

# ONE YEAR OPERATIONAL PLAN

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INTERNATIONAL BOARD  
2023/2024



*elsa*

The European Law Students' Association

## FOREWORD

Dear Network,

We are excited to share with you our One Year Operational Plan for the term 2023/2024. The following pages are the outcome of our commitment to the values of Continuity, Fellowship, and Diversity. As we embark on our journey, these three core values will guide us towards fostering an environment that thrives on our collective strength, mutual understanding and sustainable progress.

### CONTINUITY

Continuity within our Association means upholding the legacy of our past achievements while adapting to the changing landscape of the present. We recognise the importance of preserving the core principles and lessons learned from our history while embracing innovation and evolution to remain relevant and impactful in an ever-changing world. By nurturing a culture of continuity, we ensure that our efforts are not isolated occurrences but rather part of a collective journey towards sustained progress. This involves fostering a sense of shared responsibility and empowering members to build upon the successes of those who came before them.

### FELLOWSHIP

The ELSA Network represents a global community of over 60.000 law students, which transcends borders, cultures and backgrounds. In such a diverse environment, we recognise the need for forging connections, fostering mutual understanding, and nurturing relationships among each other. For us, Fellowship underscores the belief that by coming together and embracing each other's unique perspectives, talents, and experiences, we contribute towards a more harmonious and interconnected global society. Encouraging engagement and open dialogue, we are empowered to collaborate, learn from each other, and work together towards the Philosophy Statement of ELSA.

### DIVERSITY

Being a human rights-oriented INGO in the 21st century, we recognise the importance of inclusivity and the undeniable value of diversity. Embracing diversity within our Network, we ensure a broader spectrum of perspectives, talents, and ideas, leading to more innovative and well-rounded solutions. Together we harness the power of our collective differences to create a stronger, more dynamic, and culturally enriched community that thrives on the collective strengths of our members.

With a heart full of ELSA blue, we invite you to #DreamDareDo!



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International Board of ELSA 2023/2024

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## CONTINUITY

### Functionality

Following the first year of the full implementation of the Board Reform, including the new division of projects between the areas of Academic Activities and Competitions, we are now experiencing challenges regarding the changes in the workload within the International Board. Additionally, the increasing number and scale of international projects, combined with the continuous growth of ELSA's infrastructure and the deficiencies in Human Resources to meet the growing demand, have placed an administrative burden on the International Board that endangers the quality of its work.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA International has a well-defined overview of the responsibilities between the different positions in the International Board and the ELSA International Team. This includes taking initial steps towards the division of the roles of Academic Activities and Competitions when it comes to the management of the Officers from these areas in the Network. Additionally, ELSA International has simplified and clarified its internal structure and refined the necessary tools to alleviate the workload of the International Board.

*Thus we aim to:*

- review and have a unified structure for all job descriptions in the ELSA International Team;
- create roadmaps for all Director positions within the ELSA International Team;
- establish a coherent method of G-Suite management within the International Board of ELSA;
- develop a consistent archiving system for the International Board of ELSA, including an updated archiving checklist;
- restructure and organise our archive on Filezilla;
- explore the feasibility of implementing further automation solutions for the Association and its projects;
- create an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of different work management tools in order to make a recommendation for the next International Board of ELSA;
- assess the feasibility of creating two separate communication channels as well as workshops for the areas of Academic Activities and Competitions;
- support interested National and Local Groups alike in transitioning to the structure of the International Board of ELSA, following the Board Reform; and
- carry out evaluation calls with the ELSA International Team at the end of the term in order to gather feedback on the functioning of each team and develop ways to make it more effective.

## **International Annual Meetings**

With the past changes to the International Annual Meetings (IAMs), some of which were implemented to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the purpose of these IAMs has been constantly shifting. This has led to them having an undefined structure and outcome, ultimately leading to decreasing levels of participation and an overall lack of interest.

*Our goal is that:*

By May 2024, ELSA has a concrete and settled structure, format and purpose of its IAMs. Additionally, ELSA has developed specific methods to increase participation in its IAMs.

