**Council of Europe - HELP Course launch: Ethics for** **Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**



**Launch Date: 25 January 2024**

**Duration: 6 weeks**

**Format: online tutored course**

**Open to: lawyers from Bulgaria**

**Language: English (launch event); Bulgarian (course implementation)**

**Council of Europe HELP Certificates delivered for successful participants**

**Organised under EU-CoE HELP EU III Project in cooperation with the CCBE**

Participation in this training contributes to the goal set by **EU Judicial Training Strategy** in training legal professionals, including lawyers, on EU law, by 2024; lawyers are therefore warmly encouraged to participate.

**Launch of the HELP course on**

**Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**

***Concept paper and Agenda***

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| **Date** | 25 January 2024 |
| **Location** | onlineLink:  |
| **Language** | English/Bulgarian |
| **Participation** | Lawyers from Bulgaria |
| **Registration** | Via the procedure and by the deadline indicated in the call  |

**Background**

The **Council of Europe (CoE) Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)[[1]](#footnote-2)** is aimed at supporting the CoE member States in implementing the European human rights standards at the national level, focusing on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), other key CoE instruments, and since 2015, EU law. This is done by raising the capacities of legal professionals to apply those instruments in their daily work.

The objective of HELP is to provide high quality education on human rights to judges, lawyers and prosecutors throughout Europe. Law enforcement authorities such as police and prison staff are also targeted by HELP. Thanks to HELP courses, legal professionals can better protect human rights on a national level and keep up to date with the ever-evolving standards and case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). HELP courses specifically designed for EU countries increasingly incorporate relevant EU laws.

HELP is:

1. the only pan-European Network of national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in the 46 CoE Member States.

2. an e-learning platform with free on-line courses on human rights.

3. a human rights training methodology for legal professionals.

**The EU-CoE HELP “Judicial Training on Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights” Project (RoL Frights)**

The joint EU-CoE HELP Judicial Training on Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Project is funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020) and implemented by the CoE from November 2022 to November 2024.

The objective of this EU-CoE Project is to contribute to the effective and coherent application of European law in the areas of rule of law, criminal law and fundamental rights, as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the European Convention on Human Rights. To achieve this objective, it is intended to strengthen the capacity of EU justice institutions (multipliers) and the knowledge and skills of justice professionals. In addition, the project aims to strengthen the HELP network in the EU and the capacity of network members to effectively implement the HELP methodology and courses.

**The HELP course on Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers**

The state of **rule of law** is an increasing concern in respect of many European countries. In recent years concerted efforts have been made at European level to prevent degradation of the rule of law through measures aimed at the well-functioning of national justice systems. Judges, prosecutors, and lawyers occupy a critical and sensitive place in society; the way they conduct themselves directly impacts on **public confidence and on the administration of justice**. Therefore, they have a duty to maintain the highest of ethical behavior. There are international standards providing guidance on ethical conduct and on the core principles of these professions. **Independence, impartiality and integrity underpin the rule of law** in a healthy democracy and guarantee the protection of human rights.

The HELP online course covers in an interactive way the key concepts and principles, the **International and European (CoE and EU) framework** as well as the relevant **case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)**. It is aimed at deepening the knowledge and understanding of professional tools and at developing reflective skills, based on practical examples, to address ethical dilemmas in the performance of professional duties.

This course is thought to help professionals understand the **purpose and importance of ethics in the administration of justice** for the benefit of the people, allowing to identify key **concepts** and understand common **values**, ethical **principles** and **virtues**.

The online course has been developed in 2020-21 by the Council of Europe HELP Programme under the EU-CoE “HELP in the EU II” project, in cooperation with several Council of Europe entities/services such as the Secretariats of the Venice Commission, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) and the Consultative Councils of European Judges and Prosecutors (CCJE and CCPE) as well as the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights. It also involved representatives of the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) and the Council of Bars and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE).

The course consists of **2 general modules** on Introduction, and International and European Framework, as well as **3 specific modules** for judges, prosecutors and lawyers, respectively.

The 2 general modules and the module for lawyers will be mandatory, while the modules dedicated to judges and prosecutors will be accessible, but not mandatory for the successful completion of the tutored course.

