

STUDY VISITS HANDBOOK

SEMINARS & CONFERENCES
2019/2020



elsa

The European Law Students' Association

Foreword

Study Visits are one of the most popular S&C events in the Network. They reflect the core values of ELSA - they underline the importance of the mutual understanding in the spirit of internationality and diversity. Study Visits are a perfect way to get to know other legal systems and cultures, to see some beautiful towns and cities not only in Europe, but also on other continents, to meet fellow ELSA members from other National Groups of ELSA and to make friendships for life. Moreover, Study Visits are a great opportunity to convince ELSA members to stay involved in ELSA and its activities. Additionally, they can make your ELSA Group stand out at your faculty or university.

This Handbook aims to facilitate and simplify the organisation of Study Visits in the Network. It consists of tips and tricks on how to organise a successful event, especially on a low-budget basis. As it is based on real, personal experience, it constitutes a valuable tool, which we hope the Network will find useful.

Should you have any questions regarding organising Study Visits or this Handbook, do not hesitate to contact Vice President in charge of Seminars and Conferences of ELSA at seminarsconferences@elsa.org.

Best of luck with organising your event!

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1. What is a Study Visit?

1.1. Definition

Study Visits (SV) are academic, cultural and social exchanges, which are organised between a minimum of one ELSA Group and minimum of another ELSA Group or a group of ELSA's partner organisations in Asia (ALSA), the Dominican Republic (DLSA) or in Israel (ILSA).

Study Visits can be:

- *Unilateral*: Where only one Group visits another Group;
- *Bilateral*: Where two Groups visit each other;
- *Multilateral*: Where more than two Groups visit another Group.

The whole regulation on SV can be found in the International Council Meeting Decision Book, available on officers.elsa.org.

1.2. Aim

Study Visits are the very essence of ELSA: sharing experiences with people of different cultural and legal backgrounds. Study Visits aim to develop mutual understanding and provide the opportunity to share cultural experience, combined with an academic programme to foster the exchange of legal knowledge.

2. Why to be a part of SV?

2.1. Why to visit another group

- To get an insight into the legal background of the place you are visiting;
- To exchange legal knowledge with law students and young lawyers from around the globe;
- To experience the culture of a different city or country;
- To meet new friends and establish new contacts;
- To get the opportunity to be shown around a city or country by a local person which can explain local customs and culture and take you to places, you might otherwise not have come across.

2.2. Why to host

- To share the culture of your country and the ELSA life of your ELSA Group with students coming from a different country or city;
- To take part in interesting discussions during the academic programme with the Visiting Group, who will give you the opportunity to learn from their experience and knowledge;

- To have the opportunity to present your town from an academic, cultural and social point of view;
- To begin long lasting friendships and different cultural links, which will strengthen the Network as well as your own personal network;
- To improve your organisational skills;
- To strengthen the cooperation your ELSA Group has with local authorities, that may be interested in promoting the city at an international level;
- To bring internationality to your ELSA Group.

3. Organising a Study Visit

You have just decided to organise your very first Study Visit. Congratulations! Now it is time to start planning your event. In order to make the process easier, you may find a detailed roadmap on how to organise a successful event, below.

3.1. Initial planning

The very first things you need to do when planning to organise a Study Visit is to answer the following questions: what kind of Study Visit do you wish to organise – unilateral, bilateral or multilateral? How many participants from your ELSA Group do you want to be attending the event? When do you want the event to take place? Which group would you like to organise a Study Visit with?

3.2. The choice of a Study Visit partner

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, one of your first tasks is to find a suitable Study Visit partner, meaning the group with whose cooperation you are going to organise your event. It is to be noted, that according to the definition of the Study Visit, you can organise it either with another ELSA Group or a Group of ELSA's partner organisations (ALSA, DILSA, ILSA), should you wish to visit a city/country outside of Europe.

When choosing your partner, you should consider a number of factors. Those are e.g. the total cost of going to the respective city, the quality of the academic programme, sightseeing options and ELSA Spirit of the Hosting Group. Some of those are explained below.

