

2020 COUNCIL OF EUROPE HELP NETWORK e-CONFERENCE

8-9 JULY 2020

CONCEPT NOTE



Greek Chairmanship
Council of Europe
May – November 2020

Présidence de la Grèce
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai – Novembre 2020



**The e-Conference is organised under the auspices of the Greek Chairmanship
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

BACKGROUND

The [European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals \(HELP\)](#) of the Council of Europe (CoE) aims at assisting legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) and other professionals to effectively apply the European human rights standards in their daily work.

This is done by **developing** and **implementing** high-quality, tailor made **online courses** on various human rights related topics.

HELP's three pillars are:

- the [HELP Network](#);
- the [HELP online courses](#); and
- the [HELP Training Methodology](#).

The HELP Network is the only European peer-to-peer human rights training network. It consists of representatives of national training institutions for legal professionals (judiciary schools and Bar associations) from the CoE member States and beyond. Other international organisations, as well as some NGOs, are partners of the Network, including the main international associations of legal professionals (European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), etc.).

The HELP Annual Network Conference is the main gathering of the HELP Network members and partners. It provides a forum for discussion on ways of enhancing human rights training results and on how to improve effective co-operation among all members and partners of the HELP Network. Information on previous HELP Network Conferences is available [here](#).

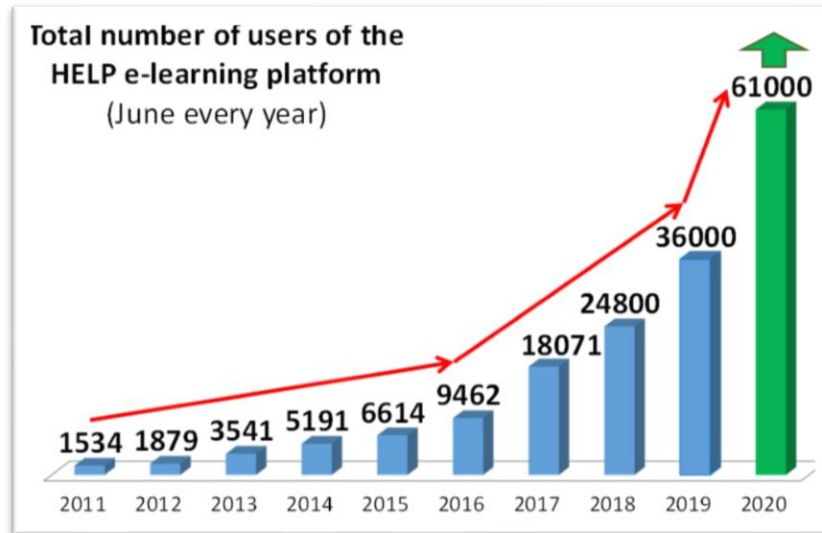
THE 2020 HELP NETWORK E-CONFERENCE

The first half of 2020 was globally marked with the **outbreak of the COVID-19 related disease**, which gravely affected many aspects of usual life.

The COVID-19 outbreak also inevitably influenced the work of the HELP Programme.

Due to the restrictions of movement which have been in place in many of the Council of Europe member States, many training activities for justice professionals took place in **online format**.

For an illustration, the number of users of the [HELP online platform](#), hosting the [HELP online courses](#), grew from 47.000 in mid-March 2020 to almost 61.000 in the beginning of June 2020.



The 2020 HELP Network Conference, in particular, is affected by this situation in the following 2 ways:

1) **The 2020 HELP Network Conference will be held entirely online.**

Restrictions on movement and/or potential reluctance to travel lead us to organise, for the first time, the HELP Conference in an online format. We at the HELP Secretariat deeply regret that the HELP Network member and partners, the speakers at the Conference, as well as our CoE colleagues and ourselves, will not be able to exchange and network in person this year. However, we still consider very important to meet with and inform our Network members and partners of the developments within HELP during the last year.

2) **One part of the 2020 HELP Network Conference will be dedicated to the response of the HELP Programme to the situation caused by the coronavirus.**

We will take this opportunity to inform our Network of the HELP online courses particularly relevant for the sanitary crises caused by the virus, but also of how we adapted our HELP Methodology and usual practices to provide the best possible support to the training activities of legal professionals throughout Europe and beyond.

In 2020 the HELP Programme also joins the marking of the [70 years of the European Convention on Human Rights](#). 15 years ago, the HELP Programme was envisaged as a tool for supporting the effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights, under the [Recommendation \(2004\)4 on the ECHR in university education and professional training](#) (the 'birth certificate' of the HELP Programme). This mandate was strengthened in 2019 with the [Recommendation \(2019\)5 on the system of the ECHR in university education and professional training](#).

Indeed, HELP courses remain a tool for increasing the knowledge on the Convention and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, hand in hand with the relevant law of the European Union and relevant case-law of the European Court of Justice.

This year the HELP Programme marks the establishment of the Open Council of Europe Academic Network (OCEAN), which will be presented at the Conference in a special dedicated half-day session.

OBJECTIVES

In view of the above mentioned, the **objectives** of this year’s HELP Annual Network Conference are:

- To highlight the **response of the CoE HELP Programme to the situation caused by the coronavirus outbreak**
- To mark the **70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights**
- To inform on the **current challenges** for the respect of certain rights guaranteed with the ECHR and on the **HELP response to those challenges** through the HELP online courses
- To present **the developments in the HELP Programme** since the 2019 HELP Network Conference,
 - an update on the HELP Projects and initiatives; and
 - newly developed or updated HELP courses
- To provide the HELP Network members **a forum for addressing their peers**
- To present to the HELP Network the newly established **Open Council of Europe Academic Network (OCEAN)** and discuss links and synergies between OCEAN and HELP

In particular, participants to the Conference will be updated on the CoE HELP projects being implemented in the period between the 2019 and 2020 Conferences:

Geographical scope	Thematic scope
HELP in the EU II	Radicalisation Prevention, Judicial Response to Terrorism and International Cooperation in Criminal Matters
HELP in the Western Balkans	HELP Refugees and Migrants, including Children
HELP in the Russian Federation	
Beyond CoE MS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HELP in the South Mediterranean • HELP in Tunisia • HELP in Central Asia 	

The following newly developed/updated HELP courses will be presented to the participants:



Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR (updated), with an entirely new module on Execution of Judgments of the ECtHR



Environment and Human Rights



Protection and Safety of Journalists



Alternatives to Immigration Detention



Freedom of Expression (updated course)