

# NEWSLETTER

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## ABOUT EU-CIEMBLY

Launched on 1 January 2024, the EU-CIEMBLY project is funded by the European Union under the **Horizon Europe research and innovation program** with a four-year timeline.

The project aims to create an innovative and inclusive European Citizens' Assembly that addresses issues of intersectionality, inclusiveness, and equality in European Union political life. Furthermore, EU-CIEMBLY seeks to improve **participatory** and **deliberative democracy** by developing an analytical framework and prototype for establishing the Assembly at the EU level, with potential adaptations at national and local levels across EU Member States. Drawing on academic perspectives on intersectionality, equality, and power relations, the project is built on a foundation of **open research practices**, including open access and early sharing of findings.

EU-CIEMBLY will test three pilot models for the Citizens' Assembly: a local pilot, a national pilot, and a transnational pilot. These pilots will provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of Citizens' Assemblies and their impact on democratic processes.

## FIRST INSIGHTS AND PROGRESS

### The foundation of the project

A major achievement of the EU-CIEMBLY project so far has been the development of the **Analytical and Normative Framework**. This framework serves as a foundation for addressing intersectionality in **Citizens' Assemblies** and democratic participation, focusing on three key qualities: **equality, inclusion, and high-quality deliberation**.

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EU-CIEMBLY: Creating an Inclusive European Citizens' Assembly addresses the need for the introduction of new forms of citizens' participation and deliberation in EU political life.



## PROJECT WORKSHOP IN MADRID

From 4–6 November 2024, the EU-CIEMBLY team gathered at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid for a key workshop.

The mission was to lay the foundation for an innovative Citizens' Assembly designed to give people from all walks of life a voice in shaping Europe's future.

The workshop focused on building an inclusive, respectful, and collaborative environment that reflects Europe's diversity.

The framework was initially developed based on the project proposal, which served as a starting point. As the project progresses, this initial framework is being refined and expanded. The team has integrated **intersectionality theory**, which emphasises the influence of power dynamics and the intersection of social identities on individuals' ability to participate meaningfully in democratic processes.

One of the significant achievements is the development of **working definitions** for the key concepts of **equality**, **inclusion**, and **deliberation**. These definitions were crafted through the lens of **intersectionality** and contrast traditional, conventional approaches with more contemporary frameworks that account for structural inequalities. In many conventional deliberative democracy models, participants are treated as rational, free, and equal individuals, which often overlooks the challenges faced by marginalised groups.

This project, however, emphasises the need for a more nuanced understanding of equality and inclusion that recognises the **structural discrimination** experienced by these groups. In contrast to traditional models, the project advocates for **substantive equality**, focusing on achieving **equitable outcomes** rather than simply ensuring equal opportunities.

This intersectional approach recognises that equality cannot be achieved by treating everyone the same but requires addressing power imbalances and ensuring that disadvantaged groups are given the support they need to participate fully and meaningfully in democratic processes.

## NEXT STEPS

The upcoming phases of the EU-CIEMBLY project involve several crucial actions, including the application of theoretical insights to the practical design of Citizens' Assemblies. For example, **mapping the intersectional framework** onto various design choices such as recruitment, institutional setup, and decision-making processes.

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## WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

### Learning about Intersectionality.

Participants explored how different aspects of peoples' identities such as gender, nationality, and ability shape their experiences in society.

### Designing the Citizens' Assembly.

Teams brainstormed how to organise and run the Assembly, recruit participants from all backgrounds, and guide meaningful discussions where everyone's opinion counts.

### Ensuring Inclusive Communication.

The workshop emphasised the importance of clear and accessible language, so the project team worked on creating a Glossary to explain complex terms and developed strategies to ensure communication materials are inclusive and easily understood.