3.2.1 Travelling Distance

It is important to stress that the cost of travel should not deter you from organising a Study Visit. There are many different forms of transport, some of which might turn out to be easily affordable. What you can do e.g. is check to which destinations there are cheap flights, trains or buses from your city. Bear in mind, that a successful and appealing Study Visit is not necessarily the one that takes place 1000 km away. Hence, consider also an option of organising the Study Visit with a

Local Group situated in a neighbouring country. Additionally, remember that sometimes, even though the connection to some destination might seem cheap, your stay there might be expensive. Take all of those factors into consideration and choose where you wish to go!

3.2.2 Finance

You should ensure that you establish a good level of communication with the group that you are visiting/hosting. This is because each ELSA Group is different in terms of expectations and their financial situation. You should comprehensively discuss all details relating to the costs from the outset to avoid any misunderstandings and to ensure that the financial arrangements of the visit suit both groups. Additionally, take into consideration whether it will be affordable for the students/ELSA members from your university/Local Group to attend the Study Visit. For this purpose, you might create e.g. an online poll asking your colleagues how much they are ready to spend for the purpose of attending the Study Visit.

3.2.3 Timeframes

You should ensure that your Study Visit will not clash with exam periods or work deadlines for the groups. Otherwise it may be difficult for the groups to find participants of the event. For this purpose, you might create e.g. an online poll asking your colleagues which dates are the most suitable for them to conduct a Study Visit. Additionally, when planning the timeframe of the event, you should consider the effect that the duration of the visit will have on the overall cost.

3.2.4 Useful Tools to find a SV Partner

To make the process of finding a Study Visit partner easier, you might use the following:

- [ELSA Study Visits Facebook Group](#) where Local Groups can post their Study Visit requests and establish a direct contact with other Local Groups in a more informal way;
- [S&C Team Facebook Group](#);
- *S&C mailing list (to be added to the list please contact segen@elsa.org).*

Other than that, you can also just contact some friends you might have in the respective Local Group. Should you have any troubles with finding a Study Visit partner, you should contact your National Vice President in charge of Seminars and Conferences or any other Officer in your National Group responsible for Study Visits.

3.2.5 Forming an Organising Committee

It is advisable to create an Organising Committee (OC) which will be responsible for the smooth organisation of the event. The tasks in the OC shall be more or less equally divided more or less equally. It is to be noted that both - the Visiting and the Hosting Group - should create an OC and those OCs should cooperate every step of the organisation process. The size of the OC shall be dependent on the size of the event (usually based on the number of participants and the

duration of the visit), however most of the times most of the times it varies from 1 to 5 people. In cases when there is only one person in the OC, it is usually the Director or a Coordinator for Study Visits of the Local/National Group, or the VP S&C itself. An example of the OC structure can be found below.

3.2.6 OC of the visiting group

- **Head of the OC**, who will coordinate the works of the whole OC and be the main contact person for the OC of the Hosting Group.
- **Person responsible for participants**, who will organise an application process, choose and collect all the relevant information from the participants, e.g. emergency contacts.
- **Person responsible for marketing**, who will make sure your Study Visit is promoted enough so that you have as many participants as possible.
- **Person responsible for finances**, who will keep an eye on your budget and make sure you have enough money to organise a Study Visit. This person can also search for sponsors, grants and other financial aid that may lower the costs of the visit; however, you might create a separate position in your OC for that, namely person responsible for sponsors.
- **Person responsible for transportation**, who will find the cheapest and easiest way to get to your destination. This person will also be responsible for communicating transport information to the participants and the Hosting Group as well as coordinating travel during the visit.

3.2.7 OC of the hosting group

- **Head of the OC**, who will coordinate the works of the whole OC and be the main contact person for the OC of the Visiting Group.
- **Responsible for academic programme**, who will together with the OC of the Visiting Group plan the academic programme of the Study Visit.
- **Responsible for social and cultural programme**, who will plan/assist the Visiting Group in exploring the venue of the visit.
- **Responsible for logistics**, who will be responsible for arranging meals, accommodation and transportation in the city for the Visiting Group (unless agreed otherwise in the SV Agreement by the Groups involved). If the workload turns out to be too high, you can also create separate position in the OC for a person responsible for meals, person responsible for accommodation and person responsible for transportation.