*Thus we aim to:*

- adjust the timeline for the International Training Meeting (ITM) to ensure that the Working Materials are released with the opening of the application period;
- diversify the trainings and workshop topics of the ITM;
- develop evaluation forms for the IAMs with focused questions and clear outcomes;
- identify current and relevant areas of focus for the International Strategy Meeting (ISM);
- set a clear schedule for the ISM, including at least one workshop dedicated to the evaluation of the implementation of the current Strategic Plan of ELSA;
- open the discussion on the purpose of the IAMs during the ISM;
- start drafting a comprehensive plan on the format and execution of the ITM in the upcoming terms; and
- collaborate with the next International Board of ELSA regarding the timing and dates of the ITM ahead of their Transition.

## **Data Protection Compliance**

As an Association of law students and young lawyers, ELSA needs to guarantee continued compliance with laws and regulations applicable to its operations, with those relating to Data Protection as the highest priority due to the number of personal and potentially sensitive data being processed as part of the operations of the Association both inside and outside the European Union. With the rising importance of ELSA having a coherent data protection strategy, data privacy is an issue that we should raise awareness of as part of our operations on every level of the Association and towards ELSA's partners.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA International has a professionally verified roadmap that ensures its general compliance with the applicable data protection requirements. Furthermore, ELSA has a plan on how to stay updated on future EU and other applicable data protection regulations.

*Thus we aim to:*

- identify the actions that need to be undertaken to achieve complete Data Protection Compliance of ELSA International;
- involve members of the Advisory Body of ELSA with proven expertise in the field of Data Protection, as well as existing partners of ELSA, in the above-mentioned identification process;
- develop a clear protocol for data processing, retention and deletion within ELSA International, which includes a checklist of all applicable deadlines;
- re-draft existing hosting agreements to include appropriate Data Protection clauses;
- perform a comprehensive review of ELSA's existing privacy policies;
- sign data processing agreements with ELSA's existing partners;
- re-establish a cookie policy for ELSA's websites;
- explore the possibility of designating a dedicated Data Protection Officer;
- ensure the security of files containing personal data stored on Filezilla and our archive;
- update existing training materials on Data Protection and create templates for GDPR privacy policies;
- promote the member benefits connected to Data Protection offered by our partners; and
- provide expert GDPR training for the International Board of ELSA as a part of their Transition.

## **Website**

In a changing and digital world, ELSA needs to adjust and have a website that is up to the expectations of externals and members and adequately represents our Association's brand image. The change of the website has been previously postponed due to other priorities, alongside the additional lack of knowledge and financial and human resources.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA has a visually pleasing, user-friendly website that can be modified and is a tailor-made one-stop-shop solution to the needs of the Association. ELSA works with a provider who ensures the efficient maintenance of the website within a predefined budget.

*Thus we aim to:*

- review the steps undertaken by previous International Boards to find a new website hosting provider;
- evaluate our needs and expectations from the website and define a potential budget for it;
- perform Europe-wide research on hosting providers in and outside the Network to meet the aforementioned needs;

- conclude an agreement with the potential new hosting provider that would include *ad hoc* IT support;
- launch the new iteration of the general ELSA website (elsa.org);
- provide a set of priorities regarding the change of the subdomains in the following terms; and
- ensure that the International Board is properly trained on the usage and moderation of ELSA websites.

## Financial Sustainability

The financial shape of ELSA has traditionally been hard to predict in the long term. This underlines the need to increase the Association's financial stability through quality financial management and proper transfer of knowledge between Officers. Financial sustainability will also enable ELSA Officers to devote more resources to project management and ultimately increase the quality of projects and events.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the 85<sup>th</sup> International Council Meeting, ELSA International has a long-term plan for the strategic and financially responsible utilisation of its funds. In particular, it has also established proper tools to educate the ELSA Network on financial management. Additionally, ELSA International has analysed the organisational processes of its Flagship projects and set up a strategy for making them financially sustainable.

*Thus we aim to:*

- organise a webinar for the Network on the topic of financial literacy, including experts from the field;
- encourage the organisation of trainings on financial management within the Network, including but not limited to such in the context of the ELSA Skills Academy;
- analyse the income and expenditure of each of the Flagship projects of ELSA;
- research and sign an agreement with a potential sponsor eager to financially commit to the publication and expansion of the ELSA Law Review;
- expand the list of the Partner Law Schools of ELSA Law Schools;
- explore the possibility of establishing a general project partnership for ELSA Law Schools and have a concrete approach towards it;
- expand the list of partnerships for ELSA Traineeships;
- have a roadmap for the financial sustainability of ELSA Traineeships; and
- create a plan for the efficient use and potential investment of ELSA's funds.

