



The ImpleMéndez Newsletter

COST Action CA22128 – Establishing Networks to Implement the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations

#9 • September 2026

Welcome to the NINTH EDITION of the ImpleMéndez Newsletter of 2026!

WE ARE NOW 451 MEMBERS FROM 60 COUNTRIES

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, Miet Vanderhallen

WG2

Law, Human Rights, Criminal Justice

Leader: Anzelika Baneviciene

Co-leaders: Zeynep Reva, Denis Solodov, Ondrej Pavelek

WG3

Vulnerability

Leader: Lore Mergaerts

Co-leaders: Hanna Lahtinen, Laura Pajon

WG4

Institutional & Governmental Leadership

Leader: Vasylyna Yavorska

Co-leaders: Martijn van Beek, Olafur Bragason, Monty Mountford

REFLECTION

Twenty-five Years after 9/11: A Constructive Legacy from a Profound Failure

11 September 2026

Juan E. Méndez and Steven J. Barela reflect on how the Méndez Principles emerged as a positive alternative to interrogational torture. Full reflection inside.

EVENT

Opening of the Méndez Centre for Effective and Fair Interviewing in Freiburg

10 September 2026

ZEFAB officially opened in Freiburg, Germany, bringing together experts from research, justice, law enforcement, criminal defence and human rights.

OPPORTUNITY

Call for Abstracts: Investigative Interviewing Conference 2027

Deadline: 9 October 2026

Investigative Interviewing: From Science to the Interview Room, 2–3 March 2027, The Hague. See the call for papers inside.

NEWS

Professor Dave Walsh receives EAPL Educational Impact Award

Congratulations to Professor Dave Walsh, Chair of ImpleMéndez, on receiving the 2026 Educational Impact Award from the European Association of Psychology and Law (EAPL).

The award recognises Dave's contributions to education in the field. As part of the award, he will be invited to give a talk at the EAPL's 2027 conference.

Please join us in congratulating Dave on this achievement! 😊

EVENT

Child Interviewing Seminar at the Irish Méndez Centre for Investigative Interviewing

4 September 2026



On Friday, 4th September 2026, the Irish Méndez Centre hosted a half-day seminar on Child Interviewing at Dublin City University. This seminar, attended by over 100 practitioners, addressed a wide array of core topics including:

- Opportunities and challenges involved in interviewing children who may have experienced sexual abuse;
- Recent academic research on child developmental psychology, particularly centered on methods to interview children who are reluctant to make disclosures;

- Empirical findings on what young people find helpful and supportive when engaging with formal police investigations;
- Practical guidelines and protocols for conducting police interviews with children and vulnerable adults who are interviewed as suspects;
- Understanding the deep psychological vulnerability of children under interrogation, and the risks of acquiescence and compliance; and
- Managing cognitive bias, avoiding coercive questioning styles, and implementing rigorous hypothesis testing during investigative processes.

The event featured three leading international expert speakers (two of whom are members of ImpleMéndez):

Dr Rosaleen McElvaney (Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist): Dr McElvaney lectures in the Schools of Psychology and Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health at Dublin City University. She is also a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist. Her career spans extensive practice in specialised sexual abuse services and training academic and clinical professionals. She has published widely on child sexual abuse disclosure and is the author of three prominent textbooks: *Finding the words: Talking children through the tough times* (Veritas, 2015), *How children tell: Containing the secret of child sexual abuse* (Lambert Publishers, 2015), and *Helping children tell about sexual abuse: Guidance for helpers* (Jessica Kingsley, 2016).

Sigrid Buseth (Norwegian Police Academy Instructor and Lecturer): Sigrid Buseth graduated from the Norwegian Police Academy in 1992 and worked as a senior investigator specialising in child sexual abuse cases from 2005 until her recent retirement. She is an expert in investigative interviewing, contributing heavily to the development of sequential interview techniques for very young children. She completed a master's thesis in 2020

on how 15-year-olds understand their suspect rights during police interviews. Together with the Norwegian Attorney General, she prepared statutory directives for interviewing suspect children and vulnerable adults in 2023, and in 2026 published practical guidelines to serve as a hands-on tool for active investigators. She currently lectures internationally in partnership with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo (which is also a Méndez Centre).

