

# CORPORATE IDENTITY HANDBOOK

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MARKETING 2024/2025



The European Law Students' Association

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## Foreword

Since the introduction of the ELSA Brand Book in the 2016/17 term, corporate identity has become the foundation of ELSA's marketing efforts and a key element of our collective image. As an organisation led by law students, we understand the importance of structure and consistency. Our brand is not only a visual asset but also a reflection of the values and professionalism we uphold across our entire Network.

The ELSA Brand Book was created to serve as both a practical guide and a formal reference point, providing clarity on how our brand should be used at all levels – from local events to international projects. Its strength lies in its simplicity, ensuring that no matter the country or context, our visual identity remains cohesive and recognisable.

However, maintaining a strong corporate identity goes beyond following guidelines. It requires awareness, cooperation, and continuous education throughout the Network. Each year, new challenges and questions arise about brand usage, prompting the need for further guidance and shared best practices.

This Corporate Identity Handbook was developed to complement the Brand Book by addressing the most common questions, offering practical advice, and outlining how to handle corporate identity violations. Safeguarding our brand is not the sole responsibility of ELSA International; it relies on the commitment of National and Local Officers alike. Through this shared effort, we ensure that ELSA's image remains unified, professional, and reflective of the vibrant community it represents.

We hope that this handbook will serve as a valuable and enduring tool for Officers at every level of the Network, providing clarity, fostering consistency, and supporting the growth of ELSA's brand for many years to come.



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## What is corporate identity and why is it important?

**Corporate Identity (CI)** is the sum of the visual, verbal, and behavioural elements that an organisation uses to present itself both internally and externally. It encapsulates the identity of the organisation, what it stands for, and how it wishes to be perceived. For ELSA, CI is not merely an aesthetic exercise; it is the core of its reputation, credibility, and long-term impact. CI refers to the unique characteristics, values and visual features that distinguish an organisation from others. It is an integrated system that includes:

### Visibility and Recognition

Strong CI makes an organisation recognisable and memorable. Everything we do in the association contributes to its reputation and long-term identity, for better or for worse. A consistent look and feel across all communication (whether at International Council Meetings, local events, or on social media) enhances ELSA's visibility across its vast Network and beyond.

### Credibility and Trust

Credibility is not merely built on what an organisation says but how consistently it lives out its values. For ELSA, maintaining professional communication, respecting cultural diversity, and upholding human rights values are central to gaining trust from stakeholders, including students, universities, law firms, international institutions, and partners.

The ELSA logo, fonts (Lato and EB Garamond), official colours (notably ELSA blue and orange), and the consistent tone of voice are codified in the ELSA Brand Book (an Annex to the International Council Meeting Decision Book) to ensure coherence. These are not decorative details but essential tools for conveying ELSA's mission: *“to contribute to legal education, foster mutual understanding, and promote social responsibility among law students and young lawyers”*.

## The Risks of Neglecting CI

Poorly managed Corporate Identity can lead to internal fragmentation, public misperception, and reduced member engagement. For ELSA, corporate identity is not just a set of rules; it is the living expression of its mission, vision, and values. It is how the association shapes its place in the world, builds trust with partners, and inspires its members to strive for excellence. By investing in a strong, coherent Corporate Identity, ELSA ensures it remains a leading and unifying force in the European legal community.

## Explanations of logo usages with examples

The usage of the ELSA logo is a common point giving rise to CI violations in our ELSA Network. The Brand Book carefully sets out four main guidelines for logo usage, as you can see below:



## Using the correct logo for your Local/National Group

The ELSA Logo contains three main parts as seen here →

1. The 'logo element' ('ELSA')
2. The full text - "The European Law Students' Association"
3. The name of the Local or National Group (the city/country)



The logo that you are using should **ALWAYS** contain these three parts! Lack of the National/Local name under the ELSA logo leads to a violation of the Brand Book → the use of the logo of ELSA International is strictly reserved for ELSA International and shall not be used by National/Local Groups.

## Logo colors

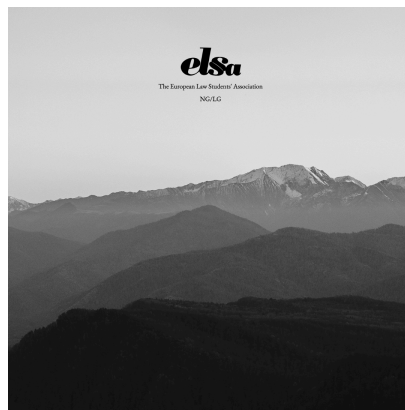
The ELSA logo can be found in three different colours:

ELSA Blue (**#0a3087**), white (**#ffffff**), or black (**#000000**).

