

# INTERNAL MANAGEMENT MANUAL

---

*elsa*

The European Law Students' Association

## Foreword

---

If you search for the most common definition of a Secretary General, you will find that it is a person in charge of administration. However, in ELSA, Secretaries General are responsible not only for administration but also for internal affairs, knowledge management, communication, information technology, human resources and ELSA Training. Our task is not basic paperwork, but internal management, which is key for association management.

The purpose of ELSA is “To contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers.” However, this is not possible if the association is not strong internally and doesn’t have strong human resources and internal governance structure. Thus, think of the Internal Management area as the foundation of the well-functioning of ELSA.

In this handbook, you will find a detailed overview and guidelines on what your main responsibilities are as a Secretary General and how to perform them. With so many responsibilities, being a Secretary General is not an easy task, but with proper planning and a sense of responsibility, nothing is impossible. Remember: “The secret to multitasking is that it is not actually multitasking. It is just extreme focus and organisation.”

Make sure to read this handbook carefully and start planning!

Sincerely yours,

**Yordan Kyurkchiyski**

Secretary General | International Board of ELSA 2023/2024

*Assisted in the revision of the handbook by:*

**Anna Szulc and Gabriela Tomaszewska**

Assistants for Internal Management | ELSA International Team 2023/2024

**Nea Nurmela and Rugilė Hokušaitė**

Assistants for International Internal Meetings | ELSA International Team 2023/2024

*Based on the original draft of:*

**Nana Gegia**

Secretary General | International Board of ELSA 2019/2020

**Akvile Jurkaityte**

Secretary General | International Board of ELSA 2018/2019

**Nurcan Sarikaya and Kristin Ferm**

IM Team | ELSA International Team 2019/2020

*Last revised May 2024.*



## Table of Contents

<b>The role of the Secretary General in ELSA.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Areas of responsibility.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Administration.....	4
Regulations.....	4
Statutory Meetings.....	4
Other meetings.....	8
Materials.....	8
Member management.....	8
Communication and Information.....	9
ELSA Training.....	9
Human Resources.....	10
<b>Cooperation with other areas.....</b>	<b>11</b>
IM and BEE.....	11
IM and FM.....	11
IM and MKT.....	11
IM and the Key Areas (AA, C, PD and S&C).....	12
Cooperation with the whole Board.....	12
<b>Planning and transition.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## The role of the Secretary General in ELSA

As a Secretary General, your job is not, as the title might mislead you, to be a secretary. Instead, your job is more like Vice Presidents in other associations. As such, your work spans over all things that happen internally in ELSA.

In other words, you are responsible for all the basic functions of the organisation - the sphere of Internal Management, which is divided into four dimensions:

1. *Administration*: to know the norms that guide our association and to act in accordance with them, as well as ensuring the member management.
2. *Communication and Information*: being in touch with the entire network, making sure that proper information is given to those that need it in the best way possible, the resources and tools you use are known to everybody as well as having the contact details of your members, partners and others updated.
3. *ELSA Training*: giving soft skills and tools to our members and officers. It is your responsibility to be in contact with the trainers and to help your local groups arrange training events.
4. *Human Resources*: your Human Resources strategy should be focused on the [Human Resources Model of ELSA](#) (p.7):
  - Attraction and recruitment - approaching potential new members or board members;
  - Training and development - providing tools and skills to the members with the help of the trainers;
  - Engagement and Retention - ensuring people are motivated and knowing their tasks; and
  - Transition and Exit - facilitating a smooth transition for new members and transformation of existing such into alumni.

Always keep in mind that Internal Management is a supporting area, and your job always includes supporting team members with their activities.

## Areas of responsibility

### Administration

#### Regulations

The internal regulations of ELSA on the international level are, firstly, the international Statutes and Standing Orders (SSO). ELSA is formally registered as an association in the Netherlands, and thus, the law under which ELSA is regulated is Dutch law, and the official language of the SSO is Dutch. However, for ease an accurate English translation of the SSO is maintained for day-to-day reference.

The SSO of ELSA regulate the structure, purpose, and the organs of ELSA and can be considered as the constitution of our association. The SSO are the statutory fundament for the entire network, which means that all National and Local Groups' internal regulations must be in compliance with them.

The International Council Meeting Decision Book (DB) is a compilation of all in-force decisions that the International Council has taken so far. The International Council is the supreme decision-making body of ELSA on the international level and it meets twice a year in International Council Meetings. The second organ of ELSA is the International Board, which is the supreme executive body of ELSA.

