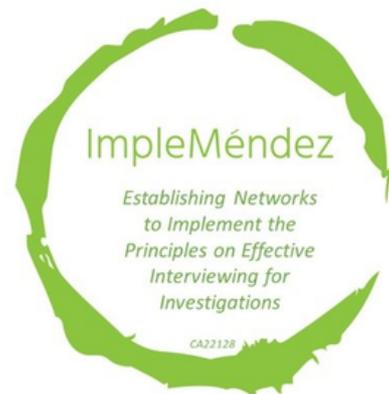


THE ImpleMéndez newsletter



WELCOME TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE
IMPLEMÉNDEZ NEWSLETTER OF 2026!

Your ImpleMéndez Core Management (CM) group

Chair

Dave Walsh

Vice-Chair

Yvonne Daly

Special coordinators

Science Communication Co-ordinator

Kristjan Kask

Grant awarding co-ordinator

Ivar Fahsing

WG1

Investigation and Interviewing

Leader: Lennart May

Co-leaders: Linda Geven, Telma Sousa

Almeida, Becky Milne and Miet Vanderhallen

WG2

Law, Human Rights, Criminal Justice

Leader: Anželika Banevičienė

Co-leaders: Zeynep Reva, Denis Solodov and Ondřej Pavelek

WG3

Vulnerability

Leader: Lore Mergaerts

Co-leaders: Hanna Lahtinen and Laura Pajon

WG4

Institutional and Governmental Leadership

Leader: Vasylyna Yavorska

Co-leaders: Martijn van Beek, Ólafur Bragason and Monty Mountford

A round-up of ImpleMéndez activity and developments in February

- In February, ImpleMéndez hit a landmark of recruiting its **400th member**. This is more than double the average of other COST Actions and represents over 450% growth in membership since we started in October 2023!
- A training curriculum network meeting was held, which was another important step towards the completion of this project and the production of a generic curriculum for members to use. This network has a face-to-face meeting in March in Krakow, and it is expected that soon afterwards the training curriculum will be made available.
- Also in February, three of our members were awarded Short-Term Scientific Mission Grants. Congratulations to Emek Yuce Zeyrek Rios (who will be undertaking her STSM in Turkiye), Ferid Azemi (whose STSM is in Finland) and Jenny Skrifvars (visiting the UK for her STSM). Many thanks also to the three hosts in those countries for availing themselves of this role. We look forward to hearing about progress here!
- As many of you know, the application deadline for conference grants expires on 27th February. Late applications will be discounted. The panel sits on 6th March, and it is expected that applicants for these

grants will be notified very soon afterwards.

- One of our new Méndez Centres (Méndez Asia-Pacific Centre for Investigative Interviewing or MAPCII) held its first meeting since its commencement, and continues to plan for its official launch.
- Finally, the response to Kristjan Kask's call for interest in the ImpléMendez book. He received expressions of interest from members in over 40 countries! Please bear in mind that the short summary documents have a deadline of 2nd March. We are working on tight deadlines and for those chapters selected for the book, please be aware that soon afterwards we will ask for a 250-word abstract (a tight deadline there too!). Please be aware that it is important to meet these deadlines, as delays hold up the entire book project.

Webinars and meetings in February

WG1 Online Meeting on 10 February 2026

Working Group 1 convened online with members from across the Action. We opened the meeting by welcoming new members and noting the continued growth of WG1, which now forms part of a network of over 400 members representing 60 countries. The meeting provided an overview of WG1 activities planned for 2026. These include two WG1 meetings (February and October) and a series of webinars addressing research developments and quality control in investigative interviewing training. Members were also updated on key collaborative activities linked to the iIRG masterclass on interviewing child suspects (July, Leuven) and the iIRG conference, which will feature WG1-linked symposia on biases and co-production. At COST Action level, we discussed ongoing contributions to the development of Méndez Centres in several regions, progress on White Papers (including deception detection and forensic linguistics in relation to the Méndez Principles), and upcoming webinars focusing on linguistic and cross-cultural aspects of investigative interviewing. Opportunities for Short-Term Scientific Missions, conference grants, and future training schools were also highlighted. The second part of the session was dedicated to member engagement. New members were invited to briefly introduce themselves, and all participants were encouraged to outline how they would like to collaborate within WG1 and how they hoped to benefit from the network.

