

INTERNATIONAL INTERNAL MEETINGS HOST HANDBOOK

INTERNAL MANAGEMENT 2024/2025



The European Law Students' Association

Foreword

Dear Network,

Organising an International Internal Meeting (IIM) is one of the most valuable contributions an ELSA group can make to the ELSA Network. IIMs are where key decisions are made, ideas are shared, and ELSA Officers come together to build the future of our Association. It is also a significant responsibility that requires dedication, careful planning, and attention to detail.

This Hosting Handbook has been developed to provide comprehensive and practical guidance throughout the entire IIM planning process. From preparing your application and assembling your OC, to managing logistics, external relations, and participants, this resource aims to support you at every stage of the process.

Thank you for considering taking on the challenge of hosting an IIM!

ELSAfully Yours,

Mie Tveit

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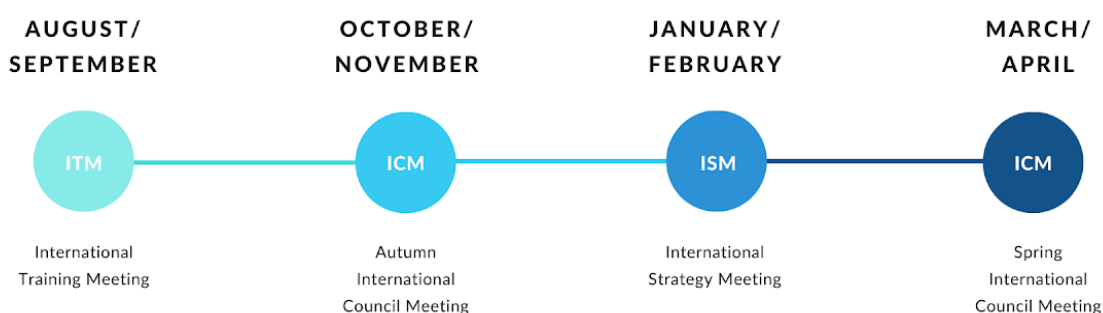
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What are International Internal Meetings?

There are four IIMs throughout the year:

- International Training Meeting in autumn
- International Council Meeting in autumn and spring
- International Strategy Meeting in spring



International Council Meetings

Every term, the whole ELSA Network meets twice for the International Council Meetings (ICM) to make decisions and set the course for the future of the Association. The Members of ELSA form the International Council, which is the supreme decision-making (legislative) body of the Association. Decisions taken by the International Council are binding on the whole ELSA Network and may only be changed by the International Council themselves. In order to be able to vote, all Member National Groups of ELSA must fulfil their statutory obligations towards ELSA International.

The first ICM of the term (Autumn ICM) must take place for a period of *5 days and 4 nights* (Wednesday to Sunday) between the second Wednesday of October and the third Sunday of November. The second ICM of the term (Spring ICM) must take place for a period of *8 days and 7 nights* (Sunday to Sunday) between the third Sunday of March and the last Sunday of April. The ICMs must be at least 140 days apart from each other. The specific dates are agreed upon between the International Board of ELSA and the hosting group of the ICMs.

International Training Meeting

The aim of the International Training Meeting (ITM) is to prepare Officers of the Network for their term. The ITM takes place online at the beginning of the term for a period of 3 days (Friday - Sunday) between the first Friday of August and the last Sunday of September. The specific date is set by the International Board of ELSA.

International Strategy Meeting

The aim of the International Strategy Meeting (ISM) is to gather interested and involved officers to discuss the strategic development of the Association and to evaluate measures already adopted. The ISM takes place in the middle of the term, during a period of 5 days (Wednesday to Sunday) between the third Wednesday of January and the third Sunday of February.

The ISM consists of Workshops led by the members of the International Board of ELSA and members of the ELSA International Team. The Workshops act as a forum for discussion, debate and strategising in order to take the necessary steps in preparing proposals to be put before the International Council during the ICMs.

Why host an IIM?

Why should you organise an IIM? Hosting an IIM constitutes an incredible contribution to the Network by letting members from all across Europe get together and interact, as well as allowing them to network with externals and professionals. You also facilitate the best platform the Network has to develop the organisation. Additionally, you get to promote your own National or Local Group and the goals you strive to achieve in your country, as well as internally in the ELSA Network. It is important to keep these reasons in mind throughout the entire process of organising, as this is why we do it and why IIMs are such incredible events.

The IIMs are the number one place to develop the Association. One part of this is the decision-making process in the International Council Meetings, which allows the Council to develop regulations and rules which are binding on every Group in the Network and is an efficient tool to ensure that our great projects are implemented Europe-wide, in the way we want them to. Furthermore, even more important for the development of our Association, are the workshop sessions held in every area. A group of people, from all corners of our Network, get together to discuss the issues faced in regard to our projects, share knowledge and best practices, and develop new projects which, in the future, will benefit law students greatly.

