



**Innovative and Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation**  
HE-101132431

**D1.6 Policy Brief Report**

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<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The main objective of this deliverable is to describe a set of recommendations for future research needs and actions to reach and influence policy makers. To do so, information from tasks of WP1, as well as its deliverables and deliverables from WP4 have served as a source</p>	



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of evidence-based knowledge. The structure of the deliverable responds to that of a policy brief. It first poses the challenge of inclusion in democratic processes of people who experience language-related difficulties and those with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. It describes the specific barriers that these individuals face before, during, and after their participation in deliberative and participatory democratic processes. Then, it develops the iDEM solution, which is based on an effective combination of both technological as well as analogic techniques to overcome the identified barriers and design deliberative processes which are inclusive for the target individuals. Finally, it lays out two types of recommendation for the replicability of the described inclusive processes: first, it develops standards, specific courses of action, and general recommendation for the design of inclusive deliberative processes; and second, it describes a set of recommendations that aim at giving advice to better reach and influence policymaking.

### **Plain Language Summary**

The goal of this document is to give advice for future research and actions.

It focuses on how to reach and influence policy makers.

It uses information from tasks and documents of WP1 and WP4.

WP means work package. The document is written like a policy brief.

First, it explains the problem of including people in democratic processes. These people have language difficulties or intellectual and cognitive disabilities. It describes the barriers they face before, during, and after taking part in these processes.

Next, it explains the iDEM solution. This solution uses both technology and non-digital methods. It helps remove the barriers and creates inclusive democratic processes for these people.

Finally, it gives two types of advice for repeating these inclusive processes:

- It suggests standards, actions, and general advice for designing inclusive processes.
- It gives advice on how to better reach and influence policy making.

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<b>Acronyms</b>	
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
D	Deliverable
iDEM	Innovation and Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation (European Project)
NLP	Natural Language Processing
PCD	Person with cognitive disabilities
T	Task
UPF	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
WP	Work Package
PIM	Plena Inclusión Madrid
BOO	Sindicatura de Greuges de Barcelona
IMPB	Municipal Institute of People with Disabilities (Barcelona City Council)
ANFFAS	Associazione Nazionale Famiglie Di Persone Con Disabilità Intellettive e Disturbi del Neurosviluppo
CIB	Fundación Cibervoluntarios
AAIT	ActionAid Italia
NEXUS	Nexus Institut für Kooperationsmanagement und Interdisziplinäre Forschung, GMBH

## 1. Introduction, contribution, and alignment with the iDEM solution

The iDEM project aims at generating AI tools to make deliberative democratic processes more inclusive, accessible, and representative, fostering democratic innovation to improve the legitimacy of decision-making processes. To do so, it develops natural language processing technologies (NLP), more specifically, a text simplification tool, to make difficult texts, including political programmes, scientific information, sentences, and information provided by the public administration accessible to anyone. This tool seeks to improve the participation of people who normally experience language-related difficulties to overcome these barriers when communicating with others, reading texts, and participating in public deliberations. Participatory processes are often not inclusive, they neglect accessible tools and techniques that accommodate specific needs of vulnerable populations in the design (De Freitas & Martin, 2015). Additionally, sources of exclusion include people experiencing limited literacy, language differences, and social isolation (Holroy-Leduc et al, 2016). iDEM aims at promoting participation and unbiased discussion among otherwise marginalised groups who are *de facto* excluded from public spaces of deliberation and participation.

As stated before, iDEM's overall objective is to mitigate barriers experienced by people with linguistic difficulties in reading, writing, understanding others and expressing themselves, limiting their participation in deliberation democratic processes. iDEM poses a special focus on understanding the barriers created by structural inequalities. The reproduction of structural inequalities including power imbalances and asymmetries in race, gender, and rhetorical ability within deliberative settings excludes deliberators from effectively taking part in decision-making processes. iDEM aims at designing decision-making democratic processes that are capable of including people who experience these barriers. It will be the first study to investigate AI and NLP methods as enablers in addressing political inequality (for deliberation and participation). Political Inequality is a concept widely used in social sciences, since Aristotle, it is at the core of social, political, and economic analyses. It refers to the unequal distribution between two individuals of political power and resources, usually between two citizens who share institutions. Citizens, it is accepted in the literature, should be equally considerate by their shared institutions, this includes dimensions of political representation and participation (Dahl, 1991; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006). In this line, this policy brief report distinguishes three levels of

political inequality which have been involved in deliberative processes: first, political inequality as a requirement for the democratic legitimacy of political decision-making outcomes; second, political inequality between deliberators at deliberative processes; and third, political inequality between older persons, migrants, and people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and those who do not experience any language-related barriers at deliberative processes. It explains how societal power structures reproduce power asymmetries between deliberators in deliberative settings. This contributes to a perpetuation of societal inequalities and, more importantly, excludes these communities as active voices from deliberation and political civic participation, rendering collectively binding decisions worse and weakening political legitimacy. iDEM addresses these situations and develops tools and recommendations that contribute to more inclusive deliberative spaces through text simplification, thus removing both barriers related to power imbalances by designing more inclusive processes and language-related barriers by providing digital tools thus giving voice and agency to marginalised communities.

As argued in this document, the inclusion of deliberators will render deliberative decision-making processes at different levels of government more effective, as well as contribute to better decisions which will be able to account for the public good.

This policy brief report aims at first, summarising, presenting, and briefly analysing the barriers at the different stages of deliberative processes experienced by marginalised and vulnerable individuals. It provides practical solutions from an innovative perspective, focusing on democratic innovations, and develops first strategies to design deliberative spaces that contribute to overcome such barriers. Second, a set of recommendations and implementations for future research and replicability, and third, a set of actions to guide and help policy-makers and policymaking.

## 1.1. Methodology

This deliverable summarises, articulates, and complements the work that has been done in WP1<sup>1</sup> since the beginning of the project. First, it summarises and expands the results and

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<sup>1</sup> WP1 Theoretical Foundations: Power Structures, Inequalities, Intersectionality in Deliberative & Participatory Democratic Spaces

recommendations of D1.4<sup>2</sup> and D1.1<sup>3</sup> on establishing moral and epistemic standards for inclusive deliberative processes for people with intellectual disabilities. Second, it articulates the discussion of D1.2<sup>4</sup> on barriers for accessibility based on empirical data, the analysis of groups difficult to engage in D4.1<sup>5</sup>, and the discussion developed at D1.3<sup>6</sup> on intersectionalities to inform and illustrate the context of the problem. It complements these results and analysis with general recommendations and strategies for action on first standards and recommendations for replicability; second, on recommendations on how to increase scientific impact by approaching and influencing policy-makers; and third, drawing considerations that were not covered by iDEM's use cases on future research needs. The report is policy-oriented and aims at providing practical guidance to any public or private organization interested in organizing deliberative participatory processes.

This public deliverable has 6 objectives:

- Objective 1: raise awareness of the gap in civic participation of people who experience language-related barriers.
- Objective 2: inform about the challenge of inclusion within the scope of traditional (theoretical) understandings of democracy.
- Objective 3: propose scientific evidence to design more inclusive civic participatory processes.
- Objective 4: contribute to the replicability of inclusive deliberative democratic processes.
- Objective 5: explore ways to reach and influence policy makers.
- Objective 6: advance future research needs beyond the needs that were raised in the three case studies.

