



The European Law Students' Association

GENERAL HANDBOOK

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES 2025/2026



These Guidelines are based on the previous editions of ELSA International Seminars & Conferences.

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1. Short introduction to ELSA

ELSA is a non-political, independent, non-profit-making association that was founded in 1981 by a group of European Law Students. The aims of ELSA are to promote, establish and develop mutual understanding, cooperation and personal contacts between law students and young lawyers from different states and legal systems, thereby equipping them for professional life in an international environment.

2. Introduction to the S&C Key Area

Seminars & Conferences has been a Key Area in the ELSA family since the beginning in 1981. The first two years, it was called Scientific Seminars, but to broaden the scope of the area, the name was changed to Seminars & Conferences.

The Area of Seminars & Conferences aims to contribute to mutual understanding and legal education of law students and young lawyers by organising projects that focus on cultural exchange, developing cooperation and personal contacts, and legal knowledge.

As a mean of supplementing the study and training of lawyers, ELSA groups all over Europe organise a wide variety of educational events, thereby promoting a better legal, cultural and social understanding of other countries.

The aim of an S&C Event shall be to provide students with a positive learning experience, interaction with a new social and cultural environment and prepare them for future responsibilities as members of the academic society.

3. S&C Events

When thinking of the S&C area, the first events that come to mind are seminars and conferences, yet the S&C area is not limited only to the events indicated in its name. **This Key Area consists of academic events and a variety of projects where participants acquire knowledge and skills through lectures, panel discussions, seminars, conferences, Study Visits, Institutional Visits, webinars, delegations, law schools or any other activities falling under the scope of the definition from art. 1.1 of the ICM Decision Book.** Whatever is written in this part of the Handbook, it is defined with regards to the general understanding in ELSA, however you should remember that the definitions of such events can vary between countries and academic cultures, it is possible that for the event to be a seminar or a conference in your area, other elements will be considered by the academic staff or university rules. Also, you should always keep in mind that the only limit for your creativity is the sky!

Organising any S&C event, the organisers should remember that ELSA is not only about legal education per se, but our aim is also to promote cultural diversity and international cooperation. Each S&C event could do that, it does not matter whether the project is **local, national or international**.

I. Lecture

This is an event well known to students as it is a part of the course at each university – for the sake of this Handbook, it will be understood as a **discourse within a certain field of law or domain related to law given by a professional speaker**. The topic should be discussed later in a plenary. A domain related to law may be, for example, criminology, forensic sciences, sociology of law, thus any domain that is helpful to lawyers.

II. Panel Discussion

During such an event, **experts discuss issues of a specific topic in front of an audience.** The discussion should cover legal topics or issues auxiliary to law. It is recommended to have experts from several fields and opinions to have different perspectives on the topic. Open discussion with the audience after the experts' discussion may involve the participants more and make the event more interesting and alluring for them.

III. Seminar

Seminars are events that may last even a few days and consist of several lectures. It is recommended for them to be connected by one legal topic (or auxiliary fields) and to have an open discussion at the plenary. It is essential for them to provide students with the possibility to learn things that they do not learn at university or get a different approach to such topics. Current topics are more likely to interest both potential speakers and participants, thus the organisers should keep that in mind.

IV. Conference

Conferences are understood as **more scientific meetings than seminars.** They are usually divided into panels based on sub-themes within the main topic. **The conference should aim to have some results, to come to certain conclusions through the event.** Therefore, it is common that a conference ends with a publication that presents what was discussed during this event and gives knowledge which was shared there further. Conferences may also open or end some other event, for instance, ELSA Law School or a Legal research group. The participants of the conference should have the possibility to discuss among themselves and during the open discussion in the plenary.

V. ELSA Delegations

An important part of the institutional relations of ELSA is represented by the delegations sent to the working sessions of international organisations. They are both a major opportunity for our members in terms of personal and professional growth and a means through which ELSA gains a role in the discussion on the development of international law and valuable and current academic knowledge to be used in our projects. **ELSA Delegations is a Flagship Project of ELSA, which aims to allow ELSA members and Alumni to represent ELSA as ELSA Delegates appointed by the International Board of ELSA in meetings and sessions of organisations and institutions in which ELSA has a special Observership status.**

ELSA has a special status and cooperation with **UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC); UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL); UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Council of Europe (CoE); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).**

The appointed Delegates will be supported in their preparation by academic coordinators who will provide them with the practical and scientific information needed to enjoy the session at the

best. They will be able to participate in both the official meeting and the side events usually organised by governments and NGOs to raise awareness on specific issues. After the ELSA Delegation has finished, the **Head of Delegation Report** is prepared by the Head of Delegation (HoD). The report is a detailed summary of the events of the Delegation. Using the template as a guide, the HoD report must include details about the sessions, any academic preparation undertaken by the Delegation, side events, and networking.

The chance to play a direct role in multilateral cooperation, being a delegate in an international organisation working session while still a student, has an enormous value in terms of experiences, legal knowledge, international mindset, in short, what ELSA is there for. And such a chance is easily within your reach if you are an ELSA member.

Also, check regularly www.delegations.elsa.org - for the Open Calls and promotion to our members and potential members, ELSA Delegations, as one of the Flagship Projects of ELSA, has proven itself to be a great tool for recruitment.