No matter how many participants the meeting has, 100, 200, 300 or 400, an IIM is a unique platform to meet people from all over Europe who are as engaged and dedicated to our ELSA Network as you are. The cultural insight you get from these conversations in itself could justify whatever participation fee necessary to facilitate such a meeting. The opportunity to meet so many different people “who speak your language”, is unique and incredible. Another benefit of these interactions is the networking aspect and the opportunity to build friendships for life. No other Law Society could possibly offer the same networking opportunities and connections in the international legal job market. As an IIM organiser, you facilitate these networking opportunities allowing your fellow ELSA friends to extend their professional connections and increase their employability. When ELSA members get together, work together, and socialize together, the ELSA spirit grows, increasing motivation to develop ELSA on all levels, and all together, we benefit greatly. Organising a massive event such as IIMs is a unique opportunity to expose your own group and the projects you are working on.

Even financially, there are endless opportunities in regard to sponsorship exposure. Firstly, consider external exposure. An IIM is large enough for local newspapers, news stations, and more to be interested in covering the event, something that surely would get the attention of potential academic co-operators, law firms, and sponsors. You could also do the advertising yourself by sending a newsletter to your current partners, and some potential partners, informing them about the event and the uniqueness and splendiddness of an ELSA IIM. Maybe you could also invite a few of these partners to come and facilitate relations. As mentioned, you will be facilitating network events, which will be of great interest to your partners as they offer access to a diverse and talented pool of law students. Current academic and sponsorship partners should always be invited to attend an IIM in some capacity. Law firms, faculties, or other academic

partners could give a lecture or otherwise contribute at a Conference or Law Fair. Sponsorship partners should be negotiated with early on to ensure your ability to accommodate their wishes in regard to representation and promotion throughout the event. The IIM is an opportunity to both facilitate already existing partnerships as well as interest potential new partners to come join our ranks. You should not underestimate the value and importance of such a meeting to partners and sponsors.

Applying to host an IIM

Who can apply?

Any Member of ELSA or any member Local Group of a Member of ELSA is eligible to apply to be elected or appointed as the host of an ICM or an ISM.

All applications from Local Groups must be submitted to the International Council by their respective National Group. Local Groups may only apply on their own behalf if:

- There is no National Group in their country;
- Their National Group has persistently refused to offer their administrative support to the Local Group, proven to the satisfaction of the International Council; or
- The host of the IIM is not elected, but appointed by the International Board of ELSA.

Application period and election/appointment of host

Call for hosts

The International Board of ELSA announces the call for hosting applications for the upcoming IIM. This call is opened at the latest 60 days before the Opening of the ICM, where the elections will take place. Applications must be sent to the Secretary General of the International Board of ELSA no later than 28 days before the ICM where the elections take place.

Election of the host

The International Council elects a host for the IIM responsible for its practical organisation. The election of an IIM host is based on a submitted application and is taken by means of an absolute majority of the votes. After submitting the application, the International Board of ELSA justifiably recommends to the International Council whether to accept or decline an application for the IIM Host. The decision on the host is made no earlier than 20 months before the IIM in question.

Appointment of the host in case there is no elected host

In case no host is elected at least two regular ICMs prior to the respective IIM in need of a host, the International Board of ELSA re-issues a call for applications. Any applicant during the re-issued call may be appointed as the host of the respective IIM by a decision of the International Board of ELSA. In case no host is appointed six months prior to the latest possible date of the Opening of the IIM, the International Board of ELSA is responsible for the organisation of the respective IIM. In these instances, the provisions of the International Council Meeting Decision Book do not apply.

Content of the application

Hosting Agreement

- Dates of the IIM;

- Venue and logistics;
- Financial implications;
- Responsibilities of the International Board of ELSA and the OC;
- Quality Standards;
- Discharge of the host.

Draft Budget

- Include a preliminary budget for the IIM - [template](#) available.

Draft Programme

- Provide a tentative schedule of the programme.

Logistics Information

- Include important logistical details for hosting, such as accommodations and transportation.

Motivation Letter

- Explain your group's motivation and objectives for hosting the IIM.

Proposed OC

- Outline the structure and key members of the OC.

Proposed Head of the OC

- Identify the individual who will lead the OC.

Additional Information

- Include any other relevant information to support your application.

Organising an IIM

Where to start?

When organising an IIM, first it is important to gather the core team for the OC. It is vital to have human resources to organise an event like this and for all steps of the process to run as smoothly as possible. Further help and OC members can be recruited at later points, but the key team members should be there from the start to kick off the process.

