



## Welcoming address: speaking points

**Harry Alex RUSZ,**

Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the  
Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 1 July 2021



**HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY**  
Council of Europe  
May – November 2021  
**PRÉSIDENCE HONGROISE**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2021



- **Greet and welcome** Mr Bjorn BERGE, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ms Meglena KUNEVA, the Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation to the Council of Europe, the members of the HELP Network, representatives of Permanent Representations of Council of Europe member States present and everyone following the Conference online.
- **Open** on the behalf of the Hungarian Presidency with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe the **2021 HELP Network Conference**.
- In May this year, **Hungary assumed the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers**. The Hungarian Presidency aims at continuing to consolidate the stability of Europe based on democratic institutions; seeking to strengthen the political, legal, social and cultural cohesion of our continent and combatting the divisive factors constituted by intolerance – whether political, cultural or religious – and discrimination against minorities.
- Hungary assumed the CM Presidency in the unprecedented circumstances imposed by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. It is in those circumstances that the 2021 HELP Network Conference is taking place this year. I am happy to see at least a very small number of participants physically present here in the Conference room, after last years' Conference held fully online, but I understand also that most of the HELP Network members are following the Conference in an online format, due to the impossibility to be present here.
- COVID-19 is affecting an entire spectrum of our lives in a multitude of dimensions: political, economic, social, cultural, institutional. **Health** has become a topic of primary concern for all of us, and I am glad to see that the Conference will address this topic in a separate session tomorrow morning, focusing notably on the HELP courses on [Bioethics](#) and [Pharmaceutical crime and the MEDICRIME Convention](#), this latter one recently made publicly available to all 90.000 users of the HELP online Platform.
- During the COVID-19 crises **the Council of Europe was prepared** to continue its efforts on human rights training of legal (and increasingly other) professionals. Namely **through the HELP Programme, and its online platform and courses** encompassing a wide variety of human rights related topics **and the flexible HELP human rights training Methodology**, the judicial, prosecutorial and judicial training on human rights did not stop during COVID. To the contrary, the HELP actions as you will hear later grew in an unprecedented manner to mitigate the COVID consequences on usual training of legal professionals.
- Let me come back to [priorities of the Hungarian Presidency with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe](#). The Presidency will focus particularly on five themes:
  - 1) **promoting the effective protection of national minorities,**
  - 2) **interreligious dialogue,**
  - 3) **“next generation”:** children’s rights, youth participation, and Roma inclusion,
  - 4) **technological challenges and**
  - 5) **environmental challenges.**

- The **links between these priorities and the work of the HELP Programme**, including this Conference, are evident. Many of the topical HELP courses can become a tool for implementation of some of the thematic priorities of the Hungarian Presidency. Let me name but a few of them.
  - One of our thematic priorities is related to the **Next generation**, including **children's rights** and **Roma inclusion**. Indeed, children and young people face several challenges caused by the digital world, which has been even more prominent since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis. There is a HELP specific online module on [key challenges in fulfilment of children's rights](#), tackling the issue of Rights of Children in the Digital Environment. The HELP courses on [Child-friendly Justice](#), [Refugee and Migrant Children](#) and [Family Law and Human Rights](#) are also very relevant in this context.
  - When it comes to the Roma population, a specific [HELP module on Anti-discrimination of Roma](#) has very recently been updated and modernised. Relevant in this respect is also the HELP module on social rights, which will be presented to you tomorrow during this Conference.
  - I would like to turn to the 4th priority of the Presidency, **Technological challenges**, addressing **justice in the digital age, artificial intelligence and fight against cybercrime**. The Budapest Convention on Cybercrime will celebrate its 20th anniversary in November. The Hungarian Presidency would like to play a strong role in the celebration of this anniversary in conjunction with the Octopus Conference of the Council of Europe. It is closely following the preparation of the Second Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime that is to address complex questions of crime, jurisdiction, rule of law and human rights in cyberspace. I am thus glad to see that the upcoming HELP course on Cybercrimes will later today be announced to the participants to this Conference.
  - The fifth thematic priority of the Hungarian Presidency concerns **right to a healthy environment**. Continuing the process started by the Georgian Presidency, the Hungarian Presidency will also aim to strengthen environmental protection work in the Council of Europe through its existing instruments to secure better human rights protection standards in member States. This Conference contributes to the Council of Europe work in this area with the special topical event, which will be opened by the PACE President Rik DAEMS as well as Ambassador KUNEVA and which you will be able to follow tomorrow afternoon. The HELP course on Environment and Human Rights, also announced during last years' HELP Network Conference, is already followed by nearly 700 users of the HELP online platform in English and will be soon available in other languages.
- And there are other areas where the priorities and the agenda of the Presidency work towards the same goals as HELP's courses.
- I would like to reflect on the **links between the HELP Programme and my country**: there is recently increased interest of Hungarian legal professionals for the HELP online courses, in particular during the COVID – 19 crisis. Namely the number of Hungarian users of the HELP online platform has increased significantly since early 2020. Then, in May this year, the [HELP course on Procedural Safeguards in Criminal Proceedings and Victims' Rights](#) was launched for a group of prosecutors in cooperation with the General Prosecutors' Office. This HELP course will also soon

become publicly available in Hungarian on the HELP online platform. The HELP course on Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR, the HELP 'bestseller' which was presented to you last year, is also publicly available in [Hungarian](#) and I hope it will reach a wide audience. A previous edition of the HELP course on Hate Crimes, implemented with the Prosecutor's Office was considered very successful.

- I also understand that there are contacts between the HELP Secretariat and the Budapest Bar association for using the HELP courses for lawyers' training. I sincerely hope that this cooperation will materialize and expand further in future.
- **Wish** fruitful and interesting Conference.