WG2 Online Meeting on 9 February 2026

On 9 February, WG2 held an online meeting chaired by WG2 lead Anželika Banevičienė (Lithuania), bringing members together to discuss ongoing and future activities. The meeting began with a welcome to new WG2 members, who briefly introduced themselves. The group then discussed preparations for upcoming activities, including the Geneva conference and future webinars. Key topics included the role of lawyers as legal representatives of interviewees in implementing the Méndez Principles, as well as challenges in ensuring accountability (Principle 5). During the meeting, WG2 highlighted the launch of a small-scale survey assessing the implementation of Méndez Principle 5 – On Accountability. In the context of criminal investigations, Principle 5 requires that allegations of mistreatment, coercion, or other violations

during interviews or interrogations can be reported, independently examined, and remedied. Accessible complaint mechanisms are therefore essential to ensure oversight, accountability, and the prevention of abuse in practice.

The survey aims to evaluate how complaints regarding mistreatment during interviews, interrogations, and criminal investigations are handled in different countries. The results will inform the planning of a WG2 webinar focused on the “domestication” of Principle 5. If you would like to contribute, please complete a short Google Form (mainly closed questions, with only one open) [here!](#)

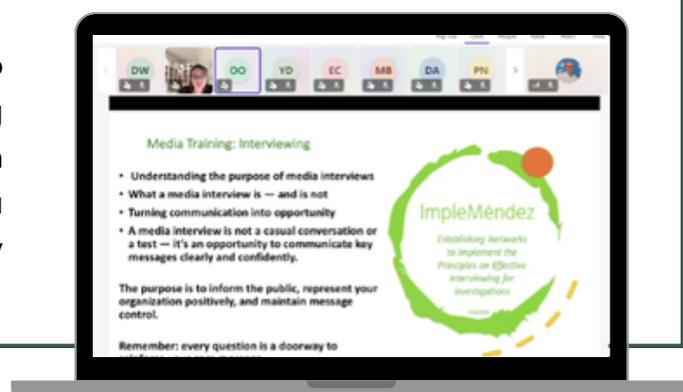
WG3 Online Meeting on 12 February 2026

The WG3 meeting took place on the 12th of February, welcoming 5 new WG3 members. Updates on current work within WG3 include the webinar delivered by Dr Francesco Pompemma on the 22nd of January on Child interviewing. A second webinar will take place in May (details to follow) and will focus on child suspect interviews. Key upcoming activities include the illRG masterclass on ‘Interviewing child suspects’ (July 6th-7th, Leuven). The next WG3 meeting will take place on 6th October 2026, 13:00 CET.

Undertaking Media Interviews on 3 February 2026

Three speakers—Özlem Özdemir and Elif Başak Sarioğlu (both from Turkey), and Martijn Van Beek (the Netherlands)—presented during the online training session. A total of 66 participants joined this webinar! Among the issues highlighted were the purpose of media interviews and their nature, the roles of the reporter and the newsmaker, and how to build mutual understanding, achieve success in transmitting the intended message and content, and handle difficult questions (Özlem Özdemir). Elif Başak Sarioğlu discussed the media paradox—namely, that high visibility does not necessarily lead to high understanding—as well as the components of high-quality listening, channels of communication, and practical steps to improve communication with the media.

Martijn Van Beek presented issues related to narrative. A short Q&A session followed, highlighting the issue of deliberate disinformation in connection with criminal investigations and the use of media provocations. The webinar was moderated by Natalija Orlić.

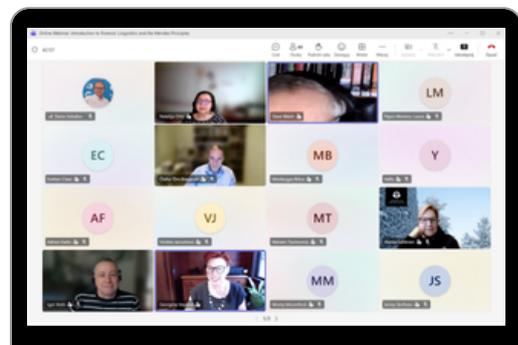


Online Webinar on Linguistic Strategies and the Méndez Principles on 11 February 2026

On 11 February 2026, more than 50 participants joined an online webinar dedicated to linguistic strategies in light of the Méndez Principles. The event brought together researchers and practitioners interested in forensic linguistics and investigative interviewing.

The webinar was delivered by our colleague professor Georgina Heydon (Australia), a well-known expert in forensic linguistics. In her presentation, Georgina Heydon briefly introduced the foundations of forensic linguistics and explored how linguistic analysis can support criminal investigations and criminal justice processes. She discussed key areas such as authorship attribution, speaker identification, interview analysis, and the communication of rights. A central focus of the session was the language of police interviewing, particularly within the framework of the PEACE model.