To achieve these objectives, it combines two strategies: first, it reflects on the results of the research and adapts them to generate a clear and specific set of recommendations for the replicability of inclusive deliberative democratic processes; and second, it has complemented the results from previous deliverables to strengthen the case and reflect the urgency of inclusive deliberative processes for people experiencing language and intellectual barriers as well as

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<sup>2</sup> D1.4 General recommendations for piloting

<sup>3</sup> D1.1 Report on epistemic and legitimacy standards that apply to the civic participation of people with cognitive disabilities

<sup>4</sup> D1.2 Report on barriers, strategies, and support to increase inclusion

<sup>5</sup> D4.1 Report on engagements of hard to reach groups and vulnerable populations in participatory and deliberative processes

<sup>6</sup> D1.3 Report on power structure and intersectional barriers in democratic spaces

clearly illustrating the proposed solution which combines artificial intelligence and natural language processing models and tools with the design of the space, deliberative strategies, and time management.

## 2. Legal and Political Context

Disability in general and intellectual disability in particular, has been a source of political inequality and exclusion. However, this situation is not inevitable, according to the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation, it is considered to be a social difficulty: "Disability [is] the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities." (UPIAS 1976). The exclusion of people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and those who experience language-related difficulties can be understood along these lines.

As text remains to be the most widespread source for transmission of information and knowledge, people with language-related difficulties are experiencing barriers to access and understanding of political texts, administrative as well as legal documents, and information which is of utmost importance to their lives, reducing their autonomy and, in some cases, their self-esteem. Although both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) includes accessibility as one of its rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes access to information as a fundamental right, barriers are still experienced daily by these individuals.

Following this rationale, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its protocol, both adopted in 2006, had a twofold aim, first it continued the work on changing attitudes and dispositions towards persons with disabilities, to perceive them as subjects with rights rather than objects of charity; second, it contributed to reaffirming the statement, by broadening the category of disabilities, that regardless of their capabilities, all persons should be able to "enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms." In particular, Article 29 "Participation in political and public life" reinforces two fundamental ideas: first, participation in non-institutional spheres should include the means to secure their effective inclusion in public deliberation and public affairs. This idea is condensed in Article 29.b which states that: [States

Parties should promote] “an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in public affairs”.

Second, institutions should grant both their effective participation, responsiveness, and account for their needs by their representatives. This aligns with Article 29.a: “persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis” and, in particular, “including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected, inter alia”. These rights might present challenges to both traditional models of public deliberation and institutional integration of informal communication channels. These challenges, including barriers for participation, the difficulty to reach hard-to-engage individuals, and the need to develop an intersectional perspective to promote inclusion are the main subjects discussed in the following sections.

### **3. The Problem: An Unwelcome Tension between Democratic Deliberation and Inclusion**

Millions of citizens are actively excluded from civic and political participation and deliberation worldwide. Only in Europe, more than 20 million people with intellectual disabilities experience pervasive barriers for political participation. Some of these barriers are formal. What is more, in 2024, people with intellectual disabilities were legally impeded to vote in 7 European countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, and Slovenia). Other barriers are material; the lack of sufficient support for people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities leaves them out of many electoral processes. Obstacles and barriers experienced by these citizens are both physical (i.e. transport, accommodation of the space) and cognitive (i.e. lack of easy-to-read: programmes, electoral documents, explanation of processes). This diversity increases the difficulty of designing inclusive participation and deliberation processes.

This formal and material exclusion has various negative consequences. Firstly, it undermines the legitimacy of our democratic systems, for one of its central pillars is precisely the inclusion of, ideally, all citizens in democratic processes, electoral or participatory. Despite nuances, there is widespread agreement within the literature on deliberative democratic theory on the idea that deliberative democracy should not only be fully inclusive but also proactive in designing both

formal and informal processes that accommodate the needs of citizens experiencing different barriers to participation and deliberation (Clifford, 2009; Mandiberg, 2010; Freyenhagen and O'Shea 2013; De Wispelaere and Casassas, 2013; Davy, 2015; Knight, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Celiktemur 2016; O'Shea, 2018; Afsahi, 2020; Williams, 2020). Secondly, democratic institutions that fail to account for all their citizens' interests, needs, and preferences, make worse public decisions since they leave out part of their citizenry's needs, talents and knowledge, embodying more restricted and limited forms of collective intelligence, and thus reaching more partial or less comprehensive understandings of the public good. Deliberation and deliberative processes should be inclusive, they should manage to include everyone subjected to political decisions to take part and participate in shaping decisions. In addition, all deliberators should participate on an egalitarian footing as free and equal citizens, removing all formal as well as material obstacles. However, in many deliberative settings this is reportedly not the case for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and other groups experiencing language-related barriers (such as migrants or elderly people) who need to accommodate discursive practices, the material space, time management, and need special support from facilitators to be able to fully participate in deliberation.

This section accounts for the barriers and the gap in civic participation and deliberation experienced by people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and individuals facing language-related difficulties to grant their full participation in political decision-making processes.

### **3.1. Problem description. The Gap in Civic Participation of Disabled Persons**

Although inclusion is both a widely accepted condition of democratic legitimacy and could be used to compensate for social and economic inequalities between deliberators, it has been a persistent challenge for deliberative democratic theory. In this sense, the standard model of deliberative democracy relies on procedural rules and forms of rational argumentative processes that rest on exclusionary sets of assumptions. In addition, it privileges face-to-face rational discussion through an exchange of well-grounded logical arguments (I.M.Young, 2002). These characteristics pervasively limit the participation of people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, as well as those facing language-related barriers. On the contrary, designing inclusive deliberative and democratic processes expanding deliberation and political communication

should involve language and linguistic symbols, and the expression of affection as well as cognition (I.M. Young, 2002; & B. Barber, 1984). Consequently, deliberative processes that are not able to go beyond the classic ideal of deliberation as a communicative process based on reasons and rationality where able deliberators discuss on an equal footing, will fail to include people with cognitive and intellectual impairments, as well as individuals facing language-related barriers and difficulties. To exclude those individuals from deliberation compromises the political legitimacy of both democratic institutions and democratic public decisions.

This part of the section aims at providing an image of the democratic deficit of failing to include these individuals in decision-making processes. To do so, it first describes structural inequality and the reproduction of social inequality patterns during deliberation through 5 mechanisms, second, it describes the accessibility barriers experienced by these individuals, third, it focuses on the concern with intersectionality and argues that it is specially eminent in these cases, and fourth, it describes the scope of the deliberation, the stakeholders who should be included in these processes, and some reasons why some of them might be hard to engage or easy to ignore.

### 3.1.1. Structural inequality and sources of inequality during deliberation

Structural inequality refers to the existing structures of power limiting participation of marginalised and vulnerable people who in addition experience language-related barriers. These inequalities are reproduced in the scope of deliberative processes. Asymmetries in power based on gender, race, ethnicity, language-related skills, rhetorical ability, and differences in social status establish relational patterns among deliberators which are effective during deliberation processes. Based on an empirical study, the literature identifies five mechanisms that appeared during the observed deliberation processes and contributed to reproduce patterns of social and structural inequality during deliberative processes.

