaches may not attend the Oral Pleadings of other Teams.

3.5.8 Rule 3.5.7 does not apply once the Team has been eliminated.

3.6 Exemption

3.6.1 Where exceptional circumstances exist, an exemption from requirements under section 3 of these Rules may be allowed only by the Vice President in charge of Competitions of ELSA upon a reasoned request submitted by Teams via email.

4. Written Round

4.1 Dispatching

- 4.1.1 Teams must submit their Written Submissions via the relevant form on the Website before 23:59 CET on the deadline as set out in the Timeline referred to in Rule 2.3. Written Submissions shall not be considered received if they are submitted via other means than the form on the Website, e.g. via email. Late submissions shall be dealt with in accordance with the penalty system set out in Rule 8.2 and Appendix 2.
- 4.1.2 Each set of Written Submissions must be accompanied by a declaration of honour in a separate document signed by all members of the Team thus verifying that the Written Submission is a product of their own unaided work, team coaches have not participated in their preparation and is not a result of plagiarism.

4.2 Content, Formatting & Penalisation

- 4.2.1 The content and formatting of the Written Submissions must adhere to the requirements specified in the Guidelines for Written Submissions.
- 4.2.2 Any breach of the Rules related to the Written Round will lead to the deduction of points issued by ELSA International in accordance with the penalty system as referred to in Appendix 2.

5. Oral Pleadings

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 The failure to comply with any part of section 5 of these Rules will not lead to disqualification of the Team but shall be taken into account when evaluating the individual and Team performance and attributing scores.
- 5.1.2 In the Oral Pleadings, the case must be referred to as it is titled, i.e. “[Applicant] v [Respondent]”.
- 5.1.3 The order of the Oral Pleadings is:
 - a) Applicant: Team Appearances;
 - b) Respondent: Team Appearances;
 - c) Applicant: Main Oral Pleadings;

- d) Respondent: Main Oral Pleadings;
- e) Applicant: Rebuttal;
- f) Respondent: Sur-Rebuttal.

5.1.4 The scope of the Oral Pleadings of a Team does not depend on the scope of its Written Submissions.

5.2 Team Appearances

5.2.1 Prior to the start of the Oral Pleadings, each Team shall fill in their Team Appearance sheet and submit it to Timekeepers. Upon the start of the Oral Pleadings, one Team member shall introduce all the Team members, the nominated orators and the structure of their Main Oral Pleadings. The Team Appearances shall not exceed three (3) minutes per Team and must match the information as provided on the sheet. In case of discrepancies, the Timekeepers shall ask the Team for clarifications, after seeking the permission of the President of the Bench.

5.2.2 The content of the Team Appearances shall be limited to the points listed in Rule 5.2.1 and must not contain any substantive legal argumentation.

5.3 Main Oral Pleadings

5.3.1 Each Team shall have a total of thirty-five (35) minutes to present its Main Oral Pleadings, including the time needed to address the Judges' questions. This time does not include the three minutes provided for the Team Appearances.

5.3.2 A minimum of two Team members shall present the Main Oral Pleadings. Each orator shall present for a minimum of 7 minutes.

5.3.3 Each Team may request additional time once during their Main Oral Pleading to enable it to complete its submission or to answer the Judges' questions. The President of the Bench has the discretion to grant the request and grant up to an additional five (5) minutes to the Team.

5.3.4 If the Applicant seeks and is granted additional time during its Main Oral Pleadings, that time will also be added automatically to the time allowed to the Respondent for its Main Oral Pleadings.

5.3.5 If the Respondent seeks and is granted additional time during its Main Oral Pleadings, that time will also be added automatically to the time allowed to the Applicant for its Rebuttal.

5.3.6 Additional time may be requested only during the Main Oral Pleadings. Any requests made after the expiry of the allocated time shall not be taken into account.

5.4 Rebuttal and Sur-Rebuttal

5.4.1 Each Team shall be given a total of five (5) minutes to present its Rebuttal or Sur-Rebuttal, including the time needed to answer the Judges' questions.