Dr Francesco Pompemma (Senior Researcher, University of Turku, Finland): Dr. Pompemma is a licensed psychologist in Italy, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, and a Senior Researcher at the INVEST Research Flagship Center at the University of Turku, Finland (having previously served as Academic Course Leader for the BSc in Forensic Psychology at the University of Gloucestershire, UK). In collaboration with Professor Pekka Santtila, Dr. Pompemma co-developed the world's first avatar-based training system utilising dynamic response algorithms to train law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, and psychologists on child interviewing techniques in sexual abuse cases. His research has recently expanded into the integration of artificial intelligence in broader legal contexts.



WEBINAR

WG2 Webinar: The Méndez Principles and the Role of the Lawyer in Investigative Interviews

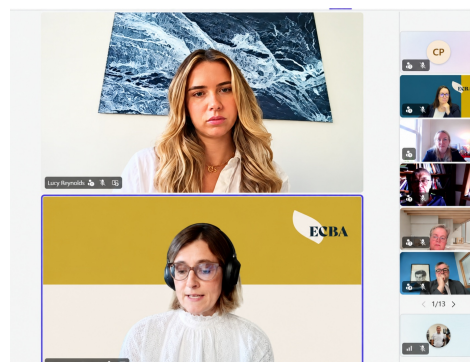
8 September 2026

On 8 September 2026, ImpleMéndez and the European Criminal Bar Association held an online WG2 webinar exploring the Méndez Principles and the role of lawyers in investigative interviews. Open to all ImpleMéndez members, the one-hour session was facilitated by Professor Yvonne Daly, Vice-Chair of ImpleMéndez, in discussion with criminal lawyers Lucy Reynolds (United Kingdom) and Katarzyna Dąbrowska (Poland).

Professor Daly opened the session with a brief introduction to the Méndez Principles. The session also highlighted two relevant resources: the *Manual on Investigative Interviewing for Criminal Investigation* (2024) and the *Toolkit for Defence Lawyers: Applying the Méndez Principles in Legal Practice* (2026).

The discussion examined the Principles from a legal practitioner's perspective, addressing support for vulnerable interviewees, audio-visual recording, pre-interview disclosure and lawyers' interventions during interviews. It also considered the distinction between witness and suspect status, restrictions on lawyers' attendance and the participation of lawyers representing injured parties.

Drawing on the speakers' experience in criminal law and police-station representation, the webinar explored what effective interviewing principles mean in practice for lawyers participating in investigative interviews.



EVENT

Opening of the Méndez Centre for Effective and Fair Interviewing in Freiburg

10 September 2026



On 10 September 2026, the Méndez Centre for Effective and Fair Interviewing (Méndez-Zentrum für effektive und faire Befragungen, ZEFAB) officially opened in Freiburg, Germany. The launch brought together experts from research, justice, law enforcement, criminal defence and human rights to discuss the implementation of the Méndez Principles. Two specialist forums and a closing panel discussion explored interviewing standards and their application in police, legal and judicial practice.

ZEFAB emerged from the ImpleMéndez network. The centre aims to improve interviewing practices across

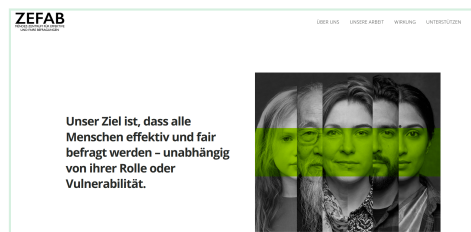
Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Its work includes interdisciplinary research, interviewing guidelines, workshops and conferences, and collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

Congratulations to Lennart, Frank, Teresa and everyone involved in this milestone for the implementation of the Méndez Principles!

Learn more on the [ZEFAB website](#) (in German).

Media coverage of the opening event: [beck-aktuell](#) and [Evangelische Zeitung](#).

Special greetings from the Federal Minister of Justice: [watch here](#).



