



ACADEMIC PREPARATION HANDBOOK FOR **ELSA DELEGATIONS TO UNODC**

SEMINARS & CONFERENCES
2024/2025



ELSA
Delegations

elsa

The European Law Students' Association

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1. Introduction

This handbook aims to provide ELSA Delegates with all the necessary information to prepare themselves academically for a respective UNODC session. It is designed to be read alongside the Guidelines for the relevant institution. Any relevant feedback or questions are encouraged to improve this handbook for future ELSA Delegates.

1.1. About the European Law Students' Association

The European Law Students' Association (ELSA) is an international, independent, non-political, non-profit organisation run by and for students. It comprises students and recent graduates interested in academic and personal excellence in addition to their studies at their universities. ELSA offers law students a perfect platform to develop their existing skills, acquire new skills and meet fellow students and legal professionals throughout Europe.

Five law students from Austria, Hungary, Poland and West Germany founded ELSA in 1981. Today, ELSA is the world's largest independent law student association, and it is represented at nearly 432 law faculties in 41 countries across Europe with a membership of over 60,000 students and young lawyers.

ELSA's activities comprise a large variety of academic and professional events and projects organised to fulfil the vision of ELSA and to provide our members with opportunities to enhance their skills and interact with each other. Furthermore, ELSA provides law students with opportunities to develop their skills through our traineeship program and publications. Finally, working in the ELSA Network prepares active members of ELSA for their professional life through international experience gained through the association.

Vision

“A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”

Purpose

The purpose is to contribute to legal education, to foster mutual understanding and to promote social responsibility of law students and young lawyers by:

- providing opportunities for law students and young lawyers to learn about other cultures and legal systems in a spirit of critical dialogue and scientific cooperation;
- assisting law students and young lawyers in being internationally minded and professionally skilled;
- encouraging law students and young lawyers to act for the good of society.

To read more about ELSA, please visit our [website](#).

1.2. ELSA and International Organisations

ELSA has gained a notable reputation in the international community. For many years, thanks to having a special status within a number of different international organisations and institutions, its members and alumni are able to participate in events organised by those institutions.

ELSA has special status and cooperation with:

- UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (since 1994);
- UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) (since 1997);
- UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) (since 1997);
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
- Council of Europe (CoE) (since 2000);
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
- World Intellectual Property Organization (UNODC) (since 2005);
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (since 2016);
- Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (since 2022).

ELSA is exploring the possibility of gaining status with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

1.3. ELSA Delegations

ELSA Delegations are regulated in the [International Council Meeting Decision Book](#) under decisions relating to Seminars and Conferences (S&C). The relationship between ELSA and ELSA Delegates is regulated by the [ELSA Delegations Terms and Conditions](#).

To participate in ELSA Delegations, ELSA Members and ELSA Alumni need to fulfil the following requirements:

- The Application form shall be submitted before the deadline;
- The Application form shall be written in English;
- All the fields of the application form shall be filled.

Please refer to the relevant Guideline for more information on the process of being an ELSA Delegate. You can also find practical information pertaining to your stay in Vienna, and instructions for delegates who will join a delegation remotely. If you have any questions, please contact your

coordinator: dunecosoc@elsa.org, or the Director for ELSA Delegations: delegations@elsa.org.

2. About the Institution

The [Selection Criteria](#) do not require a particular level of education for applicants to attend a delegation. In fact, an applicant's grades are not considered during the selection process. However, we believe that, in order for delegates to represent ELSA to the best of their ability, it is important for them to have a good understanding of the session they will attend and the significance of the institution.

2.1. Introduction to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

2.1.1. What role does UNODC play in the United Nations?¹

UNODC helps to secure the aim of global peace and security laid out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. It does this by providing a forum to discuss major issues of drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism experienced across the globe. This is strongly connected to the overarching goals of sustainable development and the protection of human rights. UNODC can conduct research and help Member States to standardise policies around these core issues. Its solutions are designed to be evidence-based and comprehensive, to tackle threats on a regional, national, and international scale. UNODC also offers technical assistance to Member States (examples include legislative advice, training and capacity-building, and the provision of materials such as handbooks)².

Examples of areas covered by UNODC's technical assistance include: organised crime, human trafficking, cybercrime, corruption, and HIV/AIDS.³

2.1.2. History of UNODC⁴

UNODC was established in 1997, when the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme were combined into

¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/index.html>

² <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/international-cooperation/technical-assistance.html>

³ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/international-cooperation/technical-assistance.html>

⁴ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/index.html>

one organ. The Secretary General of the United Nations at the time was focused on addressing issues that are deeply interconnected, namely drug control, crime and international terrorism.

Today, UNODC has 20 offices covering more than 150 countries worldwide.⁵ This system allows UNDOC to tailor programmes and policies to the individual needs of a country or region.⁶

2.1.3. Development

Below, you can find a timeline of major developments in the field of drug control:⁷

- **1909** - the Opium Commission convened in Shanghai. This was the first international conference on drugs;
- **1912** - Opium Convention passed in the Hague, the Netherlands. First international treaty for drug control. It was incorporated into many peace treaties in 1919/20, following a rapid rise in drug use during World War One;
- **1925** - Opium Convention expanded to include cannabis;
- **1931** - the Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs was passed. Aimed to restrict the use of narcotics to medical and scientific needs;
- **1936** - Convention for the Suppression of the Illicit Traffic in Dangerous Drugs passed. The first international convention to criminalise certain drug offences at the international level;
- **1946** - International drug control became the responsibility of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) was established as the main body to deal with drug-related issues;
- **1948** - the Synthetic Narcotics Protocol put a range of new drugs under international control;
- **1953** - Signing of the Opium Protocol. The trade of opium was limited to that needed for medical and scientific purposes;
- **1961** - the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was adopted, paving the way for modern drug regimes. It listed all controlled substances and established the International Narcotics Control Board;

⁵ <https://www.unov.org/unov/en/unodc.html>

⁶ <https://www.unov.org/unov/en/unodc.html>

⁷ https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2008/timeline_E_PRINT.pdf

- **1988** - the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was passed. Targeted illicit drug trafficking that occurred across multiple regions;
- **1991** - establishment of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP);
- **2002** - adoption of the name of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as we know it;
- **2003** - United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime entered into force.