Marginalisation of different deliberators during the democratic process is reproduced by different mechanisms including (Holdo, M., & Öhrn Sagrelius, L., 2020):

- 1) *Imposition of preexisting narratives or interpellation.* This dynamic refers to the use and reproduction (conscious or unconsciously) of familiar narratives that marginalise certain individuals “because they do not fit the frame of the discussion.”

- 2) *Inclusion of locally dominant actors.* The inclusion of deliberators who already play a central role within local communities might reproduce patterns of domination between them and other individuals during deliberation.
- 3) *Discursive Distancing.* The practice of expressing ideas that relate what is acceptable and what is not acceptable to two different groups of individuals. People exposed to this mechanism find it harder to express certain ideas which position them closer to the group they want to be distanced from.
- 4) *Reliance on Social Markets.* The practice according to which, some deliberators treat other participants based on their social backgrounds. For these deliberators, others' views and opinions are determined as important or worthy of consideration based on these social elements.
- 5) *Paternalistic Conflict Avoidance.* This dynamic treats deliberators as more or less capable of engaging in the discussion of certain topics based on whether they are perceived as able or unable to handle it correctly. In case they are perceived as unable, they will be treated with paternalism and treat the discussion as a taboo.

The reproduction of structural inequalities during deliberation in the form of discourse dynamics and practices contributes to the different types of marginalisation experienced by individuals. Individuals who experience material (lack of support and accessibility to participate in deliberative processes) and formal barriers (discriminatory legislation) to participate in deliberative processes are likely to experience the deliberation dynamics described as especially marginalising for them. In this context, the interdisciplinary perspective is an adequate tool to address the complexities experienced by individuals in these positions.

### **3.1.2. Accessibility barriers for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and persons who experience language-related difficulties**

In deliberative processes, accessibility barriers can be found before, during, and/or after the process. During the course of the analysis carried out for WP1, 14 accessibility barriers experienced by people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities were identified. These barriers especially affected people with disabilities and constituted challenges to their capacity for participation and deliberation, as well as limited the range of strategies that they could follow to overcome them.

Firstly, barriers present since recruitment of deliberators included the need to clearly explain (i) what a deliberative process is to people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and those experiencing language-related barriers; (ii) why participation in such processes is in their best interest; (iii) why the perception of deliberation as an elitist process is wrong; and (iv) how formal, material, and/or social aspects will be accommodated to their needs before, during, and after deliberation. These four elements are crucial for the design of inclusive deliberative processes and should be overcome in the starting phase.

Secondly, barriers during deliberation were mainly related to the need for effective assistance during the sessions for comprehension and communication. The presentation of the information to participants is highly important, as lack of clarity in the presentation of different pieces of information on various topics contributes to disorientation. As analysed in the previous point, social barriers during deliberation are of special concern. Both social norms that do not fit participant's needs and unfamiliarity with the other participants, as well as big groups and people exercising dominant roles during discussions constitute, in many cases, barriers for participation of people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities.

Finally, barriers after deliberation included lack of clarity in communication in the aftermath of the session, which might impact the motivation to continue participating in deliberations. Texts which summarise the discussion, consensus, or the aftermath of the process, should be adapted to be easily understood and contain the main ideas discussed and, when applicable, the main consensus or results reached.

Consequently, accessibility barriers exert a pervasive impact in people's willingness and effective participation and deliberation in democratic processes. Failing to account for individuals' preferences, interests, and needs directly erodes political equality and fairness of public decision-making processes; thus, weakening political legitimacy of democratic institutions, worse decisionmaking, and less effective public policies. Failing to account for marginalised and vulnerable people in decision-making generates, in turn, the background conditions for further situations of domination and oppression of those communities.

### 3.1.3. Intersectionality

The gap in civic participation and deliberation is not solely experienced by disabled people. Marginalised and vulnerable people experience different barriers for participation and deliberation when they decide to take part in these processes.

Inequalities experienced by marginalised people may be added to another layer of complexity when they are experienced by people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and individuals facing language-related disabilities. In these cases, the iDEM project and the work developed in T1.3<sup>7</sup> and D1.3 proposes to conduct an analysis focused on intersectionality. To experience intersectional disadvantages includes individuals with autism, those who experience dementia and poverty, or brain injury and oppression as a woman facing mobility problems. Now, one distinctive element of people with these experiences is that they are more likely to experience asymmetric relations with others which might include relations of domination and oppression. Individuals who are subject to the intersection of multiple factors and thus, are subjected to multiple disadvantages, experience of one or a combination of the following barriers: barriers in regard to gender, barriers in regard to ethnic group, barriers regarding language, barriers regarding functionality, and other barriers including socioeconomic status and institutional and policy-related barriers.

Any solution to design more inclusive deliberative processes for people facing different types of barriers due to marginalisation and disabilities should avoid stigmatisation of these deliberators. To do so, deliberative processes that aim to be inclusive for people who are subject to language-related barriers should shift from an ableist paradigm, this is to say, a paradigm which categorises people in relation to their capacities to a functionalist one. While categorisation focuses on *status judgements* (e.g., degree of disability), the implementation of the intersectional perspective to the design of inclusive deliberative processes focuses on removing barriers experienced by people facing different types of discriminations; this is to say, focuses on *functional judgements* (e.g., memory, evaluative competencies, etc.).

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<sup>7</sup> T1.3 Analyze barriers to participation in democratic spaces by gender, ethnic group, type and degree of disability, language, etc.

### 3.2. Scope of the problem and engagement difficulties

The scope of the problem to be discussed in a deliberative setting is determined by the institutional levels where deliberative democratic processes are taking place. These levels include local, regional, and national governments, as well as European institutions. Deliberation processes can take place both formally at different levels within governmental institutions, informally in a non-institutionalised manner. The systemic turn in deliberative democratic theory proposes to encompass institutional levels integrating formal deliberative processes with public informal deliberation. This systematic integration of formal and informal deliberation results in a coherent set of plural deliberations that operate in different contexts with different rules and manifestations all of which should share the aim to contribute to a widespread societal discussion and to build up ample political consensus (Mansbridge and Parkinson, 2012). As a result of the systemic turn, accessibility barriers partly depend on the deliberative venue and its formality or informality, as well as the deliberative dynamics that might contribute to reproduce structural inequalities.

