



European Lawyers Foundation

Policy Plan

Updated April 2025



Index

Index.....	2
Foundation's Vision and Objectives.....	3
Profiling the European Lawyers Foundation.....	3
Activities.....	4
Financial sources.....	5



Policy plan

Foundation's Vision and Objectives

The European Lawyers Foundation (ELF) was established in 2014 to involve European Bars and lawyers in the implementation of projects related to improvements in justice. Lawyers, as one of the most important justice stakeholders, are in the best position to identify challenges and propose measures to address today's priorities. ELF focuses on improving justice in the European Union (and its Member States) as well as in those countries where the involvement of European lawyers can contribute towards progress in the rule of law and human rights, through the implementation of projects which allow lawyers to contribute their knowledge and so provide value.

The Foundation's objectives, according to its statutes, are to promote access to justice; provide training for lawyers; undertake activities relating to the exercise of the profession of lawyer, the rule of law and legal services and substantive developments in the law itself; promote defence and protection of human rights and human rights defenders, and of international justice.

The Foundation works at both European and international level. The Foundation, a network of Bars and Law Societies from Europe, fulfils its objectives through the implementation of projects.

Profiling the European Lawyers Foundation

ELF is an independent organisation founded by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE - which represents the bars and law societies of 32 member countries and 13 further associate and observer countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers). The collaboration between ELF and CCBE ensures that ELF has access to the CCBE's expertise through its committees on substantial law and its network of lawyers in the Member States. As a result, ELF has access to one of the broadest networks in justice across Europe.

However, since ELF's activities are not limited to Europe, ELF maintains relationships with other organisations that work in the justice field worldwide. For instance, it collaborates in the implementation of projects with peer organisations such as the International Bar Association (IBA) and maintains contact with stakeholders such as the World Justice Project (WJP). ELF also has relationships with regional Bars and Law Societies (Southern African Development Community Lawyers Association, East Africa Law Society, LawAsia) and with national Bars from various countries (e.g. Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Fiji, Indonesia, Taiwan, South Africa). It is open to collaborate with other actors worldwide to fulfil its mission and objectives.

In this way, ELF promotes Europeans lawyers' contributions towards the achievement of justice and rule of law - indeed, the motto of ELF, included in its logo, is 'Lawyers for Justice'.



Activities

ELF serves justice and, therefore, serves citizens. ELF's double objective is implemented principally through the implementation of a range of projects. ELF monitors the state of play of justice in various contexts, regions, etc. When ELF identifies an opportunity for improvement, it starts to brainstorm as to how to address the issue. After analysing different outcomes, a solution can be envisaged and the way to proceed is confirmed. At that stage, the development of a project proposal starts taking into account various elements: activities, methodology, timetable, funding, etc.

ELF activities take various forms: from sending experts to countries where their assistance may be relevant/required, to the development of IT tools for justice. However, the main activities of ELF take one of the following forms:

1. **Training of legal professionals:** ELF organises the training of lawyers in various areas (for instance, EU law). Special attention is given now to training lawyers on the procedural rights safeguards (notably to the right of access to a lawyer, the right to presumption of innocence, and the right to legal aid), digitalisation of justice (which includes the use of AI tools by lawyers in their daily practice) and on the various rights consecrated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (including the right to personal data, asylum, intellectual property, etc). Similarly, ELF organises capacity-building for lawyers from non-EU Member States on issues such as the rule of law or the coping with the globalisation of law firms and law practice.
2. **Exchange of lawyers:** ELF, together with various EU Bars, runs projects which enable lawyers to travel for short periods of time to law firms in other Member States. This allows the lawyers to become familiar with other Member States' legal systems and helps them to extend their network.
3. **Studies on substantive law:** There are many areas of law where legal analysis is required, together with a description of best practices, and recommendations. ELF has conducted and is conducting studies on rule of law issues, EU criminal law, digitalisation of justice, immigration and asylum, an EU-wide curriculum and recognition of training undertaken by EU lawyers, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing, etc.
4. **Supporting organisations in the field of law:** Since ELF has access to a comprehensive network of legal professionals from various countries, it is able to help countries on specific issues. Examples includes the organisation of capacity-building with non-EU Bars on various matters such as coping with the globalisation of lawyers' practices.
5. **Developing IT tools:** ELF has become a strategic actor in the EU e-justice field. This is due to the various e-justice projects in which ELF participates. ELF has been involved in projects such as Find-A-Lawyer 2 and 3 and the European Training Platform. It has also collaborated on the large-scale project called e-CODEX, which aims to interconnect the e-justice systems of various EU Member States through the internet. After the conclusion of the e-CODEX project, ELF has been involved in its successor projects (i.e. Me-CODEX 1, 2 and 3). Finally, ELF also participated in a project on cross border videoconferencing in the field of justice. Taking into account that the objective of e-justice is to obtain better access to justice through making it faster and cheaper, ELF will continue implementing projects in this field, to improve the quality of justice and contribute to protecting citizens' rights.



6. **Organisation of/participation in events to promote access to justice:** ELF is committed to the organisation of events on relevant topics that will contribute to better access to justice. ELF, for instance, has organised various webinars about the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and about the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), in which lawyers from across Europe participated. Likewise, ELF has conducted several capacity building-events in relation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). ELF regularly monitors the state of justice in Europe and beyond, and the organisation of such events has become a regular activity.

Financial sources

ELF is a non-profit organisation and, therefore, its funds are used for the implementation of projects in the areas mentioned above. ELF's annual reports (which includes its annual accounts) are publicly available at <https://elf-fae.eu/about-us/annual-reports/>

The Foundation's main funds come from public administrations (mainly the European Union), as ELF carries out projects under the form of tenders (public contracts) or grants. While in grants it is forbidden to make a profit, the execution of tenders may create a small benefit for the organisations commissioned to provide the service. In such cases, ELF does not make profits as such, as the funds are reinvested in the Foundation's accounts to be used for future projects.

ELF can also access other funds belonging to non-public organisations, for instance grants given by other organisations for the implementation of projects. These funds cover the project's operations and no profit is made.

ELF also receives generous donations from Bars and Law Societies of various Member States of the EU. These donations help in covering costs related to running the organisation. ELF's running costs are also partially covered by an operating grant received from the EU.

All the funds are used taking into account the current state of play of justice both in Europe and worldwide.

To summarise, the resources of the Foundation are spent on two kinds of projects:

- a) European projects: projects of EU-added value that follow the priorities set by the European Union every year;
- b) "External projects": projects which are implemented beyond the EU's borders and where input from EU lawyers is required.

The finances of ELF are structured in such a way as to allow the Foundation to carry out its work while ensuring its sustainability in the long term.