VI. ELSA Law Schools¹

ELSA Law School is a Flagship Project of ELSA, which is organised by the Organising Committee (OC) of one or more National or Local Groups and coordinated by ELSA International, which fulfils the requirements regulated in the International Council Meeting Decision Book. All the regulations under the Decision Book are binding for the Organising Committees. An ELSA Law School must be an event that aims to be annual, is conducted in English and lasts at least 7 days. Moreover, it must have a minimum of 20 hours of academic programme with lectures, workshops and other academic activities per week and allocate time for homework to revise the lectures and prepare the next lessons. For that reason, the ELSA Law Schools have relatively broad topics.

As an ELSA Law School is an ambitious project requiring speakers and logistics for a long period, they must be organised in close co-operation with academic or institutional partners, e.g. the law faculty, law institutes, etc. Lastly, ELSA Law Schools have to follow ELSA Law Schools' Cycle, which sets out the deadlines for each ELSA Law School. In each cycle, there are 6 or 8 periods, depending on the cycle. periods that are called "specification, preparation, application, selection, (additional application, additional selection only for the summer cycle), event and lastly after the event evaluation". Never neglect the importance of the evaluation since knowledge management is the first and maybe the most vital step for improvement. In this very Handbook, there is a whole section dedicated to evaluation.

VII. International Conferences of ELSA²

International Conferences of ELSA (ICE) are international events organised by Organising Committees of one or more ELSA Groups that fulfil the requirements regulated in Chapter 5 of Part 9 of the International Council Meeting Decision Book. International Conferences of ELSA can be defined by their international outlook, focus on the academic aspects of the law and intention of having an audience largely comprising international participants. Moreover, it must be conducted entirely in English and have a minimum of 10

¹ Detailed information can be found in ELSA Law Schools Handbook: https://files.elsa.org/SC/ELSALawSchools/ELSA_Law_Schools_Handbook_2025.pdf

² https://files.elsa.org/SC/ICE/ICE_Handbook_2025.pdf

hours of academic programme. Detailed information can be found in the updated ICE Handbook.

VIII. ELSA Webinars & ELSA Webinars Academy

ELSA Webinars is an educational event taking place in the digital sphere, organised by **Organising Committees of one or more National or Local Groups of ELSA**.

ELSA Webinars Academy (EWA) is a project of ELSA, which is organised by **Organising Committees of one or more National or Local Groups of ELSA** and coordinated by **ELSA International**, which fulfils the requirements regulated in the Decision Book. ELSA Webinars Academy shall be open to everyone and conducted in English, be composed of at least five different sessions amounting to a total of at least five hours, and it must be organised in close cooperation with an academic or institutional partner. Moreover, it shall be promoted using the ELSA Webinars Marketing Kit. More information about ELSA Webinars and ELSA Webinars Academy can be found in its Handbook³.

IX. Study Visits

A Study Visit is an event organised by one Local or National Group and at least one other Local or National Group of ELSA or the partner associations of ELSA, aiming for an academic, social and cultural exchange. They can be:

- **Unilateral:** When one Group visits another Group.
- **Bilateral:** When two Groups visit each other.
- **Multilateral:** When several Groups visit another Group.

It is important to remember that study visits aren't the equivalent of a cheap holiday. **The academic programme shall have an average duration of a minimum of three hours per day.** It means that more hours should be planned, so in case of real emergencies, the 3 hours minimum would still be fulfilled.

When creating the cultural and social programme, the organisers of the Study Visit should keep in mind that the aim of this project is to bring mutual understanding and knowledge sharing. The participants of the Study Visit should come back with a basic knowledge of where they were, what is characteristic for this culture and make new friends.

You can find the full Study Visits regulations in Article 5., Chapter 7., Part 9. of the International Council Meeting Decision Book & in the Study Visit Handbook.⁴

X. Institutional Visits

Institutional Visits are visits to international or national governmental or non-governmental organisations, public administrations or private institutions, universities or other higher education institutions. Its aim is to deepen the knowledge in the field in which such institutions act. Depending on the chosen institution, it may also show the participants how the laws or international resolutions are enacted or what work in the international organisation looks like, which is the insight they wouldn't be able to see otherwise.

³ https://files.elsa.org/SC/ELSAWebinars/ELSA_Webinars_Handbook_2025.pdf

⁴ https://files.elsa.org/SC/StudyVisits/Study_Visits_Handbook_2025.pdf

It is up to the Local or National groups to choose the institution and what aspect of its activities they want to show to the participants. It doesn't have to be the United Nations, it can also be a developing foundation in the same city. For the first ideas of the institutions, see the exemplary list below. Remember that the Institutional Visit may also be a part of a Study Visit, giving its participants a more complex experience of the place they've been to.

This project also falls within the scope of VP S&C responsibilities, but it is more efficient to appoint a separate person who will take care of the event. It may be a Director for International Relations, a Director for Institutional Visits or simply the coordinator.

If you chose an International Organisation, remember to fill in the contact approval form on the Officers Portal. More detailed information about Institutional Visits can be found in the IV Handbook.⁵

4. Organising an S&C Event

A. The Research Stage

Planning is one of the most important stages of the event. Very often, this stage is underestimated, and that is a big mistake! You will discover that the more time you spend on planning, the more you will save later. When you start planning, think about the following things:

- **Resources of the ELSA Group**, both human and financial (can I make it happen?)
- **Assignment and target group** (what, when, why?)
- **The objectives** (what is the goal?)
- **Options** (brainstorming)
- **The best option** (make sure that everybody knows what was decided and everybody is comfortable with that)
- **Your plan** (plan the whole process from the research stage to the evaluation)
- **Steps of the process** (set middle deadlines)

Remember to always think of Plan B regarding every aspect of the organisational work, so that when something comes up unexpectedly and ruins your plans, you remain calm and turn problems into a solution!

