



The 2019 Council of Europe HELP Network Conference 'HELP: celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe

Closing of the 2019 HELP Network Conference

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5 July 2019

Chers membres du réseau HELP, chers participants et collègues,

C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de prendre la parole à la fin de cette Conférence HELP. Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier chaleureusement nos partenaires de la République française. Comme vous savez, la Conférence était organisée dans le cadre de la Présidence française du Comité des ministres du Conseil de l'Europe.

I will now turn to English:

You had intensive and enlightening sessions throughout this day and a half. I hope you enjoyed both the individual presentations and the group discussions, as well as the networking possibilities.

I would now like to briefly **recapitulate on the developments** concerning the HELP Programme that you have heard:

- The **projects** implemented by HELP and the plans for the future. In the recent period of political and financial hardship for the Council of Europe, HELP benefited from the support of its long standing partners, such as the European Union and the Human Rights Trust Fund but also from the dedication of many of you. I want to express my gratitude and congratulations to all those who have contributed to all of the HELP courses developed and launched in the past year. It is a real pleasure that we will continue the second phase of HELP in the EU in 2020. The implementation of HELP in the Western Balkans will also proceed with EU funding. We are hoping to get EU support for a second phase of HELP Radicalisation Prevention also covering judicial responses to fighting terrorism and international cooperation on criminal matters. In parallel, we are looking forward to continuing and increasing the work with our partners from the Eastern Partnership countries and from the Russian Federation through various fora and modalities.

- The **new courses** developed by HELP since the last Network Conference were also presented to you. You have noted how HELP courses follow your training priorities and cover emerging topics. In this respect, I would like to refer to one notion of the priorities of the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, namely that *'the technological and societal upheavals confronting us raise many issues and call for adaptations of the instruments at our disposal.'* HELP will continue to work on tackling those issues, with a view to empowering legal professionals to address them.
- For instance, you were already informed of an important initiative of the Cybercrime Division and HELP to prepare a course on the topic of Cybercrime. The team has already started to develop a course on Alternatives to Immigration Detention, a very important question from the point of view of human rights protection. I look forward to those courses being presented at the HELP Network Conference next year.
- The existing **34 HELP courses** are free and available for all users of the HELP platform in a total of **170 language versions** and this number is growing on a daily basis.

- We are publishing **2** new courses this summer, as announced, and we will have **2** more finalised by the end of the year. I want to congratulate my colleagues of the **HELP Secretariat** for these results.
- **HELP's work with Universities:** after having brainstormed with some of you last year on avenues to strengthen our work with Universities, this year has seen an increase in the number of courses made available to law schools and other higher education institutions. I know that the HELP team has more ambitious plans and will further increase its efforts in working with Universities.

I would now like to reiterate two **key messages**:

- The first one is the **transversality** of HELP's work:
 - As you know, when developing the courses, HELP works directly with colleagues from different CoE entities, including the European Court of human Rights, and benefits from their expertise. This is paramount in the European legal area.

- You saw the concrete results of this expertise transformed into courses on topics such as data protection, radicalisation prevention, CPT standards, access to justice for women, family law and human rights and fair trial rights in criminal proceedings. For this, I would like to express my gratitude to all our colleagues, some of whom were present here during the Conference, for providing their best and most unique asset: their expertise.
- In addition, the transversality of HELP's work means that HELP courses are embedded in many other capacity building projects of other CoE entities. This increases the possibilities for your institutions and legal professionals to benefit from the existing courses.

The second key message is **support**. We are here to support you, within our capacities, when you have challenges in specific areas of training. But in turn we count on your support as well. As it was stressed last year and the years before, you can support us in terms of your engagement to embed the courses in the curricula of your judicial and prosecutorial training institutions or Bar associations.

- One of the advantages of the HELP courses, as you know, is the fact that after being adapted to a national legal order, they can be replicated for as many times as needed, without significant further costs. Some of our partners are already successfully introducing the HELP courses in their national curricula. Some of them are also translating at their own initiatives and taking over for implementation of the course on their own funds. These are practices that we warmly praise and we strongly encourage you to replicate in your respective institutions.

I want to reassure you that we, on our part, stand ready to develop the HELP courses and to the methodological support and assistance to implement them, if the necessary financial resources can be found. We have already had a few successful examples of combining efforts and resources with other international organisations working on human rights training. On this, I would like to praise our work with key international partners: the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), the Council of Bar and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), the UNHCR, the OSCE ODIHR and FRA, among others.

With this, I would like to close this year's HELP Annual Network Conference and thank you all for being part of it and for your extremely useful contributions and fruitful discussions. Each year the HELP Conferences get bigger and bigger and I am looking forward to seeing you all in this, and possibly even enlarged, composition on the occasion of the 2020 HELP Annual Conference next year. Of course, in the meantime the HELP Secretariat will remain in constant contact with all of you and we hope to report next year on our many more joint achievements.

Thank you for your attention!