WEBINAR

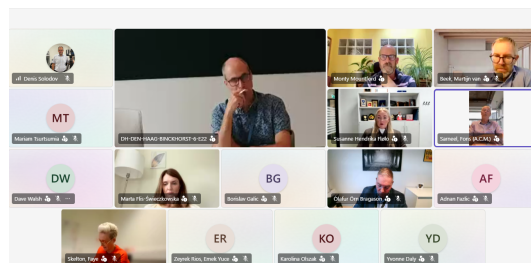
WG4 Led Conversations: Leadership and Management

14 September 2026

On 14 September 2026, Waldo de Boer and Fons Sarneel joined the WG4 series on leadership and management to share their reflections on the implementation of the Méndez Principles in the Netherlands. The conversation was moderated by Monty Mountford (UK).

Waldo de Boer is Head of the Regional Criminal Investigation Department in The Hague and National Portfolio Manager for Investigative Interviewing with the Dutch Police. He brings over 40 years of policing experience and extensive involvement in developing investigative interviewing practices.

Fons Sarneel is the Netherlands' *Landelijk Verhoorexpert*, or national expert consultant for police interviewing. His role connects strategic leadership with operational practice, supporting the implementation of policies and legislation and advising on complex or sensitive police interviews nationwide.



MEETING

Full Membership Meeting

16 September 2026

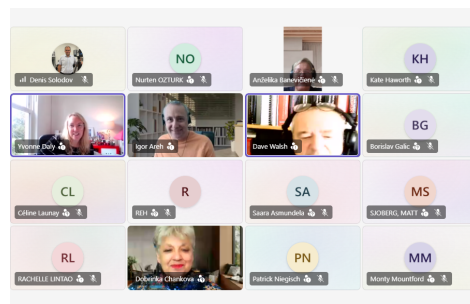


On 16 September 2026, an online Full Membership Meeting was held, led by Action Chair Dave Walsh and Vice Chair Yvonne Daly.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable growth and activity of our Action since its launch in October 2023. Membership has increased from 88 to 451 members from 60 countries, representing growth of more than 410%. The Action now brings together a wide range of researchers, practitioners and partner organisations working towards the common goal of supporting the implementation of the Méndez Principles.

Participants reviewed the extensive programme of activities carried out during Year 3, including conferences and meetings in Istanbul, Kraków, Geneva, Bodø, Dundee, Leuven and Freiburg, as well as training schools, webinars, Short-Term Scientific Missions and conference grants. The growing network of Méndez Centres and thematic networks, including the Emerging Technologies Network, Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network, Forensic Linguists and Interpreters Network and Training Curriculum Network, was also highlighted.

Looking ahead, the meeting focused on the fourth and final year of the ImpleMendez COST Action. Planned face-to-face activities include the launch of the Dutch-speaking Méndez Centre in Maastricht, training schools in Sofia and Turku/Åbo, and the final workshop and Management Committee meeting in Tallinn. Particular emphasis was placed on producing lasting outputs of the Action, including policy briefings, training materials, professional and scientific publications, Frameworks for Investigative Transformation (FITs), and the planned multi-author book.



The discussion also looked beyond the formal end of the COST Action, considering how Méndez Centres, research networks, collaborative publications and new international research initiatives can continue the work of ImpleMendez. The objective remains clear: to help turn the Méndez Principles into practice and support more effective, ethical and human-rights-compliant investigative interviewing worldwide.

MEETING

MC Online Meeting: Reviewing progress and looking ahead to the final year

29 September 2026

The ImpleMendez Management Committee met online on 29 September 2026 to review the Action's achievements during Year 3 and discuss plans for its fourth and final year. The meeting led by Action Chair Professor Dave Walsh and Vice Chair Professor Yvonne Daly provided an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable growth of the network, its expanding programme of activities, and the work still ahead.

Since October 2023, ImpleMendez membership has grown from 88 to 451 members from 60 countries — an increase of more than 410%. The network currently has a 40% male / 60% female gender balance, with 37%



Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI) and 38% of members from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC).