5.4.2 A Team may not ask for additional time during its Rebuttal or Sur-Rebuttal.

5.4.3 Only the Team member who has been nominated during the Team Appearance shall present the Rebuttal or Sur-Rebuttal and answer the questions of the Bench.

5.4.4 If the allocated time for the Main Oral Pleadings is not utilised fully, the time they will not be added to the time allowed for Rebuttal or Sur-Rebuttal.

5.4.5 The scope of the Rebuttal is limited to the issues raised in the Respondent's Main Oral Pleadings only.

5.4.6 The scope of the Sur-Rebuttal is limited to the issues raised in the Applicant's Rebuttal.

5.5 Timekeepers

5.5.1 Timekeepers will indicate the elapsed time towards Judges and Teams at intervals of five (5) minutes, where there are three (3), two (2) and one (1) minutes left, and when the end of the time allocated is reached.

5.5.2 Each Oral Pleading session must have two timekeepers.

5.6 Judges

5.6.1 The Judges must be human rights experts selected by ELSA International in consultation with the Academic Board. Regional Round Organisers shall also be included in the consultation process for the selection of the Judges of the Regional Rounds. The Judges must not have assisted any Team taking part in the current edition of the Competition.

- 5.6.2 The Judges shall sit in benches. Each Bench shall have a President.
- 5.6.3 The Judges may direct questions to the Teams at any time during the Oral Pleadings, including the Main Oral Pleadings, the Rebuttal and the Surrebuttal. A question of the Bench may only be answered by the speaker to whom it is addressed.
- 5.6.4 The Judges must keep the contents of the Bench Memorandum and the Oral Pleading Scoring Guidelines strictly confidential from the Teams and the coaches throughout the Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round.
- 5.6.5 For Regional Rounds:
- a) The Teams shall be scored by a Bench of three Judges in accordance with the Scoring Guidelines and the Bench Memorandum.
- 5.6.6 For the Final Oral Round:
- a) During the Preliminary Rounds, each Team shall be scored by a Bench consisting of three Judges, in accordance with the Scoring Guidelines and the Bench Memorandum.
 - b) During the Quarter-Finals, each Team shall be scored by a Bench consisting of three to five Judges, in accordance with the Scoring Guidelines and the Bench Memorandum.
 - c) During the Semi-Finals, each Team shall be scored by a Bench consisting of five to seven Judges, in accordance with the Scoring Guidelines and the Bench Memorandum.
 - d) During the Grand Final, each Team shall be scored by a Bench consisting of seven to nine Judges, in accordance with the Oral Pleading Scoring Guidelines and the Bench Memorandum.
 - e) In each round, the size of the Bench shall be the same for all Moots in that round.

5.6.7 In the event that, as a result of unforeseen circumstances or reasons of force majeure, a Bench cannot be composed of an odd number of Judges, the International Board of ELSA has the discretion to let pleadings commence with an even number of Judges. Under no circumstances shall pleadings be considered valid where only one Judge is present.

5.6.8 In the event that the Bench consists of an even number of Judges, the score will be determined based on the average score of the scores of the Judges present.

5.6.9 Judges shall not participate in an Oral Pleading where it is considered they have a conflict of interest. This may mean that a Judge will not be permitted to judge a specific Regional Round or at the Final Oral Round if the Team that gave rise to the conflict is competing.

5.6.10 A “Conflict of Interest” means an affiliation that would, in the eyes of a reasonable observer, create an inference that the affiliated Judge would be unable to be impartial as to the conduct or result of a Regional Round or at the Final Oral Round. Affiliation means a personal or professional relationship between a Judge and a school, coach, or Team member that is participating in the Competition in which the Judge is participating.

5.6.11 A “Conflict of Interest” does not arise solely because:

- a) The Judge has had prior interactions with any of the team’s coaches, including through moot court competitions, professional encounters, or other limited personal or professional contacts;
- b) The Judge is an alumnus or a current/former employee of a participating school, where such affiliation is sufficiently remote from the activities of the Team as to create any reasonable suspicion of partiality;
- c) The Judge is from the same country as the Team that they are scoring.