Although one relevant characteristic analysed in the research conducted in WP1 is that people facing language-related difficulties are difficult to engage, they are the ones especially benefited by the systemic turn. Language-related barriers include barriers to reading, writing, understanding complex texts (including legal texts, documents expedited by the public administration such as fees, electoral documents and politically relevant texts), and expressing views. At formal and informal deliberative settings, these persons experience multiple barriers including literacy related barriers, lack of physical assistance and lack of accommodation of deliberative spaces. According to D4.1, during the design and implementation of deliberative and participatory spaces and practices which aim to reduce barriers, it may prove to be a complex process to identify the different needs that arise for different target groups (including organizational staff, experts, administration, etc) during the different phases of the deliberative process. In this sense, substantial challenges to engage the target groups include barriers such as “limited literacy, language differences, and social isolation, which hinder effective participation” (Holroyd-Leduc et al., 2016). Political institutions which are unable to accommodate easy to ignore persons will fail to account for these individuals’ preferences and needs during decision-making processes, rendering public decisions worse. Now, the institutional and non-institutional spheres of democratic politics become a highly relevant opportunity for the target deliberators to first, increase their visibility and have their voices

heard, and second, their representatives should pay attention to their special interests and needs. The latter might mean to create special channels of communication to bridge the formal and informal deliberative spheres.

#### **4. Solutions: Scientific Evidence to Design (more) Inclusive Deliberation Processes**

According to the research that has been done for WP 1, deliberative democratic theory provides both a common view of the legitimacy of democratic systems and a coherent set of standards to guide the design of decision making processes and deliberative participatory mechanisms, giving voice and agency to marginalized individuals. This section aims at describing and elaborating three solution strategies (first, increasing democratic legitimacy, second, strengthening the quality of public decisions, and third, democratic innovations) to the problem of inclusion, based on the research developed at the iDEM project.

##### **4.1. Inclusion: Increasing Democratic Legitimacy**

There are intrinsic reasons based on democratic principles of political equality, fairness, solidarity, and respect for diversity to design inclusive deliberative processes, to open these processes to people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and people facing language-related barriers. More basically, deliberation is a necessary condition for democratic legitimacy. A democratic system, to be politically legitimate, establishes that every citizen should enjoy equal political rights and equal consideration and treatment (Christiano, 2008). These conditions of political legitimacy entails formal equal rights but, most importantly, material conditions granting equal exercise of these rights. Material conditions include different types of resources such as correct time management, necessary support, well-designed space, intelligible texts, etc. To provide the needed material conditions for people experiencing language-related barriers directly determines their effective inclusion in deliberative processes (a specific set of recommendations with regard to material conditions is developed in Section 5).

Additionally, the political legitimacy of democratic institutions highly depends on the capacity of democratic systems to ground their decisions on the basis of public widely shared reasons. One

main component of democratic legitimacy is that their decisions should be justifiable to all, this is to say, decisions should be reasonably understandable for everyone, regardless of whether all citizens agree with them. The second element of legitimate democratic institutions is that they should treat every single citizen as free and equal. Every citizen deserves to know the justification of public decisions. In turn, citizens should be able to contribute in different ways and by different means and degrees, to public debate and collective decision-making. The idea of democratic legitimacy is highly conditioned by the quality of democratic deliberation and participation. The inclusion of people with intellectual and cognitive impairments and persons facing language-related barriers is essential to strengthen the quality of public decision making and final public decisions.

#### **4.2. Inclusion: Strengthening the Quality of Public Decisions**

According to the research developed for WP1, one of the most relevant reasons to include individuals with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and those facing language-related barriers in deliberative processes are epistemic reasons. In the context of the design of inclusive deliberative processes for people experiencing language-related barriers and intellectual and cognitive disabilities, epistemic reasons refer to the capacity of deliberators to make legitimate decisions, which in turn are decisions that pursue ultimate goals that are more likely to be correct. These epistemic reasons are based on collective intelligence theory (Noveck, 2015 and 2023); Mulgan, 2017): (1) Laws or decisions addressing special needs of people with cognitive disabilities will be better and directly contribute to the common good if those having special needs who are subjected to laws, participate in the decision-making process. (2) Determination of ultimate goals should be an impartial task that manages to take everyone's interests into account. For that, it is necessary that all citizens may have a say in public decision making processes, including people with language-related barriers. (3) The distribution of talents across society makes the case for diversity strengthening collective intelligence. (4) Evidence states that more open and collaborative approaches to public decision-making significantly improve its effectiveness, efficacy, and efficiency.

Now, while on the one hand, the quality of public decisions crucially depends on the ability of decision-making processes to integrate elements of collective intelligence theory, on the other hand, the substantive merits of public decisions refer to formal and material aspects of such

decisions. First, the formal aspects of public decisions establish that they should be clear, simple, concrete, complete, and coherent. Second, the material aspects of public decisions state that the quality of public decisions relevantly depends on the *substantive correctness* of these decisions, i.e., their justice or fairness understood as their capacity to pursue correct goals, their effectiveness, efficacy, and efficiency.

Now, the fairness of public decisions depends on the principles of fairness each society uses to evaluate the outcomes of public decisions. However, this reason justifying inclusion in deliberative processes might depend on a particular principle of justice. This element could be too ambitious as one characteristic of modern societies is the presence of strong disagreement on which are the principles of justice that should govern political institutions. To overcome this obstacle, an additional mechanism to strengthen public decisions is to combine the evaluation of outcomes with an analysis of which are the conditions under which a decision-making process is likely to make correct decisions. Thus, the *substantive correctness* of public decisions and ultimately their legitimacy, also depends on their capacity to pursue correct goals in an effective, efficient, and efficacious manner. More specifically, an efficient decision maximizes the production of the intended results at the lowest cost, vis-a-vis other alternative decisions. A decision is effective if it gets implemented and produces some results. Finally, a decision will be efficacious if it (partly) produces the results that it intended to produce.

All in all, there are intrinsic reasons and epistemic reasons for the inclusion of people experiencing language-related barriers and intellectual and cognitive disabilities in deliberative processes. Both intrinsic reasons which are based on political equality and epistemic reasons are based on stronger public decisions justify: (i) granting formal access to all citizens to political institutional processes, (ii) participation in informal public deliberation, (iii) adopt active policies in the design of institutionalised deliberative participatory processes removing informal accessibility barriers and empowering vulnerable citizens to ensure that their contributions are equally considered (Estlund 1997; Martí, 2006; Landemore & Estlund, 2018).

### 4.3. Democratic Innovations

The core of the solution to make deliberative processes inclusive for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and people with language-related barriers relies on democratic

innovations. As the theoretical basis of the deliberative theory states, deliberation and deliberative processes are a necessary element of democratic legitimacy and an optimal space for democratic innovation and empirical testing.

In this sense, deliberative democratic theory provides an optimal theoretical framework to identify the challenges that individuals targeted by the project, including migrants, the elderly, and people with intellectual disabilities face when participating in deliberative democratic processes, but most importantly, the opportunities to create inclusive deliberative processes with a special emphasis on the target individuals. Thus, this last part of section 4, focuses on describing and discussing (i) how the democratic deliberative theory might accommodate innovation for inclusion that enable to distinguish different levels of participation; (ii) what elements of deliberative processes should be measured to evaluate the quality of the participation; and (iii) which strategies could be followed to design inclusive deliberative and participatory processes.

#### 4.3.1. From Classical to Expanded Deliberation

Although deliberative democratic theory has been a plural set of different accounts from its inception, there are three common characteristics shared by its many developments (Carson and Hartz-Karp 2005): (i) the *demand for inclusivity*; deliberators should represent different views that are present in the society. (ii) *Deliberative Discussion*: everybody should be able to present their views and opinions, listened to, and the social background should not influence the process or reproduce social patterns (Cohen 2009; Habermas 1999). (iii) *Effectiveness and feeling of involvement* should be part of every process of public deliberation (Raisio et al., 2014). The demand for inclusivity is interpreted in different ways which do not always prove equally inclusive, especially in the case of people with disabilities.

