

Template for Management Response and Action Plan

Name of Evaluation Report:	EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT: EU-COE “HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION III” (“EU-COE HELP IN THE EU III”) REPORT		
Date of Evaluation Report:	30/11/2024	Date of Action Plan:	NA

Overall management response to the evaluation:

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the potential **relevance, added value, impact** and **sustainability** of the Project, based on the objectively verifiable indicators and sources of verification foreseen in the project’s logframe, as well as to assess the project gender equality aspects and human rights-based approach, their relevance and the likelihood of economic and institutional sustainability of the results.

The evaluation report clearly presented its findings and recommendations. They were noted and will be guiding the Project team into the future phase of this Project, as well as the work of the HELP Programme in general.

HELP in the EU III was found to contribute to cohesion across member states, securing ‘correct and uniform’ application of European law, fully aligned with EU standards. The collaboration between the EU and Council of Europe that underpins HELP in the EU, was found to be developing the EU as an ‘area of justice’, and to deliver the step-change in terms of approach and scale required around human rights education. The non-tutored, online courses were said to democratise access to learning. The quality of the content, and them being ‘free’ was understood to fill an existing gap across member states.

In terms of relevance, the evaluation report found that the Project remained highly relevant to the shared values and specific objectives of the EU and Council of Europe partnership. It described a remarkable, high-level consistency in reported satisfaction with relevance levels between 2022 (HELP II) and 2024 (HELP III) projects, even though the number of beneficiaries has grown. It also reported high-quality trainings and an important contribution to the digitalisation of society and the legal and judicial systems that serve it.

The added value was found to be the HELP Programme’s clear and coherent identity in providing the highest standard of human rights education. The HELP methodology is particularly well suited to disseminate the vision and principles of the European Convention on Human Rights and aligned texts and policies.

In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation report found that the quality of the courses is very strong, and the course creators and tutors are a key attraction because of their renowned expertise. The exponential growth of participants and their consistently high level of satisfaction suggest that the project is achieving

expected results, while having shaped the prestigious HELP in the EU 'brand.' It was also found that there is some evidence around impact, with legal professionals across member states applying the learning in their work, returning to use materials, and seeing legal structural change at the domestic level, influenced by HELP in the EU training.

Concerning sustainability, the evaluation report found that the HELP Programme has established itself as the 'gold standard', with further growth potential. It was emphasised how important it is that the HELP Platform provides the possibility to follow courses online, in a self-paced format, and in national languages. That being said, it was underlined that its sustainability rests on funding commitments, notably from the EU, but also from other Council of Europe resources. This is important to consider across the different responsible entities of the Council of Europe, who must ensure the HELP Programme benefits of adequate funding and other resources to achieve its full potential.

The evaluation is user-focused, which means that its purpose is defined in view of its usefulness to the main users, namely the HELP Programme Secretariat, and DG JUST. Other evaluation audiences include the CoE project team, as well as the beneficiary national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers, the European Judicial Training Network and the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe. The evaluation also represents one of the final deliverables of the EU-CoE HELP in the EU III Project and was submitted to the European Commission.

The evaluation responds to the need to adapt and update the Justice and Human Rights Training Division's strategy and plan of activities, improve the functioning and user-friendliness of the platform, promote good practices and remedy weaknesses, with a view of continuation of HELP trainings for EU MSs. This evaluation is, therefore, project-centred and also **formative**: it derives lessons learned, good practices and offers recommendations for decision making.

[FOR DECENTRALISED EVALUATIONS] Dissemination plan for the evaluation: please briefly explain how the report will be shared (internally, other CoE entities, donors, beneficiaries etc.), methods (email, events, website etc.), resources, timeframe and person responsible.

The findings of the evaluation report were used in the final report of the Project that was submitted to the EU. Relevant parts will also be included in the HELP annual report, which will be disseminated with partners across the EU, and during events and conferences, such as the HELP Annual Conference that will take place in July 2025. The main person in charge is Oana Girlescu, who managed the Project and who will get support from the rest of the HELP Secretariat with the dissemination.

