**Council of Europe - HELP Course launch: Ethics for Judges**



Participation in this training contributes to the goal set by **EU Judicial Training Strategy** in training 65% judges on EU law, including human rights, by 2024; judges are therefore warmly encouraged to participate.

**Launch Date: 14 June 2021 (14.00-17.00 CET)**

**Duration: 5 weeks**

**Format: online tutored course**

**Open to: judges from the EU MS**

**Language: English**

**Council of Europe HELP Certificates delivered for successful participants**

**Organised under EU-CoE HELP EU II Project**

**Launch of the HELP course on**

**Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**

***Concept paper and Agenda***

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| **Date** | 14 June 2021 (14.00-17.00 CET) |
| **Location** | Online (web-conference) Link – provided to registered participants prior to the session |
| **Language** | English |
| **Participation** | Judges from EU MS |
| **Registration** | Via the procedure and by the deadline indicated in the call circulated at national level |

**Background**

The **Council of Europe (CoE) Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)[[1]](#footnote-2)** is aimed at supporting the CoE member States in implementing the European human rights standards at the national level, focusing on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), other key CoE instruments, and since 2015, EU law. This is done by raising the capacities of legal professionals to apply those instruments in their daily work.

The objective of HELP is to provide high quality education on human rights to judges, lawyers and prosecutors throughout Europe. Law enforcement authorities such as police and prison staff are also targeted by HELP. Thanks to HELP courses, legal professionals can better protect human rights on a national level and keep up to date with the ever-evolving standards and case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). HELP courses specifically designed for EU countries increasingly incorporate relevant EU laws.

HELP is:

1. the only pan-European Network of national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in the 47 CoE Member States.

2. an e-learning platform with free on-line courses on human rights.

3. a human rights training methodology for legal professionals.

**The HELP in the EU II Project**

The joint EU-CoE project ‘European Programme for **H**uman Rights **E**ducation for **L**egal **P**rofessionals in the European Union’ (**HELP in the EU II[[2]](#footnote-3)**) is funded by the EU and implemented by the CoE from 1 September 2019 to 28 February 2022. Its overall objective is to enhance EU justice professionals’ capacities to effectively and coherently apply European fundamental rights standards at the national level through training, mainly referring to the Council of Europe instruments (the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the (revised) European Social Charter (ESC) etc.) and EU framework (EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, EU Law). It also aims to strengthen the HELP Network in the EU, as well as the capacity of the Network members to effectively implement the HELP methodology and courses and contribute to increasing mutual trust and exchanges between EU practitioners.

**The HELP course on Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**

The state of **rule of law** is an increasing concern in respect of many European countries. In recent years concerted efforts have been made at European level to prevent degradation of the rule of law through measures aimed at the well-functioning of national justice systems. Judges, prosecutors, and lawyers occupy a critical and sensitive place in society; the way they conduct themselves directly impacts on **public confidence and on the administration of justice**. Therefore, they have a duty to maintain the highest of ethical behavior. There are international standards providing guidance on ethical conduct and on the core principles of these professions. **Independence, impartiality and integrity underpin the rule of law** in a healthy democracy and guarantee the protection of human rights.

The HELP online course covers in an interactive way the key concepts and principles, the **International and European (CoE and EU) framework** as well as the relevant **case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)**. It is aimed at deepening the knowledge and understanding of professional tools and at developing reflective skills, based on practical examples, to address ethical dilemmas in the performance of professional duties.

This course is thought to help professionals understand the **purpose and importance of ethics in the administration of justice** for the benefit of the people, allowing to identify key **concepts** and understand common **values**, ethical **principles** and **virtues**.

The online course has been developed in 2020-21 by the **Council of Europe HELP Programme** under the EU-CoE “HELP in the EU II” project, in cooperation with several Council of Europe entities/services such as the **Secretariats of the Venice Commission, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice** (CEPEJ) and the **Consultative Councils of European Judges and Prosecutors** (CCJE and CCPE) as well as the **Registry of the European Court of Human Rights**. It also involved representatives of the **European Judicial Training Network** (EJTN) and the **Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe** (CCBE).

The course consists of **2 general modules** on Introduction, and International and European Framework, as well as **3 specific modules** for judges, prosecutors and lawyers, respectively.

