

HELP Online course on Refugee and Migrant Children

Background and summary

The mass arrivals of those seeking refuge in Europe from war and persecution, as well as the continuing movement of persons across the Mediterranean and Turkey, act as a constant reminder of the precarious situation refugee and migrant children find themselves in, as well as the human rights violations they are confronted with. All Council of Europe (CoE) member States are affected by the refugee/migration flows, either directly or indirectly, as countries of origin, transit, destination or resettlement.

Children on the move, especially in an irregular way, remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe today. Regardless of their status and the fact that they are accompanied or not, they may suffer persistent violations of their rights.

They are exposed to sexual abuse and forced labor. They may face marginalization, discrimination and barriers to accessing social services, such as education or healthcare. Some of them are even placed in detention on the sole basis of their migration status, in violation of their rights. International and European standards are clear: in the context of migration, children should be treated first and foremost as children. It concerns all children in migration who arrive or have arrived in the territory of any Council of Europe member State.

This course explains how critical issues are addressed in the international and European legal framework and provides the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights. It allows legal and other professionals improving the knowledge and skills on the existing standards in the field of the protection of refugee and migrant children and applying them in their daily work.



The course is developed in an interactive way and includes various practical exercises to ensure the adequate acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. It is a part of the activities implementing the CoE [Action Plan on protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe \(2017-2019\)](#).

The course was developed in 2018.

Target audience

This free on-line course is primarily addressed to the following audience:

- Judges
- Prosecutors
- Lawyers
- Guardians
- Children's Rights experts intervening in judicial proceedings and professionals working within the child protection system, like social and health workers
- Law enforcement officials
- Staff of the Ombudspersons' offices and NGOs.

Course outline (modules)

The course is composed of 7 modules:

- **Introduction to the legal framework** (the specific rights of refugee and migrant children; unaccompanied children; family reunification and durable solutions; alternatives to detention; administrative proceedings)
- **Child-friendly procedures** (the best interests of the child assessment; identification of children; access to information; reception conditions; appointment of a guardian; legal representation; access to asylum and migration procedures; (forced) return of children)
- **Alternatives to detention** (the legal framework; alternatives to child immigration detention; safeguards and standards)
- **Family reunification** (the importance of family reunification; international and European standards; application of the principles to refugee and migrant children)
- **Social rights and integration** (adequate standards of living; education; safe work; health; integration and durable solution)
- **Guardianship** (the legal framework; timing and appointment of a guardian; monitoring and complaints; volunteer and professional guardians; guardians and legal representatives; principles for guardians)
- **Age assessment** (the legal framework; the benefit of the doubt; non-invasive and holistic age assessment procedures; legal remedies)

Development of the course

The course was developed under the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP; www.coe.int/help) of the Council of Europe, by using the HELP methodology (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/help/help-training-methodology>) in close cooperation with the staff of the CoE Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, the relevant Divisions in the CoE and the UNHCR.

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).

The course will be available online in July 2018.