

## Education but make it practical - The Professional Development Fair

Studying law is nothing like practicing it - at least that's what many people think. But the European Law Students' Association (ELSA) has made it its goal to change that. For this purpose, the German General Assembly passed the concept of a Professional Development Fair just last year. And only months later, three dozen students from Austria, Germany and Switzerland were able to expand their professional skills in Heidelberg during the first execution of this project.

The concept of a Professional Development Fair is constructed around one main goal: preparing for your profession. Per conference, at least three professional development workshops must be put on the agenda. Between November 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in 2022 the attendees gained insights into several fields: After a voice training workshop with Law and Voice, which marked the start of the conference on Thursday evening, the students were able to establish their first professional contacts with RITTERHAUS, one of the law firms present at the Professional Development Fair. Over the next few days, further workshops and get-togethers with CMS, Greenfort and MLP followed. Together all the necessary stations for a successful start to one's career path were covered: clear and persuasive rhetoric, impactful resumes and proper online presence.

Law isn't just thick books and notebooks filled to the brim by cramping hands anymore. For many, the heavy legal commentaries may soon be traded for a lightweight laptop. Through presentations about Tech Law and AI by the Robotic & AI Law Society

(RAILS e.V.), the attendees of the Professional Development Fair were allowed a look into their soon-to-be not so old fashioned day-to-day.



*Presentation by RAILS e.V. about Tech Law and AI during the I. Professional Development Fair in Heidelberg on the 26.11.2023*

From a tour around town and the Christmas market to the closing party on Saturday: In between the events on this fully packed agenda, the students had the chance to get to know the city and its people.

At the heart of ELSA's connection to the practice of the legal profession, one thing rests above all else: the ELSA Traineeships. This internship arrangement program is the oldest project ELSA has taken on, aiming to strengthen the international cooperation and exchange between law students. The participants receive the unique chance to access internships outside of the country they study in through ELSA's connections to foreign law firms, NGOs, universities, companies, etc. This way, they can gain valuable experience that will broaden their professional horizon. To inform more students of this opportunity,



the Professional Development Fairs are always held during the application periods for the ELSA Traineeships. Through a presentation on Saturday morning, the attendees were given a glimpse into the world of Traineeships and at the same time, the chance to apply for the program.

At the end of this long weekend, the students were able to look back on many interesting workshops, new contacts and a great time in Heidelberg. In the future, there will be more Professional Development Fairs, in numerous formats. Soon, they will not only be held nationally but on all levels, starting from the local to the international. This way, more Professional Development Fairs can be held at the same time in various lengths and sizes, so that students from all corners of the German-speaking world can improve their professional skills.

But all Professional Development Fairs will have one thing in common: Diverse insights into the professional world that will be provided by experts in the field, as well as the opportunity to discover and familiarize oneself with the ELSA Traineeships.

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