



New
Direction



SQUARING THE CIRCLE

LESSONS FROM SOCIAL POLICY IN CENTRAL EUROPE

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1

INTRODUCTION

Since the financial crisis of 2008 —with some precedent such as the Maastricht Treaty or the Treaty of Lisbon, as well as the failed project of a European constitution— is in a constant test of life or death, at a permanent crossroads as a result of its fragility. Fragile in practice, though a former ‘theoretical superpower’, as Europe was the cradle of most —if not all— of the vital concepts of international relations, such as the notion —and reality— of the nation-state or the notion of national sovereignty.

The fragility of Europe is not only a consequence of internal intra-nation affairs, but also the result of an increasingly hostile international context. One where the United States is leading an increasingly accelerated withdrawal from the international sphere and revisionist powers are advancing positions. Therefore, European integration is essential to confront endogenous problems or exogenous threats. It is in this sense that Kissinger stressed that EU unification is a result of weakness, since “none of the old European practitioners of *raison d’état* is today strong enough to play a leading role in the emerging international order”¹.

Integration, however, is not an easy task, as the recent history of the European Union shows, with breakaways —i.e., Brexit—, as well as tensions between different visions of what the Union should be. Furthermore, the EU does not guarantee any degree of relevance in the international arena, as Kissinger also pointed out when he assured that, even if total integration were to be achieved, Europeans “would not have automatic alignments at hand to lead a unified Europe at the global stage, since such a political entity never existed”². However, in recent decades there has been

a number of circumstances that have revealed very marked differences in what pertains to the nature and intensity of this integration process. In particular, in three respects.

First, the growing political union that the European integration process has turned into has generated a bureaucratic apparatus that increasingly exceeds the powers granted to it by treaties and aspires to predominate over the constitutions of the member states themselves. This growing bureaucracy has not translated into greater political harmony —neither internally nor in its foreign relations—, since there are still notable differences —for example, at the economic level— between the characteristics and interests of the countries of the North and South of Europe, as well as between Eastern, Central and Western Europe, while Germany and France live in a constant battle to occupy positions of power within the European institutions.

Secondly, these marked differences go well beyond economics, since the ideological tensions that the European Union is increasingly experiencing acquire special relevance. This is the real crossroads today, because within the EU we find countries with differing ways conceiving themselves, the nation-state, the EU, etc. And this all results in great discrepancies.

Special reference should be made to social policies. In particular, those that promote natality and protect the family. It is on this topic that this paper will focus on, given its relevance —since the demographic situation of the Old Continent is critical and social vulnerability is rampant —, and because it exemplifies



in a paradigmatic way the division —ideologically and policy-wise— between the countries that promulgate the globalist agenda and its dictates, and those who uphold traditional Western and European values, such as family.

Lastly, the particular interest of some of the main member states in accelerating the process of political integration of the EU has only heightened tensions and produced the rebound effect in other countries and in the political formations most critical of the current EU direction.

In sum, the European Union is currently experiencing a situation of authentic existential doubt, which is also reflected at the global stage, since the path it takes at this crossroads will also mark the response it gives to external challenges and threats. This existential crisis has also come to existence in view of the collapse of the traditional institutions that have shaped the life of Europeans for centuries: The nation-state, family, Church... These actions result in the separation of the individual from everything that ties one to a community; to something larger than oneself. This desire to do tear down borders and dilute national identities is not only pernicious, but also provokes

great unrest, as it represents a paradigm shift in the course of a single generation. Furthermore, it eliminates the protection that emerges from a well-nurtured community of families, people and civil society organisations.

However, EU institutions and the bureaucrats seem to ignore or play down this paradigm shift, which naturally generates fear, doubt and tension. On the other hand, however, the mere fact that there is a healthy philosophical and public policy debate on this issue, on the idea of Europe, is fundamental. And not to do so is totally suicidal.

This debate on what kind of Europe we want ought to be followed by another which lays out the policies, strategies and mechanisms to make an alternative vision of Europe a reality, focused on policies that aim to repair, and nurture, the social fabric of European societies. Until then, the Union is a ship without course, where each member of the crew makes decisions that are sometimes correct, sometimes erroneous, but always erratic, hindering the progress of European societies and reducing the EU's ability to be a leader at the international sphere.

¹ KISSINGER, H. (2010). *Diplomacia*, Ediciones B, Madrid, p. 11.