5.6.12. In any case where a Judge is subject to a Conflict of Interest, in Regional Rounds and in the Final Oral Round, the Judge must immediately recuse themselves from the matter.

5.6.13. Any Conflict of Interest must be raised and communicated to ELSA at the moment it arises. If not raised immediately, the right to appeal on that ground will be lost.

5.7 **Feedback**

5.7.1 The Judges may provide direct feedback to Teams at the conclusion of the Oral Pleading. Such feedback must comply with the following conditions:

- a) it must not concern the substantive aspects of the case or reveal any of the contents of the Bench Memorandum;
- b) it must not reveal individual scores;
- c) it must not reveal the result of the round;
- d) it must not discuss or inquire about the country of origin of the Teams and the institution they represent.

5.8 **Devices**

5.8.1 Teams may use one (1) device for the inquiry of information and research. One (1) additional device may be used for timekeeping.

5.8.2 All electronic devices used by the Teams must be in silent and flight mode.

5.8.3 Coaches may not use any electronic devices during the Oral Pleadings.

6. Regional Rounds

6.1 General

6.1.1 There shall be three Regional Rounds of the Competition organised by Hosting Groups that are appointed by the International Board of ELSA. They shall have a Head of Organisation who shall be responsible for the overall organisation of the Regional Round. ELSA International shall coordinate and assist in the organisation of the Regional Rounds.

6.1.2 Each Team shall be assigned to a Regional Round. After the publication of the allocation to the Regional Rounds, changes are not permissible.

6.1.3 The allocation of Teams to the Regional Rounds is done by ELSA International. The preferences submitted by the Teams will be taken into account; however, allocation to a preferred Regional Round is not guaranteed by ELSA International.

6.2 Structure

6.2.1 In the Regional Rounds, each Team shall plead twice, once on behalf of the Applicant and once on behalf of the Respondent.

6.2.2 The pleading schedule is determined by a random draw at the Opening Ceremony by the Head of the Organising Committee of the respective Regional Round or by ELSA International.

6.2.3 The awards of the Regional Rounds are the following:

- a) The Winner;
- b) The Runner up;
- c) The Best Orator.

6.3 Financial Responsibilities

6.3.1 Teams shall bear all financial costs assessed by ELSA International in the form of the participation fee for the Regional Round under Rule 1.4.5. Accommodation and travel costs to the Regional Round shall not be covered by the participation fee.

- 6.3.2 Upon registration, a Team binds itself to the financial obligations directly related to their assigned Regional Round.

6.4 Qualification to the Final Oral Round

- 6.4.1 The Qualification Score shall be calculated in accordance with Rule 8.1.5.
- 6.4.2 18 Teams shall qualify for the Final Oral Round. ELSA International will determine the number of Teams qualifying from each Regional Round, as follows:
- a) The four highest-scoring Teams from each Regional Round shall automatically proceed to the Final Oral Round.
 - b) After the Teams who qualify automatically are determined, the remaining spots in the Final Oral Round go to the six Teams who scored highest among the Teams in all the Regional Rounds.

7. Final Oral Round

7.1 General

- 7.1.1 The Final Oral Round shall take place in Strasbourg, France.
- 7.1.2 The Preliminary Rounds, Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals shall take place in the Palais de l'Europe of the Council of Europe.
- 7.1.3 The Grand Final shall take place in the European Court of Human Rights.

7.2 Structure

- 7.2.1 The Final Oral Round shall consist of Preliminary Rounds, Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals and a Grand Final.
- 7.2.2 Before each round, Teams representing the Applicant must send a summary of their Main Oral Pleadings to ELSA International for the purposes of disclosure to the Teams representing the Respondent in the respective Moot. This summary must be no more than one A4 page and must be submitted to ELSA International via email no later than the deadline specified by ELSA International. It will be transmitted to the relevant Respondents. Providing the summary later than the specified deadline will lead to penalty points issued by ELSA International in accordance with section 8 of these Rules.

