

GUIDELINES - HYBRID EVENTS

SEMINARS & CONFERENCES
2020/2021



elsa

The European Law Students' Association

FOREWORD

The post-pandemic world is itching to make its way back to normal. The projects of ELSA however, are adapting and improvising with the emergence of hybrid solutions. To stay afloat during the new reality, it is vital to master the art of creating engaging and meaningful hybrid experiences. Hence, the imminent shift to hybrid events will impact the ELSA Network tremendously for the foreseeable future.

The Working Group on Hybrid Events conducted a thorough research on hybrid events and this Guidelines composed of two parts. Firstly, we focused on the detailed analysis of hybrid events; from the comparison with other event formats to its feasibility. Then, we reviewed our findings within the scope of ELSA, evaluated what kind of ELSA projects worth organising in this format and how to organise them step-by-step.

We really hope it will shed some light on this new format of events, and guide the future generations. Have a good read!

Created by:

İlke Yılmaz

Vice President in charge of
Seminars and Conferences
International Board 2020/2021

Ainoa Ordonez

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Basil Shaller

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Dora Stambuk

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Mikko Laitinen

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Pavlos Klagkos

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Ausra Abraityte

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Dagne Kemezyte

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Maciek Lodzinski

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Sophie Wilson

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Pavlos Vaenas

Member of the Working Group on Hybrid Events

Table of Contents

1. What is a Hybrid Event?	3
2. SWOT Analysis	3
2.1 The Strengths	3
2.2 The Weaknesses	4
2.3 The Opportunities	6
2.4 The Threats	7
Conclusion	8
3. Practicalities	9
3.1 Human Resources	9
3.2 Financial Aspects	10
3.3 Logistics	12
3.4 Feasibility	13
4. Comparison with Other Event Formats	15
4.1 Hybrid Events and Online Events	15
4.2 Hybrid Events and Physical Events	17
5. Organising Events in Hybrid Format	20
5.1 Seminars/Conferences/Panel Discussions	21
5.2 National Council Meeting / National Officers Meeting	22
5.3 Academic Competitions	23
6. Organising Engaging Hybrid Events	26
6.1. Content	26
6.2. Experience	27
6.3. Networking	28
6.4. Logistics	28

1. What is a Hybrid Event?

When talking about Hybrid Events, it is important to first gain a clear understanding of what exactly the term encompasses. “Hybrid Events” don’t have one set definition, so looking at what the words originated from can give some insight. The word hybrid describes *something of mixed origin or composition; often, a tool or technology that combines the benefits of formerly separate tools or technologies*.

The important thing to remember is, that for an event to truly be a Hybrid Event, a certain set of prerequisites must be present: the event must include participants both online and on-site in a way that is immersive and allows both to fully take part in the entire event or at least significant parts of it. Thanks to modern technology and digital components, the audience is equally able to partake and interact on site or online.

Therefore, a Hybrid Event is an event which takes place in a physical location but is simultaneously broadcast online. The speakers, experts, panellists are mainly at the physical location but may also attend from online. Hybrid Events can then mean many types of events, such as meetings, panel discussions, conferences or online lectures.

2. SWOT Analysis

Before a conclusion can be made as to whether Hybrid Events make sense for our Association, a SWOT Analysis ought to be conducted, to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The current strategy needs to be assessed, helping us make the most of what our Association already has, also in comparison to competitors. By understanding our strengths and weaknesses, we can reduce the chances of failure, helping to create a strategy for long-term successful implementation.

2.1. The Strengths

The ELSA Network and our event formats do currently have multitudes of strengths that support the possibility of Hybrid Events in the future. During the pandemic, we have already familiarised ourselves to both working online and the tools making that possible. Hence, we have a wide Network of active, skillful and committed officers that already have the skills and attitude to manage international events.

A. Experience with online formats

In the past year, the Network has gained a lot of experience and tools for hosting events online. Therefore, there is no need for big time investments for training or knowledge management to start hosting Hybrid Events. Most officers are also digital natives hence, the online formats and the necessary equipment is already familiar to them or at least attainable with little extra time and familiarisation.

B. Large network & engaged officers

The Network has a lot of active and engaged officers to tackle possible issues and develop the formats of Hybrid Events. We also have a wide area of different kinds of expertise in the Network, from project management to marketing. Most of the officers are engaged and willing to work to make the events possible and are open to new ideas and formats, especially given the experiences of the last years.

C. Strong brand of ELSA events

Many ELSA events have an already strong brand for officers already active in the Network. Active officers are engaged in the brand and the Network and are willing to move forward with the changes and move the Network ahead. Active members will take part in any events regardless of the format because they want to be part of the Network and get the experience and social connections the event provides.

D. Experience with project management

The Network has 40 years of experience with project management and has developed already working protocols in event management and transitions for local, national and international officers. Adding Hybrid Events into the Network is just another project of which the know-how and knowledge needs to be transitioned. Since 2020, there is plenty of experience in online project management in the Network, therefore there is no huge need for training about online tools.

E. The infrastructure of virtual tools

The Network already has the tools and infrastructure to hold events online (G-Suite, ClickMeeting, NemoVote etc.) and the officers with skills to use these tools. Transferring these skills into holding events both online and live is not as big of a step as starting from nothing.

F. Cross-border communication

The ELSA Network has 40 years of experience in cross-border communication and organising international projects. The association lives off cultural exchange and different countries working together. The ELSA officers do not have problems working in international teams, we have already done that.

2.2. The Weaknesses

Even with multitudes of strengths, we also have weaknesses that limit the scope of potential for Hybrid Events. The hybrid concept is complex when compared to both online and live events and requires additional resources both in time and money. Many of the key aspects of ELSA projects rely on personal connections and traditions not easily translated into online or hybrid environments.

A. Inactive National and Local Groups

The Network does have multiple inactive National and Local Groups (NGs, LGs) that have fallen behind in the development of the Network. These groups that do not currently have the culture of attending live events might in the future have even less of an incentive to do so. The inactive LGs and NG's might lack the know-how and virtual tools available to active groups and therefore they cannot participate in or organise Hybrid Events as well as others. These groups might require a lot of support and knowledge transfer to become properly active again, resources the Network then has to offer since we do not want to lose them. If the barrier to becoming active again is set too high, the NG's might find it too difficult or even impossible to do so, resulting in the NG being lost completely to the Network.

