

Technology-facilitated Violence against Women and Girls

HELP
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
Council of Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented by the Council of Europe

Technology-facilitated Violence against Women and Girls

HELP ONLINE COURSE

Duration: 3h 30 min

Available for free on the CoE HELP e-learning platform

Statement of Accomplishment

START COURSE

Council of Europe
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme
2025

Background and key concepts

As the prevalence and impact of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (TFVAWG) continue to grow with the rapid expansion of digital technologies, legal professionals require a nuanced understanding of both the forms this violence can take and the broader human rights context in which it occurs.

In 1979 the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was interpreted through General Recommendation No. 19; this requires state parties to adopt positive measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including those enabled by technology. General Recommendation No. 35 expands upon this obligation, expressly recognising the diverse impacts of violence and the way intersecting identities may intensify its effects.

The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence), stands as the leading treaty for addressing all forms of violence against women and girls, including TFVAWG. In 2026 , the Council of Europe also adopted its Recommendation on Accountability for Technology-facilitated Violence against Women and Girls, which specifically defines TFVAWG as any act of gender-based violence that is committed, assisted, aggravated or amplified through technology and that impacts women or girls. Other critical Council of Europe instruments include the Lanzarote Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, both of which address forms of online abuse and cross-border issues relevant to technology-facilitated violence.

The EU ratified the Istanbul Convention in 2023, signalling a significant step forward for regional coherence on this issue. It also adopted the Violence against Women Directive, the Victims' Rights Directive, the Digital Services Act, and the General Data Protection Regulation, reflecting the multi-layered nature of the European legal landscape in tackling TFVAWG. These instruments serve to protect victims, ensure platform accountability, regulate the processing of personal data in the context of online abuse, and harmonise minimum standards of criminalisation and support across member states.

About the HELP course

The HELP short course on **Technology-facilitated Violence against Women and Girls** aims to support legal professionals and other relevant stakeholders understand the current challenges and developments in the field and identify and apply existing legal standards.

The course explores the definitions and occurrence of TFVAWG, unpacking the various types of harm, the relationship of these acts with human rights and gender stereotypes, and the ways in which technological development shapes and exacerbates these phenomena. Particular attention is paid to the continuum of violence against women, emphasising the disproportionate effect on women with additional vulnerabilities or intersectional identities, and the central role of gendered power dynamics.

The course also provides a structured overview of the principal international and European legal instruments that underpin the response to TFVAWG, and information about how they are being implemented in practice across Europe and beyond. It includes recent case-law of the European courts (the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union), as well as the EU and CoE legislative and policy frameworks.

The HELP course was developed **in 2025-26,** by the Council of Europe Gender Equality Division (in the framework of the project on "*Combating digital and sexual violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina*" and the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme of the Council of Europe (in the framework of the *EU-CoE HELP in the EU IV Project*). It has been tailored **to meet the learning needs of legal and other relevant professionals working to end violence against women.**

Target audience

This free online short course is primarily addressed to **legal professionals**:

- judges (particularly those working in civil and criminal law)
- prosecutors
- lawyers
- court staff

The course is designed also for professionals working in the field of gender-based violence, including experts involved in judicial proceedings, as well as professionals engaged in the victim protection system. The course can benefit staff of national human rights institutions, equality bodies and civil society organisations.

Finally, it is open to anyone interested in the topic, such as students and other professionals wishing to strengthen their knowledge of women's rights in the digital environment.

Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals

COURSE BRIEF

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Course outline

	Introduction • About the course • For whom and by whom • Learning objectives • Resources • Course structure
1	**Definitions and consequences** • Learning objectives • Definitions • Types of violence • Consequences • Key points and knowledge check
2	**International and European legal frameworks** • Learning objectives • Council of Europe • European Union • United Nations • Key points and knowledge check
3	**Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls through the justice chain** • Learning objectives • Irene's case • Justice chain considerations • Stakeholder considerations • Key points and knowledge check

How to access the HELP online module

This short course is freely available in self-learning format on the CoE HELP e-learning platform. It has a total length of **three hours and fifteen minutes** and participants who complete it in self-learning format can obtain an electronic '**Statement of accomplishment**'.

To access the course, you need to have a HELP account. If you haven't created one yet, you can sign up **here** - it only takes a few minutes.