- 7.2.3 The summary shall include clear indications of the alleged violations of the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols, with reference to the relevant Articles and key arguments.
- 7.2.4 In the event that the summary of arguments does not fulfil the above-mentioned requirements, the Applicant team will be asked by ELSA to resubmit an improved summary.
- 7.2.5 Rule 7.2.2 is only applicable to the Final Oral Round of the Competition, not the Regional Rounds.
- 7.2.6 The Preliminary Rounds are composed of 18 separate Oral Pleading sessions. Each Team pleads twice, once as Applicant and once as Respondent. The pleading schedule is determined by a random draw at the Opening Ceremony by the Vice President in charge of Competitions of the International Board of ELSA or, in case of their absence, a person they have authorised.
- 7.2.7 The 8 Teams with the highest scores in the Preliminary Rounds will participate in the Quarter-Finals. The Preliminary Round Score shall be an average of their score as Applicant and as Respondent. Teams shall be scored solely on their Oral Pleadings. The Qualification Scores shall not be taken into consideration unless there is a tie between Teams following the Preliminary Rounds. In this case, the Team with the highest Qualification Score shall proceed to the Quarter-Finals. The Teams shall be assigned as follows:
- a) In Quarter-Final 1, the Team with the highest overall score will plead against the Team with the eighth-highest overall score.
 - b) In Quarter-Final 2, the Team with the second-highest overall score will plead against the Team with the seventh-highest overall score.
 - c) In Quarter-Final 3, the Team with the third-highest overall score will plead against the Team with the sixth-highest overall score.
 - d) In Quarter-Final 4, the Team with the fourth-highest overall score will plead against the Team with the fifth-highest overall score.
- 7.2.8 The winner of each Quarter-Final is the Team with the highest score. The winner of each Quarter Final will qualify for the Semi-Finals. The Teams shall be assigned as follows:
- a) In Semi-Final 1, the winner of Quarter-Final 1 shall plead against the winner of Quarter-Final 4.

- b) In Semi-Final 2, the winner of Quarter-Final 2 shall plead against the winner of Quarter-Final 3.
- 7.2.9 The winner of each Semi-Final is the Team with the highest score. The winner of each Semi-Final will participate in the Grand Final.
- 7.2.10 The winners of the Quarter-Finals, the Semi-Finals and the Grand Final shall be decided by the Bench applying the criteria set out in Rule 8.1.3.
- 7.2.11 If Teams have pleaded against each other in earlier rounds, they shall plead in the opposite roles in the next Oral Pleading Session. Otherwise, the pleading roles shall be determined by a random draw by the Vice President in charge of Competitions of the International Board of ELSA.

7.3 Financial Responsibilities

- 7.3.1 Teams shall bear all financial costs assessed by ELSA International in the form of a participation fee for the Final Oral Round under Rule 1.4.7. Accommodation and travel costs to the Final Oral Round shall not be covered by the participation fee.
- 7.3.2 Upon registration, a Team binds itself to the financial obligations connected with the Final Oral Round, if selected.

8. Scores and Penalties

8.1 Scoring

- 8.1.1 Written Submissions shall be scored on the following grounds, each weighing equally:
 - a) identification of legal issues and relevant legal framework,
 - b) knowledge of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as relevant case-law,
 - c) quality of legal analysis and persuasiveness of arguments, and
 - d) style.
- 8.1.2 The Written Submission Score comprises the average of the scores for the Written Submission for the Applicant including penalty points and the scores for the

Written Submission for the Respondent including penalty points. The formula for calculation is found in Appendix 1.

