



YOUNG
EUROPEAN
LAWYERS
CONTEST

ERA Young European Lawyers Contest 2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

 yelc.era.int

About the project

YELC is part of the **Young European Lawyers Project (YELP)**, which is an initiative by the Academy of European Law (ERA), CCBE, EYBA, partnering Bar associations and the European Commission designed to empower the next generation of legal professionals across Europe and bridge the gap where EU law meets digital innovation.

YELP isn't just another training programme - it's a launchpad for young lawyers to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected Europe.

The project focuses on three critical areas:

- **Digital Mastery:** Equipping lawyers with cutting-edge tech skills
- **EU Law Expertise:** Ensuring confident and effective application of EU legislation
- **Advocacy Skills:** Learning from peers how to convince, conduct negotiations and plead before a judge.

Why YELP matters

YELP is a crucial initiative that addresses current gaps in the training of young legal professionals across the European Union. The project will reduce the gaps in training of young lawyers identified by the European Commission's European judicial training strategy for 2024 by giving young lawyers "a grounding in the EU legal system and legal culture in the course of their initial training" while addressing new developments such as digitalisation and new technologies.

More on <https://yelp.era.int/>

Young European Lawyers Contest (YELC)

YELC isn't just a competition - it's a unique opportunity for young lawyers to develop their legal skills in an increasingly digital and interconnected Europe!

Format of the contest

The contest is composed of 3 semi-finals and one final.

Semi-finals

- The semi-finals taking place in Bratislava, Paris and Vilnius present an exciting opportunity for teams to defend their written report.
- Participants will, ahead of the semi-final, create a compelling written report addressing a relevant question in EU law with direct implications for everyday professional practice.
- Teams of up to four contestants from various EU Member States will be matched and introduced at least two months in advance through online communication.





Final

The two leading teams from each semi-final will participate in a final that lasts two and a half days. This event will take place at ERA's premises in Trier and at the General Court of the European Union in Luxembourg.

The final programme will include:

- a webinar offering the basics of EU law
- a crash course on how to litigate before the Court of Justice of the European Union
- a negotiation exercise
- a moot court at the General Court of the European Union, where the two winning teams from the negotiation exercise will compete in front of a jury made up of high-profile representatives from the legal professions and judges from the CJEU.

Aims of the contest

- to unite young and newly qualified lawyers, emphasising European law's vital role in shaping their future careers
- to collaborate in teams with peers from various European countries, engaging in practical role-play scenarios that challenge everyone to apply their knowledge of European law
- to gain invaluable experience working alongside colleagues from diverse legal cultures
- to build compelling cases in dynamic areas such as EU digital law, including the AIA, DSA, and DMA, the interaction of different data protection frameworks, EU efforts to stimulate the data economy and digital transformation, cybersecurity, and corporate mobility

Benefits of the contest

Contestants will be:

- empowered to incorporate EU law into their daily legal practice for greater professional success
- assessed by a jury of esteemed European law practitioners
- given precious feedback on their advocacy skills
- trained by their more experienced peers in drafting persuasive written arguments, conducting effective negotiations, and presenting their case before a judge

Participation

Participation

The project focuses on lawyers in private practice at the beginning of their career. 'Young lawyers' are those who are, at the time of registration, considered trainee lawyers under national law, including those who are in an induction or apprenticeship period; in jurisdictions in which initial training does not include a period of legal practice, newly qualified lawyers with less than three years of experience can apply.

The organisers reserve the right to request proof of apprenticeship or qualification during the application process.

Participation fee

- Young lawyers nominated by Bars financing the project participate free of charge or will be reimbursed by their Bar.
- For participants applying on their own or through other Bars, a fee of €200 will be charged, including costs for documentation, lunches, coffee breaks and dinners.

Language

Participants should have a working knowledge of English.

Other services

Lunches, social dinners, beverages offered during the event, documentation and transfer to Luxembourg (CJEU) are included.

Travel & Accommodation

Participants are asked to arrange their own travel and accommodation for the semi-finals after they have received ERA's confirmation to book. Selected participants are eligible to receive a fixed contribution towards these expenses following the event.

For the final in Trier and Luxembourg, ERA will take care of booking and covering up to 3 nights' single use accommodation for the contestants.

Contestants are asked to arrange their own travel and a fixed contribution towards travel expenses can be claimed following the event.

For further information on the contribution, please see the terms and conditions.

The nearest airports close to Trier:

- Luxembourg (40 km, 1 hour 20 minutes by bus and train),
- Frankfurt Hahn (76 km, 2 hours by bus and train),
- Cologne (167 km; 3.5 hours by train),
- Frankfurt am Main (185 km, 3-3.5 hours by train).

Application

Participants nominated by Project Partners should contact the project partners.