The first important things to consider when organising an IIM are the “big things”, such as accommodation and venues. It is also important to start the fundraising process early. There are many steps and things to consider when planning and organising an IIM and the following chapter highlights these in more detail.

Mentorship Programme

To support OCs in their work, ELSA International offers a Mentorship Programme that pairs your OC with that of a previous IIM host. This mentor acts as an experienced advisor, offering practical guidance, sharing lessons learned and providing support throughout your preparation and event. Where possible, the pairing is made with consideration for similarities in context such as group size, available resources, or past experience, so that your mentor may better understand your specific challenges and offer relevant advice.

We strongly encourage OCs to engage actively with their mentors to make the most of this valuable resource.

The Organising Committee

Structure of the Organising Committee

Organising an IIM is not only a time-consuming responsibility but also a very human resources-consuming task. Every National and Local Group of ELSA are unique and have different human resources available to them, and thus the structure of the OC will vary. It is up to the host to decide on the structure they are going to follow. However, here are some recommendations for you to make it easier.

- All OCs need Head(s) of the OC who will be responsible for the overall management of the event and the team as well as communication with the Secretary General of the International Board of ELSA during the preparations.
- A person responsible for Finances who will be in charge of general financial management of the event as well as the creation of the invoices for the participants, and any other relevant tasks.

- Person(s) responsible for Logistics who will be in charge of preparing logistics and necessary equipment for the plenaries and workshops. Sometimes a person responsible for logistics is also responsible for room allocations of the participants, however, we recommend to allocate rooms together with a person responsible for Participants since they are in constant communication with the participants and know their needs and requests on the matter very well.
- Person(s) responsible for Participants who will be in constant communication with participants and be there to answer any questions before and during the IIM. This person or these persons should be in constant communication with the person(s) responsible for Logistics.
- Person(s) responsible for Transportation who will be responsible for arranging all the transfers necessary from the airport to the accommodation and vice versa, as well as transportation from one venue (e.g. accommodation) to another (e.g. plenary venue, social programme venue etc.).
- Person(s) responsible for Marketing who will be in charge of creating the materials necessary to promote the event, managing social media accounts as well as preparing necessary promotional materials used during the event, such as banners, name tags etc.
- Person(s) responsible for Social Programme who will be in charge of planning each social evening, creating a good atmosphere, and making sure that people are having fun. This also includes taking care of the pre- and after-party venues. Sometimes, they are also responsible for the Gala Ball. However, some OCs prefer having a separate person responsible for the Gala Ball, taking care of all the details.
- Head of Helpers who will be the main contact person for helpers and make the whole communication easier. It is not a secret that some of the tasks (such as being at the OC desk, accompanying the buses to the venues or guiding participants through public transportation in a foreign country) can easily be conducted by helpers, and it is important to have one person in charge of them.

Welfare Officer

The Welfare Officer is a key member of the OC, responsible for supporting the safety and wellbeing of all participants during the IIM. They are the first point of contact if anyone feels unsafe, uncomfortable or witnesses/experience a potential breach of the Code of Conduct. The Welfare Officer will receive training ahead of the event, provided by the Welfare Team of ELSA International, and are often supported by them on site during the IIM as well.

Division of responsibilities between the International Board of ELSA and the Organising Committee

It is important to clarify that the OC is organising the IIM in collaboration with the International Board of ELSA. However, it is important to define a strict division of responsibilities. The International Board of ELSA is responsible for the content of the IIM while the OC takes care of all the logistics.

Although good cooperation between the International Board of ELSA and the OC forms the basis of any good IIM, and both the International Board of ELSA and the OC are a team organising one of the most important events for the Network, the International Board of ELSA has the final word on all matters relating to the content of the Meeting which includes, but is not limited to, the agenda and timing of the plenaries and workshops, external guests and sponsors invited to the IIM, etc. The International Board of ELSA can also advise the OC in logistical questions, but the final decision on these matters are to the OC.

All OCs are required to prepare Terms and Conditions for participants applying to the IIM. These should outline key information such as payment policies, cancellation rules, force majeure, and any other relevant conditions related to the event. The Terms and Conditions must be included in the application form and accepted by participants at the time of registration. The document is drafted by the OC, but the International Board of ELSA will provide guidance and support throughout the process. Previous editions from former IIMs are also available and can serve as helpful references.

It is important to highlight that the OC is responsible for fundraising for the IIM in order to have a sufficient financial basis for the event. The OC shall host the IIM on its own account. Any profit or loss arising from the organisation of the IIM shall be kept by or covered by the OC.