## Grants

In order to increase and diversify the sources of its income and guarantee its continuous financial stability, ELSA needs to explore grants as a main alternative financial stream. In that direction, ELSA should focus on securing expert support to understand the procedure of acquiring international grants, increase the knowledge of its Officers and be able to evaluate unsuccessful past practices.

*Our goal is that:*

By January 2024, ELSA International has established a partnership with professionals who provide it with feedback on procedural matters concerning grant applications. Furthermore, by the end of the term, ELSA has an updated grants database and a stable level of knowledge within the Network regarding grant opportunities and application procedures.

*Thus we aim to:*

- have a grants IT programme, providing suggestions for grants to apply to, which can subsequently be added to the ELSA grants database;
- reform the ELSA grants database and improve its promotion by raising awareness of it amongst the Network during International Internal Meetings and Open Calls;
- organise a webinar for the Network on the theoretical and practical aspects of grant applications and their procedure, including experts from the field;
- write a guideline on grant procedure;
- create a timeline for the grants we regularly apply to;
- approach Alumni to assist with proofreading grants applications;
- perform extensive research for new grants throughout the whole year;
- collaborate with the next International Board of ELSA to include expert training on grants during the ITM; and
- provide expert training on grants for the International Board of ELSA as a part of their Transition.



## **FELLOWSHIP**

### **Knowledge Management**

Having existed for more than 40 years, ELSA has accumulated knowledge and experience which needs to be retained and transitioned to the next generation of Officers. Therefore, ELSA needs to focus on passing this knowledge in the most coordinated and efficient way.

*Our goal is that:*

By the 4<sup>th</sup> International Strategy Meeting, ELSA International has reviewed its existing knowledge management and training tools and created a coordinated system for their effective use by the Network. After the review and by the end of the term, ELSA International has updated the above tools and created new ones where knowledge gaps have been identified.

*Thus we aim to:*

- have a more coordinated approach towards the Coaching System;
- evaluate the current Officers' Portal of ELSA;
- restructure the Officers' Portal and include in it a unified platform for training;
- update outdated existing materials from the Officers' Portal;
- explore new tools for interactive and visual learning;
- create new materials that are more concise and helpful in applying the knowledge;
- create a guideline on the effective use of G-Suite and related tools;
- create adaptable Welcome Packages for ELSA Members and ELSA Officers, outlining the Association's structure, projects and helpful resources;
- develop an overarching training strategy that integrates different existing training tools, such as ELSA Training and the BEE Academy;
- collaborate with Alumni to complete missing parts from ELSA's archive and digitalise older files where possible; and
- have a structured Transition system for the ELSA International Team.

### **Communication**

Being a European continent-wide Association, ELSA should undertake steps to utilise its communication channels better, allowing for quick and unobstructed information exchange. In light of such need, the International Board of ELSA should focus on increasing the transparency towards the Network.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the 85<sup>th</sup> International Council Meeting, the International Board has the necessary communicative tools in order to maintain the relations and be transparent within itself and with the National Groups, ELSA International Team, and ELSA Alumni. ELSA has optimised its communication practices and adjusted to the current needs of each of the areas and the Network.

*Thus we aim to:*

- develop a strategy for utilising various communication methods within the Network, which involves specifying the suitable platform for each type of communication;
- set a clear purpose and timetable for Open Calls within each area;
- research and potentially establish a new mailing list system, following the sharing of information with other youth organisations;
- ensure continuous engagement with predecessors by activating our communication channels; and
- re-establish the Former IB Weekend.

## **Engagement**

ELSA benefits from the valuable contributions of its numerous members, and it is essential to acknowledge their dedication and celebrate their achievements with the wider Network. We can inspire greater engagement by recognising their efforts and involving them further in decision-making processes. Additionally, ELSA should work on extending its outreach to a broader audience.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA has strengthened the sense of belonging of its members to the Network and highlighted the importance of their achievements. The Network has a better perception of the work of the members of the ELSA International Team and acknowledges their contribution. ELSA has also engaged in further collaboration with other youth organisations and its partners by, amongst other means, sharing know-how and celebrating common successes.