The guidelines on how to use these colours are carefully set out in the Brand Book, and below are examples of how to use and not to use the different colored logos.



**Example 1:** Use a colour that will show on the background! Using a white logo on a light background or a blue logo on a darker background is not a visible option and is therefore a CI violation.



**Example 2:** Wrong use of the black logo. The black logo can only be used on black and white materials. Even though the logo is visible, the first picture below is a CI violation. If you are uncertain of when you can use the black logo, ask the Vice President in charge of Marketing of ELSA International. However, the safest option is to adjust your black and white design only a little, and you are able to use a white logo without the risk of a CI violation!

## Clear space rule

This is probably the most common CI violation that we see daily! Respecting the clear space rule is very important when creating marketing materials. Here are some guidelines to follow to make sure that you don't violate the clear space rule!

### What is the clear space rule?

In order to maintain the integrity of the ELSA logo, it is important that no other logos, inscriptions or graphical elements infringe on the space around it. The clear space rule is a common practice in marketing, and it is used by the most recognisable brands, such as Netflix or Google.

The size of the clear space is determined by the cap height of the letter "e" in the design part of the ELSA logo and is to be respected for all directions, as seen below.



As can be seen above, the height of the **E** is marked with an x to determine the height. When using the logo in a post, no element, text, etc., can enter the striped area.



This post shows how to use the ELSA logo in accordance with the clear space rule. No element, text or the edge of the post area interferes with the “invisible” striped area around the ELSA logo.



### **This is an example of a CI violation!**

Compared to the first post, this one has the building element interfering with the clear space if you were to put the striped area around the ELSA logo. NOTE: This would also be a CI violation if the building element stayed but the ELSA logo was moved to the edge of the post since the edge would interfere with the clear space instead!

## **Use of Handwritten Fonts**

In recent years, there has been discussion sparked in the Network about the use of handwritten fonts. While Lato and EB Garamond remain our official typefaces, a handwritten font may be used sparingly in specific contexts:

### **✓ Permitted Use:**

- For special occasions (e.g. galas, winter campaigns, holiday greetings, etc.);
- As a headline element, not for a body of text;
- Only when it aligns stylistically with the event or theme;
- Only as an element – it should not replace ELSA’s corporate fonts, but serve as a decorative highlight.

### **⊘ Not Allowed:**

- Using handwritten fonts for text paragraphs;
- Replacing Lato or EB Garamond in general promotional materials;
- Excessive or unrelated stylisation (e.g. casual birthday-style fonts for academic posts).

**Reminder:** Whenever in doubt, consult your National VP Marketing or ELSA International.

## Safeguarding the brand of ELSA in audiovisual materials

Audiovisual materials – such as videos, animations, reels, or TikToks – are among the most powerful tools to promote ELSA and its projects. They capture attention quickly and are widely shared. However, they also carry a high risk of inconsistent branding if not done correctly. To safeguard ELSA's brand, keep the following principles in mind:

### Use of the ELSA Logo:

- Ensure the logo is clear, in the correct proportions, and not distorted, pixelated, or cropped.
- Respect the logo clear space, even in video overlays;
- For dynamic visuals, the logo may appear in animated form, but must be displayed in its correct static form for at least 1 second (as per the ELSA Brand Book).

### Text Usage on Screen:

- Ensure that the text is readable: use sufficient contrast, and keep font size and spacing optimised for mobile and desktop viewing;
- Use animated texts to make audiovisuals more engaging for your audience.

### Imagery and Footage:

- Use high-quality footage. Avoid blurry, shaky, or pixelated clips;
- Respect image rights: ensure you have permission to use and publish all filmed content;
- Avoid showing controversial political symbols, inappropriate backgrounds, or anything that could conflict with ELSA's non-political status.

### Accessibility & Subtitles

- Always include subtitles for spoken content to improve accessibility and engagement;
- Maintain correct grammar, consistent styling, and readable placement for subtitles.

If you're unsure whether your audiovisual material complies with ELSA's brand identity, ask your National VP Marketing or ELSA International for feedback before publishing.

## Creating new brands for National ELSA projects

**Fonts:** You may use fonts outside of the ELSA corporate fonts, but they should match the tone and professionalism of the ELSA brand. Avoid overly playful, handwritten, or stylised fonts unless there is a clear and justified thematic reason.

**Colours:** New colours can be introduced in the sub-brand, especially if they reflect the unique identity of the project. However, ensure they do not visually clash with the ELSA blue or make sure to be able to use the white ELSA Logo instead.

**Logo Integration:** If designing a project logo, it should be visually aligned with the ELSA brand. The ELSA logo must remain visible and correctly applied according to the Brand Book.