It is the Secretary General on the International Board of ELSA who is responsible for the IIMs, meaning as a general rule, all IIM communication should be directed to them. To facilitate this, the OC is responsible for appointing one person to be responsible for the communication and report to the International Board of ELSA before, as well as during and after the IIM. It is recommended to have the Head of the OC responsible for communication with the International Board of ELSA.

It is important to note that during the IIM communication is more diversified and direct, and there is usually one contact person from the OC for each of the members of the International Board of ELSA. As for the plenaries, communication remains with the Secretary General of the International Board of ELSA.

Participants

Delegations

The Delegations are the participant groups representing every single Member or Observer Group of ELSA. Members and Observers are treated as the same type of Group in this chapter, as the regulations concerning the number of delegates are the same.

The number of delegates regarding ICMs is regulated by the Standing Orders (SO) of ELSA. Members and Observers of ELSA have the right to send eight delegates to the ICMs. This number is a hard rule and means that the OC has to budget for that number of delegates.

For the ISM, National Groups may send three delegates. This is regulated by the International Council Meeting Decision Book (DB).

The Head of Delegation (HoD) is a delegate chosen by the National Board of the National Group (often the Secretary General of the National Board) that stands first in line in communication with the OC. This means it is fine to prioritise dealing with the HoDs before other delegates. You should also ensure that all important information concerning the logistics of the meeting reaches the HoDs first.

In a situation where National Groups have not filled all of their spots in the first application round (this is what normally happens), you have the opportunity to open a second call for applications to fill the remaining spots. Such a second call should, however, be discussed with the International Board of ELSA first. Another option is to instruct the National Groups to list everyone who wants to participate in the application sheet during the first call, even if that means their Delegation will exceed eight/three participants. Often, some National Groups apply with less than eight/three participants, and some groups with more. It usually evens out. With either method described above, the second option potentially being more efficient, you can give National Groups more spots, exceeding the total number of participants (eight/three). This can be beneficial for you so that your expenses and income can be balanced according to your budget. Keep in mind that according to the SO, the OC should aim to distribute all the remaining spots equally between the National Groups in such cases.

Applications

The timeline for the application period is decided between the OC and the International Board of ELSA. Each delegation sends the application form collectively (one per National Group). When the application period is opened, the OC sends the application form to mailing lists. A template application form will be provided by ELSA International.

Visas and invitations

Participants from some countries might need a Visa or an Invitation to the IIM from the hosts or accommodation providers in order to enter the country. When preparations for the application period start, you should do the necessary research on which countries this might

apply to if you wish for a lot of participants at your IIM. You could inform affected National Groups about this in the invitation, on your website, social media, or through other means of communication that are convenient to your applicants. If you have questions about the visa status of some countries, you should approach your national government, if you are unsure about the process.

If your applicants need an invitation in order to get their visas approved, you should also clarify this with your government. If such invitations are required by you, the host, the accommodation facility, or the University, you should prepare for this situation early on in the process, but certainly before the application period has opened. If you need invitation templates or have questions regarding invitations, contact the International Board of ELSA or former IIM hosts.

The International Board, Chair, Vice Chair and Council Guests

According to the DB, the International Board of ELSA may request an OC of an IIM to cover their participation fee for the meeting. This fee includes the meals and accommodation for a certain number of nights. For the ICMs, the International Board of ELSA shall divide the covered nights amongst themselves, the Auditors, the Chair, and the Vice Chair of the Plenaries. This topic is further regulated in the hosting agreement between ELSA International and the OC.

Externals

Externals are usually partners of ELSA who are invited to the IIMs to deliver presentations. The International Board of ELSA constantly updates the OC with information regarding externals participating at the IIM, as well as any specific arrangements that have to be made for these guests. The OC should provide adequate reception upon their arrival as well as accommodation, food, and social programme. The external guests are liable for the fees directly to the OC.

As hosting and organising an IIM is a great opportunity for promoting your own National or Local Group as well as ELSA in general, the OC is also encouraged to invite your own external partners to attend the IIM. Please, however, consult the International Board of ELSA and keep them informed about any externals you consider inviting. You could invite your partners to hold presentations, educational or promotional or otherwise, in order to fulfil sponsorship agreements with these partners, or purely to promote ELSA. The participants attending the IIM will also love to see what the legal sector has to offer in your jurisdiction.

Finances

Budgeting

Always budget as carefully as possible and ensure your budget balances before entering into contracts with service providers and other financial obligations. As described above, it could be beneficial to have a designated OC member responsible for always keeping track of the budget. Regardless, make sure you have the necessary routines and rules in your OC for anyone taking on financial obligations. The Head of OC should always be involved in entering into agreements involving money or services.

