

HELP Online course on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

Background and key concepts

Violence against women is a grave violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women. It can take many forms, such as physical violence, sexual abuse, stalking, female genital mutilation or forced marriages. Violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of unequal power relations between women and men and it limits the full advancement of women. Violence against women, including domestic violence occurs in every Council of Europe member state despite some positive developments in law, policies and practices.

States have a responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all their citizens. Therefore, all reasonable measures have to be taken to prevent, investigate and punish all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. Violence against women is a complex issue, particularly when it occurs within the home, which can be compounded by the response of authorities to whom women turn for help. A comprehensive European curriculum on the topic for a better understanding of violence against women and domestic violence by legal professionals is therefore needed.

The HELP course Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence covers in an interactive way the key concepts, the international and European legal framework and case law governing the prevention and protection of women and girls from violence, focusing in particular on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Furthermore, the course provides the legal professionals with practical tools for dealing with cases of violence against women and domestic violence with respect to a human rights and victim centred approach.

The HELP course Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence offers a detailed and comprehensive curriculum to improve the quality of the judicial response in violence against women cases and support the access to justice for victims of violence. Such a course is intended, in the long term, to become an integral part of the overall learning curricula of the national training institutions and/or other competent authorities of the CoE member States.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Understand the key concepts related violence against women and domestic violence and recognise common barriers to access to justice for victims of violence against women;
- Refer to the key international and European legal instruments, especially the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, in your everyday work;

- Apply a gender sensitive and victim-centred approach in violence against women and domestic violence cases;
- Understand the important role of the civil and criminal law professionals in protecting the victims of violence against women and domestic violence and ensuring their access to justice;
- Understand the importance of co-operation and co-ordination to ensure higher standards and greater efficiency in the judicial system and better measures targeting violent offenders.

Course outline

The course consists of the following seven substantive modules:

- ❖ Understanding violence against women and domestic violence
- ❖ International and European Legal Framework
- ❖ Overcoming barriers / access to Justice
- ❖ Criminal Justice Response I – Investigation and pre-trial
- ❖ Criminal Justice Response II – Trial and sentencing
- ❖ Civil Justice Response
- ❖ Alternative Dispute Resolution



Development of the course under CoE

This free on-line course is developed jointly by the Equality and Human Dignity Department, Violence Against Women Division and the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals “HELP” of the Council of Europe.

Target audience

This free on-line is primarily addressed to legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, private attorneys, lawyers and senior court staff) but can be also useful for the police, forensic services, civil society organisations, media and other professionals working in the field of violence against women and domestic violence. The course can also be translated and adapted to a national context.

Starting the course

To access the course, first you need to open yourself an account at HELP if you have not yet done so (<http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/>) (2 minutes) and then you click here to access the course directly: <http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/course/view.php?id=2112>