

Parlamento 2030

General presentation

In response to the generalized lack of political accountability and availability of clear public information related to the political measures adopted to implement the Agenda 2030, this online tool provides an open and qualified access to the Spanish Parliament's activity from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) perspective. It promotes a transparent and participative implementation of this Agenda and allows CSOs, policy makers and the media to monitor political discussion, proposals and decisions.

Parlamento 2030 is being implemented in the Spanish Congress in the framework of a collaboration agreement between Political Watch and the Secretariat of State for International Cooperation (SECI), responsible for international cooperation policy in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (MAUC). It was included in the Spanish Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a public tool for monitoring the SDGs.

Parlamento 2030 is an innovative online tool created to track, compile, tag and provide (in a free, open, clear, reliable and easily understandable manner) all the information about the activity of national parliaments related with the 2030 Agenda. It gathers all the information published by national parliaments into a database and, through an automatic process of massive tagging, classifies it according to the different linkages to specific SDGs and targets. It then offers this information freely and openly through an online browser for users to search, find and download. This combination of advanced computer science and the traditional knowledge provided by policy makers, CSOs and academia makes Parlamento 2030 one of the most advanced tools at an international level to access parliamentary activity information and for public monitoring.

The team behind this tool consists of people with experience in technical engineering, political coherence, and sustainable development and advocacy. Parlamento 2030 is a project of Political Watch, a civil society platform of engineers, social researchers and journalists created under the umbrella of CIECODE, a think- and-do tank focused on policy coherence for sustainable development. Our mission is to generate, in Spain and also in every country or region we work, positive conditions for the designing, adoption and implementation of public policies and private practices that promote a more equal, fair and sustainable society. We develop innovative technologies and tools to automatically track sustainable development-related political activity and offer public, direct, and free access to this information to citizens and key stakeholders.

Project objectives

The ultimate objective of Parlamento 2030 is to promote ambitious, properly designed and adequately financed public policies oriented towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The specific objectives are:

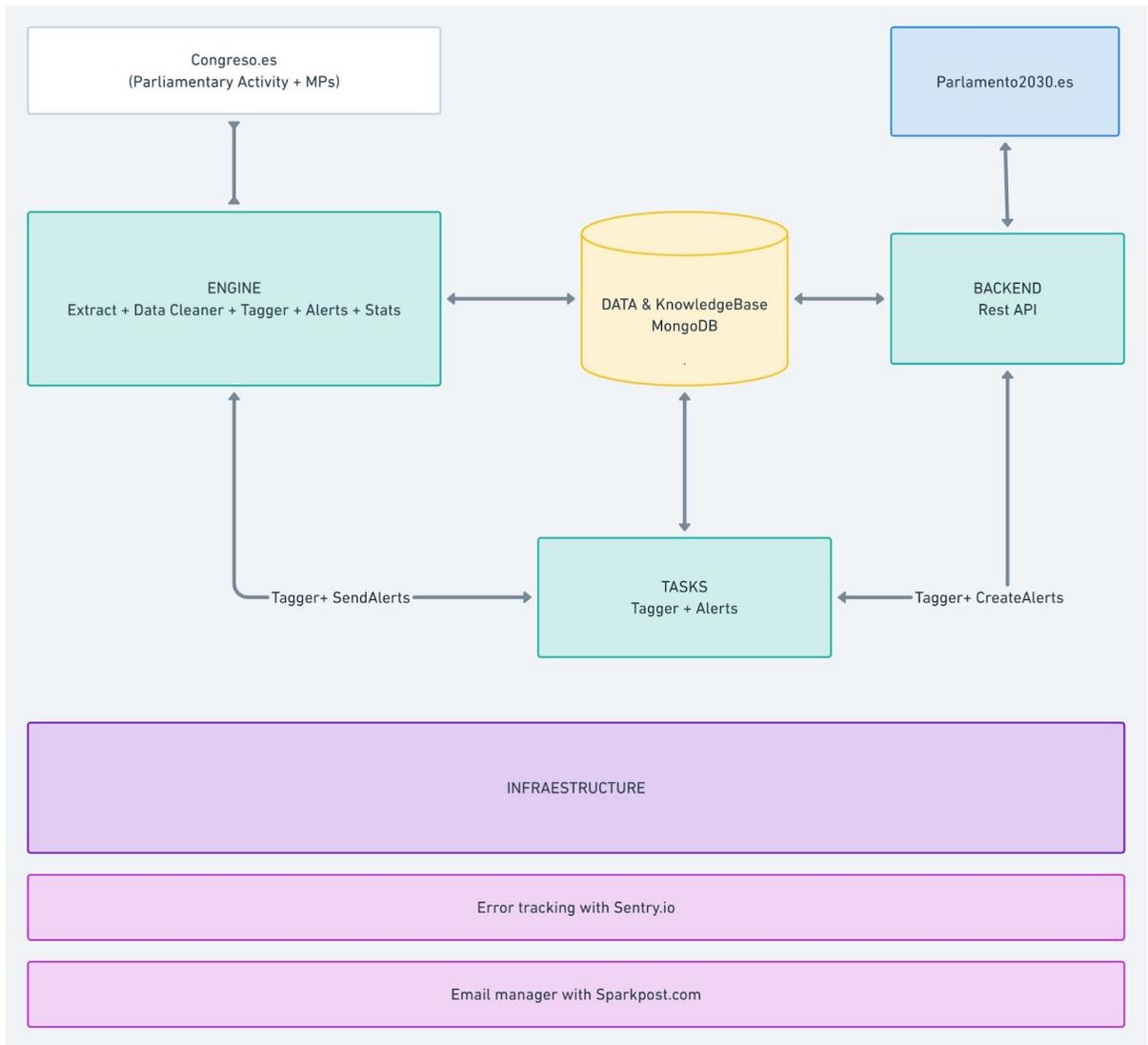
- Provide citizenry with an open and online tool to access information about the activity of the Parliament
- Provide the media and CSO with a reliable tool to access to all the information of the Parliament in terms of the 2030 Agenda
- Create an incentive system for deputies in order to publicly recognize the good practices in terms of 2030 Agenda parliamentary activity and point out the bad practices or initiatives that go against its principles.

