Human Rights in Sports



HELP
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
Council of Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

HUMAN RIGHTS IN SPORTS
HELP ONLINE COURSE

Duration: 8 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
2018

Background

The course objective is to increase the awareness of human rights and related legal issues in the field of sport among legal professionals and specialists involved into sport.

In particular, the course aims at increasing the knowledge and skills of (primarily) legal professionals but also other relevant experts to apply the related domestic and international law standards in the field of human rights in sport in their daily work.

Nowadays sport has achieved a significant level of impact on people: on their personal, social, and professional life. For athletes, sport is their livelihood and thus has a serious effect on their personal lives, health, economic prosperity, safety and social status.

The complexity of the question in the field of sport and its increasing popularity leads to an increase of the number of sport-related legal disputes. Disputes are often of a general criminal, administrative or civil nature, with the added specificity of sport, including short deadlines and criminal groups extending wider than simply the athletes. These disputes are adjudicated by national courts as well as by special sport tribunals. The questions on the application of the procedural safeguards enshrined in Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) in such proceedings have been raised before the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR).

The Council of Europe has significant expertise in the important sport-related questions based on its actions in fighting the negative aspects of sport and protecting its integrity - in particular violence, doping and the manipulation of sports competitions - through its Conventions in this field, which focus on three areas related to sport integrity and the interest of spectators.

Special protection is needed for young athletes and spectators who are often misinformed or not informed at all about the consequences of doping, violence or fixing of matches. Doping significantly affects the health of users, many of whom are often unaware of the effects and the illegal nature of certain products. The manipulation of sport competitions is a phenomenon involving serious and organized crime groups executing traditional crimes such as match-fixing, illegal betting and money laundering through sport, which is largely low-regulated currently. Finally, the interest of spectators is an aspect that renders sport a social activity and therefore needs to have a safe, secure and hospitable environment.

According to the European Sport Charter, states and sports organisations should apply a policy of zero tolerance for violence and all forms of discrimination, paying particular attention to individuals and groups in a situation of vulnerability, such as children, migrants and persons with disabilities.

These topics will be explored in a practical manner, using presentations, interactive screens, knowledge tests and reflective exercises.

At the end of each module a self-assessment survey may be offered for the user to test his / her knowledge on the subject matter post-taking the module. This will allow them to assess how much knowledge they gained by going through the module(s).

About the course

The course is being developed jointly by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme (HELP; www.coe.int/help), the Council of Europe's Children's Rights and Sport Values Department (www.coe.int/en/web/sport). The module on Child Safeguarding in Sports was developed in cooperation with EPAS (Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport) Sport Division in 2026 thanks to the financial support of the Principality of Monaco.

Target audience

This free on-line course will be primarily addressed to legal professionals and also athletes, coaches or sport managers.

Course outline

The course consists of 9 substantive modules:

	Introduction module • Pyramid structure • Autonomy and self-regulation • International instruments
1	Module 1 - Fair Trial, Sport Litigation and Arbitration. Article 6 ECHR • Sport litigation • Sport proceedings • Human rights under Article 6 of ECHR • Sport case-law

2	Module 2 - Privacy (Art. 8 of the ECHR) • What is Article 8 • Public interest vs private life • Privacy and the fight against doping • Quiz
3	Module 3 - Life and Security (Art. 2, 3 and 4 of the ECHR) • Article 2 of the ECHR • Article 3 of the ECHR • Article 4 of the ECHR • Quiz
4	Module 4 - Liberty, Freedom of Expression and Assembly (Art. 5, 10 and 11 of the ECHR) • Article 5 of the ECHR • Article 10 of the ECHR • Article 11 of the ECHR • Quiz
5	Module 5 - Prohibition of Discrimination • Access to sport • Prohibition of discrimination in sport • Grounds of discrimination • Persons with disabilities and differentiation • Fight against racism • Gender equality
6	Module 6 - Anti-Doping and Human Rights • Anti-doping rules • Gathering evidence • Enforcing rules • Engagement of human rights • Adjudication and human rights
7	Module 7 -Sport Manipulation and Human Rights • Macolin Convention • Sport competition manipulation • Human rights considerations • Quiz
8	Module 8 - Safety, Security and Service at Sports Events and Human Rights • Legal framework • Main actors • Safety

	• Security • Services • Sport case-law
9	Module 9 – Child Safeguarding in Sports (2026) • Introduction • Definitions • The sports context • The legal and policy framework • Prevention and protection • Remedies • Knowledge check

How to access the HELP online course

To access the course once it is ready, you will need to enter the HELP e-learning platform at http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/. First you need to open yourself an account at HELP if you have not yet done so (2 minutes).