

Council of Europe/EJTN International seminar and HELP course launch – Judges Upholding the Rule of Law



JUDGES UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW

HELP
Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
Council of Europe

ejtn

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Seminar date: 27-28 May 2025

Course duration: 2 months

**Format: international seminar followed
by online tutored course**

Open to: judges and prosecutors from EU MS

Language: English

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

**Organised by the Council of Europe in cooperation with
the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN)**

Participation in this training contributes to the goal set by EU **Judicial Training Strategy** of training legal professionals, on EU law, by 2024.

International Seminar and HELP course Launch

Judges Upholding the Rule of Law

Concept paper and Agenda

Date	27-28 May 2025
Location	Room G02, AGORA (Strasbourg, France)
Language	English
Participation	Judges and prosecutors from EU MS

Background

The **Council of Europe (CoE) Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)**¹ supports the CoE member states in implementing European human rights standards at the national level, focusing on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the European Social Charter, other key CoE instruments, and, since 2015, relevant EU legal framework. This is done by raising the capacities of professionals to apply those instruments in their daily work.

The objective of HELP is to provide high quality education on human rights to judges, prosecutors and lawyers throughout Europe, and beyond. Law enforcement authorities such as police and prison staff may also be 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 Courts: the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the EU. HELP courses specifically designed for EU countries increasingly incorporate relevant EU legal content.

HELP's three pillars are:

1. A European **Network** of national training institutions for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in the 46 CoE member states, and beyond.
2. **Free online courses on human rights** hosted on an e-learning platform.
3. A human rights **training methodology** for (mainly) legal professionals.

The **European Judicial Training Network (EJTN)**² brings together judicial training institutions from all EU member states to pursue an aim of general European interest: developing and implementing training and exchange activities for members of the European judiciary. These activities cover both initial and continuous training/ EJTN's fields of interest include EU, civil, criminal and commercial law and linguistics and societal issues training. The vision of EJTN is to help to foster a common legal and judicial European culture.

EJTN develops training standards and curricula, coordinates judicial training exchanges and programmes, disseminates training expertise and promotes cooperation between EU judicial training institutions.

¹ For more information on HELP please visit HELP's website: www.coe.int/help

² For more information on EJTN please visit EJTN's website: [About us - EJTN](http://www.ejtn.eu)

EJTN's mandate is to help build a genuine European area of justice and to promote knowledge of legal systems, thereby enhancing the understanding, confidence and cooperation between judges and prosecutors within EU states.

The EU-CoE HELP in the EU IV Project

The EU-CoE 'Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals in the European Union IV' Project (HELP in the EU IV) is funded by the EU and implemented by the CoE from 1 November 2024 to 31 March 2025. Its overall objective is to **promote the digitalisation of national justice systems** and to **contribute to the effective and coherent application of European standards** in selected areas of fundamental rights, including non-discrimination, equality, and the rule of law, civil law and criminal law, as enshrined in both the CoE and EU systems and frameworks. The promotion of digitalisation will be done through training aimed at building the 'digital capacity' of justice/legal professionals on substantive law, digital procedures and digital tools.

The project aims to enhance EU MS justice professionals' capacities (knowledge and skills) in priority topics, in line with the principles lined out in the Council of Europe's [Reykjavik Declaration - United around our values](#), through the **implementation of HELP courses and networking seminars for justice professionals**, in a format aimed at preparing them to embrace digitalisation and the use of new technologies in the learning process. The Project will make use of the already developed HELP courses, will enhance the EU dimension and the CoE-EU interplay when updating courses and will develop new training material. The Project also aims to **strengthen the HELP Network in the EU**, as well as the capacity of the Network members **to effectively implement the HELP methodology and courses** and contribute to **increasing mutual trust and exchanges between EU practitioners**.

The International Seminar

The seminar will provide a comprehensive overview of the relevant standards, case law and good practices, stemming from the CoE and the EU frameworks. It aims also to create a forum for practical exchange among judges and prosecutors on principles, best practice and challenges. The theme will be examined from the perspective of the human rights protection and the impact on the rule of law and will address connections with the judicial accountability and ethics, performance and transparency. In order to deepen their discussions and follow up on the exchanges, the group of participants will continue with the implementation of the HELP course on Judges Upholding the Rule of law, tutored by designated HELP tutors.

The **seminar will be held in Strasbourg, France**. The travel and accommodation of participants will be covered by the Council of Europe. The event will include a series of presentations, aimed at providing the participants with background information and motivate them to follow the course. The working language will be **English**.

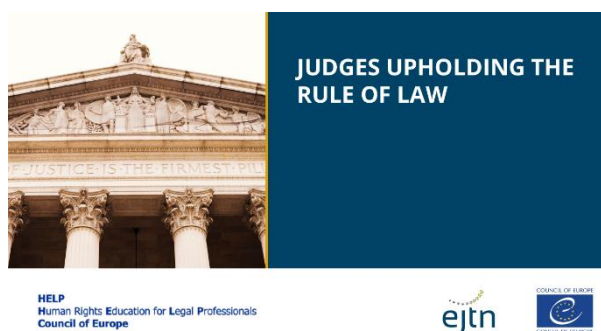
The seminar will be attended by two separate groups:

- A group of judges and prosecutors from Slovenia
- An international group of judges and prosecutors from EU member states

The HELP/EJTN course on Judges Upholding the Rule of Law

The **rule of law is a fundamental value** in the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE) and **judges are crucial in upholding it both at the national level and across the continent**. To foster a common judicial culture, promote judicial independence, and ensure the efficient and ethical administration of justice, it is vital to enhance dialogue and shared understanding among European judges.