B. Bad knowledge management

The short one year terms of ELSA are a barrier to continuity and since Hybrid Events are more complex, there are more possibilities for things and details to get lost or be forgotten in the transition. The issues with knowledge management regarding Hybrid Events might make long-term project management harder and limit the passing of knowledge from board to board. Online environments are inherently less clear and more complex and thus require more knowledge management.

C. The strong traditions of internal ELSA events

The *ELSA Spirit* translates poorly into online and hybrid environments for someone who does not know what it is. The multitude of rites and traditions (energisers, vision contest) that are the cherry on top of the event might feel weird and deter people from participating in future events. There is a big problem of combining the structure and traditions we have into online formats in a way that does not confuse or scare freshers. The implementation of Hybrid Events might also create a split into the Network for some groups to always participate live and others to only participate online.

D. Lacking promotion/marketing strategies

The Network does not have strategies and know-how on how to market Hybrid Events and to make them appealing. Creating the ELSA way of Hybrid Events and familiarising the Network to the idea will be a big undertaking that requires a lot of resources and commitment from the Network. It is also possible that there is going to be a period of trial and error and therefore events with less than optimal outcomes. That is to the detriment of the participants since the active ELSA careers of officers rarely exceed two or three years.

E. Member engagement in online formats

Member engagement does not really transfer into online social programmes either. Online social programmes are limited in what they can offer and are inherently not as engaging as live

programmes. Participants with less ELSA spirit might skip the programme altogether and thus miss on the possibilities the Network might offer them. In an online format, the social and networking aspects of the event are lacking, especially in the one-on-one aspects you might get by discussing with different people in the meetings, in a party or during lunch. Mixing live and online participants in an engaging and satisfactory way may be hard and thus the events will have split experiences. This may especially affect the engagement of online participants since they might feel “left-out” of the social and interpersonal aspects of any event.

F. Lack of connectivity and focus on the event

Participation in an online event is always less intense and focused than in a live event. The participants attend the events during work or school and sometimes do not really focus or prepare for the discussions or are even fully there. This especially shows during workshops or discussions where input from the participants is required and where they need to be prepared. Most ELSA officers do not work for ELSA full time and therefore lack the ability to focus on a week of online meetings back to back whereas flying to a country for a week is a better option to properly take the time. The event also being online gives the less committed officer less incentive or even ability to focus on the event

G. Lack of current structure for these types of events

The Network currently lacks the knowledge on Hybrid Events. The beginning of organising the events requires high time and possibly monetary investments for the event formats to be worked out and developed. Currently we do not know what kinds of equipment and facilities we need in our event venues to successfully organise a working Hybrid Event. The idea is new so we do not know if the next board or the one three years down the line will use it, so it is also impossible to know if the investments made now will ever be amortised.

2.3. The Opportunities

The opportunities that Hybrid Events can offer are numerous. In the end, the question should always be what we wish to achieve with this format.

A. Greater reach and accessibility

By taking away the pressure of having to worry about financial aspects or time constraints, Hybrid Events instantaneously become more accessible. By being able to attend the event from the comfort of your home, the events lose some of their barriers. Especially for local officers that don't have many financial resources, being able to attend an meeting online really lowers the bar for participation on a national or international level. This introduces many more people to this aspect of ELSA and truly gives members and officers from all of our 44 countries the opportunity to be an active part of the Network. By being able to allow a virtually unlimited number of participants online, both the number of registrations and the actual number of participants can increase significantly. The live aspect of the Hybrid Event still offers everybody that isn't comfortable with the virtual environment the opportunity to join live - the participants can decide for themselves.

B. Build long-term officer engagement

The above mentioned greater reach and accessibility seamlessly lead over to the next opportunities provided by hosting Hybrid Events: Especially related to International Meetings, giving more local officers and members the opportunity to participate makes the hunt for successors easier. Much more people have the opportunity to participate internationally, increasing the incentive to become a national board member. The lowered barrier to attend an event can lead to much more people than before participating. Being able to attend, even partly, opens new doors - it's not all or nothing.

C. Sustainability

One final opportunity to be looked at is the aspect of sustainability. By reducing the number of people traveling to live events, a large amount of CO₂ is saved. There are also other sustainable impacts, such as reduced waste or more sensible use of resources that are on site. Furthermore, a sustainable event experience can be evoked in the participant, boosting connectivity to the association. Having and following a more sustainable implementation plan for large events also makes ELSA look good to externals.

2.4. The Threats

In contrast to the opportunities provided by organising Hybrid Events, we must also be wary of the threats switching to such formats can pose to our association.

A. Higher organising & investment costs

Not only is a bigger Organising Committee (OC) needed to organise Hybrid Events, there are also initial high investment costs, such as buying all of the necessary equipment to be able to host a Hybrid Event. In addition to this, depending on the event type (e.g. panel discussion), it would still be necessary to hire professional experts to be able to properly implement such an event type, for example sound, light, and camera technicians.

B. Training & familiarisation necessary

Our ELSA Officers must be trained to deal with virtual participants as well as the needed technology and equipment for hosting Hybrid Events. Having just one person in the OC or in a panel discussion not knowing how to properly use the technical equipment or software could be a huge hindrance and cause issues.

C. Potentially fewer live participants

ELSA lives through its members engaging with one another and coming into contact with ELSA officers from different countries and locations. Having less live participants could cause less interconnectedness between the different ELSA groups in our Network. For many not already active officers, ELSA events will not be a priority and thus also never become a priority, causing big Human Resources problems in the future as well.

D. Different participant experience

One big threat for any social part of events not organised completely live is the inclusion of virtual participants. They will miss most of the social engagements of the event, for example the conversations had at the dinner table or on the dance floor. A transmission of content to participants at home causes no issues. Social interactions however are impossible to transfer to a hybrid format.

Having two separate social programmes also does not meet the expectations of a Hybrid Event and would automatically split any group of participants into two, which is seldom a wished-for result. This means that any matters being discussed can easily be shared via live, online or hybrid formats, but having a hybrid social programme seems impossible at this point in time.

