

# **CORE COMPETENCES**

for

## **INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN CAREERS**

**Vol. 1 : A roadmap from general careers skills  
to EU-Focused expertise**

Directed and edited by

**Pierre-Jean THIL**

**Oana Andreea MACOVEI**

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**ÉCOLE de DROIT  
de TOULOUSE**

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# CORE COMPETENCES FOR INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN CAREERS

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*A roadmap from general careers skills to EU-Focused expertise*

*Vol 1 (1<sup>st</sup> ed°) – 2026*

Directors

**Pierre Jean THIL and Oana Andreea MACOVEI**

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## **Introduction**

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## **PIERRE-JEAN THIL**

*(Lawyer, Academic entrepreneur, Researcher)*

Since the creation of the European School of Law (ESL) in 2014, every year, hundreds of students dream of working in the International and European sphere. Throughout their academic journey, they have the opportunity to discover new cultures and different legal systems. The uniqueness of its programs reflects the ESL's ambition to promote excellence and new opportunities through internationalization and multilingualism. In this context, helping students to navigate the fascinating professional environment is essential. Indeed, the different paths they can take and the countless opportunities available to them remain often unclear after graduation.

In response to this specific challenge, multiple ESL projects were created as part of the professionalization pillar to which I contributed proactively for several years. These include large-scale initiatives, such as forums on European and international careers, as well as more targeted, individual actions carried out as a European Personnel Selection Office Ambassador, or supervised projects conducted with private and institutional partners in recent years. The objective was clear: to familiarise students with professional practice and the everyday reality of working in European and international affairs, helping them to make informed choices while developing their skills. Subsequently, specific course modules were introduced within the Master's programs at the European School of Law under the leadership of its directors, Prof. Lukas Rass-Masson and Associate Prof. Oana Andreea Macovei. I had the privilege of coordinating these modules from 2022 to 2025. These 'core' skill-oriented courses were designed to stimulate students' curiosity and critical thinking while raising their awareness of European and International career opportunities. More specifically, I adapted the Core Competencies Module to address two specific needs: access to information and guidance to anticipate their future career opportunities.

Firstly, there is nothing more inspiring for a student than meeting a professional who shares their dreams, fears, doubts, and failures. This transfer of practical knowledge and experience differs profoundly from the 'theoretical knowledge' traditionally taught at university. Yet it is equally essential, particularly at the Master's level, and provides fertile ground for learning. The students discovered entirely new professions, they developed an interest in defending a cause, or they even realised that their initial career plans did not correspond at all to what they truly wanted to achieve in life. Encounters with representatives of European and UN institutions, business lawyers, in-house counsel, and lobbyists from diverse backgrounds provided invaluable opportunities. Students were also encouraged to reflect on the notion of European and international careers, which helped to dispel

common misconceptions. This human dimension was at the heart of these modules, which consistently put students at the center.

In the same vein, the second underlying objective of these courses was to expose students to the everyday reality of such professions — to gain practical experience — beyond the 'walls of Academia'. The goal was to ensure that they acquired the necessary understanding and skills to successfully navigate future internships and professional careers. Within this framework, they were invited to put themselves in the shoes of prospective candidates preparing for EU competitions, parliamentary assistants, legal advisers, or international negotiators. Realism was emphasized in the projects. These activities were also guided and supervised by representatives of the relevant professional communities. Students were directly confronted with the feedback and advice of professionals through activities such as mock job interviews, drafting briefings, amendments, or advocacy notes, and simulating the demanding assessment center of former EU recruitment competitions.

Working, advancing, and building a career in an international or European environment is the very purpose of the course module that served as a foundation for this Guide on European and international careers. This Project started in 2022, in the MADIC Module, Core Competencies for International careers, with a specific demand from my students. They underlined the need for an accessible source of information on European and international careers. After carefully weighing two compelling options—drafting an informational corpus summarizing the various exchanges and presentations delivered by professionals or entrusting the students with compiling it themselves under my supervision, I decided to choose the latter. And this choice ultimately led to the first Volume of the Guide, currently available.