**Introduction**

• Why does professional ethics matter?

• Common values and principles

• Key concepts

• Distinction between ethical principles and disciplinary rules

**International and European Framework**

• Treaty norms

• United Nations

• Council of Europe

• European Union

• Professional bodies

• Instruments of international courts

**Ethics for Judges**

• Main principles

• Qualities and virtues

• Tools

• Practical examples

**Ethics for Prosecutors**

• Main principles

• Relation with the media

• Tools

**Ethics for Lawyers**

• General principles

• Relation with other parties

• Values

• Tools

• Practical examples

**The online launch**

The activity is organised in cooperation with the Bulgarian Bar Association. The **launch event will be held online**, **by web conference**. Its main goal is to introduce participants to the HELP platform and the course pages on the national group of participants will follow the course with the assistance of a national tutor. Moreover, the launch will include a presentation on the topic, given by a case-processing lawyer from the European Court of Human Rights, aimed at providing the participants with background information.

The working languages of the launch event will be English and Bulgarian. The working language of the tutored course will be Bulgarian. Selected participants will receive from the HELP Secretariat a link allowing them to access the web-conference, based on which they can follow the event on their computer or mobile devices (tablet/smartphone).

**The course preparation and implementation**

Before the online launch event, participants should create an account on the [HELP e-learning platform](http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/)

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| *For creating your HELP account, please follow these steps:*Play*- go to this link and fill in the form (it takes about 2 mins):* [*https://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php*](https://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php%20) *- once submitted, you will receive an activation link on the email you used for creating the account**- go to your email inbox and click on the link to activate your account.* |

During the launch event, the participants will be registered on their course page, prepared in advance by their respective national tutors. Over the following weeks and based on the planning set by the tutors, the participants will go through the **online course,** complemented by the additional materials and resources prepared by their respective national tutors.

The participants who have successfully completed the course and passed the evaluation set by the tutors will receive **certificates issued by the HELP Programme of the Council of Europe**.

**Registration**

Interested participants should:

* be available to **attend the launch event**
* undertake to **follow and complete the online tutored course** in the following 6 weeks (approx. 1-2 hours of work per week)
* **register** for the event through their national institution
* **have the necessary knowledge of English** to follow the launch event
* have a laptop/tablet/smartphone available for accessing the HELP e-learning platform.

**Further information**

For any information, do not hesitate to **contact the project team**:

Content related issues, speakers, agenda:

* Giulia Lo Presti - Project Coordinator (giulia.lo-presti@coe.int)
* Tomislav Toshkov – HELP Info Point for the Bulgarian Bar Association

Organisational and administrative issues:

* Stephanie Denton – HELP main Assistant (stephanie.denton@coe.int)

**Agenda – 25 January 2024** (Bulgarian time)

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| --- | --- |
| 12:45 - 13:00 | Online registration of participantsLink :  |
| 13.00 – 13.10 | **Welcome address***Mr Ivaylo Dermendzhiev, President of the Supreme Bar Council* *Representative HELP secretariat TBC* |
| 13.10 – 13.45 | **Presentation of the HELP Programme****Presentation of the HELP platform and walk through***Ana-Maria Telbis/Oana Girlescu, HELP Programme, Council of Europe* |
| 13.45-14.30 | **The importance of ethics in preserving independency and impartiality of the judiciary – topic TBC***Judge– TBC* |
| 14.30-14.45  | **Break**  |
| 14.45-15.20 | **The importance of ethics in preserving the rule of law – the perspective of the ECHR** *- TBC**Radoslav Dimov, Senior lawyer at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights – TBC* |
| 15.20-16.00 | **Presentation of the HELP course on Ethics for Judges, Prosecutors and Lawyers****The implementation of the national course: tour de table and sharing of expectations, presentation of the national page, planning, evaluation***Eli Hristova, HELP national Tutor*  |
| 16.00 – 16.15 | **Q/A session, conclusions and closure** |

*\*Agenda may be subject to change*

1. For more information on HELP please visit HELP’s website: [www.coe.int/help](http://www.coe.int/help) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)