The budget should include any income or expense of the hosting group connected with the IIM. Any financial obligation of the OC should be portrayed as detailed as possible. The final budget of the IIM should be ready after the first few meetings of the OC, early in the planning process, and should not change much before the Opening of the IIM. If you need help with the budget, you can contact the IB. We recommend you to use this [template](#).

ICM financial report

The Treasurer of the International Board of ELSA shall, according to the SO, have two meetings with the OC of an ICM, respectively eight and three months before the start of the event, to help with the budget, and provide advice on the creation of the financial report.

After an ICM, the International Board of ELSA must distribute the financial report submitted by the OC, listing all income and expenses of the meeting, at the latest 42 days prior to the following ICM. The internal deadline for the OC to produce this report to the International Board of ELSA will be agreed upon in the planning process of the event.

Expenses

You should early on budget for the minimum accommodation expenses. The number of nights you need to accommodate depends on which meeting you are hosting, i.e its length and the regulations of ELSA. Meals can either be included in the deal with the accommodation provider, or be provided by the OC through other means, such as sponsorships or fundraising.

Your OC will most likely need to provide transportation for the participants during the IIM. Such transportation could include transport to a different venue from the accommodation, for the academic programme. Or to an off-venue academic programme event, or transport to and from nightclubs or other social or cultural events, for example sightseeing.

The OC Desk and name badges for all participants are regulated services the OC has to provide. Additionally, you might need to budget for other facilities or technical equipment to fulfil your obligations as an IIM host, as stated in the regulations of ELSA, and the Quality Standards in the Hosting Agreement.

When it comes to optional/other services for the participants, water is always popular at IIMs. Remember to think about every aspect of the schedule, which facilities are available where, and which additional services the OC can provide to make life easier for the participants.

Fees

The maximum participation fee for the regular nights, meaning the days with any official IIM programme, is regulated by the International Council Meeting Decision Book. These prices are agreed upon to ensure fairness, accessibility, and sustainability. Additionally, the fees are indexed twice a year. When budgeting for your participation fee income, please check the updated regulations of ELSA to make sure you are budgeting according to the latest numbers, or consult the International Board of ELSA. Moreover, keep in mind that there are two categories of the participation fee, one for favoured countries and one for non-favoured countries. A list of which ELSA groups are in each of the categories can be found as an annex in the International Council Meeting Decision Book. The OC is of course free to charge a lower participation fee, should you wish to.

The participation fee is a mandatory fee for the delegates attending the IIM. The participation fee is charged per night, and covers accommodation, three meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) per day, and any scheduled transportation on the official programme of the IIM (such as transportation to off-venue academic programmes like workshops, plenaries, conferences, or sponsors' fair). For arrival and departure days, the meals included should be dinner for the day of arrival and breakfast and lunch on the day of departure. The OC is free to agree on other meal arrangements with individual participants or delegations.

Next, the OC should also offer participants accommodation for a few days prior, as well as post, the official IIM programme. At the first ICM (fall), the official programme, and thus regular nights, include Wednesday to Sunday, while the second ICM (spring) includes Sunday to Sunday. More often than not, some participants wish to spend a few extra nights at the OC-provided accommodation to attend the pre-/post-IIM programme, or due to their travel arrangements. Thus, the OC should aim to provide accommodation for extra nights. Such nights are not subject to the participation fee regulations in the International Council Meeting Decision Book, and it is at the discretion of the OC to set the participation fee. However, it is very important that the OC strives to keep these extra night rates reasonable and affordable for all participants.

Moving on, additional costs may be charged for a number of extra services the OC provides to the participants, such as a gala ball, social programme and cultural programme. If participants wish to take part in the social programme, the current maximum fee is € 20. Usually, this fee covers entrance to a bar/club and/or transportation to this venue. The maximum fee for the gala ball is € 55, while the price for the cultural programme, most often sightseeing, is € 15.

The OC could also provide transportation upon participants' arrival and departure in connection with an IIM, for example to and from the airport, bus station or train station. The current maximum fee is € 15 for a one-way transfer, and € 30 for both arrival and departure transfer.

The OC is also free to produce ICM-branded merchandise, for example tote bags, t-shirts, hoodies or magnets. This is often very popular with participants. Because the type and price of ICM merchandise are not regulated, this is up to the discretion of the OC and can be a clever way of balancing the budget.

Sponsors and fundraising

It is often beneficial to negotiate sponsorship agreements with external partners. In order to receive financial support for the IIM, you could offer promotional efforts for the partner (logo promotion at the venues or at plenaries, and gift bags to the participants etc.), have the partner speak at a Conference during the IIM or during pre-/post-IIM, or be present during the IIM in another capacity. Please consult with the International Board of ELSA to make sure you are not breaching the regulations of ELSA when negotiating with externals.