E. The slippery slope of going more and more online

Regarding International Internal Meetings, the potential lack of live participants and differences in participant experience might lead the future Network to end live events all together and just organise online events due to the comfort of this alternative. The knowledge of how to organise a live Meeting can be lost quickly, especially due to the short-lived careers of our ELSA officers. Losing this knowledge and expertise all-together would be incredibly harmful for the longevity of our association.

Conclusion

Looking at all above mentioned aspects, a clear conclusion can be drawn regarding organising Hybrid Events:

The biggest disadvantage of organising Hybrid Events is the impossibility of having a hybrid social programme. The format does not translate well and we currently lack both the tools and a strategy of how to equally engage live and remote participants. The hybrid format is not a reliable option for social and Networking components.

On the other hand, the accessibility and sustainability points of Hybrid Events provide a huge benefit to our association. The possibility to participate in workshops and plenaries remotely could make the association more open and be an incentive for ELSA officers from inactive countries, and those with less financial resources, to participate in the Network. Especially considering the aspect of wanting member engagement from all National Groups, this would be a huge asset to a more inclusive association in the future. Furthermore, any type of event which has a focus on academic development could greatly benefit from the possibility of not excluding participants due to location or monetary reasons.

Considering the above-mentioned aspects, not making use of this new format and all of the advantages it has to offer would be contrary to development we wish to see in our association. It

is still to be determined how to deal with the current lack of possibilities of a hybrid social programme, but while this argument is not undue, it still weighs weakly compared to all advantages.

All in all, Hybrid Events offer many advantages and opportunities for growth to our association. When utilised correctly and with a well thought out strategy, especially in terms of connecting the different participant-types, ELSA could greatly benefit from implementing Hybrid Events into our Network.

3. Practicalities

3.1. Human Resources

For Hybrid Events, you should have a similar amount of OC members as in the physical event, but have in mind that you should have more people for supporting the technical part of the event - depending on the event size.

This designated OC member should be in charge of communicating with the technical support staff for technical equipment and other service providers that are needed to stream the event live. Otherwise, if the organising group decides not to use the technical support services and organise a live broadcast of the event by itself, they would be in charge of providing, transporting and taking care of technical equipment, moving the camera, and microphone around, dealing with technical issues. Taking into consideration that a significant part of the Hybrid Event is composed of online participants that should get as close to a live event experience as possible, they should focus on paying attention to the online participants, comments, questions, and engaging with them, as they were physically participating in the event.

This additional OC member should be always free from other tasks during the event because, on the day of the event, they must be the ones that always are reachable if some technical difficulties come.

While organising a Hybrid Event you should take into consideration that at first, it will require high investment costs of time and greater human resources in the beginning, because the concepts have to be worked out and developed and adapted to the event concept.

3.2. Financial Aspects

The financial part for Hybrid Event will have a big difference as the event is organised only for physical participants as it also requires additional financial resources for technical equipment that should be planned in the budget of the event in advance.

A. Sources of income

The sources of income for the Hybrid Event are essentially the same as for any event of ELSA: participation fees, grants, partnerships or sponsorships, and financing from the organising group's budget.

Participation fees

When organising a Hybrid Event, the participation fee should depend on the benefits received from the event. The participation fee can be formed in two ways:

- In case the benefits gaining from the event is equal for both online and physical participants, by establishing the same participation fee for all participants;
- In case the benefits differ (e.g. physically participating participants receive welcome packs that are not received by online participants, as well as online participants will not be able to participate in the social and/or cultural programme, coffee breaks, etc.), by establishing two different participation fees: one for physical and one for online participants.

Under the second option, the amount of participation fee established for the online participant should not exceed the amount of the participation fee for physical participants.

It is advisable that the participation fee for the international, national and local internal meetings would be maximum EUR 10 for online participants and should only be used to cover the costs of technical equipment and/or its maintenance. For other types of events (conferences, seminars, etc.) the participation fee should depend on the benefits received by the participants, the duration of the event and the demand of the content of the event itself. You can also determine the participation fee differently for in-person participants and online participants as their benefits also differ.

Partnerships and sponsorships

The main key selling point of the Hybrid Event unquestionably is the number of participants in the event and the potential visibility of the sponsor. However, to ensure that this is not just empty promises to sponsors, the organising group needs to plan clearly in advance how information about sponsors and their involvement will reach both physical and online participants of the Hybrid Event and clearly explain this at the negotiating table with a potential sponsor.

Moreover, the Hybrid Event is unique not only because of its attractiveness due to the potential higher visibility of the sponsor in quantitative terms but also in that you can offer your sponsors a lot of different opportunities for cooperation and advertisement related to the broadcast of the event. For instance, in exchange for financial or in-kind support, you can propose your sponsor during the event to organise VIP Networking or matchmaking features, sponsored sessions and live demos of their services or products, display the sponsor's logo on the live broadcast platform online or in the app, as well as communication to the participants solely related to the sponsor itself or its branded parts of the event. Of course, these methods of cooperation are

aimed specifically at the entertainment and busyness of online participants but could attract additional funds for the implementation of the physical part of the event.

B. Expenses

Although most of the expenses will not vary from the physical event cost, there will be some new expenses for technical equipment. The amount of equipment costs depends on whether the organising group chooses to order the technical support staff for the live broadcast or whether it decides to organise the live broadcast itself with rented equipment.

It is recommended to focus on finding a venue that already has equipment for streaming events online, for example, equipped universities, hotels, and conference rooms. If it is not possible, the costs of the above-mentioned options of organising the Hybrid Event may differ from country to country, as well as depend on the need for cameras and other technical equipment, on the number of live broadcast sources in which the broadcast will be shown, and on the planned number of spectators of a live broadcast.

Renting prices for equipment (for 1 day) may fluctuate between EUR 100 and EUR 300 per camera and a suitable tripod, as well as other mandatory accessories. If any technical staff (i.e. cameraman, sound and video directors, etc.) are needed, the services of them may increase the renting prices (for 1 day) by an additional EUR 50-200 per person. Nevertheless, before choosing what equipment to rent, it is recommended taking into account the scale of the event and also consulting with the specialists.