The standard model of deliberative democracy conceives deliberation as an open discussion where people with different ideas and preferences are brought together to, ideally, reach some type of consensus rationally and based on the common good. This standard model of deliberation describes a process which is fully cognitive. Additionally, emotions should be avoided. Following the standard model of deliberation, participants should possess “deliberative capacities” (Cohen, 1989). Deliberators should meet certain cognitive demands that enable them to engage with others, understand and express their preferences and needs in a reasonable manner. Only when this condition is met participants can take part in the deliberation. Now, it is clear that this narrow definition of the ideal deliberator sets aside people who do not comply

with the described ideal conditions of deliberative capacities. This includes people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and people facing language-related barriers.

To mitigate this situation, another account of deliberation was developed: the expanded account of disability in deliberative democracy (Rasio et al. 2014). This account focuses on openness, inclusiveness, and contestation. It emphasizes the role of affect in public deliberation and recognises that there are both negative (denial, cognitive dissonance, etc.) and positive factors (enthusiasm, sympathy, etc.) arising from affection (Yankelovich, 2011). An effectively inclusive deliberative process requires extended forms of communication within public deliberation. In the case of the iDEM project, the expanded paradigm of deliberation is assisted by AI-based text simplification technologies to enable political equality between deliberators experiencing language-related barriers.

Finally, the classic ideal of public deliberation, the deliberation capacity, is seen as benefiting already privileged people, thus reproducing social inequalities and patterns of inegalitarian relations which makes participation of marginalised and vulnerable persons even more difficult.

Disability in deliberative democracy	Classical, liberal and cognitive side of deliberation	Expanded, critical and affective side of deliberation
Premise	To strive to respond to the challenges of contemporary liberal democracies.	To examine the 'limits of democracy' by articulating the injustices within.
Cognition/affect	Deliberation understood as a purely cognitive process.	Emphasis on the role of affect in public deliberation.
Communication	Favours calm, dispassionate, literal and disembodied speech.	Accepts many different ways of verbal and embodied communication.
Inclusiveness	Cognitively impaired persons and the speech-impaired population are left outside of public deliberation.	As every one of us is cognitively limited, everybody is considered having 'deliberative capacities'.
Legitimacy	The legitimacy of deliberative democracy is questionable.	As inclusiveness increases, the legitimacy of deliberative democracy strengthens.

*Figure 1 - Classical and expanded deliberation in relation to difference and diversity (Source: Rasio et al., 2014)*

Once conceptualized to a sufficient degree, the shift from the classical to the expanded paradigm of deliberation opens the reflection on how these differences should be accommodated in terms of discourse, space, time management, and general rules to make

deliberative processes a venue where all deliberators participate on an equal footing regardless of their capacities and based on their functionalities. These questions are being discussed at the end of this section, and more specific recommendations to design inclusive deliberation for people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and people facing language-related barriers are described in the next section, section 5.

#### **4.3.2. Discursive innovations to include people with intellectual disabilities and language-related barriers in discursive practices**

One of the main aims of the different proposals for combining diverse patterns of speech at deliberative settings is to counteract power imbalances between deliberators taking part in the participatory process. For the last 20 years, an ever growing number of voices have spoken up about a new understanding of both the concept and practice of discourse to make deliberation more inclusive. The exclusion of deliberators that did not master the cognitive side of deliberation was especially persistent in discussions of policy matters and at policy-making institutions including those between members of parliaments (T. Schramme, 2021).

To improve this situation, discursive practice's innovations constitute both conceptual and practical shifts from the traditional idea of discourse to a new conception and recommendations for designing deliberative settings where people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and those experiencing language-related barriers can express their preferences and interests, and eventually integrate their political needs in policymaking and institutional decision-making processes. Within the literature, revisited discursive practices, as well as collaborative speech, and practices of translation have been proposed as alternatives to the standard model of deliberation with the focus of enabling the introduction of non-cognitive elements in deliberative processes. Before establishing a comparison among these alternatives, a brief definition of each would contribute to identify potential similarities. First, revisited discursive practices refers to the communication between deliberators, it might include different forms of speech such as discourses, perspectives, and lived experiences. Second, collaborative speech is quite similar to discursive practices, it aims at generating the conditions to include people with profound disabilities in deliberation. To do so, it proposes a model of discourse practice according to which individuals make claims collaboratively. Third, practices of translation have common elements both with revisited discursive practices, and collaborative speech, as it aims to recognise unconventional forms of communication. Practices of translation refers to alternative forms of speech including communication of guardians on behalf of deliberators who are severely disabled and sign language interpreters.

The following table depicts these 3 sets of strategies to overcome disability and language-related barriers during deliberation, specifically barriers involving discursive practices. It is organised to highlight both the similarities and consensus between the three proposed strategies.

<p><b><u>STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON DISCOURSE PRACTICES (AFSAHI, 2020)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>STRATEGIES BASED ON COLLABORATION (CLIFFORD, 2012; Schramme, 2021, &amp; Landemore, 2012)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON THE PRACTICES OF TRANSLATION (Knight, 2015)</u></b></p>
<p><u>Expanding the scope of speech acts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participation</b> can be <b>embodied</b> in addition to, or instead of verbal. Encompasses <b>partial</b> and <b>assisted speech</b> by caregivers. Participation relies on <b>collaborative speech</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Joint Effort Model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberation as a joint effort, <b>undermines the distinction between contribution and participation. Individual deliberation requirements:</b> “deliberative stance” (Owen &amp; Smith, 2015) and “deliberative answerability” (Westlund, 2009). <b>Minimal deliberative capacity:</b> no deliberator should act in an anti-deliberative way. <b>Specific contributions</b> from disabled people based (not only but also) in: (i) <b>ignorance of norms of normality;</b> (ii) <b>ignorance of social norms;</b> (iii) <b>ignorance of epistemic norms.</b></li> </ul>	<p><u>Embrace Politics of Translation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Redress misrecognition</b> to resist conformity and persistent exclusion. This includes <b>sign-language interpreters</b> and <b>guardians</b> to make concerns <b>intelligible for nondisabled audiences.</b></li> </ul>
<p><u>Enclave deliberations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enclaves</b> including marginalised and disempowered groups can <b>incentivize</b> their <b>participation</b>, enlarge the pool of opinions, and equalise speaking time since participants are comfortable with disagreement.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Democratic Reason</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>epistemically better</b> to have a larger group of <b>cognitively diverse people</b> (larger pool of ideas, most likely to identify bad arguments), than a smaller group of very smart homogeneous individuals. Epistemic benefits of diversity rely on social circumstances.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Listening and understanding by nondisabled</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nondisabled</b> should work on <b>understanding</b> and <b>recognising alternative</b> forms of <b>communication.</b></li> </ul>

