



ELFA President's Report 2025–2026

University of Deusto – Campus Bilbao, 17 April 2026

In accordance with the ELFA Statutes and our own established tradition, I have outlined below the principal activities of ELFA during my term as President, with a view to seeking your approval to close the 2025–2026 year.

I should like to begin by evoking the warm memory of last year's Annual General Meeting, which took place on **25 April 2025 in Sofia** under the presidency of **Jivko Draganov**. That occasion also marked **our 30th anniversary** – a milestone that invited us to reflect on our history: to recall where we have come from and to appreciate where we stand today. The European Law Faculties Association was founded in 1995, inspired by the European vision of Professor Frans Vanistendael (1942–2021) of the Faculty of Law of the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium). He served as ELFA's first President from 1995 to 1997 and organized the inaugural conference in December 1996 in that very city. At the time of our foundation there were **80 Law Schools** in membership; **today** we are **more than double that number**. Over the years, new Law Faculties have continued to join ELFA, enriching its community and broadening its reach across Europe and beyond. During the academic year 2025–2026, ELFA received 15 new membership applications, of which 1 is a renewal. The total number of active members now stands at 146, drawn from 37 countries. **New members** will be formally welcome at this Annual General Meeting:

NEW ELFA MEMBERS SINCE THE 2025 SOFIA AGM AND CONFERENCE:

1. POLAND, Kozminski University, College of Law
2. POLAND, University of Lodz, Faculty of Law and Administration
3. POLAND - John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Faculty of Law, Canon Law and Administration
4. GEORGIA – Kutaisi International University (KIU)
5. GEORGIA – LEPL Sokhumi State University, Faculty of Law and Diplomacy
6. GEORGIA - LLC Central University of Europe, Faculty of Social Sciences Business and Law
7. NETHERLANDS - Tilburg University Law School
8. ITALY - Università degli Studi di Palermo, Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza
9. LITHUANIA - European Humanities University, Academic Department of Social Sciences
10. PORTUGAL - Lusófona Law University
11. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – Abu Dhabi University College of Law (Observer)
12. POLAND, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Faculty of Law and Administration
13. TURKEY. Özyeğin University Faculty of Law
14. ROMANIA, Danubius International University, Faculty of Law and International Governance
15. AUSTRIA, University of Graz.

1 (EXPLICIT) WITHDRAWAL: FINLAND, University of Lapland, Faculty of Law

This growth and diversity represent one of ELFA's greatest assets, and they continue to expand the range of opportunities available to all our members. In that spirit, this year's Conference has included a dedicated networking session, which we have named the "**Collaboration Hub**". Its purpose was to facilitate meaningful connections between members attending the Annual Conference, enabling them to find new partners and to generate fresh opportunities for teaching and legal research. We very much hope that it has served this goal, which lies at the heart of ELFA's mission.

Turning to governance: the **ELFA Board held four meetings during this year**, all conducted online (30 June 2025; 16 January 2026; 9 February 2026; and 17 March 2026). The Board addressed the following matters:

1. Collaboration with International Associations

We have continued to pursue ELFA's ambition of forging strong ties with other associations and organizations. We have been in contact with the **International Academy of Comparative Law (IACL)**, which will hold its biennial congress in Berlin next September. Professor Stephan Grundmann, Director of the congress, has invited ELFA to participate, and the relevant arrangements, to be led by **Barbara Pozzo**, will be confirmed shortly.

In addition, ELFA will this year establish a new presence within the **Association of Law Teachers (ALT)**, represented by Professor of Legal Education at City Law School, **Nigel Duncan**, who is also a member of the Editorial Team of the Journal of European Legal Education.

These two new partnerships complement those already established in previous years: with the **Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS)**, represented by its former President **Gregory Bowman**; with the **Association of American Law Schools (AALS)**, represented by its former President **Leo Martinez**; with the **European Law Institute (ELI)**, whose new President **Maria Teresa Rodríguez de las Heras** joined this Conference; with the **Law Schools Global League (LSGL)** represented by its Co-President **Soledad Atienza**, who is with us at this Conference; with the European Network of Clinical Education (ENCLE), its Board member, **Aleksandra Klich**, has attended this Conference and with the **European Law Students' Association (ELSA)**, represented by its President **Gabriel Marti**, together with the collaboration of its local **ELSA branch at Deusto (Lucila Cacho, Luis Eguiluz and Lorena Buitrón)**.

2. European Journal of Legal Education

One of the initiatives that has been in development for six years is the relaunching of the **European Journal of Legal Education**. Over the past year the Editorial Board has been enlarged, and the Journal's visibility and

scholarly impact have continued to grow. Much work remains to be done, and we are grateful for the support of our member Faculties in disseminating the Journal within their institutions and academic networks.

In September 2025, a special issue on Global Legal Education was presented at **King's College London**, thanks to the efforts of **Verónica Ruiz Abou-Nigm**, former President of ELFA, and **Soledad Atienza**, Co-President of the Law Schools Global League. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to both, as well as to Greta Bosch and the entire Editorial Board, for their commitment to producing a publication of genuine scientific quality that contributes to the wider debate on legal education.

From this year onwards, ELFA will provide editorial support to the Journal, enabling us to manage more effectively the significant number of submissions it receives. We are particularly grateful to **Izabela Krasnicka**, Vice-President of the ELFA Board, for her work in overseeing this important area.

3. ELFA Award

Last but by no means least, I should like to express, on behalf of the entire ELFA Board, our deepest gratitude once again to Professor **Laurence Gormley**, who has conducted also this year the ELFA Award process from September 2025 through to March 2026. We extend our warmest congratulations to the prize winners and our sincere thanks to Professor Gormley and the other members of the Jury for their dedication, especially to **Professor Markus W. Gehring**, former Erasmus Student in Deusto.

This has been a rich and eventful year for ELFA, and the foregoing is a summary of our collective life during this period. I wish to express my gratitude to every member of the **ELFA Board** for their support and collaboration throughout these months (**Barbara Pozzo, Izabela Kraśnicka, Lukas Rass-Masson, Lana Bubalo, Ovidiu Ioan Dumitru and Jivko Draganov**). The teamwork, the exchange of ideas, and the encouragement I have received have been very helpful in ensuring the continuity and vitality of our Association.

I should also like to give a particular word of thanks to the Secretary **Milagros Orozco** for her commitment, generosity, dedication, and trust.

My deepest thanks also go to the staff of the **University of Deusto**, the Dean of Law School and all those who have provided support – for making this conference possible.

It has been a great honor and a profound responsibility to serve as ELFA President this year. I should like to acknowledge those who come first in this role: **José María de Dios**, ELFA President 2017–2018, who first invited me to become part of the ELFA Board at the Barcelona Conference and all those who succeeded as ELFA President: **Michele Graziadei** (University of Torino); **Marek Grzybowski** (University of Warsaw), **Andreas Ziegler** (University of Lausanne), **Verónica Ruiz Abou-Nigm** (University of Edinburgh), and **Jivko Draganov** (University of Sofia).

Gema Tomás Martínez

President. European Law Faculties Association (ELFA)