Participants applying independently or through non-partner Bars:
Please [click here to apply](#)





Calendar of activities

Events 2026

Start of application	15 September 2025
End of application	15 December 2025
Publication of the list of registered participants Team members put into contact with one another	10 January 2026
Teams to receive task(s) for semi-finals	15 January 2026
Webinar on the basics of EU law	3 March 2026
Teams to submit written reports for semi-finals	30 March 2026

Semi-finals

Bratislava, 16-17 April 2026	Slovak Bar Association
Paris, 4-5 June 2026	Paris Bar Association
Vilnius, 18-19 June 2026	Lithuanian Bar Association

Final

Trier and Luxembourg, 5-7 October 2026	Academy of European Law (Trier) and General Court of the European Union (Luxembourg)
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Terms and Conditions

Eligibility to participate

1. Citizenship of, residency in or place of work in should be a country eligible for the Justice Programme (all Member States except Denmark; including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Moldova** and Ukraine).

2. The contest is open to lawyers in private practice at the beginning of their career. 'Young lawyers' are those who are, at the time of registration, considered trainee lawyers under national law, including those who are in an induction or apprenticeship period; in jurisdictions in which initial training does not include a period of legal practice, newly qualified lawyers with less than three years of experience can apply. The organisers reserve the right to request proof of apprenticeship or qualification during the application process.

3. Participants should have a working knowledge of English.

Participation costs

4. Young lawyers nominated by Bars financing the project participate free of charge or will be reimbursed by their bars. For participants applying independently or through other Bars, a fee of **200 Euro** will be charged, including costs for documentation, lunch(es), coffee break(s) and dinner(s). No discounts are given.

Travel, Accommodation and Catering

5. Applicants will be subject to a selection procedure. ERA will send confirmation of selection to each participant individually. Confirmed participants are eligible to receive a fixed contribution towards their travel expenses following the event, upon receipt of travel and accommodation costs (invoice, ticket or boarding pass).

*this designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence, ** this designation applies to the extent that participants do not replace the European quotas provided for.

6. The precondition for payment of the travel cost contribution is confirmed attendance at all events (webinar, dinner, contest). Travel cost contributions are based on the distance between the place of work and the event venue (distance only one way – reimbursement amount is for the total travel cost) location and will not take account of the participant's actual travel and accommodation costs. Please note that no contribution can be paid for travel under 50km. The reimbursement will be calculated as follows:

51-199 km € 100
200-399 km € 200
400-600 km € 245
601-800 km € 261
801-1200 km € 276
1201-1600 km € 288
Over 1601 € 369

To calculate the distance please use this calculator, contribution is according to Table 2: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/calculate-unit-costs-eligible-travel-costs_en

7. For the semi-finals, participants shall book their own accommodation. The conditions for payment of this contribution are to participate and sign all attendance sheets at the events (webinar and semi-final) and to attach the accommodation receipts to the reimbursement form. Accommodation cost contribution (1 night) for the YELC semi-finals:

Semi-final in Bratislava: € 112
Semi-final in Paris: € 176
Semi-final in Vilnius: € 94

8. For the final in Trier and Luxembourg, ERA will take care of booking and covering up to 3 nights' single use accommodation including breakfast for the contestants selected to participate in the final.



9. Successful applicants will be sent the relevant claim form and information on how to obtain payment of the contribution to their expenses. Please note that no payment is possible if the registered participant cancels their participation for any reason.

10. Catering: ERA provides dinner the evening before, lunch and coffee break during the semifinals. In the final, ERA provides 2 dinners, 3 lunches and all coffee breaks in the programme.

11. No per diem or daily allowance is available.

Participation

12. Selected participants will be asked to book their travel as soon as possible and confirm their itinerary to ERA.

13. Participation at the whole contest and webinar is required and participants' presence will be logged. A list of participants including each participant's working address will be made available to all participants unless ERA receives written objection from the participant no later than one week prior to the beginning of the event.

14. Participants are asked to give permission for their address and other relevant information to be stored in ERA's database in order to provide information about future ERA events, publications and/or other developments in the participant's area of interest.

15. A certificate of attendance will be distributed after the end of the conference.



Project partners

Austrian Bar Association

Barcelona Bar Association

Bar of Ireland

Bar of Slovenia

Budapest Bar Association

Council of Law Societies (CCBE)

Dutch Bar of Brussels

Ecole des Avocats Grand-Est

Estonian Bar Association

European Young Bar Association (EYBA)



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German Bar Association

Haute École des Avocats
Conseils (HEDAC), Versailles

Latvian Bar of Sworn Advocates

Lithuanian Bar Association

Malta Law Academy

Paris Bar

Portuguese Bar Association

Romanian National Union of Advocats

Slovak Bar Association





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