Management Decision ¹	Entity in Charge	Planned Actions ² (determined by Entity)	Justification ³ for Non-Acceptance	Target Date for Action	Person Responsible for Action
Recommendation 1: The EU with other donors should revisit future funding needs in collaboration with the HELP Secretariat					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	The HELP Secretariat engages regularly with different entities of the EU and other funder, on its own or together with other entities of the Council of Europe, to identify and secure financial resources for the HELP Programme.	-	ongoing	Ana Maria Telbis, Head of the Justice and Human Rights Training Division
Recommendation 2: The HELP secretariat with the Director General's support should consider extending the HELP remit to include university students and legal trainees, linking to key donors for resources and seeking support of universities/academies.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	The HELP Secretariat engages regularly with different entities of the EU and other funder, on its own or together with other entities of the Council of Europe, to identify and secure financial resources for the HELP Programme, including for HELP in Universities.	The HELP Programme already has a branch focused on academia, called HELP in Universities	ongoing	Krystyna Kohklova, Programme Manager
Recommendation 3: The HELP implementation team should examine the feasibility of increasing the number of live events, and/or increasing the delegate list to include former participants at tutored courses, working with the HELP Secretariat, EU and other key donors to support financially.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights	The HELP Secretariat is assessing at all times the feasibility of face-to face events. Many such events are organised	-	ongoing	Oana Girlescu, Programme Manager

¹ The management decision is in relation to the Recommendation (Accepted, Partially accepted, Rejected).

² For implementing accepted recommendations.

³ For recommendations that are partially accepted or rejected.

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	Training Division	regularly, being combined with hybrid and online events.			
Recommendation 4: The HELP implementation team should examine the feasibility of using a platform such as LinkedIn to effectively replace the forum.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	<p>An approval for the creation of an official LinkedIn account for the HELP Programme has been obtained. Once created, the page will be used as much as possible during events/seminar and during the implementation of courses.</p> <p>That being said, due consideration will be given to the fact that LinkedIn is not very popular among certain categories of legal professionals, particularly in certain countries.</p>	-	ongoing	Oana Girlescu, Programme Manager
Recommendation 5: The HELP implementation team should perform a cost/benefit analysis on making course materials downloadable as a PDF on course completion.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	The HELP Secretariat will try to identify solutions to provide users of HELP courses with materials that can be downloaded in certain formats.	The possibility of making courses downloadable as PDF has been discussed many times with e-learning designers. Given the importance of making the courses	ongoing	Daniela Balestra, HELP e-learning officer

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			interactive and attractive, different functions introduced in the courses makes the resulting PDF incoherent and hard to follow. Some solutions involve eliminating part of the content of the course, to provide at least some materials.		
Recommendation 6: The HELP Secretariat in partnership with the HELP implementation team should encourage tutors to adopt assessments that have real-world applicability as a driver towards impact.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	The HELP implementation team works constantly with tutors, supporting them to find the most effective tools to teach courses, interact with students and achieve their objectives; knowledge sharing and application of standards in real-life cases is always a priority.	-	ongoing	Oana Girlescu, Programme Manager
Recommendation 7: The HELP Secretariat with the Director General should consider the feasibility of extending the HELP remit to include civil society as direct beneficiaries.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	The HELP Secretariat regularly seeks the involvement in civil society, where relevant, in its activities. It will continue to do so. For example, it requests	-	ongoing	Ana Maria Telbis, Head of the Justice and Human Rights Training Division

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		feedback from relevant civil society organisations during the development of courses and invites members of civil society, as participants and speakers, to events, seminars and implemented HELP courses			
Recommendation 8: The HELP Secretariat are encouraged to review the recommendations made by the 2022 evaluation, notably around accessibility and using cell phones.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	The Justice and Human Rights Training Division	Accessibility and using a variety of devices for following HELP courses has been recognised as important on one side to ensure inclusivity, and on the other to meet the needs of increasingly digitalised societies, including in the legal field. Possibilities to improve these aspects are being examined. They are to be implemented while analysing all other considerations important for users, such as the interactivity of courses.	-	ongoing	Daniela Balestra, HELP e-learning officer