We recommend checking as many services and equipment providers as possible in search of the most affordable price and/or considering approaching such a provider as a sponsor.

Below you may find a table of estimated costs of organising International Council Meeting, International Strategy Meeting, and Conference in hybrid format.

ICM	Plenary	Workshop	General	ISM	Conference (1 day event)
Platform			370	370	370
Camera	1,620	2,700		840	400
Monitors / Projector	270	1,620		210	26
Tripods	135	945		315	15
Microphones with Transmitter	2,925	6,930		2275	200
Internet line			7,200	700	100
Technician	3000	At least 2 technicians needed		5000	2,850
Speakers	675			525	
Covid tests					350
	8,625	12,195	7,570	9865	4,311
Total				10,235	4,311

3.3. Logistics

As with all the other points discussed here, the amount and type of logistics required also depend a lot on the type and size of the event. In general it can be said that the logistics of a hybrid event do not differ too much from those needed for purely physical events, but there are two fields that need some special attention in case of a hybrid event, namely the human power and technical aspects of the logistics.

A. Human Power

With human power is the amount of people and the time needed they have to invest to make the event a success. In contrast to physical events, hybrid events need some more investment especially regarding the time needed and depending on the size of the event and also in the amount of people involved.

Especially in the beginning of the planning phase, it is recommended to invest some time into developing a concept specially tailored for hybrid events, which takes the special circumstances of such an event for participants as well as speakers etc. into account, such as making sure that the participants are equally engaged no matter how they participate and to make sure that especially the online participants are not fully left out of the social parts of the event. The technical requirements might influence the choice of the venue and therefore they must be planned for from the beginning, so one might not run into troubles later if the venue is for example not equipped with good enough internet or so on. It is also necessary to keep in mind that participants and/or speakers might not be used to hybrid events and the peculiarities these entail and therefore the OC might need to invest some time before the event to coach the speakers and probably the participants as well (also in the technical aspects). Both of these probably need more time than planning a pure physical event of similar size.

The amount of people required to organise and undertake such an event depends next to the size of the event and also a lot on the capabilities of the people involved. Generally it is

recommended to have at least one person dedicated to the technical requirements and equipment, which is responsible to organise the required material, the transport of said material as well as the maintenance of it during the event. This should be a special position in an OC, next to all other positions which are also needed for pure physical events, because it is imperative that this person is always available in case of technical issues especially during the event and does not have other obligations next to these. This person or team should, if possible, have the necessary technical knowledge to handle the equipment needed or acquire the knowledge beforehand, if the hiring of outside assistance wants to be avoided.

B. Technical Requirements

As a second important difference to the organisation of a pure physical event one has the technical requirements needed to have a hybrid event. This starts with the venue which needs to have a stable internet connection that is capable of handling the amount of traffic needed for a livestream, as well as a stable power supply with enough capacity for the extra equipment that is needed.

The required equipment of course depends a lot on the exact event in question but in general it can be said that at least one high resolution camera is needed as well as a good microphone and a good laptop or computer as well as possibly an audio mixer and special software, depending on how many cameras / microphones are used and to which platform the livestream is going to.

This equipment has of course to be organised, transported and installed at the venue beforehand and in reverse be disassembled and returned afterwards. For this it is, as above mentioned, recommended to have a dedicated person or team, which also needs the means of transportation for the equipment in question (i.e. a car).

3.4. Feasibility

In this following section we will proceed with an analysis of the feasibility of hybrid events on the ELSA Network. Due to the fact that we need an individual case analysis to evaluate the likelihood of completing the project successfully, we will follow the next **seven step analysis**.

1. We will **summarise the whole project**, and we need to describe all the details of the event, from the type of event to the potential participants and speakers. First we need to understand if the type of event that we are planning is compatible with this format. Is it a seminar or conference, or is it an event that requires the physical presence of attendees such as a council meeting? Can we try to adapt our event to make it hybrid?
2. We will analyse the **technological considerations** of this format. As it has been analysed in the previous section, hybrid events not only require technical equipment, but also technical knowledge on how to develop this format. The technical equipment consists of a camera, as well as a sound desk and microphones, projectors, speakers... and if the event is bigger, and takes place with simultaneous activities or groups we can use webcams to conduct the different sessions.

Additionally, the technical knowledge required for this format consists of both hardware knowledge (how to install the different equipment, and how to connect them) as well as software knowledge, to operate in the streaming platform, as well as how to solve possible technical difficulties that may arise (audio, video etc...). You also need to take into account that you may be able to hire technical staff in order to help you with this part of the event.

3. We will **analyse the market** in which this event will take place, together with the marketing strategy that we will follow. Here we need to understand the behaviour of our participants, as well as the speakers (if needed), as well as their ability to adapt to this format. If the event is destined to ELSA members (aka young law students and young lawyers), the adaptation to this virtual format won't be an issue, but, in case we need speakers (seminar or conference), we will need to make sure they understand the platform we are using, and that they are capable of login in and participate.

4. We will look into the **required Human Resources** needed to develop these events. Looking into our ELSA structure, there is no need for an extra board position in charge of these events, but it can be covered either by a director for Hybrid events, or more specifically for the event with a Hybrid event OC member. In this point we also need to take into account the dimensions of the event, and in the case we have simultaneous activities going on, we might need to have a team, to provide better technical support.

Whichever of them we choose, they will be in charge of providing the event with the technical equipment, as well as transporting it and taking care of it, and also dealing with technical issues.

Other fundamental task of this position will be engaging with the virtual participants, helping them connect to the streaming, communicating their questions to the speakers as well as keeping them engaged on breaks or pauses.

In order to understand if this format is feasible from an HR perspective, we need to take into account the officers we have, and we are able to attract more officers for this position, as well as if they qualify for this position, or we have time to train them.

5. Next, we will proceed with one of the most important steps: **financial analysis**. On this point we will take into account the expenses and income of the event. This type of format requires high investments at the beginning of the project, in order to provide the technical equipment. These investments need to be done regardless if we buy the equipment or we decide to rent them.