1. Creating a team

The first thing that needs to be done is to find people who want to organise the event and create a team, which is going to be the Organising Committee (OC). Choose wisely someone who is going to coordinate all activity regarding the project – the Head of the Organising Committee (HoOC). It can either be you or another ELSA member who presents high-level organisational skills, responsibility and willingness! As a team leader, you have several important tasks:

- **Plan carefully.** Plans will always change along the way, but it is important that you have a common roadmap with the OC.
- **Motivate and inspire the rest of the OC.** Respect their work and trust that they will keep the deadlines you have set together.

⁵ https://files.elsa.org/SC/General/IV/IV_Handbook_2025

- **Communicate.** Choose the way of mobile communication that will make your work easier. It can be a Facebook group or conversation, or the special programmes like: Trello, ASANA, Evernote or Google Tools.
- **Think about continuity.** It is important that there is always someone who can take over if someone drops out. You can think of creating teams responsible for different areas!
- It is important that everyone in the OC **agrees upon and follows the basic ideas of the event.** It is your task, as a team leader, to see that no one goes beyond what the OC has agreed upon.
- **Keep the budget.** The treasurer is in charge of the budget, but as the team leader, you are ultimately responsible. Both of you should see that the budget is not exceeded.

Now that you hopefully are more aware of your role as team leader, we can look at the rest of the structure in the team. The number of necessary team members depends on the event you are going to organise. Here are suggestions on how to share the responsibilities:

- **Team leader:** Coordination, motivation, “source of ideas”, “information centre”.
- **Responsible for Academic Programme:** The academic programme, speakers, and workshops.
- **Responsible for Social and Cultural Programme:** Sightseeing, parties, receptions, visits, and cultural programme.
- **Treasurer:** Set up a budget, approve payments, receive payments, do the accounts, and grants.
- **Responsible for Marketing:** Materials and prospects for sponsors, posters, fliers, website, application forms, and media contact.
- **Responsible for Fundraising:** Contact with all partners and sponsors before, during and after the event.
- **Responsible for Logistics:** Accommodation of participants, meals and drinks, transportation.
- **Responsible for Participants:** Taking care of the applications, honorary patronages, writing invitation letters for visas, answering participants' questions before, during and after the event.

Benefit from the experience of the previous organisers. Ask the other S&Cers for advice!

II. Planning meeting

When you have chosen the OC, gather them in a nice place with enough space for everybody and enough time for brainstorming. Go through the different parts in organising the event and explain its aim. Split the responsibilities among the OC, having in mind all the stages of organising an event- before, during and after it. Set the first tasks and deadlines.

III. What subject to choose for the event?

Before choosing a topic, make sure you have all the necessary knowledge about the ELSA activity, taking into consideration the internal and external relations. So how do we find the ideal topic? Start with a brainstorming session with the OC, where you write down all possible and impossible ideas. Here is a list to make the thinking process easier:

1. **Consider whether you want to organise an event within the International Focus Programme (IFP) or the Human Rights topic.** Look into the IFP Outline or the Human Rights Handbook in order to get some help!
2. **Find out which are the fields of law the students at your law faculty and local ELSA members are engaged in now.** You could use questionnaires distributed at the faculty and have the answers ready for the brainstorming. Do research on current legal hot topics and look for something that may be unique.
3. **List up the fields of law that your university or institutions under it are famous for.**
4. **List up institutions and foundations** that could help you to organise the project. Maybe there is an ELSA Alumnus who could help?
5. **Consider the project's financial potential.** Is it likely that potential sponsors would support the project?
6. **Consider the participants at the event when choosing the topic.** Will they be only law students, so that it can be strictly legal? Or is the event meant for a wider group, like students from other areas, non-students, etc., so that the topic could concern issues in society and aim at causing a global social discussion?
7. Has the subject been dealt with before in other S&C events? It is not necessarily a reason to avoid that topic. The subject could be so interesting that you could organise the event as a continuation of earlier events on the same topic or to broaden it.

Probably you will end up with a short list of topics to choose from. Show the list to your lecturers at the university. They will be happy to be asked about their opinion and will get the feeling that they also participate in the organisation of the event. It is crucial to have academic support for your event at an early stage, since after all, we are merely law students. Think of asking one of the lecturers to become an academic supervisor of the project.

The final version of a topic should be compact and exact in order to make an interesting title causing discussions, sometimes in the form of a question. Choose one leading problem.

IV. To whom do we address our project?

We assume that we organise the project for students. Still, there are some questions we have to clarify:

1. Is the S&C event going to be for beginners, or should it be designed for students who already have knowledge about the subject?
2. Is the event meant for “fresh” students, or for those who have studied for a while?
3. Do we want only law students as participants, or should other students also have the opportunity to participate?
4. Are we opening the event to everyone, even non-students, who wish to participate?
5. How many participants do we accept? Do we accept them on a first-come, first-served rule, or do we choose the ones that fulfil the established criteria the most?
6. Is the participation free of charge, or is there a participation fee? Please note that ELSA is a non-profit organisation, so the income from the project should be dedicated to cover the organisational costs.
7. Is it a local, national or international project, and which language is used?

The target group affects the topic of the event. If the project is international, remember that a subject of international interest would have more appeal than an event of national interest.

V. The date of the event

Every year, we organise multiple international S&C events across the ELSA Network. That means that the chance of having events that coincide is enormous. **Nevertheless, try to avoid organising your event at the same time as another ELSA Group.** You surely want to have as many applications as possible, and if you don't keep this in mind, you risk competing with another Group for the same participants. This also can happen if you plan an event with the same or a similar topic as another group within the same period.