It could also be an idea to approach local food/drink/coffee/transportation services and offer them the opportunity to provide these services directly.

Accommodation and venues

When organising IIMs, there are several important considerations to keep in mind regarding accommodation and venues. These ensure that participants have a comfortable, convenient, and productive experience in the IIM.

Firstly, when booking the accommodation and venues, understand the terms of any contracts, including cancellation policies and possible penalties. Flexibility in these policies is advantageous.

Ensure that the accommodation can comfortably host all participants and has enough rooms available for the duration of the meeting, including extra nights pre- and post IIM. Early reservations are crucial to secure the necessary number of rooms, especially in busy cities or during peak tourist seasons. Consider the amenities available, such as wifi, breakfast, and other meals if organised at the accommodation, and common areas for informal gatherings.

The accommodation and venues should be accessible for participants with disabilities. This includes features like wheelchair ramps, accessible rooms, and appropriate bathroom facilities. Safety is also important. Make sure the accommodation and venues are in a safe area and that it has security measures in place. It is also important to inform participants about possible safety considerations.

Remember to have clear communication between the OC and the accommodation and venue providers to address any issues that may arise. It is also helpful to have OC available at the accommodation to assist participants with check-in, check-out, and other accommodation-related needs.

The workshop and plenary rooms should comfortably accommodate the expected number of participants, with enough seating, and room for breakout sessions if needed. Ensure the availability of essential equipment like projectors, screens, microphones, speakers, and reliable wifi access. The venue should have suitable furniture, such as tables and chairs. The venue should have appropriate heating or air conditioning to maintain a comfortable environment regardless of the weather.

Keep in mind that it is possible to organise the IIM using the half and half model, meaning the workshops and plenaries can take place at other venues than the accommodation, such as other conference facilities or lecture halls. This can often help reduce costs. If workshops and plenaries are organised in a different venue than the accommodation, the accommodation should be as close as possible or within a reasonable travel distance to reduce travel time and costs. If the accommodation is not within walking distance, transportation must be arranged.

See also the Quality Standards in the [Annex](#) of this Handbook for more details.

Food

The OC must organise meals and ensure that they cater to diverse dietary needs and preferences. There must be at least three meals per day, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner, with each meal being accompanied by beverages including but not limited to water. The meals must be diversified throughout the event.

Alternative meals must be provided with respect to dietary restrictions, allergies, and preferences of the participants. It is vital to consider food allergies, religious restrictions, and other dietary needs. For example, diverse vegetarian and vegan food must be available for every meal. Allergies and dietary restrictions must be communicated to the meal provider.

See also Quality Standards in the [Annex](#) of this Handbook.

Transportation

If the venues for the academic programme are not within walking distance of the accommodation, the OC must provide transportation to the workshops, plenaries, or other parts of the programme that take place outside the accommodation.

Transportation can be organised, for example, with buses or public transport in the city. If public transport is used, make sure that the participants know how to get to the locations or arrange for a member of the OC to guide them.

Arrival and departure transfers are not mandatory but can be offered as an extra service. If you want to arrange transportation for participants from airports, train stations, or bus terminals to the accommodation, it is important to consider the costs. If you provide transfers, remember to provide clear instructions (who is picking them up, from where and how to find them, etc.) and schedules to the participants. Remember to provide clear guidelines and a communication system for situations when flights are delayed.

Ensure that transportation options are available for participants with disabilities or other specific requirements.

See also Quality Standards in the [Annex](#) of this Handbook.

Social programme, cultural programme and gala ball

The IIMs are much more than just long days of workshops and plenaries. The IIMs are just as much about making new friends, having fun, and sharing the ELSA spirit across the Network! The OC is obligated to provide the participants with a social programme, a gala ball and cultural programme. Keep in mind that the maximum fees for these services are dictated by the regulations of ELSA (see the chapter on fees in this Handbook). However, the content of the social and cultural programme is at the discretion of the OC, except for a few ELSA traditions.

When scheduling the social and cultural programme, please consult the International Board of ELSA to make sure that the activities do not collide with the official programme.

See also Quality Standards in the [Annex](#) of this Handbook.

Social programme

The participants expect a planned social programme or themed gathering every night of the official IIM programme. Typically, this includes going to a social venue, whatever is possible and appropriate in the city of the IIM. It could be beneficial to make arrangements with venues to ensure they have room for all participants and to make sure you adhere to any relevant regulations.