One of the things we will have to ask ourselves is: do we have enough liquidity to proceed with the investment? If yes, we can continue with the financial analysis, but if not, we can either discard this format, or look for some alternatives to get that liquidity. In these cases, we can either look for project partners, search for some Grants, talk to our Alumni associations, or even apply for EDF or some National equivalents.

Next we will analyse if the event gives us a return of our investment, and to do so we will estimate the income gathered by the event, and see if with the final income we will cover the costs of the investments. Some of the incomes that can be taken into account in this format are the virtual participation fees, which can help us cover the technical equipment costs.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into account at this point is the possibility of the cancellation of the event, and the costs that this entails. Given that we offer the possibility of attending the event online, there is the possibility that we don't reach a minimum of physical participants so that the event is economically viable.

That is why it is recommended that, when selecting the different venues, we take into account the cancellation of the event and the possibility of getting a refund of reservation fees. Also, in order to make this easier, it is advised that the application period is moved

forward, helping the OC decide in advance on the possible cancellation. In this sense, we could have an earlier application period for the physical participants, and a much belated one for the online participants.

6. The next step to analyse is the **timeline or schedule**, and we should take into account all the elements explained above like: Do we have enough time to recruit our OC? And also, do we have time to train them on the technical requirements of the position?

Also, taking into account the financial aspects dealt with on the previous point, do we have enough and secure time to cancel the event without having further losses? Do we have time to apply for monetary support (EDF cycles, grants...).

7. Now taking all the above into account, we will proceed to give a **recommendation** of the feasibility of this format for our ELSA group.

4. Comparison with Other Event Formats

Bearing in mind the aforementioned definition of hybrid events, it is more than evident that they share several characteristics with both online as well as physical events. However, given the fact that the effective combination of the said features can prove to be rather challenging, it is worth determining the precise differences and similarities between hybrid and online/physical events.

4.1. Hybrid Events and Online Events

	Hybrid Events	Online Events
	Differences / Similarities	
Infrastructure	The technical equipment/infrastructure required for the live transmission of the event needs to be usually provided and taken care of by the organising ELSA Group, bearing the relevant financial burden.	Both speakers and attendees must have access to a computer, a microphone and a camera. No additional equipment is required.
	Both types of event require the use of virtual platforms (e.g., Facebook, Zoom, ClickMeeting, GoogleMeet etc)	
Speakers	Several speakers, especially those coming from abroad, can be virtually present, whereas others can physically participate in the event. Hybrid events	Speakers can only be virtually present.

	are more vivid than online events, yet less vivid than physical events.	
Attendees	Attendees can either physically or virtually participate in the event. A longer-than-usual application period is suggested, depending on the capacity of the venue, where the event is taking place.	Attendees can only be virtually present.
Number of attendees	More participants can attend the event, given that there will be extra places offered for physically-participating attendees (in addition to the already large number of online attendees, depending on the platform).	Considerably large number of attendees, depending on the platform.
Logistics	Both actual and virtual logistics need to be provided, thus increasing both the cost and the workload of the VP in charge of Marketing.	Only virtual logistics can be used, usually free of cost.
Engagement	Non-physical participants cannot be as actively engaged as physical participants. Special attention needs to be drawn on making the event equally exciting for them as well.	Not as engaging as hybrid events (let alone physical events).
	Not as engaging as purely physical events	
OC	There is no need for many OC members, however organisers need to be sufficiently familiar with the use of technology	

4.2. Hybrid Events and Physical Events

	Physical Events	Hybrid Events
	Differences / Similarities	
Infrastructure	No special technical support needed. The event is located in the lecture hall which can be equipped with a projector and computer/laptop devices if needed.	Technical support for organization needed (microphone, camera, computer/laptop devices, projector, high-quality virtual event platform like ClickMeeting or Zoom...) located in the lecture hall.
Flexibility	Physical events have a strict timeline, location and both attendees and speakers need to follow it accordingly, thus this format of the event is less flexible.	Hybrid events allow connecting speakers and participants from different time zones and locations. The possibility to record the ongoing sessions brings even more flexibility for attendees that are not able to attend the event or connect live.
Data Protection	During physical events we collect various data in the registration process, but in person mostly or via virtual forms. Tracking mass data in person is much more challenging and requires more engagement of the OC in order to have successfully organised the project.	While organising hybrid events various data is collected both in-person as well as virtually in the registration process. It is easier to track mass data such as comments, registrations, clicks, views, interactions, questions, answers...via virtual platforms and different surveys. All that data helps to evaluate the success of the project.
Meals/Coffee breaks	Meals/Coffee breaks for the (higher number of) participants and speakers hence, increasing the costs.	Meals/Coffee breaks to be provided to a limited number of people (or not provided at all)

Networking & Social Interaction	Face-to-face interactions and physical meetings hold its own value as they add value in building relationships when attendees and speakers are able to meet in person. Social aspect of the event is easy to develop while meeting physically.	Combination of virtual and in-person events brings difficulties in connecting between people and Networking, OC will have to provide opportunities for interaction between attendees and speakers via virtual platforms as well as enable interactions for those attending in person.
Speakers	Less possibilities while choosing speakers. OC needs to consider travel and accommodation costs for those speakers that do not live in the city where the event is located.	Hybrid events offer the possibility to choose speakers from all over the world, from all different time zones. Often it is expensive for the OC to arrange lectures of some high-quality speakers because of the budget and time limits, so with this format of the event in which we combine virtual and in person lectures we can also achieve a better quality of the project.
Attendees	Lecture halls have limited space thus the number of participants is always limited and often projects require more engagement of the audience with a speaker, so it is impossible to have a big number of participants. OC will probably have more work while selecting and evaluating applications due to more limits.	The number of attendees of the hybrid event can be higher than the physical one. Participants can choose if they are applying to attend it physically or virtually thus the number of applications is higher in the very start. OC will select and evaluate applications accordingly.

