

FAQ for EuroSLA conference organisers

When should the conference take place?

The conference is normally scheduled either for the end of August or early September or for the beginning of July, depending on local constraints. Dates should be agreed with the EC two years before the conference takes place.

How long does the conference last?

EuroSLA conferences last from Thursday morning until Saturday lunchtime (please see previous programmes for information).

Are there satellite events?

Yes.

For many years, there has been a pre-conference event, normally scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. The topic and the format should be discussed with the EC. This event should be self-sufficient: in addition to speaker expenses (travel, accommodation, conference fee, including EuroSLA membership), the host should also budget for the venue, light lunch and refreshments. The EuroSLA conference fee should not subsidise this event.

There is a doctoral workshop, usually on Wednesday morning. Should there be no other event on the Wednesday afternoon, doctoral workshops should move to Wednesday afternoon.

Are there social events?

Yes.

There is normally a reception on Thursday evening for all delegates (included in the conference fee). The conference dinner, charged separately, is normally scheduled for Friday. Some EuroSLA conferences included a drinks reception on Wednesday, too, or organised additional social outings like a guided tour of the city, a lake cruise etc. These additional events are usually late add-ons, when a conference is on track to at least break even. The EC does not encourage adding these events if they are likely to lead to setting a higher conference fee than necessary.

For a number of years, there has been a doctoral student evening, often organised in conjunction with the reception on Thursday evening.

How many plenary speakers should there be?

EuroSLA conferences typically have 4 plenary talks (please see earlier programmes for reference). In selecting plenary speakers, the host should aim for balance between areas of specialisation, theoretical orientations, gender, and geographical spread. There is an expectation that 3 speakers would be from Europe, of which one would normally come from the country in which the conference takes place. The fourth speaker can be from further afield. The selection of plenaries should be discussed and approved by the EC.

How many parallel sessions should there be?

This can vary from conference to conference, but we do not encourage having more than 7 parallel sessions at most. From past experiences, five to six work best in giving delegates a wide enough choice of talks and topics but at the same time keeping the conference reasonably focused and of a high academic standard, allowing for closer interaction and networking, and creating a distinct sense of a EuroSLA community.

How many talks, thematic colloquia, posters and doctoral workshops should there be and what is their format?

The number of talks (Thursday-Saturday) will depend on the number of parallel sessions. A half-hour slot should be allocated to each talk: 20 minutes for the talk itself, 5 minutes for questions, and 5 minutes for delegates to change rooms between talks. There can be thematic colloquia, but it is not a must. If there are colloquia, they run in parallel with talks. Presentations within thematic colloquia should also be scheduled in half an hour instalments so that they are aligned with other sessions to allow dropping in and out between talks.

Acceptance rates are not predetermined and will depend on how many abstracts are received, and how many presentations slots are planned. Typically, 40-60% of abstracts are accepted, resulting in 120-140 talks (including thematic colloquia, but excluding posters)

The number of posters is not restricted. However, there should be at least one poster session, with at least one hour dedicated to it that doesn't overlap with any other activities (e.g. lunch or coffee break). Posters are normally of the A0 size; the orientation is determined by the shape of the poster boards available.

There are usually 10-15 presentations in the Doctoral Workshops on Wednesday

What are the details of submitting papers for Thematic Colloquia?

The standard conference call available on the conference kit webpage includes details for submissions of thematic colloquia.

Is there an independent application procedure and arrangements for the Doctoral Workshop?

Submissions to the Doctoral Workshop are usually done at the same time as the main conference. However, the workshop has a separate procedure including vetting, arranging discussants and getting student work to discussants in advance.

How to determine the appropriate conference fee?

Our aim is to keep participation at Eurosla conferences as affordable as possible, particularly for research students. The fees should be set to allow the host to break even. The aim of EuroSLA conferences is not to make a profit. Fees should be set differently for full members and for research students, and there should early-bird and late registration fees in both categories. The conference fee should include the EuroSLA membership fee. To determine what conference fees would need to be charged, the host should propose a budget projecting income and costs.

Conference income comes principally from conference fees, publishers and sponsors. In some cases, financial support was available from the host institution.

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The principal expenses include: venue (Thursday-Saturday), catering (Thursday-Saturday), invited speaker expenses (travel, accommodation, subsistence, conference fee and dinner, Eurosla membership fee), Thursday reception (venue, catering). Other expenses include an abstract review platform such as SoftConf, AV support, administrative support, printing and photocopying. The host should also budget for 5 student stipends (travel grants of 300 Euros each) to support the participation of PhD students, and to allow a conference fee and dinner waiver for the recipients of the Distinguished Speaker Award and the JESLA best publication Prize. The host should aim to cover Wednesday expenses.

The host should discuss the budget and projected fees with the EC. The fees should be agreed with the EC before they are announced.

How many people do normally attend EuroSLA conferences?

The number of delegates at recent conferences has averaged around 270, ranging from around 220 to 350. It is safer to budget for the lower number (220-250) – additional numbers would bring in more profit and allow for some extra activities.

Smaller numbers attend the satellite events on Wednesday (around 150), so the host should budget accordingly (venue, catering).

What catering should be provided?

Catering should be arranged at the conference venue itself, or very close to it.

Main conference (Thursday – Saturday). On Thursday and Friday, lunch (with coffee / tea) should be arranged, together with a morning and an afternoon refreshment breaks. The conference ends on Saturday before lunch, so only the morning refreshments are needed.

How big should the venue be?

The conference venue needs to have facilities that allow all participants to be in one plenary room (at least 200 people), and to have at least 4 additional break-out rooms capable of holding around 50 people each for parallel sessions. The rooms should be relatively close to each other. There should also be a suitable location for posters. The EC have no preference whether the conference is physically located at a host institution (i.e. University) or another conference venue (e.g. hotel, congress centre).

How many people should be on the organising committee?

Organising the annual EuroSLA conference is a big enterprise and will require a number of people with clearly defined roles. There should be a chair who will be the main contact point with the EC and the co-ordinator of the local activities. The main tasks that should be allocated across the organising committee involve: co-ordinating abstract submissions, reviews and selection; creating a programme; producing a book of abstracts and a conference booklet; approaching sponsors for funding; web-page management; budget and finances; organising student volunteers; booking the conference venue, reception venue, catering; liaising with invited speakers and booking their accommodation; packing conference bags; managing the participant registration.

Who should be on the scientific committee and how many reviewers should there be for each abstract?

There is a list of previous reviewers (who serve as the scientific committee) from previous organisers. This list is expanded each year.

Each abstract is normally reviewed by 3 reviewers. Local organisers decide which platform they would like to use for abstract submission, and budget for it through conference fees. Some recent conferences have used and been very satisfied with the SoftConf platform.

Is there a fixed timeline for issuing the externally visible information (setting-up the website, first and second call for papers, contacting reviewers, deadline for abstract submission, deadline for vetting abstracts, information about acceptance/rejection, opening of inscription, etc.)?

Please refer to the 'Sample EuroSLA planner' document for suggested dates.

Is there a list of publishers who typically attend the EuroSLA conferences?

No, but the presence of publishers at the conferences is very much appreciated.

Should accommodation be organised?

Accommodation is normally arranged directly by participants. Hosts should recommend a number of accommodation options, with easy access to the venue, for various budgets. In some cases, hosts have offered the booking of university accommodation through them.

Language and presentation policy:

Presentations at EuroSLA should be in English or in any other language(s) declared acceptable by the local organising committee.

Presentations should be in person. Online presentations are not acceptable unless in very exceptional circumstances.