

PROJECT TITLE:	Expanding the Accessibility of the Méndez Principles: Piloting Translation and Dissemination Processes Across COST Country Languages
PROJECT LEAD:	Valentina Cadelo
<p>This pilot project aims to translate and disseminate the Méndez Principles into five additional COST languages: Albanian, Italian, Lithuanian, Romanian, and Polish.</p> <p>This project will extend the reach of the Méndez Principles across nine countries, including Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Italy, Switzerland, Lithuania, Romania, Moldova, and Poland, with potential applications in Kosovo. The Méndez Principles provide practical guidance for effective interviews in criminal investigations and information gathering processes, but significant language gaps limit their accessibility. This initiative addresses those gaps by making the Principles available in key national languages, facilitating their dissemination and use.</p> <p>Key activities include professional translations, and terminology workshops to ensure accuracy and cultural relevance. The workshops will also foster collaboration among practitioners and other stakeholders, aiding national outreach and understanding. Expected outcomes include strengthened networking among COST members, the creation of a glossary of key terms and concepts to support future translations and implementation initiatives and activities, and the development of a systematic translation process for future use. The project is set to run for 12-18 months, ensuring effective dissemination and implementation of the Méndez Principles across the COST countries.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	From Conflict to Courtroom: Embedding the Mendez Principles in Eastern European Investigations of War Crimes
PROJECT LEAD:	Eva Veldhuizen Ochodničanová
<p>"From Conflict to Courtroom: Embedding the Mendez Principles in Eastern European Investigations of War Crimes," aims to integrate the Mendez Principles into the investigative practices of Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania, focusing on cases involving Ukrainian child victims of war crimes.</p> <p>The initiative begins with a comprehensive needs mapping exercise, involving desk reviews and interviews with key stakeholders across the four countries. This will identify current gaps and barriers in the implementation of the Mendez Principles.</p> <p>Based on the findings, country-specific training materials will be developed and disseminated through a series of training schools. These schools will address biases, provide an overview of best practices in investigative interviewing, and offer practical, simulation-based training. The project will culminate in an international dialogue session, where participants will share experiences and assess the uptake of the Mendez Principles in their practices.</p> <p>Through these activities, the project seeks to enhance the ethical standards and effectiveness of war crime investigations, aligning them with international human rights norms. Outputs will include national reports, training manuals, and trained professionals equipped to apply the Mendez Principles in real-world contexts.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	The Vulnerable Accused Conference
PROJECT LEAD:	Roxanna Dehaghani
<p>The conference aims to bring academics, practitioners, policymakers and people with lived experience together across several intersecting disciplines (law, criminology, disability studies, speech and language therapy, psychology, psychiatry, and medicine) and sectors (e.g., police, prosecution, the judiciary, criminal justice policy). Proposed workshops will complement the work of WG3 and include: the effective identification of vulnerability and the resources available for identification; (competing and often contradictory) definitions of vulnerability; and the existence and operation of safeguards for the vulnerable accused.</p> <p>With COST funding we will be able to offer funded places for around 20 ImpleMendez members to present their work to an inter-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, and multi-jurisdictional audience. The conference will involve opportunities to network. Presenters will be strongly encouraged to submit an extended abstract for dissemination in advance of the conference. We also encourage expressions of interest from presenters to publish in a special issue. The conference is being co-funded by Cardiff University Centre for Law and Society. Further information on activities and funding will be announced in due course. Key dates for COST members include: call for papers (anticipated early 2025), registration (anticipated Spring 2025), and conference (anticipated September 2025).</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Promoting the Implementation of the Mendez Principles by Identifying Enablers and Barriers to Effective Investigative Interviewing
PROJECT LEAD:	Shiri Portnoy
