PROTECTION & SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

HELP
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals

Protection and Safety of Journalists
HELP ONLINE COURSE

Duration: 10 hours

Available for free on the CoE HELP e-learning platform

Statement of Accomplishment

START COURSE →

Council of Europe
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme

2020

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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HELP

Formation en droits humains pour professionnels du droit

Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals

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Background

Freedom of expression and free flow of information are cornerstones of public debate and democracy.

Yet, freedom of expression and the safety of journalists are facing major challenges in Europe today. In many countries, journalists and other media actors are facing threats such as censorship, political and economic pressure, intimidation, job insecurity, abusive use of defamation laws as well as physical attacks. These offences are often committed in an intolerable context of impunity, which fuels recidivism and has a chilling effect on media freedom. Another danger for journalists and their sources comes from surveillance laws passed in some States under exceptional circumstances and often by resorting to extraordinary legal procedures, which may also lead to self-censorship in the media community.

On the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights' case law, member States have both negative and positive obligations to protect journalists. Not only must they refrain from intimidating political declarations or judicial practices against media actors, they also have the duty to actively grant them full protection of the law and the judiciary in order to create an enabling environment for their journalistic activities. To achieve implementation of the Council of Europe standards in all member States, a strong and specific legal framework is needed, along with an effective enforcement of the protection of media actors by the judiciary.

This free HELP online course aims at assisting legal professionals, but also journalists and law-enforcement officials, in identifying and tackling the threats towards journalists and other media actors.

The topics are explored in a practical way, by using presentations, interactive screens, knowledge tests and reflective exercises.

The course was published in July 2020.

About the course

The course is developed jointly by the Council of Europe and the **HELP Programme** (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals), under the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Project **Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media** (JUFREX 2).

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In 2020, the course will be translated to the national languages and implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia.

Target audience

This free on-line course is primarily addressed to all legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers or court staff), as well as journalists and law-enforcement officials.

It can also be used by other public authorities, including national human rights institutions, as well as civil society organizations, university students etc.

Course outline

The course consists of **5 substantive modules:**

1	**Module 1: Key standards and principles** (introduction to the topic, freedom of expression, journalists and other media actors)
2	**Module 2: Threats against journalism** (threats against journalists, effects of the threats, response to the threats)
3	**Module 3: Legal frameworks and mechanisms and tools** (the United Nations, Council of Europe, EU and OSCE legal frameworks, mechanisms and tools for protection of journalists, including the CoE Platform for protection of journalism and safety of journalists)
4	**Module 4: Physical and psychological integrity** (positive and negative obligations of the State, substantive and procedural dimension of States' obligations; impunity for crimes against journalists and effects of impunity)
5	**Module 5: Journalism in action** (newsgathering: access to places and events, access to public information, protection of sources and whistleblowers etc.; publication: substantive and procedural legal limitations; journalism on trial; law enforcement and journalists)

At the end of each module there is a quiz and a summary of the module.

How to access the HELP online course

The course can be accessed by visiting the HELP e-learning platform at http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/ First you need to open a HELP account if you have not yet done so (2 minutes). Then you can follow this link to directly access the online course: http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/course/view.php?id=4237

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