- 8.1.3 Oral Pleadings shall be scored on the following grounds, each weighing equally:
- a) identification of legal issues and relevant legal framework,
 - b) knowledge of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as relevant case law,
 - c) quality of legal analysis and persuasiveness of arguments and
 - d) style.
- 8.1.4 The Regional Round Score comprises the average of the Team Score for the Applicant and the Team Score for the Respondent. The formula for calculation is found in Appendix 1. The scores of the Written Submissions shall not be taken into consideration while calculating the scores of the Regional Rounds.
- 8.1.5 The Qualification Score for the Final Oral Round comprises the average of the Written Submission Score and the Regional Round Score. The calculation formula is found in Appendix 1.
- 8.1.6 The Preliminary Round Score comprises the average of the Team Score for the Applicant and the Team Score for the Respondent. The calculation formula is found in Appendix 1.

8.2 Penalties

- 8.2.1 Penalties shall be imposed in accordance with Appendix 2.
- 8.2.2 Where in Appendix 2 a reference is made to disqualification, the Vice President in charge of Competitions of ELSA has the discretion in exceptional circumstances to allow a Team to continue to participate and, if appropriate, to substitute disqualification for a lesser penalty.

9. Awards

- 9.1.1 The awards of the Final Oral Round in the Competition are the following:
- a) The Winner - “The Council of Europe Award”;

- b) The Runner up;
 - c) The Best Applicant's Written Submission;
 - d) The Best Respondent's Written Submission;
 - e) The Best Orator of the Preliminary Rounds (each orator must present oral pleadings for the Applicant and the Respondent to be eligible for the award);
 - f) The Best Orator of the Quarter-Finals;
 - g) The Best Orator of the Semi-Finals;
 - h) The Best Orator of the Grand Final - "The Liaison Office of the Council of Europe Award".
- 9.1.2 The "Council of Europe Award" is a one-month traineeship at the European Court of Human Rights for each member of the winning Team.
- 9.1.3 The "Liaison Office of the Council of Europe Award" is a traineeship at the Liaison Office of the Council of Europe in Brussels for the winner of the Best Orator of the Grand Final.

10. Expected Standards of Behaviour

10.1 Communication

- 10.1.1 Teams and team coaches are prohibited from engaging in communication with any Judge on the issue of the Case before the end of the Final Oral Round.

10.2 Plagiarism

- 10.2.1 Teams shall not commit plagiarism. Plagiarism constitutes the dishonest presentation of non-original work or ideas as one's original work or ideas, regardless of whether it is intentional or unintentional. A Team has committed plagiarism if they include direct or indirect references to the work or ideas of another without giving due acknowledgement such as using quotation marks and proper citation of sources.

10.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 10.3.1 The use of Artificial Intelligence and tools relying on the use of such is expressly prohibited as part of the Competition in the following scenarios:

- a) Submitting text in the Written Submissions that has been generated by an AI-based tool;
- b) Using any documents issued by ELSA to train an AI-based tool, or to employ an AI-based tool that has been trained on the Case of the Competition in order to write and submit a Written Submission.

10.3.2 ELSA International reserves the right to test written pleadings for the use of AI at its discretion. Teams which are found to be in violation of Section 10.3.2 will be disqualified or otherwise sanctioned.

10.4 Code of Conduct

10.4.1 Teams and Team coaches must comply with the [Code of Conduct of ELSA International](#). Any violations thereof or disrespectful behaviour against other Teams, Judges or the Organising Committees shall be reported to ELSA International, who has the discretion to take the appropriate disciplinary action and measures.

10.5 Judges

10.5.1 The Judges shall not provide support or advice concerning the case or the Competition to any Team or Team coach during the Competition, including the Regional Rounds and the Final Oral Round.

10.6 Coaches

10.6.1 Coaches are not considered to be Team members and must act in good faith in respect of the Competition.

11. Reporting and Certificates

11.1 Reporting

11.1.1 ELSA International will publish the scores of both the Written Submissions and the Oral Pleadings in a final report after the Competition has been concluded.

11.2 Certificates

11.2.1 Certificates for participating Team members and awards will be available for download as PDF documents after the conclusion of the Competition. The certificates have to be downloaded by 31 July 2025. All team accounts will be reset after this date and documents will no longer be available.