Professor Heydon highlighted the importance of improving narrative responses and examined how linguistic insights can help address common obstacles in investigative interviews, including incomplete reporting by witnesses or suspects, interviewer domination of talk and concerns about losing control, questioning techniques that may contaminate evidence. Q&A session followed the presentation. The webinar was moderated by Natalija Orlić.

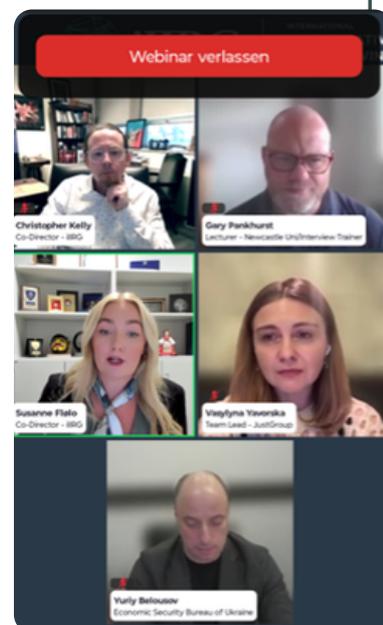
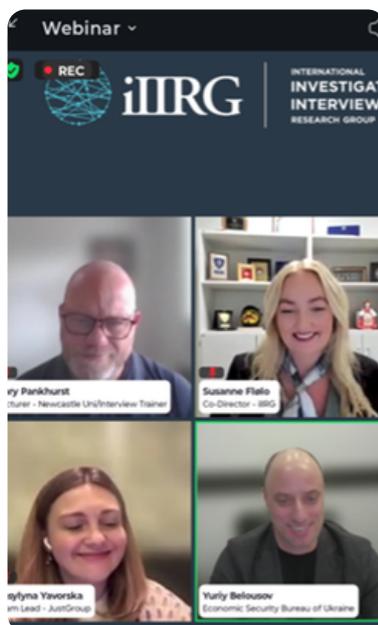


iIIRG Webinar Recap

Investigative Interviewing in Ukraine: Progress, Practice, and Sustainability on 17 February 2026

On 17 February 2026, ImpleMéndez colleagues who are also from the International Investigative Interviewing Research Group hosted a webinar exploring the development of investigative interviewing practices in Ukraine, with a focus on progress achieved, current practical implementation challenges, and long-term sustainability. The session brought together practitioners, researchers, and criminal justice professionals to reflect on how investigative interviewing standards have evolved in Ukraine in recent years. Invited speakers – Yuriy Belousov (Deputy Director of the Economic Security Bureau of Ukraine) and Vasylyna Yavorska (Team Lead of JustGroup) – highlighted key milestones in reform efforts, including the introduction of structured interviewing models aligned with international best practice and scientific evidence.

Gary Pankhurst (UK) spoke on the foundations of investigative interviewing and the challenges faced by practitioners and legislators, as well as monitoring and evaluation solutions in the UK. The conversation was moderated by Christopher Kelly (iIIRG Co-Director, USA) and Susanne Flølo (iIIRG Co-Director, Norway). The webinar also addressed sustainability, including how to ensure that changes are embedded institutionally and reinforced by policy and leadership. The event concluded with a Q&A session.



Online Webinar on Language Barriers and Rapport in Investigative Interviewing: Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Aspects on 26 February

On 26 February, Dr Maria Gomez Bedoya (University Institute for Research in Police Sciences, Universidad de Alcalá; University of East Anglia) delivered a presentation entitled “Language barriers and rapport in investigative interviewing: Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural aspects.” The session examined how linguistic differences and cultural contexts influence rapport-building and the quality of investigative interviews. The presentation reviewed scientific evidence showing that an information-gathering approach, based on rapport, active listening, empathy, and non-coercive communication, is consistently associated with more accurate information. Rapport was discussed as a structured, research-based component of professional interviewing. Core elements highlighted included mutual attentiveness, positive and respectful interaction, and coordination between interviewer and interviewee. Empirical findings presented during the session demonstrated that supportive interviewer behaviour increases disclosure and the level of detail provided by interviewees. Rapport-building techniques, such as open questions, appropriate self-disclosure, matching communication style, and the strategic use of pauses, were shown to facilitate trust and reduce anxiety. These findings align with the Méndez Principles, which define rapport as establishing a connection grounded in trust, respect for human dignity, and fair treatment. The discussion addressed practical implications for police guidelines and training, including the adaptation of rapport techniques in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Coming up!

