

Council of Europe HELP in Universities

Concept note

What is HELP?

The Council of Europe **H**uman Rights **E**ducation for **L**egal **P**rofessionals (**HELP**) supports the Council of Europe (CoE) Member States in implementing European standards at the national level.

HELP is the **main educational platform of the Council of Europe for legal professionals**. Its aim is to train current and future judges, lawyers and prosecutors on human rights standards in Europe.

Apart from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), HELP covers other instruments like the European Social Charter (ESC) or CoE Conventions in key areas like data protection, violence against women etc. Since 2015, HELP courses also cover the EU perspective, by including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and relevant EU law or CJEU jurisprudence.

The HELP courses enable legal professionals to better protect human rights on a national level and keep up to date with the ever-evolving European standards and case law of the European courts.

HELP's three pillars are:

1. A European Network of national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in the 46 CoE Member States
2. an e-learning platform with **free online courses on human rights**
3. a **human rights training methodology** for legal and other professionals and university students.

HELP's main product are the **free online courses**. They are developed by relying on the specific CoE expertise in all areas where the CoE is active (e.g. Bioethics, Data Protection or Violence Against Women). They are interactive and visual and include case scenarios, quizzes and other interactive exercises.

They are developed in English and then translated in other languages.



HELP and universities

HELP's mandate stems from the [CoE Committee of Ministers Recommendation \(2004\) 4](#) on the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training. It was reinforced with the Committee of Ministers' [Recommendation \(2019\)5](#) on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training.

According to the Recommendation (2019)5, member States are recommended, among other things, to:

- **ensure university education** on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in line with the needs and expectations of the different categories of the public,
- enhance the **effectiveness** of such university education ... by ensuring that each category of the public has **access to the necessary tools** to comply with the obligations stemming from the Convention.

Universities and, in particular, law schools are therefore part of HELP's core mandate.

University students (with a focus on law students) are a natural target audience for HELP's online courses.

Existing experiences

HELP's courses have already been used as additional educational materials at some law schools. For example,

- the HELP course on [Admissibility criteria in applications submitted to the ECtHR](#) was launched for groups of students of the Glasgow University in the UK
- the HELP course on [Asylum and the ECtHR](#) was launched for law students and PhD candidates at the Belgrade Law School in Serbia
- the HELP course on [Fight Against Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Transphobia](#) was launched at the West University of Timisoara in Romania
- ...

How to integrate HELP courses in universities' curricula?

FAQs

HELP courses can easily and efficiently supplement (rather than replace) the educational materials in the law schools' core curricula. They can also be used by university professors as complement to their academic programmes.

Where can the courses be taken by students?

I am a university teacher. How do I get a HELP course for my students?

HELP courses are all available online on the [HELP online platform](#). They are freely accessible for self-learning to anyone who has an account on the HELP platform.

The courses are located on the home page of the Platform, in many national languages versions. These language versions can be accessed by simply clicking on the language code below the image of the relevant course.

For example, if you need to access the course on Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in French, you need to log-in the HELP Platform with your account and then click on the language code for French ('[fra](#)') below the picture of the course:



Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR

Available languages:

2020 version: [eng](#) | [fra](#) | [ell](#) | [hrv](#) | [mne](#) | [srp](#) | [spa](#)

Previous version: [aze](#) | [deu](#) | [hye](#) | [ita](#) | [kat](#) | [lit](#) |
[mkd](#) | [pol](#) | [ron](#) | [rus](#) | [sqi](#) | [tur](#) | [ukr](#)

All university students who have HELP accounts can access any of the available HELP courses this way.



After they have completed a HELP course they can print out at the end a self-generated '**statement of accomplishment**'.

Students can then present this document to their professors who may acknowledge it for the purposes of their teaching programme.

Therefore, the easiest way to include the CoE HELP courses in your teaching curriculum is to direct your students to take some of the publicly available HELP self-learning courses.

In exceptional cases and when professors are HELP certified tutors, if their need to use HELP courses in their teaching programme is systematic and long-lasting, the Secretariat of the CoE HELP Programme can open dedicated closed online pages (virtual spaces) for their course and their students.

These pages are not accessible for the other users of the HELP Platform. Their advantage is that professors can add other materials apart from the HELP course and can enrol/disenroll students themselves, as well as follow their progress via the e-learning tools available on the Platform.

Which HELP courses are best adapted for students?

The diversity of the HELP courses allows for a multi-level approach in implementing HELP courses in universities, depending on the level of knowledge of the students.

For example, Bachelor students can take some of the more basic HELP courses, such as the [Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR](#) or the course on [Admissibility criteria in applications submitted to the ECtHR](#) etc. The more sophisticated courses (eg. [Data Protection and Privacy Rights](#), [Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#), [Refugee and Migrant Children](#) etc.) can be offered to Master students.



However, the selection/choice of the HELP courses to be provided to the students depends entirely on the professor. The HELP Secretariat does not interfere in it and is there to support the access to the selected course(s) for students.

Contact

If you need further information, please get in touch with the HELP Secretariat by contacting Krystyna KHOKHLOVA (contact point for Universities) at krystyna.khokhlova@coe.int.