Year 3 has been particularly active. The Action received a €244,000 budget, together with an additional €10,000 supplement, supported Short-Term Scientific Missions and 24 conference grants, and continued to strengthen its newsletter, website and social media presence. New Méndez Centres have also been developed for German-speaking countries and the Asia-Pacific region,

alongside activities organised by the Irish and Norwegian Méndez Centres.

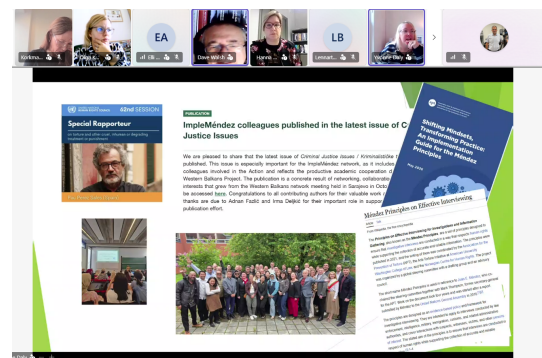
A wide range of face-to-face events took place across Europe, including activities in Kraków, Geneva, Istanbul, Dundee, Leuven, Bodø and Freiburg. These included conferences, project meetings and training schools addressing topics such as safeguarding human rights, child interviewing, training curricula, credibility assessment, investigative interviewing, and the implementation of the Méndez Principles.

The meeting also highlighted the growing range of ImpleMendez networks and sub-projects. These include the Emerging Technologies Network, Diversity and Cross-Cultural Network, Forensic Linguists and Interpreters Network, Training Curriculum Network, Western Balkan Network, and the network on detecting deception and assessing credibility. Current projects address areas including human trafficking, asylum seeking, war crimes, child trafficking, child interviewing, cooperation with international agencies, translation of the Méndez Principles, and barriers and enablers to their implementation.

Particular attention was given to the Action's deliverables. Members are being encouraged to collaborate across countries, with outputs involving at least two authors from two or more countries. Planned outputs include law papers, policy briefings, training materials, progress reports, press releases, co-designed implementation tools, professional publications, scientific articles, and an edited book.

Looking ahead, Year 4 will be the final year of ImpleMendez. The Work and Budget Plan has been approved by COST and the Management Committee, with funding allocated for conference grants, dissemination activities, Short-Term Scientific Missions, and open-access publication.

An extensive programme of face-to-face activities is already planned. These include the launch of the Dutch-speaking Méndez Centre in Maastricht, three Training Schools in Sofia, and three further Training Schools in Turku/Åbo, covering ORBIT, forensic linguistics and interpreting, emerging technologies, investigative interviewing, training curricula, and bias in investigative interviews. The programme will culminate in meetings and a final workshop in Tallinn in August 2027.



The discussion also looked beyond the formal end of the COST Action. Future opportunities considered included the JUSTICE programme and the development of longer-term interdisciplinary research bringing together expertise in law, psychology, neuroscience, data science and policing. Participants also discussed maintaining the visibility and momentum of the network through annual symposia and panel sessions at major academic conferences from 2028 onwards.

The September meeting demonstrated how far ImpleMendez has developed since its launch and set the direction for an ambitious final year focused not only on completing the Action's planned outputs, but also on ensuring that its networks, collaborations and work supporting the Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering continue well beyond the lifetime of CA22128.

Calls for papers

OPPORTUNITY

Call for Abstracts: Investigative Interviewing Conference 2027

Deadline: 9 October 2026

International Conference entitled *Investigative Interviewing: From Science to the Interview Room* will take place on **2–3 March 2027** at Hilton The Hague, the Netherlands.

Organised jointly by the Netherlands Police Academy and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR), the conference will feature confirmed keynote speakers Professor Annelies Vredeveldt and Professor Dave Walsh.

Members are warmly invited to attend as participants or contribute as presenters. Collaborative submissions from researchers, trainers and practitioners are particularly welcome, though collaboration is not a requirement.

The call for abstracts is open until **9 October**. Please check the [conference website](#) for any deadline extensions. Conference registration will open shortly after the abstract deadline.