Reminder Symposium “Interviews in Criminal Prosecution” Bern, 13 March 2026

On 13 March 2026, a symposium entitled “Interviews in Criminal Prosecution” will take place in Bern (Switzerland). The event is organised by ImpleMéndez/the Méndez Center for the German-speaking countries (Zentrum für effektive und faire Befragung – ZEFAB), in cooperation with the Bern Cantonal Police, the Swiss Police Institute, and the University of Bern. Ten ImpleMéndez members will participate in the symposium as speakers. The event will be held in three languages: German, French, and English. The symposium forms part of the 10th Symposium on Police Law. Registration deadline: **6 March 2026** // Registration website [here!](#)
For further details on the programme and speakers, please consult the event website.

WG4 invites to the Leadership Conversation #2 10 March 2026

Following the success of the first Leadership Conversation, which took place on 26 January 2026, Working Group 4 is delighted to announce the second event in this new online series. The Leadership Conversation series aims to give leadership a voice and to deepen our collective understanding of the challenges and benefits of implementing ethical investigative interviewing practices, viewed from the perspective of leaders at different levels.

All events are open to all ImpleMéndez members. Each conversation focuses on a specific country and explores leadership perspectives in that national context, with the goal of supporting project members in their own leadership engagement processes.

Event Details

- **Date:** Monday, 10 March
- **Time:** 12:00 CET / 13:00 EET
- **Format:** Online (Microsoft Teams)

Focus Country: Finland

Guest Speaker: Dr Miia Lehtinen has kindly agreed to join us as the leadership representative for this event. Dr Lehtinen is a serving Chief Superintendent in the Finnish Police and a member of the Finnish National Police Board. She has extensive experience in policing and policing strategy development, including at ministerial level. In addition, Dr Lehtinen is a military reserve officer with a long record of service, including multiple peacekeeping deployments.

In 2024, Dr Lehtinen completed her PhD at the University of Tampere, researching leadership culture in local policing in Finland. Her combined academic and practitioner expertise makes her a strong champion of ImpleMéndez work in Finland.

Session Format

The session will include:

- A brief introduction;
- 35–40 minutes of moderated conversation;
- A 15–20-minute open-floor discussion, allowing participants to ask questions or reflect on related experiences.

Those who attended the first event in January will be aware of how valuable and thought-provoking these conversations can be, particularly the opportunity to engage directly with experienced leaders.

Upcoming Conference

Transforming investigative interviewing through integrated technologies 26 March 2026

An upcoming online conference on 26 March, *Transforming Investigative Interviewing Through Integrated Technologies*, organised by ImpleMéndez member, Brandon May, will bring together researchers, practitioners, and professionals to examine how emerging technologies are reshaping investigative interviewing. The event will focus on the integration of digital tools into investigative practice, exploring how technology can enhance the quality, transparency, and effectiveness of information gathering. Key themes are expected to include the role of advanced audio-visual systems in documenting interviews, the use of AI-supported tools in analysis and decision-making, remote and technology-assisted interviewing environments, and ethical and legal implications of integrating digital technologies into investigative processes. Further details and registration information are available via the event page [here](#).

Call for papers

Supporting Vulnerable Adult Victims in the Criminal Justice System

Vulnerable adult victims experience multiple barriers as they progress through the legal system. For example, adult complainants of sexual assault have reported fear of mistreatment by law

enforcement as a barrier to reporting, concerns about police bias in the interview, memory issues when providing testimony, and worries about credibility to judges and juries. In recent years, there has been a greater appreciation of the challenges faced by vulnerable adult victims and an increasing research attention on better ways to support them.

The proposed special issue aims to publish a collection of empirical articles that examine how to better support vulnerable adult victims in the justice system – from first response through to trial. To be considered for Applied Cognitive Psychology, papers must include a focus on cognitive factors, e.g., how the inclusion or exclusion of specific supportive behaviors affect memory retrieval. The focus of the special issue will be vulnerable victims, with a wide definition of “vulnerable”. For example, victims may be considered vulnerable owing to the nature of the crime (e.g., sexual assault, high trauma) or to individual factors (e.g., developmental delay, intoxication at the time of victimization). Although the scope is intended to be adult victims, papers focusing on adolescents may also be considered.

Abstracts of papers for consideration should be submitted to Dr Brubacher by **April 15, 2026**. For abstracts that are accepted in principle, full papers will be required by **September 15, 2026**.