*Thus we aim to:*

- formulate a comprehensive Human Resources Strategy for ELSA International;
- integrate ELSA Alumni in the Human Resources Strategy and increase their connection to the Network;
- expand the opportunities for ELSA Officers to further develop their knowledge and skills;
- expand the ELSA Skills Academy based on the feedback from Trainers and participants;

- improve and expand the outreach of the ELSA Awards;
- provide impactful and tangible awards for the winners of our campaigns, such as the Annual Human Rights Campaign or the International Focus Programme;
- encourage further involvement in Synergy;
- create a common strategy for the International Board on how to acknowledge the efforts of members of the ELSA International Team and Area Officers;
- recognise the contribution of the ELSA International Team through the Monthly Reports of the International Board of ELSA;
- involve the ELSA International Team further in the organisation and delivery of workshops during International Internal Meetings;
- participate in formal and social events of other youth organisations and increase our engagement on social media;
- increase the visibility of our partners and highlight the value of our relationship; and
- have a more anthropocentric approach to our social media.

## DIVERSITY

### Accessibility & Inclusivity

Acknowledging that some of ELSA's current structures result in an overall lack of accessibility from a financial and practical point of view, we believe that ELSA is currently prevented from fully exploring the undeniable value of its diversity. In trying to create an open and safe environment ELSA should evaluate the accessibility of its events and ensure the well-being of its members.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA International has taken steps to have more financially and practically accessible events. ELSA has reinforced its Welfare Strategy and focused on the unified implementation of the Code of Conduct.

*Thus we aim to:*

- assess the level of the financial accessibility of our events by including questions on financial aspects in their evaluation forms;
- expand our member benefits, especially those including educational and travel concessions;
- expand the International Council Meetings attendance scholarships in collaboration with ELSA Alumni;
- establish standard minimum remuneration for ELSA Traineeships;
- assess the practical accessibility of our events by evaluating their format and structure;
- provide event participants with a dedicated space to require special assistance and communicate access requirements;
- explore strategies for enhancing our practical and technical accessibility by potentially seeking expert opinions;
- draft guidelines on how to increase the accessibility of our events;
- reform the existing Code of Conduct of ELSA, and the Welfare Mechanisms, contained in it;
- ensure that the International Board of ELSA and the ELSA International Team sign the revised Code of Conduct;
- educate the Network on the Code of Conduct and the Welfare Mechanisms contained in it to ensure their implementation; and
- provide a Template Code of Conduct to National Groups that they can use to develop their own.

## Advocacy

Fulfilling its Philosophy Statement, ELSA should strive to increase its presence and impact within the international legal community. Standing for its values ELSA should continue raising awareness on the vibrant societal issues.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the term, ELSA has a more concrete direction for advocacy. ELSA International educates the Network on advocacy and how to use existing projects to advocate for current issues aligned with our vision and relevant from a legal perspective.

*Thus we aim to:*

- create a long-term roadmap that ensures continuous and sustainable advocacy efforts;
- regularly assess the impact of our advocacy efforts and adjust our strategies accordingly;
- perform accurate and up-to-date research on the topics we choose to advocate for;
- provide the Network with resources (e.g., educational materials, handbooks) to encourage new advocacy initiatives;
- use our legal writing tools (e.g., ELSA Law Review and International Legal Research Group) to adopt an impartial stance in certain pressing societal issues;
- increase the impact of ELSA Delegations by providing ELSA Delegates with better academic and practical preparation;
- explore the possibility of engaging with youth organisations on the organisation of side events happening during ELSA Delegation sessions; and
- integrate advocacy in projects where it's not currently present (e.g. Career Launch).

## Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility is one of the main parts of ELSA's Philosophy Statement. In recent years, ELSA developed tools, such as the Rule of Law Education (ROLE) Programme, to actively engage in social responsibility. Our Association should utilise those tools in order to leave a positive and measurable impact contributing to building a stronger civil society.

*Our goal is that:*

By the end of the 85<sup>th</sup> International Council Meeting, ELSA has set a clearer scope for Social Responsibility and identified all relevant projects. ELSA defines concretely the term social responsibility within our organisation in order to ensure its practical implementation.

*Thus we aim to:*

- highlight the advantages of the Rule of Law Education Programme within the Network by utilising resources such as handbooks, booklets, and Open Calls;
- establish a coaching system to support National Officers to implement the Rule of Law Education Programme effectively;
- develop the Rule of Law Education Programme by enhancing the collaboration with ELSA Alumni; and
- provide the Network with project concepts they can execute concerning Social Responsibility while simultaneously aiding them in incorporating a more socially responsible perspective into their overall event management.