Fortunately, these situations are easy to avoid: consult the VP S&C of your National Group before deciding on the date. Keep in mind that ELSA may not be the only students' organisation at your University. Look into the academic calendar and try to choose the date that is not in conflict with any other event organised at your University.

VI. What is the venue of the event?

The rule of thumb is that the closer the arrangements are to each other, the easier it is to organise!

- Aim to have the lectures, accommodation and meals **at the same or close-by place**, so that it is a walking distance between them. If there is no possibility to accommodate participants close to the venue of the event, think about the easiest way of transport they can use and provide them with all the necessary information, such as: all the addresses, phone numbers of the OC, taxi numbers, information on how and which ticket to buy etc.
- Try to get **some discounts** for taxis or public transport. This also applies to the situation when the event lasts more than one day. Be sure to put in the participants' sets maps of the city, with all the places they are going to visit pointed out. When it comes to the places where the academic programme is going to take place, the university is an excellent venue. If there is no possibility to use your university, try to find a suitable place nearby. It can be the quarter of the Institutions or a firm, local library or town hall.
- Regardless of which place you choose, make sure it has **all the necessary equipment** that speakers may request, such as a projector, a whiteboard, markers, a sound system, a microphone, extensions, and power supplies. Ask the speakers before the event what they need in particular.
- Remember to book all the places with the **proper time in advance** and always have in mind another option, so that when it is close to the event, and you meet some problems, you can easily switch to another venue.
- It is also important that you and your OC, as representatives of your ELSA Group, keep in mind the standards ELSA represents. Check if the hostel/hotel/dorm remains clean, if it is a safe spot and will satisfy the participants. Think about the diversity of food served. **Ask in advance about dietary restrictions and allergies.** If you organise the international event, remember that each culture has different habits and traditions, and due to that, try to provide the participants with some common meals worldwide. The cultural diversity can also be used for getting participants to get to know the local specialities and letting them exchange theirs with others.

5. The Planning and Organising Stage

I. The academic part

The academic part is one of the most significant parts of the project. Therefore, it is important to start early to create the programme, invite speakers and plan the workshops. To make the work more efficient, the person responsible for the academic programme could create an academic programme team so they could share the workload.

a. The academic programme and speakers

The first step of planning an event is doing some research and studying the topic. You need to have an overview of this field of law to be able to work on the academic programme. It is also necessary to be able to initiate the next step: contacting a professor or a specialist in this field. With some background information, you will be able to give feedback on the inputs from the professor, and you will appear more professional when discussing the academic programme.

It is recommended to cooperate with a professor or a specialist on the topic. Besides helping in the shaping of the programme, his or her involvement makes our project more valuable and serious. The easiest would be to contact a professor at your university; consequently, it will be simple to reach him or her whenever you need consultation. You can also invite this person to be a patron of the event – a patronage of a well-known professor can help you when you contact potential speakers or sponsors. The academic programme should be included in an event brochure with basic information about the conference and a presentation of the speakers.

While creating the academic programme, have potential speakers in mind for the different parts of the programme. The patron can help you in finding the right speakers and finally help you by inviting them.

Be aware that you will have to make many versions of the academic programme before you have the final version ready. The speakers you want to cover a certain subject might not be able to come, or the speaker wants to speak about another subject than the one in the programme. This is normal when organising seminars, conferences or ELSA Law Schools, so don't panic and try being flexible.

b. Preparing the lectures and workshops

As soon as the speaker has accepted to hold a lecture (or more), you should ask for their biographical note, which you can use to promote the event. Keep in touch with the invited speaker, e.g., send an email a few days before the event to remind them about it and give all the final information. Remember to prepare the lecture room – turn on the computer and the slide projector to check if it works, place a glass of water for the speaker at the table, etc. Before the lecture starts, welcome participants and introduce the lecturer. At the end, you should give them a gift in gratitude for their participation – it could be, for example, a certificate and chocolates, flowers or wine.

It is recommended to prepare reading materials and send them out to participants, especially when the event is longer than just a seminar. They should contain the agenda and information about the event, for example, information about covered topics, speakers or partners. Reading materials could also include articles on the topics, forms that participants need to fill in and any other information that might be useful to participants.

II. Marketing

The person responsible for marketing should have at least some basic knowledge about it or experience from previous events, and be full of creativity and enthusiasm! The Vice President in charge of Marketing of your Group is the most natural person to take the responsibility, but you should think of finding more people to work within a marketing group. The marketers are responsible for promotion and public relations.

a. Promotion

You are going to promote the project towards sponsors, institutional partners and potential participants. Remember that in this process, you promote ELSA in general, too. When you plan the promotion, you must define the possible marketing tools and the visual part of the event.

In order for the ELSA Network to appear unified all over Europe and in order for the ELSA officers to have professional promotion materials even with little knowledge, ELSA has a special Corporate Identity. This includes certain colors and fonts that should always be used when promoting ELSA events. Remember always to use the ELSA logo in accordance with the regulations of the Decision Book (Marketing part). You can find more information in the ELSA Brand Book, and there are templates available on the Officers' Portal.

The most important promotional tools are:

Logo

If you organise a big event or a cycle of events, you should create a **specific visual identity for it**. The best way is to design a logo for the event that you can use on all marketing materials. It should symbolise the event.