Engagement	At physical events, during ongoing sessions attendees are able to ask questions and speakers are answering right away while during virtual sessions speakers often answer related questions after the event via email. Different workshops can be a great tool to achieve even more engagement of the participants.	As technology advances, virtual event platforms are offering more and more interactive and engaging features such as live polls, surveys, quizzes, Q&A sessions. Using all these tools we can easily have interaction between virtually present speakers and attendees and physically present speakers and attendees. Virtual engagement allows attendees to participate freely in polls who hesitate to voice out their opinion during in-person events.
Offering freebies	Physical events do offer freebies and customised gifts “to take home”. It is possible to give gifts such as customized pencils, notebooks, stickers etc easily to all participants at once. Choosing the right gift for the speaker is also easier when you are giving it in-person.	Hybrid events can offer freebies and customized gifts suiting the event using tools such as spin the wheel, quizzes and similar games. Attendees can participate in those games whether they are present physically or virtually. Also, speakers can get Thank you notes and customized gifts no matter whether they are present physically or virtually. Physical freebies can be delivered to the postal code considering additional costs.
Promotion	Physical events offer possibilities for sponsors to promote themselves speaking on a stage, hosting the coffee break or providing participants and speakers with goodie-bag content. Visibility is achieved by positioning banners, promotion materials and others in the lecture hall. With a limited number of participants and speakers it is harder to promote and be seen but with great marketing tricks and cross social media promotion it can be on a high level.	Hybrid events offer possibilities such as promoting sponsors via virtual sponsor rooms, welcome videos, virtual goodie-bags containing guides, coupons, access to different seminars or workshops and many others. Visibility of the association and the organiser generally increased using both virtual and physical promotion of association, partner organizations and sponsors. Higher number of participants and speakers, higher visibility of the event.

Transportation	Transportation of speakers and attendees during the event causes additional costs, thus if all of them attend the event live the cost is bigger and the organization of it is harder.	Transportation of speakers and attendees that are physically present in the hybrid format of the event causes additional costs as well, but the possibilities for having the part of them present virtually makes that cost lower for the same number
Human Resources	While organising a hybrid or physical project, the OC shall consist of sufficient number of members in order to have a proper task division and have a successfully organised project.	
Venue	Hybrid and physical events require a venue or lecture hall in which participants, or one part of participants will be present as well as speakers.	

5. Organising Events in Hybrid Format

5.1. Seminars/Conferences/Panel Discussions

Seminars, conferences and panel discussions, traditionally under the organising responsibility of the VP S&C, are more or less known for the large number of participants that they tend to attract. Given special requirements that need to be met, should such events take place physically in the time of the coronavirus pandemic, it is certain that venues will not be used to their full capacity, whereas some people -otherwise interested in your event- may not be willing to participate for healthcare reasons. Therefore, organising seminars, conferences and panel discussions in a hybrid format is likely to attract more attendees, without you bearing the financial burden to provide them all with the full physical experience. What is more, you may be able to invite speakers that would otherwise be able to contribute to your event (e.g., because they come from abroad). Below you may find an organising plan that you might choose, should you opt for organising a hybrid event, either during the COVID-19 crisis or even after the pandemic is over.

- **4+ months before the event**

In this early preparation stage, it is essential that you have at least made a decision concerning the general topic, the preliminary dates and budget as well as the expected number of attendees and speakers. With the aforementioned kept in mind, you will be able to more easily assess whether organising the event in a hybrid format is actually worth it, both in terms of financial resources and workload.

- **3 months before the event**

At this point, you need to start approaching your speakers (and preferably as soon as possible) in order to know whether they are going to participate physically or virtually. It is also advised to inform them concerning the precise platform you are going to use and ask for their permission whether you intend to keep your event available after it has ended (e.g., if you choose to use Facebook Live). By the end of this month, you should have at least 50% of the academic program ready, in order to further proceed with the event's organization as described below.

- **2 months before the event:**

At this point of the organisation, it is highly recommended to visit the venue of the event and check if the technological infrastructure required is available, microphones work properly and the lighting inside the venue is adequate. It is crucial to ensure the availability of the technological equipment and the acquisition of the technological know how at this point of the organisation. Moreover, a promotional strategy for the event shall be created and the publication of marketing materials in social media shall start. Depending on the size of the event, the application period can be launched and the selection of the participants shall take place. The selection process includes the indication of which participants will attend the conference physically and which online via the platform chosen. It is at the discretion of the OC to decide which participants will attend the event. However, it is suggested to inform applicants beforehand about the criteria of the selection, the spots available for physical participants and publish clear Terms & Conditions.

- **1 month before the event:**

The complete academic programme shall be finalised the latest until 1 month before the event takes place and announced to the participants by any means. It is greatly recommended to organise several rehearsals beforehand in order to familiarise yourselves with the hybrid format, inform the speakers about every technical detail concerning the delivery of their lecture/workshop. Additionally, tasks shall be divided between the OC members and make sure that each person is responsible for a different task especially regarding the online streaming of the event. (transfer the questions of online participants to the speakers, etc.)

5.2. National Council Meeting / National Officers Meeting

Organising any event in a hybrid-format can bring with it some advantages. This adaptation not only makes it easier for participants from all over the country to take part in regarding having the time and not being scared off by the time investment. It also enables anyone that might not want

to invest the money or have the money to invest in one of these Meetings to stay up to date with the Network and not miss any important discussions.

But to make it worth organising for a group it needs to have a certain number of physical participants, since all the logistics for a physical event are still necessary for a hybrid event. Therefore we recommend estimating how many people will attend the event, if less than 30 participants are physically present we think it is not worth organising an event.

It doesn't matter so much what kind of event it is but more on the size of the event in question. Even Seminars and other academic events can be worth organising if the aim is to reach as many people as possible and especially if you want participants from other groups.

Before you start planning a National Internal Meeting in a hybrid format it is important for each National Group to always keep their groups and countries' regulations in mind!

Several months (depending on your national regulations) before the event in question it has initially to be decided how big the event will be, and whether it is worth organising it in a hybrid format. Especially for National Council Meetings or National Officers Meetings, where there might be deadlines and fixed dates for cancellation of e.g. hotel reservations, this needs to be considered when planning the timeline for applications to the physical part of the event to avoid any damages.

