



The Hague, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear members of the Advisory Board and of the ELF Network, dear colleagues,

As is now customary for the European Lawyers Foundation, we are contacting you about the donations for ELF this year. This is an exercise we have to do on a yearly basis since ELF relies on your Bars' generosity to support all the work we do.

We attach to this letter the ELF Annual Report 2022, which highlights the excellent work we did last year. We could try to be modest, but we prefer to communicate with you in a totally open way, expressing the pride that all of us should feel for the extraordinary work that this organisation is doing. ELF's work goes beyond the work we undertake or the training seminars we organise. It also goes beyond the number of lawyers we train (even if we are also very proud of having trained almost 3.000 lawyers last year, a very similar amount in 2021, and to have trained this year so far - between 1st January and 2 June 2023 - an outstanding number of 1.264 EU lawyers). Our success is also borderless: we train lawyers in various EU Member States and this year, for the first time, we conducted a very successful seminar in an EU overseas territory (Martinique) where, in a single seminar, we trained 20% of the local lawyers. Our work and our pride, however, focus on our lawyers, on the good comments, reviews and satisfaction they transmit to us after our events or after consulting material we produce. We cannot forget that all these results have been obtained in the less than 9 years since ELF was established and with very limited financial and human resources.

As you know, from a political perspective, ELF's three Boards have been working quite intensively over the last 2 years in relocating the Foundation from The Hague to Rome. We are sure that you already know the background that motivated us to plan this relocation and to implement the decision to do so. The complexity of the matter, and our willingness to ensure that the relocation takes place in full compliance with Dutch and Italian laws, is delaying the process, but we are confident that we will complete it after the summer of 2023. Once we complete it, we will focus on increasing ELF's capacities, as EU lawyers are demanding that we do even more, and we cannot fail them.

You may remember that, since 2022, ELF has been receiving an operating grant from the European Union, which helps ELF to implement its work. For instance, it is through the operating grant that we organise very popular webinars where we train lawyers for free in very important areas of law. As an example, last year we held webinars on the EU sanctions that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine and on surveillance, just to mention a couple. This year we held a webinar on lawyers and climate change, and will be holding a new one on artificial intelligence and lawyers on 26 June, and expect to have two more between

**European Lawyers Foundation**

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September and December 2023. We always send you information about these webinars some weeks before they take place, so your Bars can disseminate information about them to allow as many lawyers as possible to benefit.

However, the operating grant does not cover all of ELF's financial needs but just 80% of the total eligible costs under the grant. This means that the remaining 20% has to be funded by ELF's own resources, meaning by the generous donations we receive from your Bars. For 2023, we received an operating grant for a total of 214.384 EUR, of which the EU's contribution is 171.507,20 EUR. In other words, ELF's contribution will be of 42.876,80 EUR and, therefore, this is the minimum amount in donations that we must reach. We want publicly to acknowledge and thank those Bars that have already made their donations this year: the BRAK, the Athens Bar and the Italian Bar. Their generosity not only contributes to our finances and, consequently, to our work, but for us, it is even more important: it translates into trust which they confer on our work and on ELF as an organisation. Thank you again for such trust and support!

Although donations are key for ELF's success, our work as ELF Board members is also huge. The pandemic obliged us to undertake all our work and meetings electronically, which certainly put up barriers. Human contact is necessary to build bridges, to collaborate closely and to avoid misunderstandings. It is for this reason that the chairs of ELF's three Boards have decided to have a joint meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023. You may remember that we already had one in November 2022, but this time we are planning something slightly different. First of all, and for everybody's convenience, we will hold it in Athens a couple of days before the CCBE's Plenary Session in November 2023. This would be more efficient for those of you attending the Plenary Session and/or CCBE Committee meetings due to take place at the same time and in the same city. Second, the meeting will not consist just of sitting around a table, but be more dynamic. Of course, we will sit around a table for part, as we need to take decisions, but we are working on having a second part in a more informal format, where we can chat and know each other better. Furthermore, for those Advisory Board members whose Bars have donated/will donate in 2023, we will offer a night's hotel stay in Athens (most probably in the hotel where the meeting will take place), since we can cover these costs with the operating grants and the donations which fund the operating grant. We would have been delighted to cover travel expenses as well but, unfortunately, we have various expenses under the operating grant which do not give us room to cover travel expenses as well. We are confident that you will understand this effort, because, even if it may seem small in financial terms, it requires ELF to dedicate not only financial resources but also a considerable amount of work in organising the whole meeting.

Last but not least, we want to remind you that next year ELF's bodies will be renewed. As you all know, only Bars donating to ELF can participate in the decision-taking of the Advisory Board (AB), and only the AB can propose candidates to the Supervisory Board and the Board of Directors. According to our by-laws, the weight of votes in the AB is determined by the donation each Bar made in the previous year. In other words, the weight of votes in 2024 will depend on the donations ELF receives in 2023. You will find the provisions of our by-laws about the weighting of votes below.

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We are sorry for such a long letter, but it was important to inform you about our work, about our relocation, about our joint meeting and about next year's elections. It goes without saying that if you have any questions, you can contact our Managing Director ([pinzon@elf-fae.eu](mailto:pinzon@elf-fae.eu)).

Thank you again for your support, which we are confident we can count on also in the present and in the future.

With best wishes,

Dominique Attias  
Chair of the Board of Directors

Marta Isern i Busquets  
Chair of the Supervisory Board

### **Provisions of ELF's by-laws on the weight of votes**

#### ***WEIGHT OF VOTES IN THE ADVISORY BOARD***

*The weight of votes is calculated taking into account that the maximum number of votes per member is 10 and the minimum number of votes is 2 for the minimum amount donated (2.000 EUR). From this base of a minimum of 2 votes, each extra 1.000 EUR donated to ELF equals 1 vote. Amounts of less than 1000 EUR will be rounded down e.g. a 2.900 EUR donation equals 2 votes.*

*Every year in January, the ELF Secretariat will calculate the number of votes that correspond to each donor that has either started or continues its membership of the Advisory Board in accordance with article 2 above.*

*The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which is the only member of the Advisory Board excluded from the requirement of making a donation in order to be member of the Advisory Board, has 2*



*votes unless it makes a donation that qualifies for more votes according to the rules laid out in the first paragraph of this article.*

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