<p>Aims/objectives: This project will identify factors that prevent investigative interviewers from using effective interview methods and those that promote the use of such methods, and explore practitioners' decision making when attempting to overcome barriers. Such knowledge is crucial for planning strategies to address challenges and promote effective interviewing methods.</p> <p>By the end of the project, we aim to produce (1) reports for external stakeholders detailing our findings and providing recommendations for effective interviewing; (2) a questionnaire aimed at identifying enablers and barriers to effective interviewing; and (3) an ImpleMéndez World-Café (IWC; see https://theworldcafe.com/) toolkit for future activities aimed at the implementation of the Méndez Principles (MP).</p> <p>Key activities proposed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold IWC networking events in Sweden and Scotland to gain knowledge on barriers and enablers that investigative interviewers from those countries encounter when attempting to conduct interviews in accordance with the MP. 2. Development (based on the IWC data) and dissemination of a questionnaire to survey additional investigative interviewing practitioners on enablers and barriers to implementing effective interviewing. <p>Partners: Practitioners involved in investigative interviewing (i.e., police officers, interviewing trainers, and social workers) from Sweden, Scotland, and Brazil.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	From Principles to Practice: Achieving Bias-Free Investigative Interviewing through Méndez Principles Training and Guidance
PROJECT LEAD:	Rashid Minhas
<p>This project aims to develop and implement bias-free investigative interviewing techniques based on the Méndez Principles to reduce implicit biases and prejudicial stereotyping in police interviews. Spanning two years, the project will focus on knowledge sharing and guide development in the first year, followed by training materials and workshops in the second year.</p> <p>Key activities include creating a bias-free interviewing guide, conducting training schools, and offering hands-on workshops for external stakeholders. External partners include law enforcement bodies from Romania, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Brazil, and Malaysia.</p> <p>The project will be implemented from 2024 to 2026, aiming to improve interview integrity, reduce wrongful convictions, and build trust in the justice system through ethical interviewing and interrogation practices.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Best practice guidance: Investigative interviewing of human trafficking victims
PROJECT LEAD:	Laura Pajon
<p>The project aims to enhance practices and promote the implementation of the Mendez principles when interviewing victims of human trafficking across Europe and beyond by conducting in-person events within targeted countries and producing best-practice guidance for interviewing human trafficking victims.</p> <p>Between November 2024 and August 2025, in-person events will be conducted in seven European countries. Those events will consist of a mix of training activities and focus group discussions, aiming to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance interviewing practices (and promote Mendez principles' implementation) in the context of trafficking and exploitation.• Promote networking among practitioners, policy leads and researchers.• Gather empirical evidence on a) current practices when interviewing victims of trafficking (and to what extent the Mendez principles are being implemented), b) challenges experienced when interviewing human trafficking victims, and c) best practices. <p>From October 2025 onwards, the project's activities will centre on co-producing and disseminating the best-practice guidance for interviewing human trafficking victims. The Mendez principles, empirical/academic evidence on human trafficking investigative interviewing practices, and findings from the in-person events will inform the best-practice guidance. The guidance will be disseminated (and its implementation promoted) via webinars, press releases, and in-person seminars and roundtables in targeted countries (specifically focusing on ITC countries).</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Establishing a Mendez Center in Moldova/Romania
PROJECT LEAD:	Luminita Diaconu
<p>The proposed project aims to establish Méndez Centers in Romania, Moldova, and possibly Ukraine to address the high number of convictions and cases at the European Court of Justice from these countries. The centers will provide training, resources, and access to good practices in investigative interviewing, targeting final-year students, MA students, and early-career police officers. Hosted by the Academy of Police in Chisinau and Spiru Haret University in Bucharest, the centers will promote the Méndez Principles, aiming to improve the quality of police interviews and prevent errors in interviewing suspects and witnesses.</p> <p>The project will develop a comprehensive training program and resource repository, including guidelines, case studies, and best practices. It will also foster international collaboration, engaging researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from Moldova, Romania, and beyond. Workshops and conferences will be organized with key stakeholders, including the criminal justice system and third-sector organizations.</p> <p>The methodology includes researching current investigative practices, developing training programs, and facilitating international collaboration. An evaluation framework will monitor the project's impact, while mentorship and joint research projects will support skill development.</p> <p>Key outcomes include raising awareness of the Méndez Principles, establishing Méndez Centers, improving interview quality, and creating a resource repository. The project will contribute to long-term improvements in interviewing practices, with sustainability ensured through resource development, including a manual on investigative interviewing and public awareness campaigns.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Bridging Linguistic and Cultural Divides: Advancing Investigative Interviewing through Multilingual Translation and Implementation
