

**Joint JURI / LIBE Workshop on “The training of judges and legal practitioners”  
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**Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals  
and EU/CoE Programme ‘HELP in the 28’**

- I would like to thank the members of the JURI and LIBE Committees of the European Parliament, as well as its Policy Department for the invitation to present the Councils of Europe’s Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals, otherwise known as HELP.
- HELP has become the driving force when it comes to legal education on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and fundamental rights. It covers the 47 CoE member states and apart from the EU, there are country- or region-specific projects in the Russian Federation, Turkey and the Western Balkans.
- HELP has 3 components:
  - a network of schools for the Judiciary and Bar associations in the 47 member states of the Council of Europe (CoE), which includes partners such as EJTN and CCBE;
  - a platform with free online courses merging knowledge, skills and values;
  - and a methodology.
- HELP does not substitute national training institutions. It provides them with its unique added value to develop practical tailor-made courses on human rights for judges, prosecutors and lawyers:
  - The CoE standards are taken as the basis, with the incorporation of the Strasbourg case law and the findings of monitoring bodies.
  - Top CoE experts are mobilized to design the HELP courses.
  - National law and CoE standards are merged so that those are not perceived as an alien source of law.
- And now, a few words to understand the rationale of HELP. HELP’s birth certificate is Rec (2004) 4 on university education and professional training. At the time, the success of the Strasbourg Court was almost causing it to collapse and it was necessary to both reform the Court and improve the implementation of the ECHR at national level. For this, legal education was seen as crucial, an uninterrupted journey from university throughout a professional career. HELP’s aim is thus to ensure that human rights training throughout Europe is of good quality and meets the specific needs of each category, be it judges, prosecutors or lawyers.

- HELP courses also cover the European Social Charter and, since 2015, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights and other relevant EU laws, as well as the case law of the Luxembourg Court. The courses on data protection and anti-discrimination, which are the most demanded, have been developed with FRA tools.
- The EU is our natural ally to work in EU member states. Actually, in 2015, the Council of Europe was entrusted with the biggest EU-funded training project on fundamental rights in EU member states, “HELP in the 28”. Certainly, thanks to this project, we have increased the professional interaction among the EU members of the HELP Network, implemented more courses in the EU and anchored the HELP methodology in EU Judiciary Schools and Bar Associations. This is our contribution in achieving the EU goal of having 50 % of all legal practitioners trained in EU law by 2020, including on fundamental rights.
- Without the EU, our impact would be limited. This is why we need to strengthen the EU-CoE partnership to extend more systematically the benefits of HELP, particularly to EU countries and EU legal professionals and make them sustainable in a multi-year framework. This will contribute to building the very much needed European Judicial Culture, reinforcing mutual trust among legal professionals in the EU, and upholding Europeans’ fundamental rights.

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