Online promotion

One of the most efficient ways to promote your projects is promotion and **cross-promotion on Instagram**. Share on your official and private accounts, insert the link for easier access and prepare a promotion strategy (you can publish, for example, notes about speakers, some interesting facts or pictures connected with the topic). It is easy – and free! – a way to make your event visible on the local, national and international levels. There are also other helpful social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, X and different blogs. Remember that the most popular posts on social media are videos and pictures. Their reach is wider than the reach of regular posts, so it is important to prepare outstanding content. In case of big events, you should definitely create short promotional videos – they are great tools to present crucial information about events, show the venue or introduce Organising Committees.

Promotion conducted by ELSA International

Moreover, keep in mind that **ELSA International conducts joint online promotion** of a few projects of our Network, such as ELSA Law Schools, ELSA Delegations and ELSA Traineeships. This kind of promotion is very efficient but only when the whole Network works together. Therefore, you should remember to comply with certain strategies of promotion and use unified materials provided by the International Board, for example, logos, posters and pictures, which makes both our projects and ELSA itself more recognisable.

Advertise on the ELSA mailing lists and Facebook groups

Send an email via **the Seminars and Conferences mailing list** and promote the event, for example, on the **ELSA or S&C Officers WhatsApp groups**. This is the quickest and cheapest way of reaching almost all ELSA members to inform them about the project.

Event materials

Prepare folders for the participants with the academic programme, notebook, advertisements, map of the city, a pen, etc. Present the event brochure to the sponsors and offer them to display their logo in it.

Badges

For the participants to remember everybody's name, badges are indispensable. The badges should be legible, and they should contain logos of ELSA and of the event. Use the other side of the badge wisely – you should put important phone numbers (such as phone numbers of the OC, taxi, emergency) and addresses (for example, hostel, lecture hall) on the backside.

Gadgets

You could produce t-shirts, caps, pens, mugs, stickers, etc., with the logo of the event. They are good marketing tools, and if they look nice, the participants will gladly have them as souvenirs. Furthermore, it is a good idea to ask the project's partners to provide participants with their accessories. This way, you will easily promote partners without bearing the costs of gadgets.

III. Social programme

The social programme is an important part of an event because during free time, the participants can get to know each other and learn new things about your city/country. However, the social programme shouldn't take the main role but should always be organised in terms of the academic programme. The social programme can consist of parties, bowling, concerts, theatre, etc.

When the event is national/international, sightseeing should always be a part of the programme. During an international event, the participants get the chance to experience a different culture. Traditional food and drinks are always a must.

IV. Finances

Organising an S&C event is quite a task, and therefore, you cannot decide on it easily. One of the reasons for this is that an S&C event requires a considerable amount of money, especially in relation to the yearly budget of an average Local Group. Still, if organised in the right manner, you can come out with a positive balance. However, as practice and experience have shown, finances (money) are of vital importance for an event.

Budget

What is needed at first hand is a serious, well-considered and realistic budget. The budget shall reflect an accurate and realistic estimation of the expenditure and income of the event. The first thing to do is to prepare a draft budget and list all the possible items on the income, as well as the expenditure side of the budget. Then you proceed to make an estimation of the minimum and maximum amounts of all items. It is very important that the amount that you put on the items is feasible and, most of all, realistic. Remember that the communication between the VP S&C and the Treasurer has to be flawless for all the information to be reflected in the budget.

The income can consist of the following main items:

- money from Sponsors and Partners (at the beginning, maybe undefined);
- grants;
- financial support from the University and other Institutions;
- participation fees;
- In cases of losses: ELSA Development Foundation (EDF).

With regards to the participation fees, there are some internal regulations of ELSA that have to be kept in mind and followed. In the Decision Book (Financial Management part and its Annexes), the maximum participation fees for S&C events are regulated as follows:

- The maximum participation fee for participants from favoured countries starting February 2026 is **40 euros**.
- The maximum participation fee for participants from non-favoured countries starting February 2026 is **46 euros**.

As a last resort, you can always have the general budget of your Local Group as a backup. Naturally, this has to be consulted with your Board. On the expenditure side, the number of participants has a great influence on the costs of the event. Furthermore, you must calculate costs resulting from the organisation, like fuel for the car transportation, printing, copying, paper costs for the marketing materials, etc.

When making the budget, it is very important to keep the inflexible costs (the costs to be paid regardless of the number of participants) as low as possible, related to the total expenditure, while the flexible costs (the costs depending on the number of participants) should be related to the total. The same thing goes for income. The best thing to aim at is to have as high an income as possible in order to secure a safe financial situation for the event. Grants and money from sponsorships are not safe before you have them on the account.

Remember that the better research you have conducted on the budget in advance, the better chances you have to avoid big changes in the budget later on, and thus the organisation will be easier and financially secure.

As another financial resort, it is also possible to apply for support from ELSA Development Foundation (EDF) in case of losses.

Account

As soon as the organisation of the event is on its way, it is time to open an account for the event or to cooperate with the Treasurer of the Local Group and use the general account of the Group. Especially in the latter case, it is important to consult the Treasurer on how the bookkeeping should be handled. It is also useful to make arrangements for a starting capital, which will be needed for all sorts of initial costs (e.g. marketing materials) before any money starts coming in.

V. Fundraising

From the first thought of organising an event, it is imperative to bear fundraising in mind. It cannot be expected (especially considering the participation fee limitations) that an event is organised without sponsorship. When thinking about the topic, speakers, social programmes, or other things, you will have to see it also from the point of view of a sponsor. Since fundraising

covers a huge field of activity and lots of things that have to be considered, when approaching possible sponsors, this manual only discusses the surface of fundraising and tries to give you some basic ideas. For further information, you should read the Fundraising Regulations of ELSA.