**Visual Elements:** Incorporate clean, minimalistic elements and avoid overly stylised designs. Make sure it reflects the nature of the project and aligns with our identity.

## Why Brand Creation Requires Coordination

As a Europe-wide association, ELSA's brand represents legal professionalism, unity, and trust. When Local or National Groups launch new projects, they must maintain visual and structural consistency with ELSA's corporate identity. To safeguard this consistency, you must contact ELSA International before creating any sub-brand or visual identity for a new project.

## When and How to Ask for Permission

Before launching a new logo, brand colour scheme, or visual identity for a project:

- Always contact the Vice President in charge of Marketing of ELSA International;
- Share the project name, purpose and draft visuals;
- Wait for guidance, feedback, or approval to avoid rework or violations

**This step ensures:**

- Compatibility with the overall ELSA brand
- No visual overlap or confusion with existing international projects

## Tips & tricks

### Putting the logo on photo posts

When you are putting the ELSA logo on your posts, make sure you have read the chapter above on the explanation of the logo usage, as well as consulted the Brand Book! This chapter will provide you with some tips and tricks to make it easier for you to know where and how you should place your logo on posts.

**Tip no. 1:** Remove the background for a smoother area for your logo



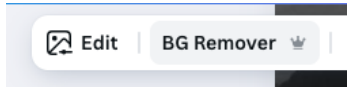
Let's say you want to use this picture for your post.

As you can see, there is no obvious place for your logo to be placed without potentially violating Corporate Identity. **Avoid placing the logo in any of the spots showcased in the photo!** The most optimal thing would be to remove one of the buildings to be able to place the ELSA logo and any potential text on a clear background.



This is how to do that in Canva:

1. Select the photo you would like to alter.
2. Select the “BG Remover” tool.



3. You should now be left with the photo without the sky.
4. Click on “BG Remover” again, and you should see an option to “erase” and an option to “restore”.
5. If you wish to remove more elements, such as a building, click on “erase” and start removing the element.
6. If you wish to restore some of the elements that were automatically removed at first, do that too.
7. When you perform this process, the sky will also be removed. Fix this by adding another photo of the sky and placing it underneath your altered image. The result should look something like the photos above.
8. You should now have a smooth background to place your logos and text. This is also a great way to get rid of any unwanted elements in the sky that disturb text or other elements that are in the way of your creations!



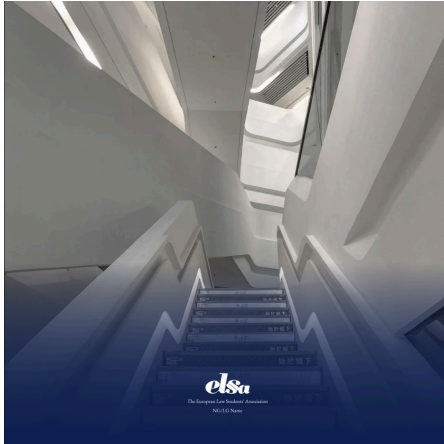
Another option is to use the “Magic Eraser” tool, which can also be found under “Edit” when selecting a photo in Canva. However, be careful when using these tools since they can leave unwanted “stains” on the photo after removing elements, as showcased in the image on the left.

As you can see, there is a darker spot in the top right corner that stains the photo we have altered. This leaves an unprofessional impression, which is certainly not desirable. Always make sure to double-check your design in this aspect before downloading it and publishing.

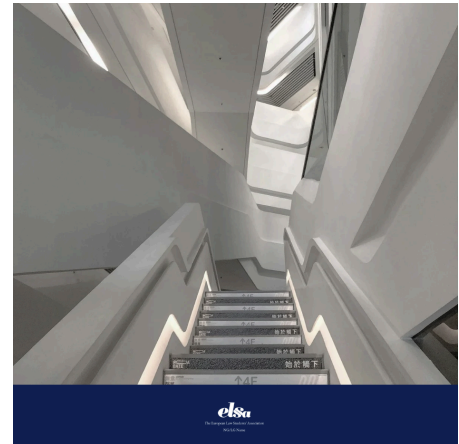
## Safeguarding CI through graphic elements

Whenever sharing a photo post, the correct inclusion of the ELSA logo is not an easy task. To make sure that you respect the clear space, while not compromising the aesthetics of the graphic, we recommend the following:

### Using a gradient



### Using other graphic elements



## CI monitoring

As the Vice President in charge of Marketing on the National level, you are not only responsible for respecting CI yourself, but also in charge of monitoring the status of CI in your National Network. ELSA International has a general oversight of the Network; however, it is not without the National VPs' involvement that Corporate Identity can actually be respected across over 400 Local Groups in Europe. This is why your role in monitoring the safeguard of ELSA's regulations - in this case, the ELSA Brand Book - is instrumental to the state of CI and the ELSA Brand.