Main results:

Parlamento 2030 is an online tool that obtains and classifies thematically the parliamentary information through an advanced system of scrapping and automatic massive tagging. These technologies build a database and enable users to navigate parliamentary activity through an openly and freely online search browser. The information provided is key for civic monitoring and public accountability of parliamentary activity. The technology used by Parlamento 2030 is called TIPI which stands for Transparency + Information + Participation + Influence. It was first used in a previous project (TiPi Ciudadano, which is still active) that tags and offers parliamentary information classified by 22 social issues.

The process carried out by Parlamento 2030's technology is:

1. The computer system extracts the information directly from the website of the Parliament. It then registers and organizes the information in its own database [Scrapping phase].
2. The software compares all this information with the 17 thematic dictionaries (a knowledge base containing more than 3.000 keywords) and labels each parliamentary act with those thematic areas they are related with [Labeling phase].
3. Parlamento 2030 offers all this information through an open, user-friendly and free access online browser. Users can select their own search parameters to tailor their inquiries according to their specific needs.



Parlamento 2030 wouldn't function properly without its 'dictionaries'. They represent the knowledge base of the tool, which is essential for the labeling phase, where each parliamentary initiative is associated with one or more specific topics of the 2030 Agenda. The software is capable of relating not only keywords but also goals and targets. This knowledge base was built using 'regular expressions' (see below) which were written by the Political Watch team and then submitted to a consultative process with experts from international CSO, government institutions, etc.

| TAGS | REGULAR EXPRESSIONS |
|--|--|
| Poor worker | Poor worker |
| Social protection | Social (protection program aid) |
| Access to vaccines in developing countries | Access to.*vaccines.*(developing countries least developed country LDC) |

Examples of regular expressions (please note that the originals are in Spanish).

As seen in the image above, our technology has different layers: a user layer, a backend layer, a data layer and an alerts layer. All of them are built using free software technologies and languages like Python, VueJS, D3js, MongoDB, Luigi, and Docker amongst many others. Our code is available for free on Political Watch's Github page. Our main data source is the Spanish Parliament website. Using webcrawler techniques, we transform HTML into structured data. We then publish all those data in an open data format, allowing anyone to build apps with them, and offering them through our API.

Responding to its main objectives, Parlamento 2030 technology is designed to cover the specific needs of its users (whether citizens, journalists, social movements or political representatives). To do so, after "processing" all the political activity of the Congress and "labeling" it according to its relation with the 17 SDG's, the technology provides the information through an online browser, with which the user can refine the search in terms of multiple criteria (author, date, subject, key word, etc.). The browser also allows users to download the result of their search in a reusable format (csv) and activate personalized alerts to be informed of any news about their subjects of interest.

Challenges

The implementation of Parlamento 2030 faced different obstacles in each phase. During the development process we faced several challenges as a consequence of the Agenda 2030's "essence":

- The cross-cutting nature of the SDGs is an extra challenge for monitoring, accountability and for the Policy Coherence implementation

- Most connections between goals could be unseen and, therefore, difficult the coordination of measures and the creation of synergies
- Pre-SDG institutions are still in charge of dealing with SDG challenges
- Need of a 'whole of government' approach

We knew that, in order to develop a truly useful tool that could answer all these challenges, we needed to make some changes in the technology (in the original coding), but also in the content (the knowledge base). As the SDGs are completely interconnected also the dictionaries of our knowledge base had to consider and embrace the same connections and relations.

Besides these adaptations, we knew we had a pending issue related to our communication capacities. In order to increase the usage of the tool by citizenry but also by public officials we needed them to know the tool and its utilities. With that purpose, we carried out an efficient communication strategy on the potential uses and the information provided by the tool.

Public administrations and CSOs from outside Spain have already shown their interest in the adaptation and implementation of the tool (specifically Andorra, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Peru). This shows that with a little increase in the investment done to announce and communicate the tool, the demand on these types of tools grows immediately.