The DB is binding on the international level and toward every National Group. In case of a conflict between the national legislation and the international regulations of ELSA, the national legislation will prevail in order to ensure the functions in the certain country. However, generally, the regulations of all National Groups are required to be in accordance with the international regulations, and that is why a group applying to become an Observer or a full Member of ELSA has to prove that its regulations are in accordance with the international regulations of ELSA.

As a National Secretary General, you have to be familiar with your own national regulations and laws to make sure that your National Group complies with them. You also need to inform your Local Groups of the norm hierarchy of ELSA and make sure they are in compliance with it, as well as making sure that all the possible revisions of your regulations are in accordance with ELSA's international regulations.

#### Statutory Meetings

There are three statutory meetings: the International Council Meeting (ICM); the National Council Meeting (NCM); and the Local Council Meeting (LCM).

##### *International Council Meeting (ICM)*

The ICM is a biannual event that takes place every autumn and spring and lasts for five days in the autumn and one week in the spring. The International Council consists of the Members and Observers of ELSA and is the supreme decision-making body whose decisions are binding to the International Board and to Members and Observers. An International Council decision can only be overturned by a subsequent Council decision. Such decisions are recorded in the International Council Meeting Decision Book (DB) as mentioned above.

The International Council is officially assembled in a plenary session, and there are usually three plenary sessions during the ICM. Before any decision is taken in a plenary session, the proposals are discussed in the workshops. At every ICM, there are seven different workshops; one for each area. The workshops are supervised by the responsible International Board member and chaired by an experienced delegate. In addition to the Chair, there is a Vice Chair and Secretaries.

Three weeks before each ICM, the International Board sends out the Working Materials, which include all the proposals, eventual Membership and Observer Status applications, and the agendas for both plenary and workshop sessions.

The host of an ICM is elected approximately 18 months prior to the event by the International Council. All Local and National Groups of ELSA are eligible to apply and host the International Council Meeting. If the host is not elected by the International Council in two International Council Meetings prior to the respective International Council Meeting, the International Board appoints the host.

The International Board is elected during the spring ICM preceding their term.

As a Secretary General, you should:

- Make sure that, if your National Group has proposals to the International Council Meeting or Input Papers to be discussed during the ICM, they are to be submitted to the Secretary General of the International Board within the deadline, stipulated by the SSO;
- Make sure to read the regulations about the responsibilities of the National Groups in order to have voting rights (financial obligations, State of the Network Inquiry, National Group Report, Letter of Authorisation). These requirements can be found in Article 7.3 of the SSO;
- Make sure that your board appoints the Head of Delegation for the International Council Meeting, who will be in constant communication with the Organising Committee;
- Inform your National Board members and Local Officers about the ICM and necessary preparations for it;
- Make sure to discuss proposals related to the area of Internal Management with your local Secretaries General (if applicable);
- Arrange a meeting with your National Board to discuss the proposals together and decide what is your position regarding them;
- Make sure to read the Working Materials and prepare everything required for the workshops;
- Take care of all the necessary communication with the International Board before the ICM, have a Pre-ICM call with the Secretary General of the International Board and share your inputs and feedback with regards to the proposals;
- Participate in the ICM and the IM Workshops, and try your best to make sure that your National Group is represented in all the workshops.

### *National Council Meeting (NCM) and Local Council Meeting (LCM)*

The NCM and LCM are different from country to country and local group to local group because each country has different laws and regulations. During these meetings, the groups can change their own statutes and regulations in accordance with the norm hierarchy of ELSA. As a

national Secretary General, you are responsible for the NCM, as well as making sure that the local Secretaries General in your country know of their responsibility for the LCMs.

As mentioned, the Secretary General is the main person in charge of making sure NCMs are arranged. This can be split up into four parts:

1. *Preparation and compilation of Working Materials* – make sure that the Working Materials are finished on time, according to the internal regulations of your country, and make sure to verify that all officers and other participants receive them. The Working Materials should include practical information, proposals, input papers, and agendas for the plenary and the workshops. The National Board should work as a team in drafting the Working Materials and deciding on the topics on the agenda.
2. *Organising the NCM* – make sure to establish good communication and cooperation with the OC of the hosting local group, as well as give instructions and advice on how to organise the NCM. It might be helpful to create guidelines for the hosts so that it is easier for them to plan everything. Keeping your board members informed is equally important.

