

- Greetings
- Short personal presentation
- The new module on Human Rights and the Environment is the first dedicated course provided on the HELP platform on this issue. The structure of the course is organised in four main chapters, to highlight the necessary interdependence between the full enjoyment of Human Rights and the quality of the environment.
- The 4 Chapters are:
  - **Introduction and main notions**
  - **The Human Rights-Based Approach to the Environment Protection**
  - **Green Human Rights in Regional Human Rights Systems**
  - **Human Rights accountability for environmental harm done by businesses**
- The HELP course on Human Rights and the environment aims to provide to learners an overview of to use the Human Rights Law (ie the existing human rights) to protect the environment. The main foundation used is that there is a Human rights approach in claims for the protection the environment. With this in mind, the course will present the main international and regional sources of human rights law and the jurisprudence produced on the topic, and explain how they can be used to achieve environmental protections
- The main goal of the course is to define the State obligations to protect the environment using a human rights approach, but also highlight the duties for the business sector and the notion of corporate responsibility, for the negative impact on the environment and human beings.

The course will also provide the opportunity to introduce the current debate about the need of a new substantive Right to a healthy environment, and to assess the Human Rights system faced to main environmental challenges of our time, such as climate change.

- Regarding the content, the 1<sup>st</sup> module will provide preliminary information to learners, such as a legal definition of the environment and the notion of environmental degradation. It will also include key concepts of the international environmental law regime, and the sources provided at the regional level by the Council of Europe and the EU Law. This introduction aims to highlight the limits of the environmental law regime and the need to enforce the Human Rights perspective as a complementary strategy to ensure the healthy, safe and protected environment.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> module will describe the Human-Rights Based Approach to the Environment and the key-concepts. The module deals with the legal background on the link between Human Rights and environmental issues, using the main international human rights instruments, and the categories of substantive, participatory and procedural rights. The last part of the module introduces the notion of the human rights to a healthy, safe and clean environment, as key-element of the current debate concerning the future perspectives in the human right legal framework, at international and at the regional level.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> module will focus on the main regional legal instruments and the Human Rights jurisprudence available to address environmental issues. In particular, the main focus will be the European Human Rights system and the jurisprudence built by the European Court of Human rights, together with the European Committee of Social Rights. However, to offer a complete background, an overview of the other regional jurisprudence, such as the Inter-American and the African court of human rights will be included as a benchmarking exercise.
- Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> Module will address the negative impact of the business sector on the environment and human well-being, to illustrate the obligations of corporations and to examine the mechanisms of responsibility.
- This course is also being developed in parallel with the upcoming business and human rights course. As such there will be a degree of cross referencing between the two, and in particular Module 4 of the course will offer the learner a launching point into that course, and vice versa. By taking both of these courses, learners will have a comprehensive and practical understanding of two contemporary

and important fields in human rights law, especially as concerns the role of human rights in respect of the business sector.