<p><u>Deliberative assistants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Caregivers, mediators, and assistants promote communication and expression</b>, and ease the process of participants' developing their own voices.</li> <li>• Similar to the joint effort model.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Communicative Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-verbal language contributes to incomprehensibility (Habermas, 1970).</li> <li>• <b>Communicative locations</b> should be <b>reformed</b> to safeguard inclusion and <b>persistent linguistic commitments</b> should be <b>dislodged</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Open-mindedness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All citizens</b> should be <b>receptive</b> and <b>open-minded</b> to <b>different communication</b> patterns, rituals, logics, and norms.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Discursive representatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some individuals should represent severely disabled deliberators' discourses (John Dryzek).</li> <li>• These individuals should not only represent discourses but also perspectives, interests, and experiences of deliberators (Afsahi, 2020).</li> <li>• This representation is limited: may not find complete resonance with anyone, but partial with many.</li> <li>• Representatives should not only be able bodied and able-minded, but those who have experienced cognitive disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Embodied Speech and Participation, and Publicity of Bodies,</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>physical presence of disabled bodies</b>, the publicity of bodies, <b>expands conversations</b> similar to <b>rational speech</b> acts.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Understanding cognitive and physical diversity as a resource to democratic decision-making</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving <b>difference in deliberation</b> generates <b>better deliberative outcomes</b>: engaging with disabled bodies promotes non-stigmatised relations, transformative relations, and better political decisions (in the long run).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Sequencing deliberation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy used in real life deliberation. The creation of <b>moments</b> and <b>spaces</b> of deliberation that are less concerned with substantive airing of issues, resolving conflict, and reaching agreements, but <b>focus on capacity building and communicative training</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Collaborative Speech</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Political claims collaboratively ensure</b> the <b>inclusion</b> of people with severe cognitive impairments.</li> <li>• Similar to the joint effort model.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Good enough deliberation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A deliberation that is influenced by power asymmetries but has the capacity to <b>reduce disparities in the next round of arguments</b> might deliver <b>better outcomes</b> (Fraser, 2007).</li> </ul>

*Table 1 - Three main strategies to include people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and people with language-related barriers during deliberative processes*

As presented in Table 1, these three strategies agree on the need to expand discourses to extended communication between deliberators. While at times they proposed similar strategies,

their perception of extended communication changes slightly; for example, while the first strategy highlights the relevance of people experiencing disabilities as discursive representatives, the third view focuses on the role of guardians to translate concerns.

Additionally, one of the main upshots of the discursive strategies identified in the above table 1 is that, according to the second strategy, non-verbal discourse in general and specifically embodiment, is a form of discourse in itself. Embodied speech manages to generate new forms of communication which might be transformative and pose different challenges to nondisabled deliberators, in addition, “experiences of people with disabilities demonstrate the ways in which their physical presence counteracts prejudicial stereotypes, elicits new debates and instills increased attentiveness.” (Clifford, 2015). This type of speech contributes to deliberation and quality deliberation by generating other forms of discursive articulations than mere rational and cognition-based argumentation.

In addition to these actions, specific indicators should be determined and provided in order to evaluate the performance of deliberative processes from the perspective of the inclusion of people with cognitive disabilities and language-related barriers.

#### **4.3.3. Measuring Deliberative Quality to Strengthen Inclusion: the “discursive quality index” and the “deliberative uptake”**

Inclusion is an indicator of the quality of public decisions. Different strategies to improve inclusion have focused on revisiting discursive practices, collaborative speech, and innovative practices of translation. One of the main goals of these proposals is to open deliberative processes to different forms of speech acts. The epistemic reason to include people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and individuals experiencing language-related difficulties establishes that to include these individuals will improve the quality of public decisions. However, to achieve better public decisions, inclusion of the target individuals should incorporate quality deliberation. In particular, there are methods that aim at empirically evaluating the quality of deliberative exchanges. One of the main methods for empirical measurement is the discourse quality index (DQI). The DQI is a well-known method which aims at measuring whether deliberative practices are aligned with deliberation ideals. It is based on Habermasian theories of discourse and democracy and utilizes speech as the unit of analysis. It codes demands and claims-making deliberation on what decisions should (or not) be made.

Within this frame, it scores speech in six indicators of quality: participation, level of justification, content of justifications, respect for groups, respect for counterarguments, and constructive politics. These indicators are however dynamic and different applications might vary some of them.

Discourse quality index	
Indicator	Codes assigned
Participation	(1) Speaker is interrupted (2) Normal participation possible
Level of justification	(1) No justification (2) Inferior justification (3) Qualified justification (4) Sophisticated justification
Content of justifications	(1) Explicit statement concerning group interests (2) Neutral statement (2a) Explicit statement of the common good in utilitarian terms (2b) Explicit statement of the common good in terms of the difference principle
Respect for groups	(1) No respect (2) Implicit respect (3) Explicit respect
Respect for counterarguments	(1) Counterarguments ignored (2) Counterarguments included but degraded (3) Counterarguments included—neutral (4) Counterarguments included and valued
Constructive politics	(1) Positional politics (2) Alternative proposal (3) Mediating proposal

Figure 2 - Discourse Quality Index<sup>8</sup>

However, the DQI fails to recognise and account for different levels of engagement during deliberation. According to the three strategies to improve the inclusion of targeted individuals in deliberation, engagement with discourses during deliberation is a key element in the case at stake. Contrarily, the DQI is a highly individualistic method and thus, does not consider the different power dynamics and structural inequalities associated with the inclusiveness of the deliberation (Mockler, 2022). Structural inequalities pervasively affect deliberators (power asymmetries due to social status, gender, race, disabilities, language-related abilities, rhetoric

<sup>8</sup> Source: Steenbergen, M. R., A Bächtiger, A., Spörndli, M., and Steiner, J.(2003)

capacity, etc.) and threaten the quality of the discourse and the engagement of deliberators. These elements are specially relevant for the inclusion of people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and people facing language-related barriers.

Now, although the level of engagement with other deliberators' discourses importantly determines the quality of deliberative processes and their practical inclusion of people who experience language-related barriers, few methods have been developed to empirically measure this aspect. A well-known method to measure the inclusion of a deliberative process at the discourse level is the "deliberative uptake". The deliberative uptake is defined as a quality discursive practice according to which "(...) when someone speaks, others acknowledge the expression in ways that continue the engagement" (I.M.Young, 2002, pg. 25). This measure captures speech and focuses on assessing whether a speaker's ideas have been heard, whether they have been seriously considered by other participants, and whether other participants have engaged with them. When these three elements are obtained, the process has meaningfully included the deliberator. This alternative measure enables a more nuanced analysis than the DQI of whether a deliberator's contributions were treated in an inclusive way in a given deliberative setting.

To measure the uptake of a deliberation at least one of the following three conditions should be met: participants will (i) see their suggestions or questions reflected in the final proposal, (ii) be acknowledged by their fellow deliberators and (iii) be acknowledged by authority figures within the deliberative setting (I.M.Young, 2002). These measures are specially relevant for the target of the iDEM project as the proposed strategies to improve inclusion might be assessed through interactions that "continue the engagement". To be able to be heard, to express their preferences and have their needs considered during deliberative and participatory democratic processes, to be included in democratic decision-making, constitute the ultimate goals of the iDEM project.