² Ibidem. p.17.

THE EU AS THE EPICENTER OF THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE. A THEORETICAL APPROACH.

Over the last two decades, ideas that have been the origin and foundation of Europe are rapidly being eroded and forgotten. Large parts of our societies feel increasingly distant from the EU institutions, which seem oblivious to the day-to-day problems of people. Some authors have defined this process as the ‘secession of the elites’:

“The secession of the elites is at the same time the symptom, the most relevant sign and one of the causes of the profound changes that, for forty years, have been taking place in today’s world and that make up a new type of capitalism. It has, therefore, subjective and objective dimensions, and consists of a process of financial, economic, political, cultural, moral and residential disembedding of the elites in relation to the society in which they are nationalized and pay taxes”³.

In the case of EU political elites, this secession has reached unsuspected heights, to the point where the division between rulers and ruled has become abysmal. This is one of the reasons why there has been a rise of national movements that are reluctant to follow the dictates of institutions with large democratic deficits —and, therefore, of legitimacy— and that have mutated from mere

intergovernmental or supranational bodies. These movements go beyond the contemporary right-left divide in politics. At this point it is convenient to specify the definition of what is meant by a political party. Among these, one of the most echoed is that of Edmund Burke, father of modern conservatism:

“Party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed”⁴.

Alan Ware substantiates the concept of political party as follows:

“A political party is an institution that (a) seeks influence within a state, often attempting to occupy positions in government, and (b), since it normally defends more than a single social interest, attempts, to some extent, to aggregate interests”⁵.

Ware’s statement is definitely closer to the reality of the vast majority of political parties. However, these Euro-demanding movements obey more to Burke’s position. Above all, they are built around a clear principle: national sovereignty prevails over supranational institutions.

³ ARINO, Antonio and ROMERO, Juan. (2016). *La secesión de los ricos*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Barcelona, 2016. p.16.

⁴ WARE, Alan, *Partidos políticos y sistemas de partidos*, ISTMO-Ciencia Política, Madrid, 2004. P.31.

⁵ Ibidem.

As a result, despite their different geographical origin, another of the points in which these *nouveau* political movements converge is in overcoming the postulates of Lippset and Rokkan. According to these two authors, the formation of party systems is due to four cleavages or points of conflict in modern industrial societies. These four points are:

- Center-Periphery.
- Church-State.
- Field-Industry.
- Owner-Worker.

It is evident that their theory needs an update, as it was formulated more than half a century ago, to the great debates of the 21st century. The owner-worker divide has been overcome by the evolution of the capitalist system, which together with the emergence of new technologies, has made it possible to dilute the antagonistic overtones of this breaking point. And the same goes for the other three dichotomies.

