WHAT MPS REALLY DO:
TURNING DATA INTO DEMOCRATIC POWER IN SPAIN

TICTEC 2025, MECHELEN (BELGIUM)

POLITICAL WATCH

DATA FOR POLITICAL INNOVATION

WE ARE A THINK-AND-DO TANK FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OUR DEMOCRACIES

How:

- Developing watchdog tools -like the one we're presenting today-
- Promoting civic engagement
- Using technology & advocacy
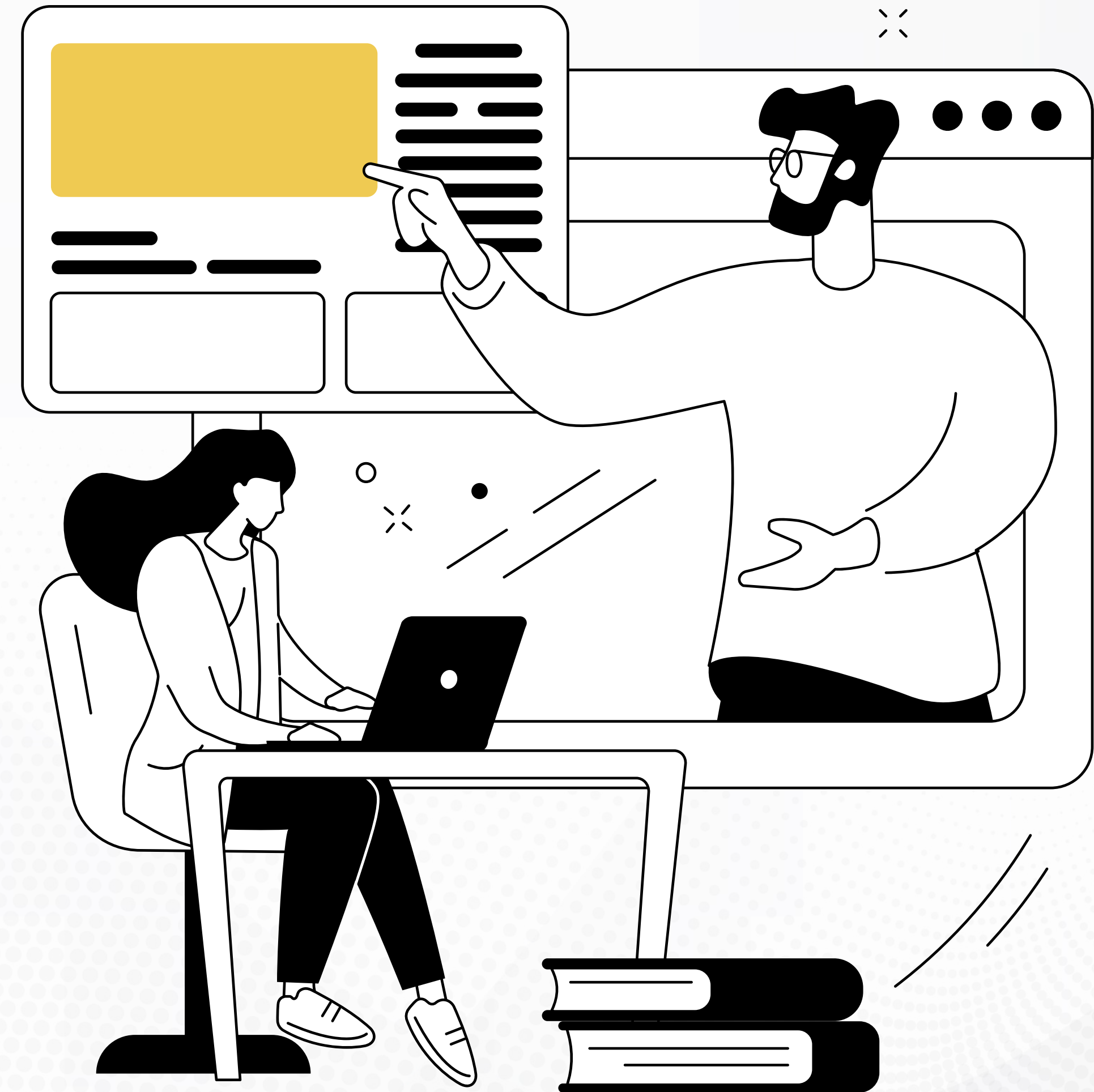- Building coalitions as part of our ADN

WHAT IS QHLD?