Fundraising as a sales action consists of four steps:

1. Preparation.
2. Approaching.
3. Negotiation.
4. After-sales.

1. Preparation

After the draft budget has been made and the major parameters of the event have been decided upon (date, title, draft agenda), it is time to think about what you have to offer to potential sponsors. You should create a Fundraising package (including the main information on ELSA and the respective event). There are several items involved when you are organising an event, which you can “sell”, and with some creativity, you can surely come up with some other appealing ideas as well.

When setting the prices for the items you intend to sell, you will have to try to assess the value of being connected to ELSA and to the event in particular. When doing this, you can try to compare your Group to other associations, asking them what they “charge” sponsors and seeing how good the image of ELSA is compared to those associations. Moreover, it is good to divide the prices for big companies and the grocery shop around the corner.

When you decide to approach some feasible sponsors, you should consult the National Board and ELSA International to avoid double-approaching. Then you should conduct some research on the companies on their websites before even contacting them. Finally, practise your presentation and negotiation skills.

2. Approaching the sponsor

The second step is to make contact with the potential sponsor. This should be done in the formal way, ideally in writing, by sending an email to the company, addressed to the person in charge of sponsoring. And also, if you are sending an email, make sure that it is strictly formal as well. If your Group has a contact person at the company, naturally, the approach should be made to them. The follow-up should be a phone call around one week later. Do not let them shake you off easily, stick around and try another time to get hold of the person in charge.

3. Negotiation

The third step is the presentation and negotiation. This phase starts with the phone call after the first contact (formal letter) has been made. Regarding the company phones, you will have to try to always get the right person on the line and ask for a meeting. If you are lucky (or you have been persistent enough), you will get an appointment with a representative in charge of sponsoring from the company.

When having come so far, the fun part of fundraising is starting. Bear in mind that you should always be two people when going to meet and negotiate with potential sponsors. Furthermore, it is very important that you are prepared for such a meeting. Always have a Fundraising package with you with all the information about the event and ELSA in general, and business cards. The whole image of your Local Group and ELSA in general is at stake during such a meeting. If you

manage to give them a good impression of our association, we will all benefit from it. However, if you leave the office without a deal, this should never be considered a failure. Even though you made a marvellous performance, they might not find it interesting to invest some money and sponsor this particular event, but this might change the next time and either way, you have maintained ELSA's good reputation.

4. After sales

The fourth and last step is working towards the future relationship with the sponsor, one of the most important, sadly, often forgotten. Once you have made the deal, it is of utmost importance to fulfil your obligations. If you do so and the sponsor is content with the results, there is a chance that you can count on them for your other projects as well. Always list them in the Welcome package, if possible, post them on the marketing materials of the event and always send them a nice report with a big thank you after the event has ended. Appoint someone to take good pictures during the event with the partners' logos showing, so that you have good material to put in the report. Take pictures and print screens of all the materials of the event.

VI. *Risk management for possible problems*

If the organising work has gone smoothly, without any particular difficulties you could not solve, some problems might show up once the event has started. There is only one piece of advice that can be given:

Do not panic, stay calm, and focus on solving the problem!!!

In order to anticipate potential risk, it is important to develop contingency plans for common risks:

- **Speaker Cancellations:** Maintain a backup list of experts and prepare alternate programme options.
- **Venue Issues:** Confirm cancellation policies and have an alternative venue in mind.
- **Technical Failures:** Conduct thorough pre-event testing and have tech support on-site.

You could also **create a mini 'Crisis Response Team'** and assign roles to manage different types of crises:

- **Communication Lead:** Handles official statements and participant updates.
- **Logistics Coordinator:** Resolves issues with venue, catering, or transport.
- **Technical Advisor:** Addresses virtual or on-site tech disruptions.

It is naturally impossible to cover all problems in advance. Below find a list of problems that you might have to face and potential solutions:

- **Cancellation of participants at the last minute** - make them pay a deposit or do not confirm their participation (certificates) until they have paid/transferred the participation fee;
- **Participants not showing up** - if you did not think of the possibility of this problem occurring earlier, and it comes, you can go to the professors who are currently holding a lecture in your university, and invite them with the students to join the event instead of the lecture or make a stand in a hall inviting students to come.
- **Lost participants** - always include important phone numbers on the backside of the badge and in the welcome package; always have everyone's phone number with you.

- **Last-minute cancellation of a lecturer** - try to get a lecturer from your faculty or organise a social event (e.g., a visit to one institution in your city) for the time gap; find a documentary on the topic beforehand and show that to the participants; have a debate with pro and con sides to raise the discussion.
- **Double-booked rooms during your event** - try to arrange another room with the respective unit at the venue, or try to get a room at your university.
- **Delay of lectures or participants coming late to the meals, changes in the programme** - stick to the schedule yourself from the beginning, so that the participants know to take it seriously.

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY:

- Use social media and email for real-time updates.
- Be transparent about the issue and share solutions promptly to maintain participant trust!

6. The Evaluation

The evaluation is a part of organising an event, and since proper knowledge management is the key for the progress of our Association, it should never be neglected.

I. Certificates, thank you letters and reports

Distribute certificates of participation to the participants, preferably already during the event or at the end of the event, to reduce the costs. Also, it is important to write a report of the event for the partners and sponsors, and remember to send thank-you letters to them and to the speakers. Remember that a report provided with pictures of the event will be extremely beneficial for fundraising in the future.

II. Participants Evaluation Form

This form is meant to collect the opinion of participants on the event, in order to carry out a proper evaluation, to be reported to ELSA International. A sample is available in the Officers' Portal.