New publications

REFLECTION

Twenty-five Years after 9/11: A Constructive Legacy from a Profound Failure

11 September 2026

Short reflection for the 25th anniversary of 9/11 by Juan E. Méndez and Steven J. Barela

The 25th anniversary of the September 11 attacks provides an important moment to reflect not only on the tragedy of that day, but also on the responses that followed. Among the gravest failures of the post-9/11 period was the resort to torture and coercive interrogation during the so-called “war on terror.” The absolute prohibition of torture came under extraordinary pressure, accompanied by what Juan E. Méndez, former UN Special Rapporteur on torture, recalls as a period of moral relativism around practices that violated fundamental legal and ethical standards while resting on deeply flawed assumptions about how reliable information is obtained.

Yet something constructive ultimately emerged from this experience. Prohibiting torture, indispensable as that prohibition is, did not by itself prove sufficient in that moment of crisis. A positive alternative was also needed—one that could build on an already developing body of scientific knowledge about effective, non-coercive questioning and connect it with the legal and procedural safeguards necessary to protect human dignity.

Méndez’s 2016 call for universal standards gave form to such an alternative and was subsequently taken forward by an international Steering Committee bringing together global expertise from law, science and practice. The process resulted in the Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering in 2021.

This history also has a distinctive personal connection for Steven J. Barela, who served as editor of the Principles. He was a United Airlines flight attendant on September 11, 2001—when two United aircraft, together

with their crews and passengers, were hijacked and turned into deadly weapons. The attacks affected him directly, while the responses that followed left him deeply troubled by fundamental questions about whether counterterrorism policies were lawful, morally defensible, or would even be effective. After being furloughed from United, he returned to academia, eventually moving with his family to Geneva, where those questions became central to his doctoral research on counterterrorism and international law. Twenty-five years later, his work on the Méndez Principles represents an unforeseen but deeply personal connection between the events that changed the direction of his life and an international effort to build a positive alternative to interrogational torture.

Five years after the adoption of the Principles, Méndez and Barela recently took stock of their development in *Just Security*. Their assessment considers the Principles' growing international recognition, lessons emerging from implementation, and the considerable work that remains. Read against the 25th anniversary of 9/11, that progress forms part of a much longer arc: from one of the gravest failures of the post-9/11 period, through the construction of a positive alternative, to the challenge of making that alternative work in practice.

Viewed through this longer arc, the examples explored in the article are themselves only part of a much wider implementation landscape—one that ImpleMéndez members are actively helping to shape. Across the network, that work is taking many forms—from WG2 comparative work on accountability, complaint mechanisms and audiovisual recording, to initiatives in Ireland bringing research on child interviewing directly to practitioners. The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights has also played an important enabling role across much of the implementation work explored in the article, working closely with national partners while keeping local actors at the forefront. As those working in this dynamic and growing space know, these are just a few examples within a broader range of initiatives addressing training, vulnerability, institutional leadership, emerging technologies, and implementation across different national and regional contexts.

Twenty-five years after 9/11, this work is a reminder that constructing a positive alternative was only the beginning. The achievement is not simply that an international standard eventually emerged from a period of profound failure, but that a growing international community is now working to translate that alternative into practice. For ImpleMéndez, the anniversary is therefore not only an occasion to look back at the history from which the Principles emerged, but also to consider the part the network can play in carrying that constructive legacy forward.

Read: [*Effective Interviewing, Not Torture: Lessons from the Méndez Principles Five Years On*](#)

PUBLICATION

New Book: Verbal Lie Detection

We are pleased to highlight the publication of *Verbal Lie Detection*, edited by Pär Anders Granhag and Galit Nahari, both members of the ImpleMéndez COST Action.

Published by Wiley in 2026, this new volume brings together leading international scholars to provide a comprehensive overview of contemporary research on verbal approaches to detecting deception. It examines the theoretical foundations and evidence base of established verbal lie detection methods, while also addressing emerging challenges, including deception across cultures, interviewing children, detecting false intentions, practitioner training, and translating research findings into practice.

The volume is particularly relevant to the work of ImpleMéndez, with several Action members contributing chapters to the book. It offers a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners interested in investigative interviewing, information elicitation, credibility assessment, and evidence-based interviewing practice.

The book is dedicated to Professor Aldert Vrij in recognition of his major contribution to the field.