11.2.2 Team members and coaches are eligible to receive the following certificates:

- a) A certificate to confirm their participation in their respective Regional Round, provided by the organisers, if they submitted both Written Submissions and were present during the Regional Round;
- b) A certificate to confirm their participation in the Final Oral Round, if they qualified for and were present during the Final Oral Round;
- c) Upon special request to ELSA International, a certificate to confirm that the Team submitted a Written Submission if they submitted both Written Submissions.

12. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Calculation of Scores.

Appendix 2: Scores and Penalties

13. Appendix 1 - Calculation of Scores

The Written Submission Score shall be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{\left(\frac{WSA1+WSA2-PA}{2}\right)+\left(\frac{WSR1+WSR2-PR}{2}\right)}{2}$$

The Regional Round Score shall be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{\left(\frac{A1+A2+A3}{3}\right)+\left(\frac{R1+R2+R3}{3}\right)}{2}$$

The Qualification Score shall be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{WSS + RRS}{2}$$

The Preliminary Round Score shall be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\frac{\left(\frac{A1+A2+A3}{3}\right)+\left(\frac{R1+R2+R3}{3}\right)}{2}$$

14. Appendix 2 - Scores and Penalties

2.1 Written Submissions (WS)

Action	Penalty
Team coach actively taking part in the drafting of Written Submissions	Disqualification
Team coach actively taking part in Oral Pleadings including but not limited to the preparation stage	Disqualification
Change of member composition after registration without prior authorisation of the Vice President for Competitions	Disqualification
Change of coach after registration without prior authorisation of the Vice President for Competitions	Disqualification
Receiving support or advice from a Judge	Disqualification
One day delay past the given deadline in the dispatch of documents	0.5 points per WS
Two days delay past the given deadline in the dispatch of documents	1 point per WS
Three days delay past the given deadline in the dispatch of documents	2 points per WS
Four days delay past the given deadline in the dispatch of documents	Disqualification
Plagiarism in violation of Rule 10.2	1-10 points per WS or disqualification, depending on the severity and extent of plagiarism

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Unauthorised use of AI according to Rule 10.3	1-10 points per WS or disqualification, depending on the severity and extent
Failure to include a one-page summary	1 point per WS
Failure to include a table of contents	0.5 points per WS
Failure to include a list of references	0.5 points per WS
Failure to include a list of abbreviations used	0.5 points per WS
Exceeds the maximum length of the one-page summary	0.5 points per page
Exceeds the maximum length of the Written Submission – excluding contents mentioned in Appendix 2 (i.e. 20 pages for content)	0.5 points per page
The electronic copy of Written Submissions dispatched in the wrong format (i.e. if NOT as a Word and PDF document and/or NOT as a single file)	1.5 points per WS
Failure to meet the request of ELSA International to submit Written Submissions in Word and PDF format within 24 hours	Disqualification
Failure to use the correct font (Times New Roman)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to use the correct font size (12 pt)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to use correct line spacing (1.5)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to use correct font and font size for footnotes (Times New Roman, 10 pt)	0.5 points per WS

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Failure to use the correct font colour (#000000)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to use the correct cover page	0.5 points per WS
Failure to correctly identify the party (e.g. putting “Written Submission for Applicant” on the WS for Respondent)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to correctly title the document in accordance with Appendix 2	0.5 points per WS
Failure to disable track changes in accordance with Appendix 2	0.5 points per WS
Applied “kerning” to the document (Written submissions should be in standard letter spacing)	0.5 points per WS
Failure to use A4 electronic page with 2.54 cm margins	0.5 points per WS
Incomplete Title of Word and PDF Documents	0.5 points per WS
Violation of Rules on Identification requirement in Rule 3.4.3.	Disqualification

2.2 Oral Pleadings

Failure to submit the summary of arguments of the Main Oral Pleadings by the specified deadline (Final Oral Round)	0.5 point per hour
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Unauthorised usage of devices by Team members and coaches	Up to 1 point/breach
Communication between Team members and their coach during the pleadings	Up to 1 point/breach, up to disqualification