After this initial step the first real deadline is the cancellation date for the venue and/or the accommodation. Before this deadline you need to know how many physical participants you would have, because at this time it needs to be finally decided how the event will be conducted. It is the last point in time the physical aspects could be cancelled without incurring any financial losses, if you are lacking physical participants. For this you need to open the call for (physical) participants before the deadline! The call for online participants can be left open much longer, since they don't have a big influence on most organisational steps.

If you decide to proceed with the hybrid format it is important to soon after start with the search for the necessary technical equipment needed, if you don't have it already. To do this it is also necessary to know at this time how the event will be structured, so how many and when the specific parts of the event will take place, such as how many plenary sessions, workshops, and so on you will have and also where they will be. Further it must be decided/known how the speakers, chairs, etc. will participate, so you know what kind of equipment you need for them to do their job. For example it is probably needed to have separate microphones for the people that will be talking a lot during the meeting and it might also be good to have special cameras for them, so the online participants will be able to see them without issues. It is especially important to know in how many rooms you will have the parts of the event you want to be hybrid, so the people tasked with the technical equipment can properly prepare for it.

As soon as you know which technical equipment you will use you need to look for which platform/streaming service you want to use for the online participants. It needs to be made sure that the equipment is suitable for the service you will use.

If you have all of this organised you need to make a test run with all equipment and the platform at the venue you have chosen, before the actual event. We recommend doing this as soon as you have all the necessary equipment and the platform, so that there is enough time left to change stuff if something goes wrong. At the latest we recommend doing this one week before the meeting will take place, but this will of course also depend on the availability of the venue.

We further recommend that at the latest one to two weeks before the meeting you also close the call for online participants, so you have time to properly inform the participants about the proceedings, the technical requirements and how they will be able to join the meeting.

Shortly before the meeting it is necessary that the equipment is installed at the venue and that a final test is conducted. During the event it is important that at least one person of the technical team is always present and ready to help if there are any issues. It might also be good if you have some alternatives planned in case you have technical difficulties, so that you can react fast in such a situation.

5.3. Academic Competitions

It is common practice that academic competitions are organised physically, as it is typical for competitions to require direct interaction between participants, as well as conditions for a rapid reaction to the comments and/or questions. Nowadays, these conditions can also be met in a fully remote (online) format of the event which has recently become particularly popular due to its advantages in terms of attracting participants from different parts of the world, reduction of financial costs for organisers, etc.

However, the first thoughts on the hybrid academic competition are negative. For instance, it is doubtful whether the hybrid academic competition will succeed in ensuring the truthfulness of the participants (cheating), actual opportunity to test participants' knowledge via transmission, etc. Moreover, several organisational difficulties arose: need to have a bigger OC to support the event both online and offline, the need to rent/buy the broadcasting equipment (if the venue doesn't provide it), as well as possible higher costs of the project related to the assurance of the technical software related to the broadcasting, etc.

Although it might look like most of the things there are to be said about the hybrid format in the academic field are negative, there are some positives too, such as:

- the possibility to attract more attention to the organisation and the project itself by organising innovative competitions;
- partners and sponsors might benefit even greater from deciding to support a hybrid academic competition because they would not only be granted with online promotion but also in-venue banners, roll-ups etc.;

- A hybrid event means a smaller number of people involved in the competition physically, so it may reduce the cost related to the venues.

Considering the above, the organisers of academic competitions looking to try and bring something new to their Network can also try an alternative format of the event - a hybrid academic competition. This innovative solution in the academic field could be appropriate and feasible only if you want to include the audience/spectators in the competition. For example, in organising the hybrid moot court competition, the performance of teams/participants could be broadcasted to the audience via live broadcast, thus increasing the visibility of the competition, benefits to its sponsors and partners, as well as allowing organisers to use smaller venues for competition.

However, such a hybrid academic competition format in which the event is broadcasted live and at least some of the participants of the competition or judges participate remotely would be feasible only in exceptional, unforeseen cases where the organisers attempt to quickly resolve the unplanned inability of a part of the participants/judges to arrive at the planned venue and participate in the competition. This contingency solution would, of course, only be implementable if the organisers of the event, in the preoperational stage to the competition prepared themselves for a possible change of the format of the event (chose the venue that could provide technical equipment for such a reform, anticipated additional funds in the event budget for contingencies, etc.).

Organising a hybrid academic competition with the audience

When planning the hybrid academic competition with the audience, and before making the decision of making the project in a hybrid format or otherwise, there are a few things the organiser should have to take into consideration:

- Beforehand, you should do market research to understand if our potential participants are willing to participate in this type of format.
- Then, you have to understand if this hybrid format is compatible with the rules of our competition, or if you have enough time to change this before the beginning. This point is closely connected to the provisions of the rules related to cheating in the competition, because while doing the competition hybrid there might arise new situations in which participants could possibly cheat, and this is something you need to take into account when choosing the format of the competition.
- Another aspect you must consider is your partners and sponsors preferences. It is important for you to consult with them before taking a decision to organise the competition in a hybrid format since it might not be in favour of their interest and you might lose them as partners/sponsors.
- The last thing you have to consider, and especially when preparing the budget is if you have enough money to cover the technical costs of the event, as well as liquidity to start renting the equipment needed.

And even if you answered yes to all the previous questions you need to take a minute and think for yourself whether the huge workload that comes with the hybrid format of the academic

competition in all its complexity are the things you're going to handle without also hurting the project itself.

However, if the decision is still in favour of a hybrid format, below you will find a set of recommended deadlines you should aim to stick to in order to guarantee a successful hybrid academic competition with the audience.

- **5+ months before the first hybrid stage of the competition**

At this time things of utmost importance are: conducting the survey/market research that is gonna allow you to test the interest of potential participants, if there is significant interest, you may want to include the project in your yearly budget, then choose the topic of your academic competition and finish it by drafting plans for the project in general and its stages.

- **3 months before the first hybrid stage of the competition**

At this point, it is the time to open the call for the OC. Then, you need to focus on the research in regard to the venues, special guests, jury members, panellists, as well as with the analysis if they're interested in participating in an event in a hybrid format. During these months, try to contact your best entities and ask them about the specifics and costs (do they have the equipment needed to broadcast/display your competition-related content). Around the same time, draft marketing materials and advertisement campaigns.