3.3. Signing a Study Visit Agreement

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, it is important for the groups participating in the Study Visit to sign a Study Visit Agreement and adjust it to the needs of the event. Signing an agreement will also safeguard your interests in the event of the cancellation of the Study Visit or damages occurring when the event takes place. Lastly, the agreement might help you during the process of fundraising, serving as a proof that the necessary formalities have been fulfilled.

The most important thing about the agreement is to negotiate and include a provision governing the ways the visit will be financed. For example, either group could pay for the event in its entirety or expenses could be split between the two groups. It will be useful to specify what each group will pay for, and how much they will pay.

The general example of the Study Visit Agreement can be found in the S&C section on the officers.elsa.org. Bear in mind that this is just a template that should be personalised accordingly (e.g. if you need a letter of invitation you should write the deadline for getting one in the agreement).

3.4. Researching accommodation, meals and other logistics

3.4.1. Accommodation

Accommodation depends on the funds available. There are many different options available including hotels, hostels, student dorms, Airbnb or even your private homes (the most economical option).

It is best practice to agree to include details of the accommodation in the Study Visit Agreement. If your Group also plans to organise other events in the same year, it is a good idea to negotiate accommodation for all of these events at the same time in order to obtain some discounts. You may also wish to organise the Study Visit at the same time of one of your additional events (for example, an NCM) as this may be logistically easier and cheaper.

It is up to you whether you wish to book the accommodation before or after you run the application process, hence have the final number of participants from the Visiting Group. Both options have some risk: on the one hand you might not have as many participants as planned, but on the other you might find the accommodation to be fully booked when postponing your booking.

3.4.2. Meals

Should the Hosting Group be in charge of arranging meals, it should ask the Visiting Group in advance whether participants have any particular dietary requirements. Some ideas for meals are:

- *Meals at home* - the most economical way to manage food. It is easy if the participants are accommodated in your homes. You can also organise dinner parties with some of the typical food of your country or town. This is a very enjoyable way to eat together, especially in the evening.
- *Meals at university/ studentsrestaurants* - this could be an inexpensive option. You could also contact your university for financial aid.
- *Picnic/BBQ* - You can eat in the great outdoors; bring food or have a barbeque.

- *Restaurants* -You may be able to negotiate with restaurants to reduce prices on the basis that a big group of you will be eating.

Don't forget to offer the participants some traditional regional/national food and drinks!

3.4.3. Transport

Ensure you plan your transport inside the city in advance and research the most cost-effective options. A good idea would be to check whether there are better options for some group tickets, whether there are some students' discounts or other special offers. Additionally, you might check if it is possible to walk between some of the destinations, which not only will lower the costs of transportation, but also give an opportunity for the visitors to explore the city more.

3.5. Plan the academic, social and cultural programme

3.5.1. Academic programme

According to the International Council Meeting Decision Book, the academic programme shall have an average duration of a **minimum of three hours per day**. Hence, you should carefully plan what and when you wish to organise as a part of the academic programme of your event. Some ideas for the academic programme are:

- *Institutional Visit*, e.g. to a local court;
- *Lanyers@Work*, meaning a visit to a law firm;
- *Lectures/seminars/panel discussions* on a chosen topic. A focus on human rights and the International Focus Programme is recommended;
- Organising events together, e.g. a conference, which would take place during the Study Visit.

You could combine your Study Visit with another event such as your NCM and part of your academic programme could be attended by both sets of participants. You can also open up elements of your academic programme to other students in your university.

3.5.2. Social and cultural programmes

Social and cultural programmes are of the same importance as the academic programme. Some of the ideas for the social programme are:

- *Party in one of the local clubs/bars* (you can check on which dates the entry is free of charge/cheaper);
- *Legal pub quiz*;
- *National drinks night*;
- *Beer pong night*;
- *Bonfire*.

As for the cultural programme, you might organise sightseeing - with a guide being one of the local ELSA members. If you plan to go to museums, check if there are any discounts for students or if an entrance is free of charge during some days. Furthermore, you can think of organising some city game, where the participants of the Study Visits must find some monuments and solve the clues spread around the city. Remember, that you can invite all ELSA members from your Local Group to join!