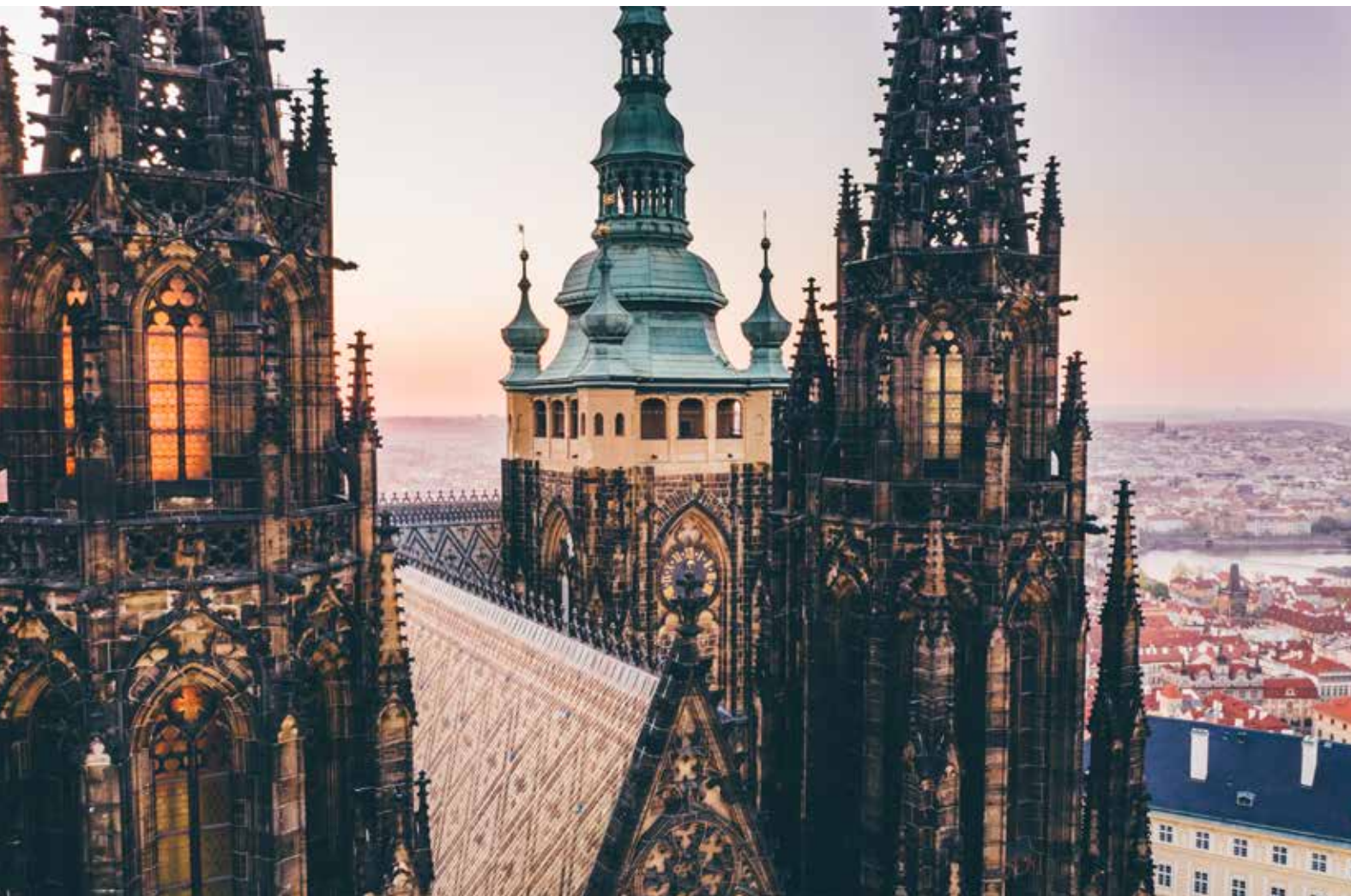
The update, nevertheless, may consist in merely adding a new cleavage which today, more than ever, stands out in the political and societal debate:

- Globalism-Nation State.

In the case of the Old Continent, the EU institutions have become the top proponents of the globalist postulates⁶, whose main premises are:

- Dissolution of the nation-state.
- Eradication of the family as the single most important integration element of society.
- Substitution of traditional values by moral relativism.

At the same time, a series of national movements have emerged in Europe raising their voices against the postulates imposed from Brussels. They seek a new EU. A different EU of which the so-called Visegrad Group is the standard-bearer.



6 The concept 'Globalism' was first coined —and popularised— by international relations expert and professor Joseph S. Nye in the early 21st century. See Nye, Joseph: "Globalism versus globalization", *The Globalist*, 15.04.02. Available online: <https://www.theglobalist.com/globalism-versus-globalization/>

3

THE NEW EUROPE AND THE OLD EUROPE. THE VISEGRAD GROUP.

The European institutions —led by the largest economies in the EU— have been protagonist in a very specific type of integration model where their supremacy is constantly on the rise attempting to rule over member state constitutions. This model is also characterised by an ideologically-charged vision of the world and society —with its economic and social implications when it comes to policymaking. This overall position, however, has not been shared by all EU countries. On the contrary, there has been great divergence over the course of this century, and not only at EU domestic affairs but also when it comes to foreign policy. This was noted in 2003 by Donald Rumsfeld. The then US Secretary of Defense defined France and Germany —opposed to the intervention in Iraq— as the 'old' Europe, while he referred to the bloc of Eastern European countries, in favor of said military intervention, as the 'new' Europe.

