

# HELP Online courses on Hate crime and Hate Speech

## Background and summary

Hate crime and hate speech are growing problems across Europe. They are manifestations of intolerance toward certain groups in society. Although these two phenomena are very much interconnected, they require their own specific responses.

The Council of Europe (CoE) HELP online courses on Hate crime and hate speech aim at enhancing the necessary knowledge and skills of legal (and other) professionals in understanding the impact of hate crime and hate speech on victims, communities and society and identifying effective responses.

Both online courses were developed by the CoE Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP; [www.coe.int/help](http://www.coe.int/help)) with the contribution of the CoE Media and Internet Governance Division and the No Hate Speech and Co-operation Unit.

Furthermore, the course on Hate crime was developed jointly by the CoE HELP Programme and the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) with the contribution of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

## HELP/OSCE course on Hate crime



Hate crimes violates various fundamental rights and are the gravest form of discrimination causing harm to individual victims, their communities and society.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has held that public authorities have a duty to take all reasonable steps to “unmask” the bias motive that drives hate crimes. This is not always easy. Evidence of bias motivation can be difficult to identify, victims are often reluctant to come forward and

remain engaged in the criminal justice process while professionals do not always have the skills or the means to capture the crucial information that will make the difference between a successful hate crime prosecution and a denial of justice.

## HELP course on Hate Speech

Freedom of opinion and expression and equality principles are fundamental human rights, essential to the good working of the entire society and human rights system.

For the ECtHR hate speech is seen as one of the cases in which freedom of expression is to be limited. The States' obligations to consider effective responses to hate speech is mainly based on the principle of human dignity on one hand and equality and non-discrimination on another hand. Understanding the concepts as well as the differences between hate speech and freedom of expression is therefore crucial for legal (and other) professionals.





The course is developed in an interactive way and includes various practical exercises to ensure the adequate acquisition of knowledge, skills and values.

Both courses were developed under the Council of Europe project "[Fighting discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgia](#)".

**The courses were last updated in 2021.**

### Target audience

This free online course is addressed to legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) as well as any other professional and entity combating hate crime and hate speech.

### Courses outline (modules)

The courses are structured as follows:

#### Hate crime

- Introduction to hate crime and hate speech
- The concept of hate crime
- International legal framework
- Investigating, prosecuting and sentencing hate crime

#### Hate speech

- Concepts of hate speech and freedom of expression
- Effective responses to hate speech
- Legal standards on hate speech

### Duration and languages of the course

The overall length of each of the courses module is approximatively one hour. So you may need 7 hours to complete the two courses in its English version. The updated courses will be available in English and, progressively and depending on countries' interest, in other languages at <http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/>. When national adaptations become available, you may add extra time to absorb complementary learning materials related to the national legislation, case-law and context.

### Access the free online course

To access the course, you just 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).