Providing information on European and International careers could take the form of a static work outlining the different types of existing professions. Alternatively, it could adopt a more dynamic approach, firmly anchored in the reality and functioning of the professional world—that is, through the prism of competencies. The approach proposed here is an intermediate one. The volumes are structured thematically, without seeking to produce a functional catalogue of all possible career paths. This collaborative project follows an empirical method aimed at systematising skills by career field, to guide the choices of junior graduates interested in European and International careers. It is a student-driven project, carefully reviewed and amended by its pedagogical coordinators. Moreover, it constitutes a valuable source of information, providing ready-to-use insights for those wishing to evolve in an international environment. This volume, now in your possession, represents the first set of material designed to guide you within the promising and fascinating world of International and European careers.



## **OANA ANDREEA MACOVEI**

*(Associate Professor Toulouse Capitole University)*

Core competences for International and European careers represents one of the key projects developed in the framework of the European School of Law (ESL). With the constant support of the ESL Director, Prof. Zoé Jacquemin, this rewarding experience, started several years ago, bears its fruits, in the format of a printed Guide for junior graduates.

As a training Module proposed initially in the MADIC Masters, it was a major component of the professional pillar envisioned by Prof. Lukas Rass-Masson, during his mandate as the ESL Director. And as a Deputy Director, in charge of the professional orientation, I initiated the training sessions in 2021. Despite an exclusively online format, during the COVID-19, on both sides of the screen, students and professionals were eager to meet and explore concretely the requirements to develop a legal profession in an International and European format. The Module was thus becoming the necessary bridge between the Academic and the Professional world. Starting 2022, Pierre-Jean Thil upgraded the Module introducing more developed training sessions and direct interviews conducted by students with International and European professionals from both the public and private sector. This effort of the MADIC students led to an original document of more than a hundred pages-thoroughly gathering precise guidelines on writing a CV, preparing a Cover letter or discussing in depth about the daily responsibilities of a Civil servant in the European Commission.

The decision was taken to consolidate this foundation and make the project visible to all students, as a necessary road map to discover, before entering the professional world. The idea of an accessible Guide developed rapidly, encompassing specific Volumes structured around the competences required in the vast professional area of International and European careers. In this endeavour, new cohorts were associated from other ESL Masters, namely MINTEC and CEPIL. The legacy of the first draft was preserved in an effort to clarify the structure and enhance its coherence. Moreover, the initial contributors, now ESL Alumni, continued to support the work of their colleagues, completing the content with the fresh insights from their professional experiences.

The Guide you are about to read is therefore the result of a collective effort made during several years, by multiple generations of ESL students and represents, hopefully, the start of a long-lasting tradition among them.

It is not an Academic memoir and it is not an internship report. Its goal is to initiate and accompany junior graduates in the early steps of their professional careers. And the first Volume lays the blue print for achieving this goal.

Following a funnel approach, it was essential to initially identify the general competences required in the spectrum of International and European careers (Chapter 1). And afterwards, an in-depth presentation concerns the specificities of the EU career (Chapter 2). This choice aligns with the ESL students' preferences to begging exploring one of the chosen professional pathways, at the end of their legal studies.

However, this is one of the multiple career paths available for junior graduates of Law Programs. In the following Volumes, other specific professions in the public and private sector shall be explored, as well as the options to navigate from one sector to the other. There is indeed no univocal pathway to develop an International and European career. Also, the Guide did not develop a descriptive approach on all career types. Its scope is precisely to underline this dynamic dimension, with a focus on developing and training one's competences for the most suitable job position.

Moreover, the Guide is not an analytical study as it focuses exclusively on the practical dimension of legal professions. Indeed, it includes concrete illustrations, for example in the first Volume, of the responsibilities linked to working in EU institutions, the skills and aptitudes required or the does and don'ts of passing an interview during the EPSO procedure to become an EU civil servant. Without establishing an exhaustive list of competences, the Guide focuses on the core ones, that are adapted to the specificities of the legal professions in the International and European field.

Last but not least important, the Guide is written by the ESL students with the help of Alumni and based on the direct meetings with the professionals. As pedagogical coordinators, we imposed a specific formal and substantive structure, constantly reviewing the general coherence of the project. As it gathered, during the years, a significant number of contributors, a major challenge was to preserve their original input, while ensuring the project's cohesion, in terms of vocabulary, the style of writing, the clarity and verification of sources. All errors, misprints or inconsistencies are therefore incumbent solely on the coordinators.

Congratulations to the entire team of authors for an amazing effort to directly accompany the future generations of young graduates in making the first steps in the exciting world of International and European careers!

The feedback of the professionals associated to this project is vital and we wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who accepted to meet with the students and accompany them in the project.

Thank you to the ESL team for their constant support!