This group of countries of the 'new Europe' are nations that have suffered for decades under communism. This is also why after the fall of the USSR, the presidents of Poland (Lech Valesa) Czechoslovakia (Václav Havel) and Hungary (József Antall), committed to greater political, economic and cultural cooperation between them, with the horizon set on their integration in the European Union and NATO⁷. This Visegrad Group takes its name from

the castle of the Hungarian city on the banks of the Danube where its founding act was signed more than 30 years ago:

"It was a place full of symbolism: in 1335, a congress was held there that brought together the monarchs Charles I of Hungary, Casimir III of Poland and John I of Bohemia in order to put an end to the disputes between their respective kingdoms, join forces against the territorial ambitions of the Habsburgs and establish new trade routes with which to avoid paying the onerous customs fees of the city of Vienna"⁸

The vision and political position of this group of countries represent the strongest counterpoint to the Paris-Berlin axis. Faced with multicultural, supranational and multilateralist postulates, the Visegrad countries are committed to a Europe that returns to its roots, a Europe of nations, away from federalist surges and moral value vacuum. They also push for a strengthened bilateral relation with the US. Specifically, through NATO. One of the paradigmatic cases is that of Poland.

In Poland, as in Hungary, a "renaissance of a Christian sentiment"⁹ is taking place, which comes together with a multitude of policies to support birth rates and the family. This is how Rodrigo Ballester, head of the Center for European Studies at the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in Budapest, defines it:

7 FERRERO, Ángel: "El Grupo de Visegrado cumple 30", *Política Exterior*, 22.02.21. Available online at: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/el-grupo-de-visegrado-cumple-30/>

8 Ibídem.

9 GIUBILEI, Francesco: "Visegrado y el futuro de Europa", *Fundación Disenso*, 23.06.21. Available online at: <https://fundaciondisenso.org/2021/06/23/visegrado-y-el-futuro-de-europa/>

“A part of the Western media and elites attack the Hungarian and Polish governments for their policies and for certain existing prejudices against these two countries. Today we are experiencing a revival of Christian values, particularly in Hungary and Poland”¹⁰.

This has developed some sort of ‘indigenous conservatism’, which transmits its ideas to society and makes it possible to combat the leftist cultural hegemony that today dominates Western Europe. In this state of affairs, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, substantiated this course change in the following words: “Central Europeans, until now, have believed that Europe was their future. Now they will see that, in reality, they are the future of Europe”¹¹.

This statement hints to the struggle of this new vision to overcome the incumbent and, at the same time, refers to the fact that, without a people-family-based approach to politics, there will not be anything to fight for. As a result, if there is a battlefield for this ideological tension in the heart of Europe, that is social policy and, more specifically, natality and family policy.

Faced with constant threats from the EU institutions and the ‘old’ Europe, both Poland and Hungary are trying to form a solid traditional value-based corpus that allows them to substantiate their model for a new Europe. In order to give solvency to their positions in this debate and being aware of the antagonism that they face from globalist EU elites, both countries “have embarked on a project that is not only political but also cultural”.



¹⁰ Ibidem. The case of the Czech Republic exemplifies the diversity that exists even within the Visegrad Group.

¹¹ FERRERO, Ángel: “El Grupo de Visegrado...” op.cit.

FAMILY AND NATALITY. THE GREAT BATTLE FOR THE EU.

The virulence with which the bureaucratic elites of the EU have attacked the family and everything it represents is shocking.

The reason behind these attacks is because the family, the cornerstone of our societies, is the last stronghold standing against the obsession with control, both political and economic, of the individual by the globalist establishment. And this obsession is manifested, first and foremost, on two fronts which pertain to demographics: immigration and natality.

Within the framework of a generalised demographic winter—which varies, nonetheless, across Europe—, countries like those that conform the Visegrad group are trying to overcome it. The year 2015 was the first in which the European Union registered a negative natural growth. That is, a greater number of deaths than births were recorded. Specifically, there was a negative balance of 117,000 people.

In the case of Spain, for instance, the situation is critical. Between the years 2014 and 2028, only 25% of children will be born—according to the statistics handled by the EU— compared to the previous decade and a half¹², with the birth and marriage rates of 2017 being half of those of 1975. At the EU level, however, similar tendencies began earlier, but they have become accelerated in recent decades. According to data from the scientific journal *The Lancet*, Spain is one of the 23 countries that will

see its population reduced by half by the year 2100. Another striking case is that of Italy, which will go from 61 million down to 28 million by that year.

This situation, cataloged by some authors as ‘demographic suicide’¹³, is true that it is not unique to Europe, as shown by Japan, which will go from 128 million to less than 53 in the year 2100¹⁴. Also, the People’s Republic of China, which totals about 1,400 million inhabitants, will see its population reduced by half in 2100.