- **2 months before the first hybrid stage of the competition**

At two months before start implementing the marketing strategy and contacting the jury members/panelist/academic board. Do another research and ask public institutions for honorary patronages (as well as barter, prizes, potentially money). It is also the time to open the call for the supporting human power of the competition (i.e. timekeepers, moderators of the pleadings, etc.).

- **1 month before the first hybrid stage of the competition**

One month before the first stage of the competition is the appropriate time to start rehearsals in the venue, as well as to check rent/buy the technical equipment required for the implementation of the hybrid format of the competition.

- **2 weeks before the first hybrid stage of the competition**

Start the application process for the audience of the competition. In addition, send out reminder emails to all of your participants (teams/individuals), judges and speakers(if any) to confirm the physical appearances/absences in the competition.

- **In the day of the first hybrid stage of the competition**

Instruct OC of what to do, whom and how to greet, take care of the participants, judges and other persons involved in the competition. Test the internet connection once again, as well as all the equipment, including broadcasting equipment (mics, cameras, etc.).

If your academic competition provides for more than one stage in a hybrid format, use the guidelines above, but modified for a specific stage, to implement further stages of the competition.

6. Organising Engaging Hybrid Events

As it's previously mentioned, ELSA has its own traditions, and activities that may only be understandable for ELSA officers. This is why, in the following section we propose a distinction between general advice on how to engage participants on a hybrid event, and then, a few tips for ELSA officers' events.

6.1. Content

Given the fact that participants will attend the event online, or a limited number of participants will attend physically and the majority will participate online, it is highly recommended to reduce the overall duration of the event in terms of hours of academic programme and overall length. It might be inconvenient for online attendees to participate actively in a hybrid conference of 4 days with 5 hours of academic programme per day for example. Hence, in the aim of increasing the engagement and interactivity of the event, it is advised to keep it short in terms of total duration yet inclusive with engaging with interesting presentations/lectures.

Under the same mindset, the OC should try to increase the length of the coffee/lunch breaks of the event provided to the live participants and to the speakers. Therefore, online participants will have the chance to make their own coffee/lunch and follow the programme of the event, as if they were physically present in it.

When designing the programme of the event, the OC should make sure that the speakers include in the presentations possibilities for the online participants to engage with the live audience and the event and vice versa. Tools like Slido, Kahoot or Mentimeter instead of "Hands up -voting" allow both the live and online audiences to participate equally.

6.2. Experience

Throughout the duration of the hybrid event, online participants should be able to address questions to the speakers and receive answers. This can be achieved by appointing an OC member responsible to check the chat and make sure that the questions of online participants are transferred to the speakers. Moreover, questions can be addressed by the speakers to the online participants by using engaging online tools (polls, etc). In this way, online attendees will be more involved in the event and interact with physical attendees. For that reason, one OC member should remain at the disposal of online participants throughout the event and intervene in case of technical issues with providing the assistance needed.

Parallel experiences

When preparing for an Hybrid event, the OC should avoid excluding the online participants from the live participants in providing materials or “extra” merchandise on the event. If the live participants receive a welcome package of materials, the same or similar package should be provided to online participants via mail. The online participants should also be able to purchase any of the same event merchandise like T-shirts or pins as the live participants.

This way, both the online and live participants can feel included in the event and get the memorabilia. What is more, online logistics can be created and sent to the online participants via email in order to simulate the actual experience. Online logistics can include: online stickers, online notebook in editable version with the logo of the conference on it, promotional materials for the upcoming events to be organised, etc.

Once the event is concluded, there are several things to do in order to keep the engagement with the participants, so that their general feelings and perceptions of the event are improved. First we can send feedback or evaluation surveys, asking their opinion on the event, the activities done, as well as the technical aspects so that 1) we can keep improving our hybrid formats, and 2) they feel taken into account even after the event.

Another thing we can do, in case of a seminar or conference, is provide the participants with the contact details of the speakers (for further questions) as well as the slides used during the presentations.

Online photobooths

In the aim of making the event more interactive and engaging especially for online participants, an online photobooth can be created in the form of a frame for pictures and videos. The frame can include the logo or other images related to the event and can be sent to the participants prior to the commencement of the event. Therefore, participants will be able to upload their pictures attending the event while using the photobooth provided by the OC. Hence, the visibility of the event will be increased and attendees will be more included and engaged in the event.

6.3. Networking

In any type of event, the live participants get more than just the organised programme, they get to Network and discuss the topics with each other or the speakers informally during breaks or after the event. The OC should try to provide the online participants the same opportunity by organising informal breakrooms during or after the event. These break rooms should be attended by also the speakers of the event so the online participants have an opportunity to discuss the subject with them.

By giving the online attendees a chance to socialize with each other and willing members of the live participants, they can create similar Networks and not feel as if they are outside of the actual event but really are a part of it. The most memorable things of most events are not the

workshops or presentations but the people, which is the reason also the online participants need the opportunities to form bonds and meet new people.

However the creation of online Networking opportunities should not result in a less engaging event for the live participants. The inclusion of online participants in the informal parts of the event must not hinder the live participants' ability to access the speakers or mingle freely.

6.4. Logistics

The OC should pay special attention that all the technical solutions implemented in the event work as well as possible. This might include the sound quality for both for and from online and live participants, avoiding any echoes, having clear and unlaggy images etc. One person from the OC or the hosting venue should be responsible for the techniques and present during the event to quickly address any issues.

When preparing the event, one of the things you can do to catch the virtual participant's attention is sending preparatory materials prior to the event like background information of our speakers in short videos that can be published in the main event page, some recommended readings to get the knowledge before the presentation, or even some previous polls to get the general knowledge on the topic by the participants.

Specific to ELSA Events

Regarding the ELSA officers events, we recommend that, even if the workshops or plenaries are conducted in a hybrid format, the rest of the activities are divided into physical participants, and virtual participants.

Despite this, they can both do similar activities, for example, if there is a thematic party, we suggest that also the virtual participants have the same thematic event; or that if there is a participative social, where each delegation gives a performance, virtual participants can send their own performance recorded. This includes finding common activities to engage online and in person participants.