Building upon the 2021 Council of the EU Conclusions "Boosting Training of Justice Professionals", the European Commission entrusted the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) with organising a forum to foster dialogue among judges, facilitating exchanges on topics related to the rule of law as well as the integrity, accountability, and independence of the judiciary. The first such forum took place in 2022, being followed by the EJTN 2023 judges@europe forum.



This 2023 forum, hosted by the Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, gathered more than 80 judges and experts from key institutions, bodies and associations at the EU level. The diverse sessions and workshops focused on the good administration of justice from three different angles, all of which relate to the rule of law: accountability through disciplinary and liability regimes; accountability through performance and performance control; and accountability through transparency.

The HELP course on Judges Upholding the Rule of Law was born from the commitment of the Council of Europe and the EJTN to share with a broader audience the expertise, insights, and outcomes from the EJTN 2023 judges@europe forum. This course aims at promoting and enhancing the dialogue among judges on the rule of law and the development of a common judicial culture in Europe. Furthermore, the course strengthens the shared understanding of key aspects of the rule of law and judicial independence as well as the good administration of justice and increased demand for judges' accountability in the digital era.

This HELP course was developed in 2024 by the Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) Programme of the Council of Europe, in close cooperation with the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN). Elaborated using the HELP methodology, the course explores different topics in a practical way by using presentations, interactive screens, knowledge tests and reflective exercises, enabling the users to apply the gained knowledge and skills.

Course outline

The course has an introductory module and 3 substantive modules:

0	Introductory module <ul style="list-style-type: none">• About the course• For whom and by whom• Learning objectives• Resources• Structure
1	Judicial Accountability and Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judicial ethics• Discipline vs judicial ethics• Disciplinary regimes• Judicial immunity
2	Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital tools in the administration of justice• Judicial leaders and judicial management• Judicial time management• AI and efficiency
3	Transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judicial associations• AI and open data in justice• Freedom of expression of judicial officers• Privacy and declarations of interest

The course preparation and implementation

Before the event, participants should create an account on the [HELP e-learning platform](https://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php)

For creating your HELP account, please follow these steps:

- go to this link and fill in the form (it takes about 2 mins):
<https://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/login/signup.php>
- 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.

VIDEO TUTORIAL
how to create a HELP account

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

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 and the EJTN**.

Registration

Interested participants should:

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

Selected participants will be contacted the HELP team for arranging their travel and providing the necessary information about the event.

Further information

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

Content related issues, speakers, agenda: Oana Gîrlescu – Project Coordinator (oana.girlescu@coe.int)

Organisational and administrative issues: Blandine Tello (blandine.tello@coe.int)

International seminar and launch of the HELP-EJTN course on Judges Upholding the Rule of Law Agenda (27-28 May 2025)

Tuesday, 27 May 2025	
08.45-09.00	Registration of participants
09.00-09.15	Welcome address <i>Ana Maria Telbis, Head of the Justice and Human Rights Training Division, Council of Europe</i> <i>Miodrag Đorđević, HELP Focal Point for Slovenia and President of the Supreme Court of Slovenia</i>
09.15-10.00	Getting to know each other – tour de table and sharing of expectations The HELP Programme -presentation and walk-through <i>Oana Gîrlescu, EU-CoE 'HELP in the EU IV,' Project Coordinator, Council of Europe</i>
10.00-11.00	CEPEJ's work on Justice and AI, open data and digital tools <i>Daniel Schmidt, European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), Council of Europe (TBC)</i>
11.00-11.30	Break (Group photo)
11.30-12.30	The Danileț v. Romania (16915/21) case (pending before the European Court of Human Rights) <i>Oana Gîrlescu, EU-CoE 'HELP in the EU IV,' Project Coordinator, Council of Europe</i>
12.30-14.00	Lunch break
14.00-16.30	Visit to the European Court of Human Rights TBD <i>TBC</i>
16.30 – 17.00	Q/A session, conclusions and closure of the first day
19.00- 21.00	Dinner <i>TBC</i>

Wednesday, 28 May 2025	
09.00-09.15	Opening of the day <i>Oana Gîrlescu, EU-CoE 'HELP in the EU IV,' Project Coordinator, Council of Europe</i>
10.00-10.45	TBD <i>TBC</i>
10.45-11.00	Break
11.00-11.45	TBD <i>TBC</i>
11.45-12.45	Presentation of the HELP course on Judges Upholding the Rule of Law The implementation of the online course: course page, planning, evaluation Q/A session, conclusions and closure <i>Masa Butenko, HELP tutor for the group from Slovenia</i> <i>Gianluca Grasso and Evgenia Papadopoulou, HELP tutors for the international group</i>

**Agenda may be subject to change*