2.1.4. Membership

As of 2024, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has 53 Members. Delegates can find more facts and information on CND's membership [here](#).

As of 2024, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) has 40 members. Its members are elected by ECOSOC. Delegates can find more information about CCPCJ [here](#).

2.1.5. Headquarters

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Vienna International Centre,
Wagramer Strasse 5,
A 1400 Vienna,
Austria.

2.1.6. Useful Links

- [Main Website](#)
- [UNODC At A Glance](#)
- [UNODC Bulletin](#)
- [UNODC's Delegate's Handbook](#)

3. Inside UNODC

UNODC is composed of two main functional commissions: the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).⁸ Consequently,

⁸ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/commissions/>.

these are the two main commissions that ELSA Delegates attend within UNODC. More information on the sessions can be found below.

3.1. Sessions that ELSA Delegates regularly attend

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)⁹

CND plays an important role in overseeing the application of international treaties on drug control. Its mandate was expanded in 1991, so it now serves as UNODC's governing body. CND sessions cover two separate topics: normative and treaty-based functions, and operational segments related to it being the governing body of UNODC. The Commission meets every year, with regular intersessional meetings throughout the calendar year. Reconvened sessions are held towards the end of each year to cover matters related to CND's budget and administration pertaining to the UN's drug programme. CND was established by ECOSOC Res 9(I)(1946).

Website: [CND](#)

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)¹⁰

CCPCJ is a vital part of UNODC's function. It is the main policymaking body for crime prevention and criminal justice in the UN. Its priorities include the improvement of international action against national and transnational crime, and furthering the effectiveness and justness of criminal justice systems across the globe. It is also a forum in which expertise, best practices, and information can be shared amongst Member States, allowing for the development of strategies to combat crime and the identification of priorities. Similar to CND, CCPCJ holds both annual sessions and intersessional meetings. CCPCJ was established by ECOSOC Res 1992/1.

Website: [CCPCJ](#)

⁹ All information taken from CND's website.

¹⁰ All information taken from CCPCJ's website.

4. Topics

4.1. What laws and issues does UNODC deal with?

4.1.1. Transnational Organised Crime¹¹

UNODC's work often addresses transnational organised crime. This type of crime is regulated by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹² The Convention itself is supported by three additional protocols relating to the smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, and the illegal production and trafficking of firearms.¹³

UNODC's website defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit”.¹⁴ Any person, regardless of gender/ethnicity/country of origin, can be a victim to this,¹⁵ and it can happen for a wide range of reasons (for example, slavery, promise of a better life, etc).¹⁶ Delegates can find more information on the following topics:

- Migrant smuggling - [here](#) and [here](#);
- Firearms trafficking - [here](#).

4.1.2. Global Drugs Policy

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is the UNODC body dedicated to the analysis of the global situation on drugs. More information about the work of this Commission can be found on UNODC's website [here](#).

4.1.3. Human Rights Law¹⁷

Human Rights are an important part of the UN's work. UNODC supports States in this area by increasing their capacity to tackle crime and other abuses that impact upon human rights (such as trafficking and corruption). All work is carried out in line with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Charter.

More on UNODC's relevance to Human Rights Law can be found [here](#).

¹¹ <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/organized-crime.html>.

¹² <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>; see text [here](#).

¹³ https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/Legislative_Guide_2017/Legislative_Guide_E.pdf, page 1.

¹⁴ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/human-trafficking.html>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/work-of-unodc-crime.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/humanrights/index.html>.

4.2. Who benefits from UNODC's guidance?¹⁸

The short answer is - **everyone**! On an international scale, Member States benefit from the guidance of UNODC to help meet the global Sustainable Development Goals. On a domestic level, every member of society is impacted by UNODC's work. UNODC is connected with many areas of law that people come across in their daily lives, so its impact is far-reaching.

4.3. Why is regulating drugs and crime important?

Regulating drugs and crime is important to ensure that the global population is safe and protected from the potential negative consequences of drugs and crime. Moreover, regulating these areas will safeguard human rights and allow for better, more effective, sustainable development.

4.4 What other policy areas overlap with UNODC's work?¹⁹

In addition to the areas mentioned above, other policy overlaps include crime prevention and criminal justice, protecting children from violence, money laundering, the prevention of terrorism, and health law.

4.5. Recent innovations

UNODC was the secretariat for the UN's recent Convention against Cybercrime, which will be opened for signature in 2025. More information about the importance of this Convention can be found [here](#).

5. Relevant Documents

- [Human Trafficking Resources](#);
- [World Drug Report 2024](#);
- [Sustainable Development Goals 2030](#);
- [Femicide Report 2023](#).

6. Rules of Procedure

Rules of Procedure for UNODC can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).

¹⁸ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/index.html>.

¹⁹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/index.html>.

7. HoD Reports

If available, the Coordinator for UNODC will share the HoD Reports from previous sessions of that Delegation's committee.

8. Archives

UNODC Document Archive: [Archive](#)