It's a tool that organizes and presents Spanish Congress activity in an accessible format.

It enables diverse search capabilities (thematic, cross-referenced, by date, by author...) **across 24 social issue areas**, maximizing the utility of parliamentary work.

The platform doesn't just track legislation, but also oversight and orientation initiatives.

WHEN AND WHY?

- Active platform **since 2011** (Global Occupy Wave)

- It's **the only open tool of its kind in Spain**, so we decided to run it on our own funding

- Give parliament the attention it deserves and connect voters with their representatives' actions to influence future electoral choices.

- Position Spain within the democratic context.

- Defend parliamentarism in an ultra-polarized political context, showcasing possible political agreements vs most known disagreements.

KEY FEATURES

TOPIC DETECTION

- Developed jointly with expert civil society: links different initiatives to multiple thematic areas.

- Periodic review of tags to adapt to current events and evolving social terminology.
  Example: vicarious violence.

MORE THAN

8K

**CONCEPTS FOR
41 TOPICS IN OUR
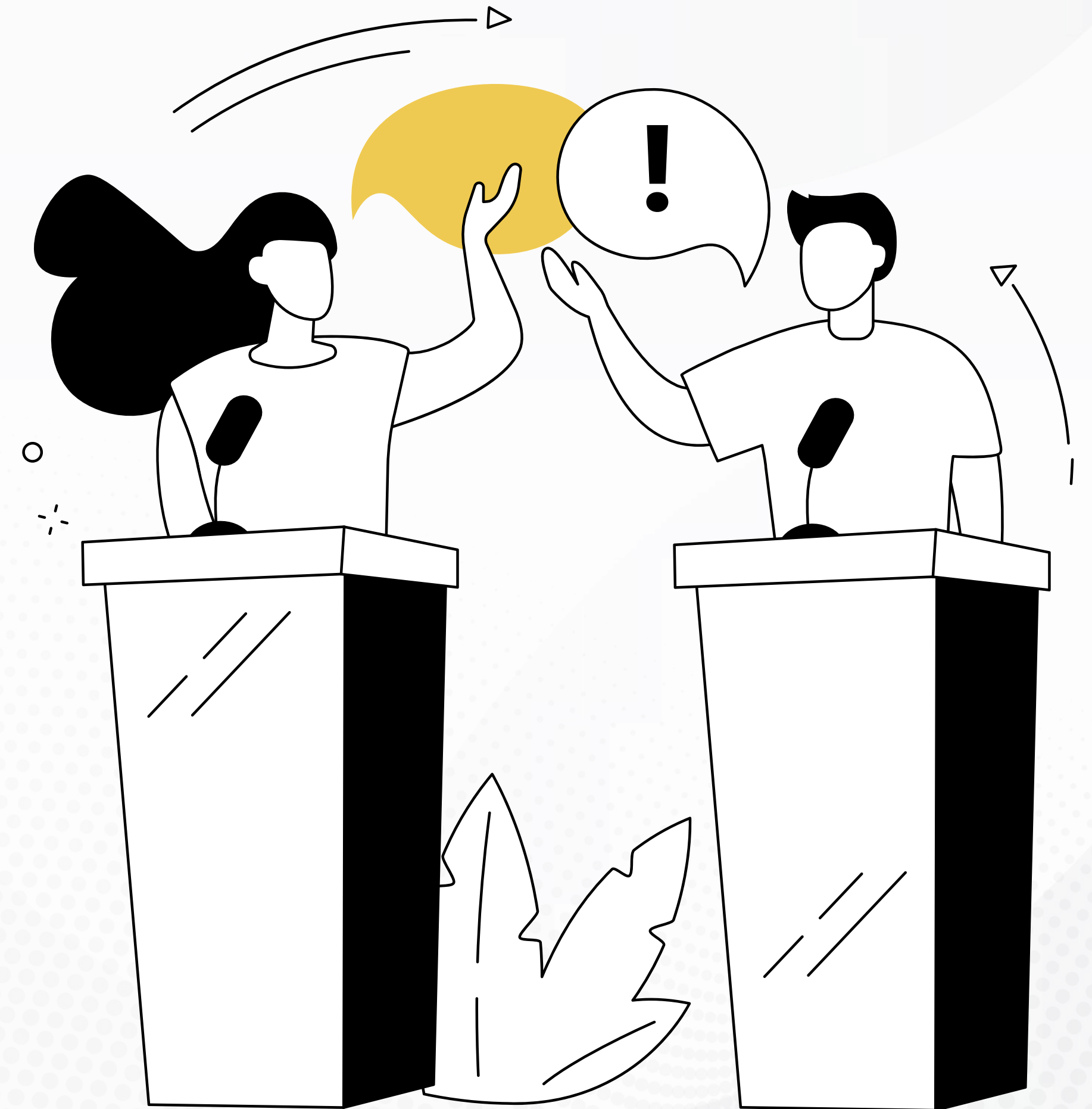KNOWLEDGE BASE**

MORE THAN

50

**EXPERTS/ORGANIZATIONS
IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACADEMIA**

PARLAMENTARY INDEX

Calculated considering:

- Volume of parliamentary activity

- Effectiveness or ability to gain support for initiatives

- Accessibility of the deputy

- Inactivity periods penalized

Additionally, we've improved the calculation by distributing each initiative's score among the number of deputies from each parliamentary group who sign it, making the index more equitable.

PERSONALIZED ALERTS

- User-centered: design focused on user needs.

- No spam: you only receive information when there are updates to your subscribed alerts.

- Maximum personalization, allowing you to save an alert for every search you perform.