III. Academic outcome

Especially larger events, such as conferences, should include an academic report after the event. You can publish a post-conference report either in paper or online, with some articles from the speakers and participants, some extracts of the lectures and of course a note from the organisers. Another possibility is to write an article for the Synergy Blog. Contact ELSA International for more information on it.

7. International Focus Programme

A. Introduction

The International Focus Programme (IFP) was established to provide the ELSA Network with an opportunity to work together and raise awareness in a “hot legal topic” chosen by the Council. In the IFP framework, Local and National Groups unite with ELSA International and legal institutions to build a concrete knowledge base and to organise events around the same topic.

Implementation of the IFP in all the key areas is just a recommendation to the Network, and it cannot be enforced.

B. The topic

The theme reflects a “hot legal topic” in Europe and the world, thereby enabling ELSA to be the largest independent law students’ organisation in the world by using the unique ELSA Network to create awareness amongst today’s law students, young lawyers, society and the international community. The aim is to gather all diverse opinions and ideas and execute them through our projects.

The International Council at the ICM decides the topic and its duration.

The topic shall be:

- versatile, thereby representing ELSA’s cultural diversity.
- internationally relevant.
- with academic discussion potential
- with an impact on everyday life, thereby generating interest towards the topic
- attractive to sponsors at all levels.

The current IFP topic is **Law and Security** (duration: 1st August 2025-31st July 2028). Detailed information is available in the IFP Outline on the Officers Portal.

8. Human Rights

A. Introduction

ELSA’s Vision, “A just world in which there is respect for human dignity and cultural diversity”, holds the idea of raising awareness of Human Rights and contributing to Human Rights education. ELSA shall be continuously committed to Human Rights awareness, Human Rights education, and the respect of the Rule of Law. ELSA shall strive to be recognised for a strictly legal, academic and impartial approach to Human Rights.

It is recommended to implement Human Rights in all key areas of activity. This means that Human Rights should firstly be respected in all activities of ELSA, and also, that Human Rights topics should be included in S&C, AA and PD. Since you are an S&C officer, you can organise a seminar and a conference related to Human Rights or even an Institutional Visit to an institution whose work is connected with Human Rights.

B. ELSA Day and the Annual Human Rights Campaign

The most important ELSA’s campaign referring to Human Rights is the Annual Human Rights Campaign. It is a huge forum of various human-rights-related events organised by all Local and National Groups of ELSA. Part of it is the ELSA Day, which happens on the last Wednesday of November. The aim of the AHRC is to jointly demonstrate our human rights engagement by providing legal education and opportunities that enable law students to be independent and critical members of society. The general topic of the forum is Human Rights, which is relatively broad – for this reason each year we draw attention to a particular topic.

C. Motivation

It can be a good idea to gather people particularly interested in Human Rights and motivated to work for ELSA in this area. You can start a “Human Rights Team” or just get some people to help you on specific tasks. First of all, one of the most fruitful ways to learn about Human Rights is to work with the topics in a practical way, such as participating in the organisation of an ELSA event on the subject. Also, this is a good way of attracting more people to ELSA, since the Human Rights activities might interest new people who would not otherwise be aware of the magnificent association called ELSA.

9. Communication

While planning and organising events is the most important part of an S&C-Officers position, no Vice President can work without other officers. This includes both the officers responsible for other areas as well as any other members of the S&C area.

A. Mailing Lists

I. S&C-Mailing List

The S&C list is a mailing list on which all VPs S&C (National and Local) should be subscribed to. This mailing list is only used for S&C-related information. You can subscribe to the ELSA-S&C by sending an email to VP S&C ELSA International, seminarsconferences@elsa.org. The list is also open for members within the Network with a special interest in the field of S&C.

B. WhatsApp

Given that almost everyone predominantly uses WhatsApp nowadays, it serves as an effective platform for communication among ELSA Officers. Therefore, ELSA has established a WhatsApp Community with groups for each area to share information with Officers.

II. S&C-Officers' Group

Every National S&C Officer should be a Member of this WhatsApp Group. The VP S&C of the International Board will use this group to share information regarding S&C with their Officers and to remind them of deadlines. It is also likely that your National Board created another S&C-Officers' group for the Officers from your country. If this is the case, you should join this group as well in order to communicate better with your national network.

C. Social Media

III. ELSA Internationals Facebook and Instagram Pages

The Facebook and Instagram pages of ELSA International provide important information about ELSA's work and current events in the network to members and externals alike. Most importantly, the Open Calls for ELSA Delegations and ELSA Law Schools are posted here. It is therefore recommended that you follow the Facebook page and the Instagram profile in order to always be up to date.

IV. ELSA Delegates Group

The ELSA Delegates Facebook Group is created to provide ELSA members with a wealth of additional opportunities. This platform serves as a hub for sharing exclusive delegations that may

not fit into regular cycles, as well as online webinars and similar initiatives. We highly encourage every Officer seeking new experiences and avenues for engagement to join this group!

10. S&C - Team

If you start your term, you will usually already have a plan of what you want to achieve within your position. In an ideal world, you would be able to organise all your events on your own. However, depending on how active your group is and how much time you need for your studies, you may want to focus on several important projects. Therefore, it can be a good idea to have one or more Directors who take some of your work for you. What kind of Directors you need in your team depends very much on your plans for your term. Some VPs focus on larger events and give smaller projects (lectures, panel discussions) to their Directors. In other local groups, all events are organised by Directors, while the VP acts as the head of the team who oversees their work.