A suitable venue should be sourced for National Drinks Night, allowing all delegations to bring their own national drinks. Furthermore, be advised that during the ICMs one night should be dedicated to the ELSA Vision Contest. In order to ensure a successful and memorable evening, it is recommended to look for venues offering a stage, permitting all participants to follow the performances.

Keep in mind that if the social venue is far away from the accommodation you must provide transportation for the participants. It is recommended that the travel between venues does not take more than 20-30 minutes. It is also encouraged to provide the participants with contact information and the addresses of the social venues prior to the opening of the IIM.

Cultural programme

The IIM is also a prime opportunity to show the participants all the great aspects of your culture. Traditionally, the OC provides sightseeing throughout the city, allowing participants to experience the local culture and customs. If possible, it is a good idea to hire a guide to enhance the learning experience for the participants.

Keep in mind that you need to provide transportation between the cultural programme and the accommodation or the venue for the academic programme. It is also important that this cultural element does not run late, as it might affect the following academic programme.

We encourage you to include cultural bits in the other parts of the IIM programme as well, for example having dancers perform traditional numbers during dinners or the gala ball.

Gala ball

During an IIM, it is custom to organise a nice/formal dinner or gala ball to complement the experience. This dinner is not an official part of the IIM programme but is very popular with participants, and is something a lot of people look forward to. As mentioned, this dinner is not included in the participation fee and the OC can charge for this event separately. This is also an excellent opportunity to share aspects of your culture by having entertainment involving music or dances. Remember that since a gala ball is not a part of the official IIM programme, you still have to provide the participants not attending the gala ball with a meal covered by their participation fee.

Sponsors' Fair

A Sponsors' Fair is a key element of many IIMs. It provides a dedicated space for external partners, such as law firms and academic institutions, to present themselves to the participants of the IIM. Participation and exposure in this event is something the OC can offer in exchange for fundraising to their partners and sponsors. It also offers valuable networking opportunities for both attendees and partners, reinforcing ELSA's position as a bridge between students and the professional world.

Coordination with partners must begin well in advance, ensuring they are fully informed about what is offered in terms of visibility, infrastructure, and access to participants. Clear and timely communication is essential. On the day of the event, the OC should be present to support the partners, assist with logistics, and ensure that their needs are met. Lastly, keep in mind to consult with the International Board of ELSA regarding the timing of the Sponsors' Fair in the schedule.

Pre- and post-IIM activities

ELSA has a long tradition of extending the IIMs by adding experiences in connection to the event beyond the official IIM programme, particularly for the ICMs. Events prior to the Opening of the IIM are referred to as pre-IIM activities, and events scheduled after the Closing of the IIM are referred to as post-IIM activities. When it comes to ICMs, arranging pre-ICM activities are most common, and often consist of both a day and evening programme. Examples of the day programme are extended guided tours to nearby islands or ancient cities, whereas the evening programme can be sampling local cuisines or customs.

Post- and pre-IIM activities are not a part of the official IIM schedule and are not subject to any of the regulations of ELSA, meaning these activities are not regulated by a set participation fee. Thus, the fee is at the discretion of the OC, but again we recommend keeping it within reason. Be sure to assess what number of participants you expect for such events before entering any financial obligations.

Communication

Leading up to and during an IIM, the OC has to communicate with a massive number of people from all over Europe, address a number of issues, and make decisions on the go. Thus, it is important to plan and prepare for communications with participants. During an IIM, there is no such thing as posting too much information. Everything you know beforehand should be transmitted to the participants, and especially to the HoDs. If not everyone in their Delegation sees the information, someone in their Delegation will and will inform the rest of their Delegation.

Make sure to post all the information about the scheduled events as early as possible. It is common to share an information booklet regarding every known aspect of the IIM before the Opening of the event. We encourage you to post such a booklet no later than two weeks prior to the Opening. This booklet should include information such as the address and contact information of the accommodation, as well as any academic and social programme venues etc. You should also include the contact information of the OC, the contact information of the Welfare Officer(s), emergency numbers, the location of the ER, hospital, pharmacies, stores, and so on.

Traditionally, either the OC or the International Board of ELSA creates a WhatsApp community to stay in touch with the participants both prior to and during the IIM. A good idea is to include the QR code for the community in the IIM Working Materials or information booklet. This way, all participants can join well in advance and whenever you have new/updated information, you could post it in the group to ensure that as many participants as possible see it. It is also recommended to arrange a group chat with all the HoDs, to be able to communicate directly with them.

During an IIM, all the participants should be viewed as equals by the OC. Thus, every question is just as important and should be treated with the same level of respect and time. However, when 300 people try to approach you at the same time, of course, you need to make a choice of who to help first. You should prioritise your assistance as follows: emergencies, the International Board of ELSA and IIM Officers (Chairs), HoDs and other participants.