PROJECT LEAD:	Rebecca Tipton
<p>This project brings together experts in terminology, forensic linguistics, translation, psychology, and representatives of police and law enforcement agencies to co-develop a multilingual database in a set of prioritised languages. The database will focus on terminology and phraseology relating to investigative interviewing practices shaped by the Mendez Principles. The objective is to identify the most suitable translation equivalents for key terminology and ensure consistency of practice across diverse linguistic, cultural, and legal contexts.</p> <p>The database will be accompanied by information on country-specific factors impacting the implementation of best practice, which will be tested and disseminated via the Interviewing Training Schools that are planned as part of the wider COST Action. Translators and police and law enforcement representatives will benefit from capacity building at both a conceptual and operational level, reducing potential misconceptions of the Mendez Principles. Wider social benefits include enhanced public trust in effective investigative interviewing.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Child interviewing and Mendez Principles CIMP
PROJECT LEAD:	Francesco Pompedda
<p>The project aims to promote the implementation of the Mendez principles and evidence-based investigative interviews of children by designing and delivering tailored training on a chosen topic in investigative interviews of children by the third party.</p> <p>The training school will be structured in two consecutive parts. The first part will aim to understand better the state of the implementation of Mendez principles and obstacles for potential implementation in specific countries. The second part will aim to combine Mendez principles and evidence-based investigative interview practice on child interviews. The delivery of the training school will be interactive and aim to draw attention to, and sensitise the participants around the Mendez principles with a focus on some principles (e.g., on practice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim to create materials (e.g., written and/or audiovisual), and we will also aim to translate the written materials into the local language.• We aim to evaluate the impact of the training on the practitioners• We aim to produce an article based on our evaluation and to create a policy brief specific to the country.• We aim to share the findings of our evaluation at international conferences.	

PROJECT TITLE:	Establishing a Méndez Centre for Effective Interviewing in German Speaking Countries
PROJECT LEAD:	Lennart May
<p>The main goal of this Méndez Centre for Effective Interviewing is to promote effective interviewing in the practice across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. This centre will create an interdisciplinary ecosystem uniting professionals from law enforcement, the justice system, intelligence services, politics and research. The centre will conduct relevant research at a high international level, and organize consultations with decision-makers and trainers (e.g. for restructuring training curriculum), along with training for multipliers. Other key objectives include providing frameworks for investigative transformation, offering region-specific training materials of effective interviewing, and generating international research insights to address language barriers.</p> <p>The project will begin in October 2024 and is planned over four years to involve collaboration with professionals in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Central activities include an identification of strategic partners and the creation of a structure to promote the implementation of the Méndez Principles in the mid and long term. Therefore, we plan to hold one event in Switzerland (for persons working in law enforcement) and Germany (for decision-makers from the justice system and university professors) in summer/fall in Year 2 of ImpleMéndez. Initial consultations have been held with police (academies), judges, public prosecutors and law professors. In general, conferences, workshops, and collaboration with international experts (e.g. UK, Norway) will help to achieve these goals and strengthen international ties.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Implementing the Mendéz principles in Finland
PROJECT LEAD:	Hanna Lahtinen