- Easy unsubscribe (1-click process).

OPEN DATA & OPEN SOURCE

OUR PRIORITY ▶ *IMPROVING OUR DEMOCRACIES*

OUR MIDNSET ▶ *COLLABORATIVE WORK*

Therefore:

- We offer **an open API** so all our data can be consumed by third parties

- All our source code is **open-free software** (open and accessible technology)

WHO IS USEFUL FOR? IMPACT

- **For informed citizens:** provides a non-existent or inaccessible public service.

- **For civil society organizations:** used by 500+ NGOs to expose political inconsistencies and the gap between promises and legislative reality, such as poverty elimination efforts.

- **For activists:** enables them to design strategies on key freedom and human rights issues (e.g., repealing Spain's Gag Law).

WHO IS USEFUL FOR? IMPACT

- **For journalists:** allows them to track developments on current issues like housing and helps fact-check inaccurate or false statements by MPs about their parliamentary activity.

- **For researchers:** for example, studies on how migration discourse has shifted since far-right entry into Congress.

- **For democracy watchers:** useful for identifying bad practices in parliamentary activity (delayed amendment deadlines, parliamentary spam...) to improve the chamber's democratic quality.

UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS

- *CONTINUE ENHANCING THE ALERT SYSTEM TO PROVIDE EVEN MORE PRECISE INFORMATION (EXAMPLE: AMENDMENT DEADLINE EXTENSIONS)*

- *SEMANTIC SEARCH ENGINE FOR VIDEO CLIPS OF MP INTERVENTIONS*

- *VOTING TRENDS DASHBOARD*

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

QUESTIONS TO EVERYONE IN THE ROOM

DILEMMAS WE FACE

- **How can we drive adoption among key stakeholders?** Could it be that free tools are perceived as less valuable?

- **How do we address the potential** (mis)use of our tool by consulting firms and large public affairs companies due to our open-use model?