The OC Desk is a great place to solve most problems. Thus, make sure the OC Desk is as accessible as possible to the participants, that it is properly manned, and open as long (as early in the morning and as late in the night) as possible. It could be beneficial to employ several helpers for this purpose alone. However, it is always helpful to have at least one full member of the OC available at the OC Desk at all times. For the participants, just seeing OC members present at the OC Desk, even when no participants are present making inquiries, helps ensure them that the OC is on top of every issue that arises. At the OC Desk, you can answer most inquiries on the spot without spending much time on the issues.

Prior to the event, you should prepare and train your OC and any helpers in how to deal with people and how to offer them the best possible solution to their issues. If you so desire, contact the International Board of ELSA in order to organise a training on the issue.

Data Protection (GDPR)

When organising an IIM, the organising group is expected to handle personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The International Board of ELSA will act as a Joint Controller alongside the organising group, as information is transmitted between the parties. As an organiser, you will be required to:

- Sign a Joint Controllership Agreement provided by the International Board, outlining shared responsibilities regarding the processing of personal data;
- Collect and manage participant data only in accordance with GDPR principles (lawfulness, transparency, data minimization, etc.).

The International Board will also provide:

- A Privacy Policy Template that must be adapted and shared with all participants together with the application form. This document will explain the purpose, scope, and legal basis for data processing, as well as participant rights (e.g. access, rectification, erasure);
- A Health Information Form to gather relevant information from participants in case of any medical conditions or food allergies, for health and safety purposes.

As an organising group, you are responsible for securely handling all personal and sensitive data collected before, during, and after the event. Ensure that:

- Access to data is limited to those with a legitimate need;
- Data is stored securely and deleted when no longer necessary.

Pre-ICM and Pre-ISM visit

After the election or appointment of the host, and before the respective IIM takes place, member(s) of the International Board of ELSA organise a pre-ICM/ISM visit. The visit is conducted by the Secretary General, sometimes accompanied by other members of the International Board of ELSA. The purpose of the visit is to meet with the Head(s) of the OC, go over the plans for the event, see all the venues, discuss outstanding tasks, discuss solutions to any arisen problems, as well as generally see how the International Board of ELSA best can support the OC. On a more detailed level, a very important part of the visit is to check the plenary room and workshop venues to make sure that everything meets the needs of the event.

Bear in mind that the OC shall cover accommodation expenses for the member(s) of the International Board of ELSA during the pre-ICM/ISM visit. However, it is often the case that, upon agreement, the OC members host the respective International Board member(s) at their houses in order to avoid any additional expenses.

Post-IIM considerations

Keep in mind that the work does not end with the IIM itself. Remember to coordinate the post-IIM process with, for example, finalising payments. And in the case of an ICM, writing the financial report. It is also good to conduct a debriefing session with the OC to review what worked well and what could be improved, and document findings for future reference. The International Board of ELSA usually gathers feedback from participants to assess the IIM and identify areas for improvement in future IIMs. It is a good practice to request the feedback from the International Board of ELSA to go over and discuss within the OC.

Practical tips by previous IIM hosts

Organising Committee

- Clearly define OC team roles with Heads and Vice Heads for each team;
- Recommended teams: Finance & Logistics, Marketing, Participants, Socials, Fundraising, Strategic Partnerships, Contact person IB;
- Consider a separate team for Transportation if logistics are heavy;
- Use a two-phase recruitment process:
 - Planning phase: recruit key roles early.
 - Execution phase: recruit practical task roles closer to the event.

Applications

- Assign a specific OC team (e.g., Participants Team) to manage applications;
- Open applications with clear travel guidelines and booking conditions;
- Align application deadline with accommodation provider's terms (e.g., cancellation policies);
- Ensure a responsive communication channel for Delegations.

Budget

- Use a “worst-case scenario” approach when budgeting;
- Prioritise essential expenses before committing to extras;
- Start fundraising well in advance with proper market research;
- Approach:
 - Local/national sponsors for exposure.
 - National alumni with ties to ELSA.
 - Universities offering LLM/PhD programs.
 - Consider organising an ELSA Training on fundraising.

Transportation

- Avoid buses when possible; choose walkable venues for social events;
- Keep travelling under 20 minutes whenever feasible;
- Minimise wait times for airport pickups (under 30 minutes);
- Group participants and schedule shuttles with efficiency in mind;
- Pre-plan return trips to avoid delays, especially from distant venues.

Social Programme

- Social Events:
 - Affordable drink options.
 - Walking-distance venues.

Annex 1: Quality Standards for ICM and ISM

Quality Standards

You can find the Quality Standards [here](#).



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