



**CHAIRMANSHIP OF CROATIA**  
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**Welcoming address by Ambassador Miroslav Papa,  
Permanent Representative of Croatia to the Council of Europe**

Strasbourg, 21 June 2018

*Dear members of the HELP Network, ladies and gentlemen,*

Please allow me to greet you all and welcome you to this event. It is an honor for me, as Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, to open the 2018 Conference of the HELP Network.

The Council of Europe continues working towards the development of a European legal area and the enhancement of democratic institutions in the Council of Europe member States. For the achievement of these goals, the Council naturally places special significance on training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other relevant actors in the justice sector. The reasons for this lays behind the title of this Conference, **Good training for good judgments**, which demonstrates the direct link between, on one hand, the focused, high-quality training for legal professionals and, on the other, the quality of judgments and, ultimately, of justice provided to individuals under the jurisdiction of the Council of Europe member States.

This is exactly the role of the HELP Programme. HELP has become the main legal training platform of the Council of Europe, encompassing a wide variety of human rights related topics. The **main aim** of the HELP Programme is to ensure the effective implementation of the European human rights standards at national level. Training on the European standards is key to achieve their application in the legal professionals' daily work.

For this, as you all know already, the HELP Programme provides online courses on human rights.

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I would now like to make a link between the [priorities of the Croatian Chairmanship](#) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the work of the HELP Programme, including today's Conference.

One of the priorities of the Chairmanship is the **efficient protection of rights of national minorities and vulnerable groups**. One of the actions under this priority was the Conference [‘Ten years of implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: impact and challenges ahead’](#) which took place one month ago, in this room. In the Conference, among other issues, we discussed approaches for prevention of trafficking, including through raising awareness, education and training. I am very glad to see that the HELP Programme, jointly with the Council of Europe Division on Trafficking in Human Beings, has developed a course dedicated to this phenomenon, which can surely be a response to some of the challenges faced and which will be presented during this Conference.

Under the same priority, special attention is dedicated to ‘the promotion and protection of the rights of members of the Roma national minority’. The HELP Programme has also contributed to efforts in this particular context, by dedicating a specific module of the Anti-discrimination course to Discrimination against Roma, and by training, in 2017, legal professionals (judges, prosecutors and lawyers) on the HELP methodology, under the JUSTROM project. These efforts will continue this year as well.

The public was informed on the events in Croatia related to the Croatian ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This ratification, [in the words of our Prime Minister](#), was ‘an expression ... of the legal and political will to strengthen the legal and institutional framework to prevent domestic violence’, but as you may know faced some opposition domestically. In this regard, I am certain that training materials, like the [HELP course on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#) will help achieve a better understanding throughout Europe of the aims and purpose of the Istanbul Convention.

And there are many other areas where the priorities and the agenda of the Chairmanship work towards the same goals as HELP's courses.

To further illustrate the link between the HELP Programme and my country, it is a pleasure for me to say that Croatian justice professionals have also benefitted from it. Namely, the HELP course on Fight Against Racism, Xenophobia, Homophobia and Transphobia was implemented in 2016 for the first time, and launched in 2018 for a second edition, in cooperation with the Judicial Academy of Croatia. And in September this year, Croatian judges and prosecutors will participate, alongside Greek and

Spanish ones, in the first cross-border launch of this course under the EU-funded project 'HELP in the EU'.

In addition to this, the HELP course on Introduction to European Convention on Human Rights and European Court of Human Rights was launched for a group of Croatian lawyers this year.

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I would now take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the HELP Programme's Secretariat, the members of the HELP Network and the partners of the HELP Programme for their work and cooperation.

In the next day and a half, I am confident that we will benefit from enlightening presentations on particularly relevant topics and that we will actively take part in the discussions during the working groups. These exchanges will be crucial for the development of HELP's roadmap in the near future, but also for informing the next steps of all HELP network members and partner institutions in their endeavours in human rights related training.

Once again I wish all the best for the work of the Conference.

**Thank you very much for your attention!**