National S&C Officers are often in contact with a lot of people: partners, internationals and – most importantly - their own local officers asking for help or information. National Directors can take responsibility for certain areas, such as ELSA Delegations, ELSA Law Schools, IFP, or Human Rights, and can answer all questions regarding these topics. They can also take over certain “long-term” projects, like working groups or handbook revisions.

Finally, the position of Director offers a great opportunity to acquire future officers. New ELSA Members who are interested in participating are intimidated by the responsibilities of an elected board position. Therefore, a position of the Director is a good way to introduce them to the work of an S&C officer, both on the national and the local level.

A. Director for S&C

This is the basic choice when picking a Director and is useful for officers who do not want a large S&C Team. Rather than being responsible for a certain area, the Director for S&C – as the name implies – can work on all projects in the S&C area.

They can assist you with time-consuming tasks for your projects, such as researching topics or speakers, or they can work on smaller events while you focus on your major projects.

This is also a good position to introduce your successor to the work of a VP S&C, since they have an opportunity to experience the full range of an S&C Officer's work without having to worry about (full) responsibility.

B. Director for ELSA Delegations

A Director for Delegations can promote ELSA Delegations in your local group and be the primary contact person for all questions regarding ELSA Delegations. This will allow you to focus on your larger events.

On the national level, a Director for Delegations may also be responsible for sharing ELSA Delegations-related marketing material and information with the local officers.

C. Director for IFP

The Director for IFP can handle all projects regarding the International Focus Programme. If you are planning a larger project with an IFP focus, the Director can help you research partners and sub-topics.

On the national level, the Director for IFP can be the main contact person for all questions regarding IFP and support the local officers in the organisation and promotion of IFP-related events, most importantly the IFP week.

D. Director for Study Visits

A Director for Study Visits can be responsible for finding Study Visit partners and discussing the details of the Visits with them. If you are unable to attend the Study Visit yourself, they are the ideal person to go to in your stead. On the national level, the Director for Study Visits can help local officers organise their Study Visits or find a suitable partner for them.

E. Director for Institutional Visits

The Director for Institutional Visits can help you with the organisation of an Institutional Visit, such as researching institutions and communicating with contact persons. They can also lead the group if you are unable to attend the Institutional Visit yourself.

If the Institutional Visit is not very expensive (e.g. because you do not stay overnight), the Director can also organise and lead the Visit all by themselves.

F. Director for ELSA Law Schools

The Director for ELSA Law Schools can be the Head of Organising Committee of the ELSA Law School of your Local Group, or hold an important position within the Organising Committee.

On the National level, the Director for ELSA Law Schools can help you answer questions from your Local Organisers, distribute the information regarding the project, or even be the Head of OC of your ELSA Law School.

G. Director for International Conferences of ELSA

The Director for International Conferences of ELSA can be the Head of Organising Committee of the International Conference of ELSA of your Local Group, or hold an important position within the Organising Committee.

On the National level, the Director for International Conferences of ELSA can help you answer questions from your Local Organisers, distribute the information regarding the project, or even be the Head of OC of your International Conference of ELSA.

11. Transition

Positions in ELSA usually change every term. Therefore, good Knowledge Management is essential in order to maintain and improve the Quality of our work. To make sure that our work continues to be “up to standards”, all Officers are expected to give a transition to their successors.

A. Giving a Transition

A good transition will save your successor a lot of time, and they do not have to make the same mistakes you made before. They can also learn from the successful events you organised and continue your work. Remember to pass on important contact information of people you worked with, so your successor can contact them again for further cooperation.

The transition should include

- A general transition on ELSA knowledge.
- A specific transition in the S&C area.
- A team building for the new board.

You should take at least one or two hours of time for your transition. It is recommended that you deliver it in person. To make sure that you have covered all the important topics in your Transition, you can take a look at the S&C Transition Checklist⁶.

B. If you did not receive a transition

Ideally, if you are reading this handbook, you should already have had your transition with your predecessor. However, if you did not receive a detailed transition, there are several things you can do.

- **Talk to a previous S&C-Officer from your Local Group.** Even if they did not hold the position during the last term, they should be able to share their experience in the S&C with you.
- **Contact your National S&C Officer or the Vice President in charge of S&C of ELSA International.** They should be able to give you all the important information regarding the VP S&C position, and they usually have a lot of experience as a Local Officer themselves.
- **Speak to your President.** As they are responsible for board management, they should have an overview of past S&C events and planned projects for the coming term. They should also be able to give you access to your Local Group's archive, to see what your predecessors did.
- **Contact other Local S&C Officers.** Most of them will be new as well, so they should be able to tell you what sources of information they are using and what was said during their transition.
- **Look into old documents.** Is there any online database that your Local Group is using? Check if there is any information regarding S&C. If you at least have access to the S&C mail account, check old emails to see what was done in the last term.

12. S&C-related Abbreviations and acronyms in the ELSA Language

EI - ELSA International

DB - Decision Book

SSO - Statutes and Standing Orders

S&C - Seminars and Conferences

VP S&C - Vice President for Seminars & Conferences

OC - Organising Committee

HOC - Head of Organising Committee

SELS - Summer ELSA Law Schools

WELS - Winter ELSA Law Schools

SELS/WELS TW - SELS/WELS Training Weekend

⁶ https://files.elsa.org/SC/SC_Transition_Checklist.pdf

ICE - International Conferences of ELSA

EWA - ELSA Webinars Academy

SV - Study Visit

IV - Institutional Visit

ICM - International Council Meeting

ITM - International Training Meeting

ISM - International Strategy Meeting

WM - Working Materials

WS - Workshop

IFP - International Focus Programme