Organising the content of the NCM itself can be divided into the following parts:

- **Plenaries:** The easiest way to coordinate a plenary is to create a roadmap for the whole process. Make sure to have a few calls with the Chair and Vice Chair before the plenary, and go through all the regulations and procedures to make sure that you understand them the same way, and there are no misunderstandings at the NCM. Create your roadmap soon enough so that you have time to discuss it with your board and your chairs.
  - **Workshops:** Make sure that your workshops are based on the needs of your local Secretary Generals. Creation of the workshop roadmap may help you to have a clear overview of what to do in the workshops.
  - **Freshers' Workshop:** If there are freshers attending the NCM, make sure to plan a *Freshers' Workshop*. Having a general workshop about ELSA and the purpose of the NCM should be enough. Try to make it as simple as possible so that they don't get lost in our complicated ELSA language with all the abbreviations.
  - **Communication:** Communication is key to everything, make sure to have a channel where you can communicate with the participants and the OC.
3. *The NCM itself* – lead the IM workshop and make sure that all decisions made at the plenaries are in accordance with all the norms that you should follow (including giving out the voting rights to the members who have fulfilled their obligations).
  4. *Evaluation of the NCM* – the minutes taken during the NCM shall be sent out to the network, and the regulations shall be updated in accordance with eventual decisions made. Also make sure to have an evaluation meeting with your organising group and the Head of Delegations to discuss the event (and write down potential advice to your successors), send out an evaluation form to the participants.

*How to support your Locals Groups with organising the Local Council Meeting?*

Create some guidelines on how to organise Local Council Meetings. Support your local Secretaries General, visit them in their LCMs, if it is possible or have calls before their LCMs, give them a chance to ask all their questions.



### Other meetings

#### *International Annual Meetings*

There are two annual meetings within ELSA: the International Training Meeting and the International Strategy Meeting.

The International Training Meeting (ITM) is a meeting for training and educating ELSA Officers which takes place annually within the first two months of each term.

The International Strategy Meeting (ISM) is a meeting for strategic planning and evaluation which takes place annually in winter (January – February).

National Groups can send eight delegates to the ITM and three delegates to the ISM.

#### *National Officers' Meetings*

In some countries, there are National Officers' Meetings, with the same purpose as the international meetings, but taking place nationally or regionally.

### Materials

#### *Council Meeting Working Materials and Minutes*

The Working Materials is the document that establishes what is going to be presented and discussed during the Council Meeting, and should contain an agenda and the proposals. It should be accessible to all members who are going to be present during the meeting.

The minutes are a report of everything that happened during the meeting, including the identity of the present people, what was said during discussions and by whom, and the voting results. Secretaries for this task should be elected at the beginning of the Council Meeting, and all present members should have a chance to approve them after the meeting.

Please note that the timeline, content and format of Working Materials and Minutes of a Council Meeting are normally regulated within the national law applicable to your ELSA Group.

#### *Board meeting agenda and minutes*

Before each board meeting, an agenda should be set that includes what is to be discussed, for which every board member has a right to propose a topic. This is the responsibility of the Secretary General or the President.

Minutes should be taken during the board meeting showing the discussion and result of the voting on different items. If necessary, the format must be in accordance with national law.

### Member management

Member management is very important for the network, as it's the only way to know who the current members are and how to reach them if needed. You should have a database that is updated continuously, and in accordance with the law. While creating and maintaining such a database make sure to act in accordance with Data Protection laws such as the General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) in the European Union.

### Communication and Information

As Secretary General, you are responsible for the internal communication (and the President is responsible for the communication with externals). This means, you are in charge of making sure that potential members, actual members and alumni receive the information they need about the internal affairs of ELSA (i.e. how to become a member, how to gain voting rights, if there are any alumni events).

You are also in charge of communicating with the International Board, and giving relevant information from that communication to your local officers. In this context, you are a sort of middleman between the international and the local level of ELSA.

While communication touches upon the importance of getting information out, the information part touches upon *what* is to be communicated.

It is important that potential members get enough information through different channels and in accordance with the human resources strategy set up by your board/local groups. This strategy should take into consideration annual events organised to recruit new members, marketing materials distributed to students, with the main goal to build up the motivation for students to join.

In both of these areas, you will work closely with the Vice President in charge of Marketing.

### ELSA Training

ELSA Training is one of the most important projects in the association that serves as a tool to help our members and officers with self-improvement, team building and soft skill development. As Secretary General, you are the one responsible for organising training events as well as instructing board members and local officers on how to do it, and why it is important.

Training events can take place on all levels of ELSA, as, for instance, the “Train the Trainers & Refreshment Weekend” on an international level, as well as trainings arranged by different National or Local Groups together, or locally by a Local Group.

As Secretary General, you should encourage your board and local groups to organise at least one training each year, as well as encourage your members to participate in these events. Explain how to organise an ELSA Training to your local officers in the workshops at your National Officers Meeting or National Council Meeting. Show them the website of ELSA Training and support them in organising it.