However, the Chinese case must be differentiated from that of the West—where Japan should also be included¹⁵— for reasons that have motivated each society to find itself in this demographic situation. In China, it has been the communist party authorities that have forced Chinese citizens to limit their offspring through the well-known one-child policy—now repealed in light of its alarming result. In the West, on the other hand, this drastic reduction in the birth rate is due to a series of factors, such as economic, cultural, moral, etc. However, all of them can be linked to the globalist vision held by EU leaders and a large part of the EU member states political elite.

As we have pointed out, the family—and, therefore, birth rates—is one of the great battlefields of our time. Instead of supporting

¹² GONZÁLEZ MARTÍN, Andrés: “La demografía es el destino, Laponia nos invade”, *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, Documento de Análisis 09/2018, 28.02.2018. Available online: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2018/DIEEEA09-2018_Laponia_AGM.pdf

¹³ ESTEBAN, Carlos: “El suicidio demográfico se vuelve global: cae en picado la fertilidad en todo el planeta”, *La Gaceta de la Iberoesfera*, 26.09.21. Disponible [en línea]: <https://gaceta.es/actualidad/el-suicidio-demografico-se-vuelve-global-cae-en-picado-la-fertilidad-en-todo-el-planeta-20210926-0700/>

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ This concept prioritizes political issues over cultural ones (Huntington). Thus, the West would include all those countries that have a liberal political system, that have the free market as their economic system and accept the liberal international order. SATO, Seizaburo: “The Clash of Civilizations: A view from Japan”, *Asia-Pacific Review*, 08.12.10.

and promoting family creation and survival, both the European and national institutions—with few exceptions—attack them through various mechanisms or systems in place that dis-incentivise marriage, having children, etc. It is obvious, however, that countries cannot afford to see their populations shrink as drastically as the vegetative growth (negative) indicates. As a result, the solution the EU institutions have arrived to is a bet on the replacement of the European population, aged and with very low birth rates, by an immigrant population. Massive population imports are the solution according to EU mainstream politics. It is in this sense that Magdalena Valerio, former Minister of Labour, Migration and Social Security of the Government of Spain for the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party ("PSOE"), asserted that "Spain needs to commit to "regular, safe and orderly immigration of

some 250,000 people a year in order to have a sustainable public pension system"¹⁶.

This statement encapsulates the intention of the EU elites. However, any substitution policies, by definition, pose a real threat to European societies. This does not mean that legal immigration is harmful per se, since these migratory phenomena respond to the needs of developed countries. However, with the intent to shrink current EU population—or refraining to take action to reverse the current trend—and promoting irresponsible immigration policies, whether legal or illegal, and without attending to reasons of assimilation or communion with Western values, it is leading to severe problems of coexistence and the future of Europe, if any, seems to resemble so little to what it was a few decades ago that the speed of change ought to be branded as revolutionary.

The 'great replacement': the substitution of European societies.

The problems of adaptation and even rejection of local traditions, norms and customs, is more likely in those population groups that have fewer common links—language, customs, religion, etc.—, with the receiving society. This is particularly the case of Muslim population, which is the fastest-growing migrant surge into the EU.

At the end of 2017, the Pew Research Center published a report in which it made a series of projections on the growth of the Muslim population in Europe. The study defines Europe as the 28 countries—including the United Kingdom—, plus Norway and Switzerland. The basis of the three possible scenarios is based on a Muslim population estimated at 25.8 million in 2016. That is, 5% of the total population of Europe. From 2010 to 2016, the Muslim population in Europe grew by 6.3 million.

- In a first scenario, of zero immigration, the Muslim population of Europe would continue to grow from 4.9% to 7.4% in the year 2050. The reasons given for this large increase are: youth compared to Europeans and much higher fertility rates.
- In the second scenario, which contemplates constant immigration levels similar to the current

ones, the Muslim population could reach 11.2% of the population in Europe by the year 2050.

- In the third scenario, with a projection of greater immigration, Muslims could exceed 14% in 2050. This would mean tripling the percentage of the Muslim population in Europe in 2017.

Thus, in the third scenario, the weight that the Muslim population will have in certain European countries is observed. Specifically, in those who have been more favorable to globalist theses. The cases of Sweden are paradigmatic, with an estimate of 30.6%, Austria with 19.9%, Germany with 19.7% or France with 18%.