<p>The project aims to organize a training school in Finland in September, 2025, to introduce the Mendez Principles and evidence-based investigative interviewing methods to key practitioners and stakeholders. The training school, held at the Police University College in Tampere, will gather detective chief inspectors, team leaders from police districts, key prosecutors, Police University College teachers and the Finnish ImpleMendez representatives together. The event will assess the current implementation of the Mendez Principles in Finland, identify areas needing change, and decide on next steps for promoting the Framework for Investigative Transformation. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to promote the principles locally and form a network of trainers in Finland. A follow-up meeting will be held in the coming years to evaluate progress.</p> <p>Another key component of the project is a survey conducted before the training to gather data on current investigative interviewing practices in Finland. This will inform further efforts to promote the framework. Results will be presented during the training and published later as a report/article and a policy brief document with recommendations for improving investigative interviewing practices in Finland.</p> <p>The project is supported by the National Police Board and the Police University College, which will provide facilities for the event.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Advancing Investigative Interviewing: Training School & Launch of the Portuguese Méndez Centre for Effective Interviewing
PROJECT LEAD:	Paulo Marques
<p>This project is designed to empower criminal justice professionals—criminal investigators, prosecutors, and judges—by equipping them with the skills needed to implement the Méndez Principles through an evidence-based investigative interviewing framework. In a country where expertise in these critical skills is still developing, this initiative aims to foster real, lasting change. The highlight of the project is a hands-on training school on interviewing vulnerable individuals, including witnesses, victims, and suspects. Designed in a "train the trainers" format, participants will not only develop their own interviewing competencies but will also be empowered to pass on this knowledge, helping to reshape institutional practices and policies.</p> <p>The event, held at the Portuguese Criminal Investigation Police headquarters in Lisbon, will also feature the official launch of the Portuguese Méndez Centre for Effective Interviewing and a dedicated workshop focused on best practices for interviewing victims of human trafficking.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Irish Mendez Centre for Investigative Interviewing
PROJECT LEAD:	Yvonne Daly
<p>Professor Yvonne Daly (Dublin City University, Ireland) and Dr Alan Cusack (University of Limerick, Ireland) have recently launched the Irish Mendez Centre for Investigative Interviewing, and will host several events in the course of 2024/2025. The Centre will work towards increased implementation of the Mendez Principles through organising training and information events, providing relevant public commentary and engaging in research with a variety of stakeholders. The Irish Mendez Centre will also engage regularly with other established Mendez Centres and with colleagues across the ImpleMendez Action, in order to build the network, share best practice, and ultimately assist in the implementation of the Mendez Principles across jurisdictions.</p> <p>Future plans include the creation of an online repository on investigative interviewing; an “Introduction to the Mendez Principles” workshop for those involved in investigative interviewing in organisations other than the police; a workshop for An Garda Síochána on interviewing child victims of serious crime; and training for lawyers on the Mendez Principles and their role in upholding procedural and legal safeguards.</p>	

PROJECT TITLE:	Spanish Méndez training school
PROJECT LEAD:	Maria Gomez-Bedoya
<p>This training school aims at providing the training for the implementation of the Mendez Principles for Investigative Transformation in Spain by assisting the Spanish investigative science with concrete, research-informed techniques and tools that will ensure fairness and effectiveness of investigation and intelligence gathering processes in Spanish policing contexts.</p> <p>The focus is on language and communication issues in policing that were empirically attested (in real-life data or experimental elicitations with police investigators and police interpreters). The goal is to reach stakeholders involved in decision making positions in the Spanish law enforcement, and enable them to understand the rationale behind the Mendez Principles (Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering) fully and clearly and to acquire linguistic and communicative strategies for implementing the Principles in a variety of real-life situations, in both monolingual and multilingual police investigations. The training will provide invaluable illustrations of both good and bad practice, and crucially a first-hand insight of what the dangers are when the Mendez Principles ARE NOT adhered to. The training sessions will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Complexities in investigative communication: Complex questions and statements, meta-communication (i.e. communication about previous communication) and miscommunication (intentional vs. accidental).b) Effects of empathy, politeness and cross-linguistic challenges on rapport-building, maintenance and interview outcomes.c) Problems in translation due to lack of adequate terms, structure or cultural mapping and how to deal with them in real time, during investigative interviews.	