ELSA International has an International Trainers' Pool (ITP) consisting of experienced former ELSA members who have undergone special training themselves in order to become trainers. The coordinators of the ITP are the Secretary General of the International Board of ELSA and the Director for Training of the ELSA International Team. More information on how to apply for a trainer from the ITP can be found on: <https://training.elsa.org/>. In case of any questions, feel free to contact the coordinators at [elsa-training-team@elsa.org](mailto:elsa-training-team@elsa.org).

In ELSA, there are two types of Trainings: **Soft Skills trainings** (i.e. public speaking, time management, etc.) and **Officers' trainings** (How to organise an ELSA Law School, External Relations, Human Resources Management, etc.).

A training by a trainer from the ITP is free, but you should however cover their travel and accommodation costs. If the training has an international aspect, you can also apply to the ELSA Development Foundation (EDF) to cover these costs.

### Human Resources

ELSA depends on the dedication and involvement of our members – they make up the base of the network. As a Secretary General, you are responsible for the human resources. A typical ELSA officer will go through four phases of membership development:

1. *Potential member* – students developing a general interest in ELSA through our social activities and promotional events, but are not yet members.
2. *Passive member* – a student who has become a member, but is not yet actively participating in our events. At this stage, the student is looking for key area events and it is the perfect chance to motivate them to get actively involved.
3. *Active member* – the member is getting involved in organising events as a team member, an assistant or a director as well as a board member. At this stage, you should encourage them to participate in meetings on local, national or international level, or in training events.
4. *Alumni* – members who are no longer actively involved in the association, but who might still be interested in participating in some events. They can also be a valuable source of support and advice for the current active officers.

Some Alumni also choose to become *Trainers* - people who share their experience and knowledge to assist in the development of the members of the Association by delivering trainings.

In order to increase the quality and quantity of ELSA members there is a tool - the Human Resources Model of ELSA that constitutes a framework to be implemented throughout the Network and which can be adapted by each group to their own needs via a tailored Human Resources Strategy. For this, please refer to the [Human Resources Handbook](#).

## Cooperation with other areas

---

### IM and BEE

From the beginning of the term, the Secretary General and the President should form a firm team, as there are things that require intensive cooperation between these areas:

- *Expansion* – while the President is in charge of establishing new local groups or covering more law faculties existing in the state, the Secretary General shall support it in IM-related matters such as statutes and standing orders, a proper transition, and establishing the basic internal management in the new group;
- *External Relations* – the Secretary General is usually the one in charge of the general email address of the National Group. Should an external contact this, it is your responsibility to forward this to the President.
- *Board Management and Board Meetings* – Board Meeting agenda and minutes of the Meeting is one of the responsibilities of the Secretary General. Though, this varies from National Group to National Group and their association law as to who is chairing the Board Meeting, who is keeping the minutes etc. You may have a rotating system, and other board members may also contribute and keep minutes of the meetings if the statutes or association law does not specifically oblige a Secretary General to carry out this task.

Please bear in mind that in order to avoid any misunderstandings, it is important to discuss with the President how you work together on these specific areas, since they all are very closely linked to Internal Management.

### IM and FM

The Secretary General and the Treasurer cooperate closely when it comes to member management regarding fees and invoicing, as well as the fulfilment of financial obligations to gain voting rights.

### IM and MKT

One important process of human resources is attraction, which is an area where the Vice President in charge of Marketing plays a vital part as well. For the marketing materials, the Secretary General should supply the content, and the Vice President in charge of Marketing should design it in an appealing way. You should also work together on brainstorming ideas on how to attract new members. Corporate Identity is not only important externally, but also internally. Here, the Vice President in charge of Marketing can help design document templates to be used for manuals, minutes, presentations, etc.

### **IM and the Key Areas (AA, C, PD and S&C)**

Key Areas play a big part in the human resources strategy, which the Secretary General is in charge of. Make sure the Key Areas are aware of the strategy, and work together on implementing it. Also be ready to help with contact information for alumni etc.

### **Cooperation with the whole Board**

As the main administrator within your National Group, you will also have to manage and cooperate with your whole board. This aspect refers to the planning of your internal calendar, organising your communication and information-sharing channels (e.g., Slack, G-Suite, etc.), and facilitating the preparations of your board for the National Council Meeting.



## Planning and transition

At the beginning of your term, it is important that you write a One Year Operational Plan (OYOP), which works like a roadmap, helping you decide on objectives, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, for the upcoming term.

This should be a realistic plan for the upcoming year, both for the entire board as a whole, as well as individual goals for each board position. This plan will not guarantee success, but the lack of a solid plan for the term will almost certainly lead to failure – when you know your goals, it is obviously easier to work towards them.

At the end of your term, the transition is an essential tool in making sure the experience and knowledge you have gained are not lost as well as ensuring continuity in terms of association management and its governance. For this, please refer to the [Transition Manual](#).