The book is available on [Wiley Online Library](#) and [Amazon](#).

PUBLICATION

New Publication: The Méndez Principles and Investigative Interviewing in Germany

A new article, *Faire und effektive Vernehmungen – Potenziale der Méndez-Prinzipien (Fair and Effective Interviewing – The Potential of the Méndez Principles)*, has been published in the *Deutsche Richterzeitung* (German Judges' Journal), 07/08 2026.

Written by Frank Maurer, Lennart May, Jens Puschke, Teresa Schneider, Frank Zimmermann and Andreas Grube, it examines how the Méndez Principles can contribute to more effective, fair and evidence-based interviewing in Germany. Frank Maurer and Lennart May are also Germany's representatives on the ImpleMéndez Management Committee.

The authors highlight the limited methodological guidance currently available for conducting interviews in German criminal and other judicial proceedings and discuss investigative interviewing as a research-based alternative. They present its core elements, including open-minded hypothesis testing, evidence-based interviewing techniques, respect for law and human dignity, rapport-building and systematic planning and evaluation.

The article also introduces the six-stage PEEKAA interviewing structure for German-speaking jurisdictions and stresses the importance of audio and video recording for improving evidential quality, transparency, safeguards against abuse and professional evaluation of interviewing practice.

Importantly, the article highlights the work of COST Action CA22128 ImpleMéndez in supporting the global implementation of the Méndez Principles and describes recent implementation activities in Germany, including the ImpleMéndez conference held at the University of Freiburg in May 2025 and the establishment of the Méndez Centre for Effective and Fair Interviewing (ZEFAB) in Freiburg in February 2026.

PUBLICATION

Special Conference Edition of the European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin – Tackling the World of High-Risk Criminal Networks

We are pleased to highlight the publication of Vol. 7 No. 1 (2025), Special Conference Edition Nr. 7 of the *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin*, entitled *Tackling the World of High-Risk Criminal Networks* (HRCN).

The issue includes several contributions connected with the ImpleMéndez COST Action, showing the Méndez Principles and illustrating the aims, activities and achievements of the Action.

The published articles demonstrate how the Méndez Principles can be applied to complex investigative contexts, including organised crime, cooperating witnesses and human trafficking. They also reflect the broader objectives of ImpleMéndez: promoting effective, ethical and non-coercive interviewing, strengthening respect for human rights, and bringing together researchers, legal professionals and practitioners to support the implementation of the Principles across different jurisdictions.

Among the authors are Kristjan Kask (Estonia), a co-author of *Transfer of Avatar Training Effects to Mock Investigative Interviews with Adult Witnesses*; Hanna-Mari Lahtinen (Finland), a co-author of *Using survey data from offenders on the Dark Web to combat online child sexual abuse and exploitation*; Denis Solodov (Poland), *Interviewing Cooperating Witnesses in Organised Crime Cases in Poland: Lessons to Learn from the Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering*; Luna Filipović (United States), *How forensic linguistics can help fight international crime*; and Silvia Tăbușcă (Romania), *A Perspective of the*



Méndez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering in Human Trafficking Cases Linked to Organised Crime.

Read the full Special Conference Edition [here](#).

PUBLICATION

Recent APT Publications

The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), Geneva, has recently published two new resources that refer to the work of ImpleMéndez and support the practical implementation of the Méndez Principles.

The first, *Toolkit for Defence Lawyers: Applying the Méndez Principles in Legal Practice*, provides practical guidance for defence lawyers on using the Méndez Principles in their everyday professional work.

The second, *Shifting Mindsets, Transforming Practice: An Implementation Guide for the Méndez Principles*, offers broader guidance on translating the Principles into practice and supporting institutional change.

Both publications are available on the APT website:

1. [*Toolkit for Defence Lawyers: Applying the Méndez Principles in Legal Practice*](#)
2. [*Shifting Mindsets, Transforming Practice: An Implementation Guide for the Méndez Principles*](#)

The Reminder

Those submitting a paper for publication should follow the COST Annotated Rules to ensure proper recognition of COST funding. Use the following formula:

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

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