## 5. General Recommendations

The strategies presented in Section 5 generate policy implications and specific sets of recommendations. These recommendations combine general standards with specific

recommendations for replicability of inclusive deliberative processes. The differences in specificity respond to a desired adaptability to different policy contexts. In addition, these policy implications are laid out in three types of actions: standards, courses of action, and general recommendations. Standards present a set of requirements to be fulfilled by any policy or deliberative procedure in which people with cognitive disabilities should be included. Courses of action aim at serving as a practical guidance with specific actions that inclusive deliberative processes should consider and follow. Finally, general recommendations offer fairly broad recommendations to design and replicate deliberative processes where individuals experiencing language-related difficulties and intellectual and cognitive disabilities will be included. In this sense, the suggested strategies for discursive practices’ innovation are implemented first as standards and then as specific courses of action. Both standards and courses of action are complemented by general recommendations for replicability. One of the most challenging and relevant objectives of the iDEM project is its ambition to reach the public administration and to have an impact in policy making. However, currently there is a gap between policy making and academia. The second part of this section on general recommendations focuses on developing a set of recommendations to reach, engage, and influence evidence-based policymaking.

### 5.1. General recommendations for replicability

Building up on the strategies and considerations developed in the previous section, this section identifies a set of standards, courses of action, and general recommendations for replicability of inclusive deliberative democratic processes that should be of practical guidance in the design of any policy or deliberative procedure in which people with cognitive disabilities and those who experience language-related barriers should be included. The following standards are based on epistemic and legitimacy considerations that are relevant to any instance of public deliberation.

#### 5.1.1. Standards, Courses of Action, and Recommendations for Replicability

Standards	Course of Action	General Recommendations
<p><u>Clear Specific Information on the Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive disabilities, should receive <b>previous</b></li> </ul>	<p><u>Adapted Materials.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special <b>informative materials adapted</b> specifically to every participant’s <b>cognitive level</b></li> </ul>	<p><u>Tackle distrust</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness raising actions at an early stage prior to deliberation. Include <b>testimonials</b>, involve</li> </ul>

<p><b>complete information</b> about how the <b>process</b> will be organized and conducted, about its <b>expectations</b>, and about <b>their role</b> in it. They should also receive some basic relevant information on the <b>topic</b> that will be discussed.</p>	<p>and background might be necessary at the 3 stages of the process: <b>previously, during, after the process.</b></p>	<p><b>community leaders</b> or trusted figures. <b>Transparency</b> in all stages of the process.</p>
<p><u>Material Conditions for Equal Setting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive disabilities, should be able to <b>share information and express their views</b> and opinions in <b>equal material conditions</b>, enjoying sufficient <b>time</b> and <b>practical resources</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Removing Material Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The identification and <b>removal of formal and material barriers</b> of access for people with cognitive disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Transportation facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special <b>assistance</b> with <b>transportation. Public means</b> to arrive at the venue. <b>Accessibility</b> of the venue.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Egalitarian Listening and Reflection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, should be able to <b>pay attention</b> and <b>understand</b> what <b>others</b> are saying during deliberation <b>in equal conditions</b>. This mutual understanding is a <b>shared responsibility</b> that might imply <b>specific duties</b> for <b>participants with no disability</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Facilitators, Assistants &amp; Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of <b>personal facilitators</b> or assistants to help the people with cognitive disabilities.</li> <li>Special <b>training for moderators</b>, other participants, and also people with cognitive disabilities.</li> <li>The use of <b>specific technologies</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Empathetic Facilitators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Facilitators</b> with <b>training</b> and <b>experience</b> in deliberations with vulnerable people.</li> <li>Deal with issues of <b>participants' mistrust</b> and <b>self-esteem</b>.</li> <li>Use <b>gratitude</b> and <b>validation strategies</b>.</li> <li><b>Assistance</b> should be provided <b>discreetly, upon request</b>, and within the framework of personal <b>autonomy</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Egalitarian Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, should be able to <b>engage in discussion</b>, comment or criticism of each other's interventions <b>in equal conditions</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Schedule Adaptation &amp; Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific <b>rules of order</b> including special turns or special schedules.</li> <li>The use of specific <b>technologies</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Increasing engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Participants' commitment</b> might be increased by choosing a <b>topic</b> of discussion which is <b>being debated</b> at the political sphere.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Egalitarian Voice and Expression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, should be able <b>express their views</b> about how the process is being conducted, and make <b>suggestions</b> or propose <b>changes</b> in it in equal conditions.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Extended and Adapted Communication &amp; Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of <b>special forms of language or communication</b>, such as storytelling or visual material.</li> <li>The use of specific <b>technologies</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Assistive Technologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Count with <b>assistive technological devices</b>: screen readers, accessible keyboards or audio amplifiers.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Egalitarian Consensus Building</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, should be able to <b>take part in consensus building in equal conditions</b> and, eventually, in agreeing on a final decision to be made, as well as in expressing disagreement with it.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Easy-to-Read and Plain Language &amp; Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of <b>easy-to-read and plain language and AAC</b> (alternative and augmentative communication).</li> <li>The use of specific <b>technologies</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Adaptive thematic discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New information should be divided into <b>small learning units</b>.</li> <li><b>Topics</b> should be presented in <b>short, easy-to-understand</b> sections.</li> <li><b>Facilitate multisensory learning methods</b> and reinforcement of key points: frequent summaries and repetition.</li> <li>Implementing <b>alternative participation tools</b> such as voting with colored cards, or simple election systems, avoiding dependence on written language, facilitates integration.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Egalitarian Evaluation of the Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants, including people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, should participate in <b>equal conditions in the evaluation of the process</b>, and receive <b>information ex-post</b> about the results of the deliberation, its evaluation, and its impact, if any."</li> </ul>	<p><u>Easy-to-Read and Plain Language &amp; Technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of <b>easy-to-read and plain language and AAC</b> (alternative and augmentative communication).</li> <li>The use of specific <b>technologies</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Time management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is essential to plan <b>additional times for each activity</b>.</li> <li>Factors related to <b>learning</b> and <b>expectations</b> during the <b>deliberation</b> facilitated by text simplification tools: <b>understanding of new concepts</b> related to a field as specialized and technical as politics.</li> </ul>

Table 2 - Standards, Courses of Action, and Recommendations for Replicability

These standards make the case to advance some general recommendations that inclusive

deliberative processes should consider to be inclusive for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and language-related barriers. Therefore, deliberative processes that fail to follow these recommendations might not grant the inclusion of the target individuals.

## 5.2. General recommendations to reach and influence policymakers

It is not highly controversial to say that there is a very relevant gap between academia and policy making with respect to advocating for evidence-based policies. Academics who aim at having an impact and influence policymaking through evidence-based decision-making processes usually encounter different expected and unexpected barriers both to approach policymakers and to participate in decision-making processes discussing evidenced-based policies. The following general recommendations aim at contributing to bridging this gap by a twofold strategy: first, by providing systematic information on the recommendations that can be found in the literature on how to engage in policymaking; and second, by complementing these inputs with the specialised literature on policy studies.