3.6. Find sponsors or other sources of income

In order to lower the costs of your event, you might try to find a sponsorship or other means of financial aid. The key selling points of Study Visits are:

- **Academic exchange**, as in developing your knowledge by getting to know foreign legal systems;
- **Cultural and social exchange**, as in meeting fellow students, peers in the different countries, getting to know their cultures, backgrounds;
- **Internationality**, as e.g. in getting your university/faculty/sponsor known in another country as a result of supporting you.

3.6.1. Grants

One of the ways to get some additional funding is applying for grants. Those can be both national, regional and international grants. Since applying for a grant is a long process, you might want to delegate this task to two or more people.

3.6.2. Sponsors

Potential sponsors for your Study Visit could be:

- Your university/faculty;
- City authority;
- Minister of education;
- Ministry of justice
- Ministry of foreign affairs
- Municipal authority;
- A foundation;
- Law firms specialising in the field of law, which you will learn about during the academic programme of the Study Visit;
- Any other entities from a bookstore to a pen manufacturer – as long as you convince them you will make their product visible to your peers from a different country.

You should concentrate on linking sponsorships. For example, your university could offer you accommodation in a student dorm or meals in the student cafeteria and a city authority could provide you with free public transport, tickets for museums etc.

Moreover, you should prepare a **sponsor package** that you can send to your sponsors, explaining the purpose of your Study Visit, what ELSA is, how you wish the sponsor to support you and what you can offer them in exchange for that support.

3.6.3. Your ELSA Group

Lastly, you might also check with your National Board or Local Board whether there are some funds that could be used to cover some of the costs of your Study Visit.

3.7. Find the participants

3.7.1. Promotion

Around 3 months before the event you should start finding its participants. For that reason, you should carefully plan the event's promotion, so that it attracts plenty of potential applicants. You can create posters and/or flyers to distribute at your university. You can also create an info session at your university, where you're going to present your Study Visit and encourage fellow students to apply. Furthermore, you can promote your event online, using the most popular social media channels, such as Facebook and/or LinkedIn.

3.7.2. Application process

In order to find the participants, you could create an application form, where you will ask parties interested in the event, to e.g. send a motivation letter, explaining why they wish to attend the event. Include a clause in your application form, which obliges a participant to cover the financial damage, if they decide to cancel his participation without a valid reason. After you select the participants, ask them to once again to confirm their participation.

3.7.3. Right before the event

Just before the event starts, make sure you have the data of all participants, including e.g. emergency contacts. Additionally, you might create a Study Visit handbook for the participants, where all of the parts of the agenda, as well as the logistics will be explained. You can include this kind of handbook in the welcome package for the participants. Next to the handbook, make sure the participants have received information about emergency numbers, numbers of OC members, the address of the accommodation, public transport routes and taxi numbers. A good idea would be to provide the participants with the map of the city.

3.8. After the event

3.8.1. Evaluation

Arrange a Call with the other OC members (of the hosting or visiting group, respectively) and evaluate what went well and what went wrong together. Archive the evaluation and make it available for your successors, who might learn from your mistakes or continue your success.

3.8.2. Letter of acknowledgements

Depending on cultural norms, you may wish to send a letter (or email) of acknowledgement as a polite gesture to institutions, organisations, foundations and individuals that supported your Study Visit. This is a way to ensure good links with said organisations so they might continue to support you in organising Study Visits or other events.

3.9. Example of the agenda

	1st May	2nd May	3rd May	4th May
	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
09:00	ARRIVAL	BREAKFAST		
09:30		BREAKFAST		
10:00		Visit to the local Court and lecture	Sightseeing	DEPARTURES
10:30				
11:00				
11:30		LUNCH	LUNCH	
12:00				
12:30				
13:00		Museum of the region	Lecture on the activities of the CoE and ECHR	
13:30				
14:00				
14:30		Aquapark	Workshop on writing an application to the ECHR	
15:00				
15:30				
16:00		Welcome lecture on introduction to human rights	Free time	
16:30				
17:00				
17:30	City game	Free time		
18:00				
18:30				
19:00	Dinner	Dinner		
19:30				
20:00				
20:30	National drinks night	Karaoke	BBQ at the river	
21:00				
21:30				