All papers will be fully peer reviewed, and not all will be accepted. Publication of the issue is scheduled for **April 2027**.

Topics for this call for papers include, but are not restricted to:

- Understanding Barriers in the Legal Process
- Improving Support Through Cognitive Insights
- Broad Definition of Vulnerability

Guest Editors: Sonja P. Brubacher (Griffith University, Australia) and Prof. Martine Powell (Griffith University, Australia)

Calls for cooperation

Call for contributors: White Paper on AI in investigative interviewing

We have received a request from three ImpleMéndez members; Brandon May (USA), who— together with Becky Milne (UK) and Coral Dando (UK) — is currently preparing a White Paper on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in investigative interviewing, particularly considering the recent independent review led by Sir Brian Leveson. The authors are now seeking expressions of interest from individuals who may be willing to support or contribute to this work. They are keen to publish the White Paper in the coming months and would welcome input from researchers, practitioners, and experts working in relevant areas. If you are interested in contributing, or would like further information, please contact Brandon May (bmay@fit.edu)

Call for Collaboration: Child-friendly justice and AI tools for interviewing children

Our ImpleMéndez colleague Marta Flis-Świeczkowska (Poland) is currently seeking collaborators for upcoming research and grant work in two related areas: child-friendly justice including interviewing child victims (she would be happy to co-author a paper on this topic) and AI in training professionals who interview children. Marta is also very interested in collaborating with experts involved in the use of artificial intelligence in training professionals who conduct interviews with children. In particular, she is exploring the possibility of applying (with partners)

for a large research grant to support the development of an AI-based training tool in Poland and to run pilot studies using the tool. She would especially welcome support from anyone who has experience with designing such tools, building AI-based training systems, or implementing and evaluating them in practice. If you are interested in collaborating, please contact Marta Flis-Świeczkowska (marta-flis@wp.pl).

Two PhD positions on the JUSTICE Project vacancies

ImpleMéndez member Dr Bennett Kleinburg (Tilburg, NL) is recruiting for two PhD positions (4 years, fully-funded + employed, based in The Netherlands, starting in Sept. 2026) that will be an integral part of the ERC Synergy project "JUSTICE" (Joining Unique Strategies Together for Interrogative Coercion Elimination).

The PhD candidates will join the [Computational Psychology & Computational Methods Lab](#) and be part of the JUSTICE consortium (Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University, De Montfort University, Tilburg University). Full vacancy specifications can be found below:

- PhD position in "Generative AI and Computational Modelling of Human Behaviour", [click here](#);
- PhD position in "Hybrid Intelligence and Human Decision-Making", [click here](#).

Application deadline: 22nd of March. // Contact: bennett.kleinberg@tilburguniversity.edu

New publications

New analytical paper Investigative interviewing and criminal justice reform in Ukraine

A new analytical paper prepared by JustGroup (Ukraine), many of whom are ImpleMéndez members, explores the ongoing transformation of Ukrainian criminal justice from traditional, confession-oriented interrogation practices toward investigative interviewing grounded in international human rights standards. Adapted from a JustTalk Discussion Paper and developed for an international audience, the publication aims to support cross-border dialogue on ethical, effective, and evidence-based approaches to information gathering in criminal proceedings.

The paper examines how investigative interviewing reshapes the philosophy of investigation—replacing coercive and accusatory methods with structured, non-confrontational communication focused on obtaining reliable and verifiable information. It highlights empathy, active listening, and trust as central components of high-quality investigations, demonstrating how these elements strengthen both human rights protection and investigative effectiveness. Drawing on legislative developments, training programmes, and practical experience within Ukrainian law enforcement and prosecution services, the analysis traces Ukraine's path from early pilot initiatives to broader systemic change. Special attention is given to the relevance of investigative interviewing in complex contexts, including war-crimes investigations, as well as its growing recognition in national standards, policies, and professional education.

The paper also identifies remaining challenges and outlines future steps needed to ensure sustainability, including institutional policies, monitoring mechanisms, education, and regulatory consolidation. Overall, the publication contributes to the international discussion on investigative interviewing as a humane, evidence-based standard for modern criminal justice systems. Read the paper [here](#)!

The Reminder

Those submitting a paper for publication should follow the COST Annotated Rules to ensure proper recognition of COST funding. In short: just use the following "formula":

This article is based upon work from COST Action CA22128 (ImpleMéndez), supported by European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).

The newsletter has been prepared by Sofia Meneses-Silva and Denis Solodov.

Share your achievements with us!



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