

Business and Human Rights



HELP

Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
Council of Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Business and Human Rights

HELP ONLINE COURSE

Duration: 6 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 | 2021

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Background

Companies have, especially where they operate at the global level as multinational enterprises, become increasingly powerful and have the ability to severely **impact** peoples' lives and the environments in which they operate. While those companies generally bring **benefits to society** in the form of tax revenues and investment, employment opportunities, and technological advancement; the operations, actions and influence of private companies can also have a **detrimental effect** on the rights of their employees and the wider community.

The question of **respect** for human rights and **accountability** for violations by companies has been the subject of increasing debate at both international and national levels. Whilst the **primary duty** to ensure the protection of human rights lies with States, companies are increasingly becoming aware of their **own responsibility** in this field.

A number of important **legal and policy developments** have been adopted at the national and international level, and companies are increasingly seeking to develop **practices and processes** to meet the growing **standards and expectations**.

This free [HELP online course](#) addresses the **legal frameworks, methodologies, and practical actions** on how States, corporate actors and legal professionals can **prevent, mitigate, and remedy** potential or actual **corporate related human rights abuses**.

This HELP course elaborates on the **State duty to respect** human rights in the context of corporate actions; provides practical guidance on how companies can conduct **human rights due diligence**; and offers an in-depth look at the **provision of remedy**.

The topics covered are explored in a practical way, using presentations, interactive screens, knowledge tests and reflective exercises.

The course was developed in 2021.

About the course

The course was published in 2021. It was developed under the Project "Online Platform for Business and Human Rights", implemented by the HELP programme in cooperation with the [Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights \(CDDH\)](#), funded by the Dutch and German Authorities. The views herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official position of Germany or the Netherlands.

In association with this project, this course has been developed alongside the [HELP Course on The Environment and Human Rights](#). These two courses are intended as **complementary resources** that can be taken **together or separately**.

Target audience

This free on-line course is primarily addressed to **legal professionals** (judges, prosecutors, lawyers or court staff). It can also be used by other public authorities, including national human rights institutions, ombudspersons, mediators, as well as civil society organisations, university students etc. Additionally, it is addressed to legal and other professionals working in the **private sector**. The course does not require any previous knowledge in the topic.

Course outline

The course consists of **5 substantive modules**:

0	Introduction Welcome message, navigation instructions, course authors and course target group
1	Overview of Business and Human Rights (1 hour) Context, key concepts and frameworks
2	Preventing Harm - State duties to protect and prevent (1.5 hours) State duties and preventing abuses by businesses in the European Convention system New approaches The State as a commercial actor Policy coherence
3	Preventing Harm - Business responsibility to respect (1.5 hours) Creating and embedding a rights-respecting culture Conducting human rights due diligence: assessing, prioritising, acting, tracking, communicating Stakeholder engagement and remedy
4	Defending rights and remedying harm (2 hours) The importance of remedy What is an effective remedy? Barriers to remedy Mechanisms for seeking remedy The wider legal environment for remedy

How to access the HELP online course

The course can be accessed by visiting the HELP e-learning platform at:

<http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/>

First you need to open a HELP account if you have not yet done so (2 minutes).

Then you can follow this link to directly access the online course:

<http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/course/view.php?id=1760>