**Introduction**

• Why does professional ethics matter?

• Common values and principles

As the present launch is open to judges from the EU MS, the **2 general modules and the module for judges will be mandatory**, while the modules dedicated to prosecutors and lawyers will be accessible, but not mandatory for the successful completion of the tutored course.

• Key concepts

• Distinction between ethical principles and disciplinary rules

**International and European Framework**

• Treaty norms

• United Nations

• Council of Europe

• European Union

• Professional bodies

• Instruments of international courts

**Ethics for Judges**

• Main principles

• Qualities and virtues

• Tools

• Practical examples

**Ethics for Prosecutors**

• Main principles

• Relation with the media

• Tools

**Ethics for Lawyers**

• General principles

• Relation with other parties

• Values

• Tools

• Practical examples

**The online launch**

The activity is organised under the EU-CoE HELP in the EU II Project. The **launch event will be held online**, **by web conference**. Its main goal is to introduce participants to the HELP platform and the course page on which the group will follow the course with the assistance of a tutor. The working language for the online launch will be **English**. Selected participants will receive from the HELP Secretariat a link allowing them to access the web-conference, based on which they can follow the event on their computer or mobile devices (tablet/smartphone).

**The course preparation and implementation**

Before the online launch event, participants should create an account on the [HELP e-learning platform](http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/)

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| *For creating your HELP account, please follow these steps:*  Play*- go to this link and fill in the form (it takes about 2 mins):* [*http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php*](http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php)  *- once submitted, you will receive an activation link on the email you used for creating the account*  *- go to your email inbox and click on the link to activate your account.* |

During the launch event, the participants will be registered on their course page, prepared in advance by their tutors. Over the following weeks and based on the planning set by the tutor, the participants will go through the **online course,** complemented by the additional materials and resources prepared by the tutor.

The participants who have successfully completed the course and passed the evaluation set by the tutors will receive **certificates issued by the HELP Programme of the Council of Europe**.

**Registration**

Interested participants should:

* be available to **attend the launch event** (join the web-conference via the link provided by the HELP Secretariat before the event)
* undertake to **follow and complete the online tutored course** in the following 5 weeks (approx. 1-2 hours of work per week)
* register for the event by following the instructions provided by their National Training Institution
* have a laptop/tablet/smartphone available for accessing the launch event via a link provided by HELP.

**Further information**

For any information, do not hesitate to **contact the project team**:

Content related issues, speakers, agenda: Ana-Maria Telbis – Project Coordinator ([ana-maria.telbis@coe.int](mailto:ana-maria.telbis@coe.int))

Organisational and administrative issues: Konstantinos Vratsidas – Project Assistant ([konstantinos.vratsidas@coe.int](mailto:konstantinos.vratsidas@coe.int))

**Agenda – 14 June 2021 (14.00-17.00 CET)**

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| 13.45-14.00 | Online registration of participants |
| 14.00 – 14.10 | **Welcome address**  *Eva Pastrana, Head of the HELP Programme, Council of Europe* |
| 14.10-14.40 | **Key-note speech – the importance of ethics in preserving the rule of law**  *Nina Betetto, President of the CCJE and co-author of the course (TBC)* |
| 14.40-15.20 | **Presentation of the HELP Programme and the ‘HELP in the EU II’ Project**  **Presentation of the HELP platform and walk through**  *Ana-Maria Telbis, ‘HELP in the EU II’ Project Coordinator, HELP Programme, Council of Europe* |
| 15.20-15.30 | **Break** |
| 15.30-15.45 | **Presentation of the HELP course on Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**  *Nuria Diaz Abad, former president of the ENCJ and coordinator of the online course* |
| 15.45-16.15 | **Getting to know each other – tour de table and sharing of expectations**  *HELP Secretariat* |
| 16.15-16.50 | **The implementation of the national course: presentation of the national page, planning, evaluation**  *Nuria Diaz Abad, HELP course tutor* |
| 16.50 – 17.00 | **Q/A session, conclusions and closure** |

*\*Agenda may be subject to change*

1. For more information on HELP please visit HELP’s website: [www.coe.int/help](http://www.coe.int/help) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information about the HELP in the EU project, please go to <https://www.coe.int/en/web/help/help-in-the-eu> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)