### 5.2.1. General Recommendations for Engagement and Complementary Considerations

<b>Engaging in Policymaking</b> (Cairney, P., & Oliver, K., 2018)	<b>Complementary Considerations</b> (Cairney, P., & Oliver, K., 2018)
<p><i>Doing high-quality research</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of specific <b>well-established research designs, methods, or metrics</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Preferred for diverse sources of information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many policymakers prefer to consult <b>information from various sources</b>, combining their own experience with literature.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making research relevant and readable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing and disseminating <b>easily understandable, clear, relevant and high-quality research</b>.</li> <li>• Aiming for the <b>general but ‘not ignorant’ reader</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Using storytelling</b>: emotional appeals or humour.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Needed framing of evidence to be politically relevant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of <b>good evidence-based knowledge</b>: not only summarising but <b>framing its implication to make it policy-relevant</b> and in demand by policymakers.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Understanding the policy process, policymaking context, and key actors</i></p>	<p><i>Policymakers value conflicts and ethical dilemmas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policymakers experience <b>“bounded</b></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the <b>specific targeted</b> policy process.</li> <li>• Noting the <b>busy</b> and <b>constrained lives</b> of policy actors.</li> <li>• Maximising use of <b>established ways to engage</b>, e.g., advisory committees.</li> <li>• <b>Pragmatism</b>: research rarely translates into policy options directly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>rationality</b>" (inability to separate one's own values from facts, rank preferences consistently, make policy in linear stages, analyse policy and policymaking context comprehensively) and <b>dilemmas</b> created by a complex policy making environment.</p>
<p><i><u>Being 'accessible' to policymakers: engaging routinely, flexibly, and humbly</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As publicly funded professionals, it is the <b>job of academics to engage with policy and the public</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Discussing topics beyond narrow expertise</b>, as a representative of the discipline or the science profession.</li> <li>• Humility, professionalism, and <b>recognition of the limits of influencing policymaking</b> when giving policy advice.</li> <li>• Respecting <b>policymakers' time and expertise</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><i><u>Limitations of good evidence</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More evidence does not help</b> to discriminate between unclarity of preferences or the policy process where they are considered.</li> <li>• <b>Policy-relevant science is highly value-laden</b>, e.g., the decision for a specific topic and research question, or the formulation to evaluate the success of the solution.</li> <li>• These problems <b>persist after the integration of technologies</b> or advances in scientific methods.</li> </ul>
<p><i><u>Deciding to be an 'issue advocate' or 'honest broker</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical <b>dilemma</b>: go beyond <b>providing evidence to recommending specific policy</b> options or remain an 'honest broker' explaining the options.</li> <li>• Making recommendations: <b>storytelling</b> to persuade policymakers of a course of action.</li> <li>• Most common <b>consequences</b> when giving policy advice: <b>criticism</b> within one's peer-group, being seen as an academic 'lightweight', being used to add legitimacy to a policy position; and the risk of burnout.</li> </ul>	<p><i><u>Competition for attention</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Researchers compete with many actors</b> to secure policymaking audiences, and authoritative decisions can take place at many arenas.</li> </ul>
<p><i><u>Building relationships (and ground rules) with policymakers.</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Relationship-building activities</b> require major investment and skills, but <b>working collaboratively</b> is often necessary to get evidence into policy</li> <li>• Academics could identify policy actors to provide better insight into policy problems, act</li> </ul>	<p><i><u>Unforeseen and attention</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social and economic crises</b> or focusing events can <b>prompt lurches of attention</b> from one issue to another.</li> </ul>

<p>as champions for their research, and identify the most helpful policy actors, who may be advisors rather than ministers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaboration can also lead to conflict and reputational damage.</b> Therefore, produce ground rules acceptable to academics and policymakers. Successful engagement: all parties to agree about processes (ethics, consent, and confidentiality) and outputs (data, intellectual property)</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Being 'entrepreneurial' or finding someone</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much <b>advice</b> projects an image of a daring, <b>persuasive scientist</b>, comfortable in policy environments and always available when needed.</li> <li>• <b>Developing 'media-savvy' skills</b> to 'sell the sizzle'.</li> <li>• Becoming able to <b>'convince people who think differently</b> that shared action is possible', and that real, tangible impacts are deliverable.</li> <li>• Alternative: <b>hiring brokers</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Institutional proliferation and changing rules</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Different policymaking organisations</b> have their own rules (formal and informal) including <b>different guides for evidence gathering</b> (from leading persons to sources and types of favoured evidence).</li> </ul>
<p><i>Reflecting continuously: should you engage, do you want to, and is it working?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academics may be a <b>good fit</b> in the policy arena if they 'want to be in the <b>real world</b>', 'enjoy <b>finding solutions</b> to complex problems' or are driven 'by a passion greater than simply adding another item to the CV.'</li> <li>• <b>Keeping track</b> of impact and revise practices continuously.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Preference to well-established ideas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to <b>favour well-established beliefs and paradigms</b> influence policymakers' receptivity to new solutions.</li> </ul>

Table 3 - Reaching and Influencing Policymakers (Source: Cairney, P., & Oliver, K., 2018)

These sets of general and specific recommendations for designing inclusive deliberative processes and to reach and influence policy making based on the research carried out in WP1 and WP4<sup>9</sup>, constitute a first step to provide guidance and transfer knowledge to the public administration and to anyone wishing to design and organise inclusive deliberative and participatory processes. These recommendations will be further discussed at M33 of the project

<sup>9</sup> WP4 User Engagement, Piloting, & Monitoring Deliberative & Participatory Democracy

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at an international workshop and a subsequently revisited Policy Brief Report which will be able to include the empirical information generated by the iDEM Use Cases.

## 6. Conclusions

This deliverable provides practical guidance for the replicability of deliberative and participatory processes enabling the inclusion of people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities, as well as people with language-related barriers. Deliberative democracy has proved to be a fruitful avenue in developing democratic innovations to foster participation of difficult to reach or easy to ignore individuals. While the traditional deliberative theory relied on rigid rational forms of rhetoric for participation, the latest developments offered a comprehensive framework to work on the inclusion through collaborative deliberation, new forms of participation including storytelling, and emphasizing both the role of facilitators and the embodiment of the speech.

This policy brief aims at helping the design of new deliberation and participatory processes providing strategies, recommendations, and courses of action to design both the formal, social, and material elements of a deliberative process, dividing the process into three stages: the preparatory stage, the implementation, and the aftermath of the process. Accessibility, both with regard to the materiality and text-related features of the process, is fostered through different recommendations. Strategies, recommendations, and courses of actions combine specificity with sufficient generality to enable its application and adaptation to a wide range of processes: from bottom-up to top down approaches, from min publics to informal deliberation and mixed forms.

Finally, this policy brief includes a corollary on as regrettably and usually forgotten as important topic: how should academics reach and influence policymaking. It offers some strategies to effectively reach policymaking, considering the difficulties and barriers to integrate epistemic voices into policymaking processes, time management, decision-making barriers (e.g. competition of different stakeholders for attention), and effective communication and understanding of dynamics implicit to institutions. It highlights both the importance and difficulty of evidence-based policymaking.

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