In short, faced with a European population that is getting older, less fertile and unmarried, EU leaders and national government elites are not promoting any action to protect European values—as a matter of fact, there is a growing lack of agreement as to what EU values mean. Quite the contrary, they try to dissolve all the ties that unite the individual with his community, such as family, religion or the Nation-State. Likewise, these same elites, guided by globalist doctrines, do favor mass immigration, to

which they are completely tolerant. Here is one of the great contradictions of the globalists. Although they do not allow dissidence and are staunch defenders of the secularism of the State or tolerance, respect and recognition of women's rights, in the face of newcomers to the Old Continent everything becomes tolerance and respect for their beliefs, however opposed these might be to those of the receiving communities. In other words, the EU shows tolerance and embrace in the face of intolerance and despise.

If to these wide cultural differences between European societies and their 'substitutes' we add the danger that irregular immigration poses for the national security of each country, a mixture is produced that allows us to measure the serious situation facing Europeans. In recent years there has been a proliferation of jihadist terrorist attacks, sometimes caused by individuals who entered Europe illegally. This was the case of the 21-year-old Tunisian who murdered three people in a church in Nice (France). The terrorist, Brahim Aoussaoui,

would have arrived in France through Italy as an illegal immigrant¹⁷. This case is just one example of the danger posed by illegal immigration promoted by the European institutions and the governments of some countries.

In light of this trend, some European countries—especially those belonging to the Visegrad Group—, want to put a stop to this demographic suicide, setting themselves up as the last hope for the Old Continent. And they do so not only for instrumental purposes—a shrinking population is suicidal—but also for normative reasons, as this 'substitution strategy' does not only include importing immigrants from outside of the EU, but also aiding for native populations to decline. And this very much ideologically-charged, as it operates under a vision of the world, and of human beings very distinct from a conservative worldview. For instance, it includes the promotion of abortion or euthanasia, as well as subsidising life choices contrary to marriage stability or higher birth rates.

Birth and family policies in the countries of the Visegrad Group.

Empirical data shows the enormous magnitude of the challenge facing European countries because of the course the EU has mandated when it comes to demography. However, in light of these mainstream policies, which seem to be a license to 'operate' within the European framework and avoid disdain and sanctions of any kind, countries like Hungary have openly positioned themselves against them. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stated that immigration "is not a useful tool" to alleviate the demographic crisis. "The only solution for the drop in birth rates is for the State to help families and support their formation"¹⁸.

In July 2019, the Magyar country launched the Action Plan for the Protection of the Family. As a note, the very existence of a Ministry for Family Affairs is interesting. Its minister, Katalin Novák, stated that it

had helped more than 200,000 families during its first year of activity.

The main measure of this action plan is the interest-free provision of 29,000 euros by the State to married couples. Moreover, said amount should not be returned if the marriage has 3 or more children¹⁹. If the family decides to keep only two children, they only must repay two-thirds of the loan. Another of the highlights of the plan cited above is that women who have four or more descendants are exempt from paying income tax.

But the Hungarian government's support for families is not limited to this action plan. Already back in 2011, Orbán's government began to apply tax deductions to marriages based on the number of children and that benefit half of Hungarian workers²⁰. Specifically,

17 GIL, Iñaki: "Tres muertos en un atentado terrorista en una iglesia de Niza", *El Mundo*, 29.10.20. Available at: <https://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2020/10/29/5f9a81effc6c83045b8b45be.html>

18 LGI: "Hungria y la República Checa reiteran su rechazo a la inmigración: "La única solución ante la extinción de Europa es la natalidad", *La Gaceta de la Iberoesfera*, 24.09.21. Available at: <https://gaceta.es/actualidad/hungria-y-republica-checa-reiteran-su-rechazo-a-la-inmigracion-la-unica-solucion-ante-la-extincion-de-europa-es-la-natalidad-20210924-1006/>

19 "La fórmula mágica con la que Hungría ha conseguido aumentar la natalidad y reducir los divorcios", *ABC*, 02.07.20. Available online: https://www.abc.es/familia/padres-hijos/abci-formula-magica-hungria-conseguido-aumentar-natalidad-y-reducir-divorcios-202007020255_noticia.html

20 LGI: "Hungría, un ejemplo para Europa: así ha logrado proteger la familia, y aumentar los matrimonios y la natalidad", *La Gaceta de la Iberoesfera*,

16 "El PSOE estima que harán falta 250.000 inmigrantes al año para pagar las pensiones", *ABC*, 30.11.20. Available online:

32 euros per month for one child, 40 euros per month per child if you have two and 106 euros per month for each child if you have 3 or more.