## CI violation detected - what do I do?

### 1. Assess the severity of the violation

The action you undertake regarding the violation largely depends on multiple factors, most importantly on the type of violation, as well as its potential repeated nature and the time that has elapsed since its publication. The use of ELSA International's logo, as well as any alterations to the National/Local Group's logo (such as cutting a part of it or including elements on top of it), are violations that are considered severe.

### 2. Time elapsed since the publication

When deciding on the response to a corporate identity violation, it's important to consider how much time has passed since the content has been made available to a wider public. If you notice the violation soon after, the mistake can still be corrected, and it is worth it to act quickly in notifying the Local Group about it. However, if you are seeing the violation a longer time after the fact, consider whether your notification should focus on deleting the content or rather notifying the violating group and observing their actions in the future.



### **3. Is it the first time?**

Make sure to keep track of the violations in your Network and react to subsequent violations accordingly. First-time violations shall be treated with a less strict approach (except in the situation of severe violations), while continuous disregard for the corporate identity of ELSA shall result in a stricter reaction.

### **4. Take down the post vs keep in mind for the future**

Based on the aforementioned considerations, you need to make a decision on how to notify the violating ELSA Group and what kind of consequences you would like to impose. The most common consequences range from asking the Group to take the post down to notifying them of the violation and asking to keep an eye out for this and other violations in the future. The time elapsed since publication, together with the repeatedness of the said violation, are factors that should be taken into consideration when making a decision. Keep in mind that posts of a political nature, or those using the ELSA International logo, should be taken down in order not to compromise ELSA's brand identity, no matter the aforementioned factors.

#### **Tip No. 1**

Make sure to, at the beginning of your term, follow all of the Local Groups' social media accounts, in order to stay up to date with the content they are sharing and detect any CI violations in time.

#### **Tip No. 2**

Stay up to date with the content shared by the Local Groups in your National Network. Get a habit of checking their social media accounts or often simply scrolling through the feed on your official ELSA account. This way, there is no need for deliberately visiting their profile, since any new posts come up immediately.

#### **Tip No. 3**

Always use your official ELSA social media account to bring corporate identity violations to your Local Groups' attention. This way, the communication is archived in one place and the message is an official notification, coming from a legitimate source, i.e. an ELSA account. Messaging groups from your personal account might be perceived as informal and therefore not 'binding'.

## Message template

The way you notify an ELSA Group about a violation has a big impact on how the message is received and what the approach of the said Group will be towards the corporate identity. Here is an example of a message that you can send whenever you want to notify an ELSA Group about their violation of corporate identity:

*Hello! I really like the visuals of your post! I love how you used that gradient. I just noticed that the corporate identity rules of ELSA are not respected. The ELSA logo's clear space is not safeguarded/the colours used are not ELSA's colours/the fonts are different from ELSA's fonts. Corporate identity is an important part of who we are as an association, and the rules concerning it are to be found in the ELSA Brand Book, which are to be found **here**. Since not a long time has passed since you shared the post, I'd like to ask you to take it down and reupload it after correcting the violations. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me!*

*Name Surname*

*Position*

## Contacts & helpful resources

### Vice President in charge of Marketing of ELSA International

[marketing@elsa.org](mailto:marketing@elsa.org)

### Director for Marketing on the ELSA International Team

[director.marketing@elsa.org](mailto:director.marketing@elsa.org)

### Find ELSA on social media!

Instagram & Facebook: @elsainternational

LinkedIn: ELSA

## Helpful resources

Corporate Identity explained:

<https://marcom.com/four-reasons-why-a-strong-brand-should-begin-with-corporate-identity/>

ELSA Transition Handbook:

<https://files.elsa.org/MKT/Handbooks/MKT%20Transition%20Handbook.pdf>

## Sources used

The ELSA Brand Book:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jVWbXcuSMYfiqibRZ\\_Ly-Q0K6k6k3VOS/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jVWbXcuSMYfiqibRZ_Ly-Q0K6k6k3VOS/view)

Marketing Handbook:

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1crIJeBj5CFguoX4ixT9GG1A8MgvkuXVn/view>

External Sources:

- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/corporate-identity#:~:text=Corporate%20identity%20is%20how%20a,to%20create%20an%20intentional%20image.>
- <https://marcom.com/four-reasons-why-a-strong-brand-should-begin-with-corporate-identity/>
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- <https://medium.com/@eonian.social/importance-of-a-strong-corporate-identity-for-a-business-c196fe47cdea>
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- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361485248\\_Corporate\\_Identity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361485248_Corporate_Identity)
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