At the same time, it is peremptory to point out that this help can be accessed from the 12th week of pregnancy. In this way, the Hungarian Government recognizes the right to life of the unborn baby.

Another country that supports the family as a basic institution of European society is Poland. Among the measures that the Polish government has introduced is the Rodzina 500+ (Family, in Polish) program. In April 2016, the Polish government launched the aforementioned action to increase birth rates and reduce child poverty by improving the living conditions of large families.

According to the Government, by the end of April 2017, almost four million children under the age of 18 had received support thanks to this programme and more than 2.6 million families had received benefits totaling more than 31.2 billion zlotys (about 6,700 million euros).

Today, across Poland, almost 58% of all children under the age of 18 are covered by the «Family 500+» programme. It supports more than 2.6 million families, including 381,000 large families. In rural areas this participation reaches 64%, in municipalities 51% and in urban and rural areas 60%. Benefits are paid to more than 726,000 families with only one child (with the child under 18), more than 1.5 million families with two children, 306,000 families with three, 56,000 families with four, more than 13,000 families with five and 6,000 families with six children.

The majority of those surveyed by The Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) point to “the positive impact of the «Family 500+» programme on the budgets of households with children. Among the observed effects of programme implementation, respondents noted better family relationships (15%) and spending more time with children (14%). Nearly one in ten respondents say they personally know someone who, thanks to

the program, has decided to have a child or says that the programme has encouraged them to precipitate this decision.

Lastly, the programme also brought about a marked improvement in the material conditions of the families. Fewer Poles seek social assistance or nutritional assistance: there has been a decrease of 10% compared to the previous year in terms of temporary and specific benefits, as well as in the provision of food to children. Thanks to the program, the percentage of people living in poverty has been reduced by 48% and that of extreme poverty by 98%²¹.

Finally, the results speak for themselves: The number of babies born in 2016 was approximately 13,000 more than in 2015. It is expected to be even higher, reaching 25,000-35,000. Likewise, “an increase in consumption and can be attributed to the more comfortable financial situation of families. Their standard of living has improved, and the programme has given them a sense of greater financial security.” Even the European Commission has recognized the success of this programme.

An allowance of PLN 500 (about 110 euros) per month is also paid to children in foster families and more than 46,000 children are supported by this measure. Child benefits are paid, regardless of family income, for each child up to the age of 18 in a foster family, a family-type children’s home and a family-type educational care facility. In total, during the first year of implementation of the programme, families and legal guardians received almost 355 million PLN (about 74 million euros)²².

Another example of social policy that is being implemented is the “good start” programme. This action aims to invest in the education of Polish children²³. The aid consists of 300 PLN (about 70 euros) that families receive—in a single payment—, at the beginning of the school year and for each child. This help is received until the child is twenty years old. In other words, it accompanies children throughout their entire educational age.

Concluding this brief summary of the social policies to foster natality that Poland carries out, we also cannot ignore the ‘For Life’ programme. This assistance is granted to the parent or guardian of a child for the birth of a child who has been diagnosed with a serious and irreversible disability or an untreatable life-threatening disease, which originated in the period of prenatal development of the child or during the delivery. The sum of this aid amounts to PLN 4,000 (860 euros)²⁴. This extra line of support is also a clear stance of this country’s pro-life position against abortion and other eugenic measures often aimed to children with disabilities.

The Czech Republic is also implementing policies that encourage fertility and support the family. Parents are entitled to claim a maximum benefit of CZK 300,000 (12,200 euros) until the child is four years old. In the case of twins or multiple births, the total amount increases to CZK 450,000 (18,400 euros). Parents are free to decide how this amount will be paid, including the quantity of the monthly payments, which can be changed once every quarter. The monthly benefit cannot exceed CZK 43,470 (1,770 euros) for people with a higher pre-assessment base—i.e., those with higher incomes.

Parents who have not contributed to health insurance and for whom an assessment basis cannot be defined—e.g., unemployed, students, etc.— are entitled to a

monthly amount of parental allowance of up to CZK 10,000 (400 euros). Finally, the mother and the father can alternate the receipt of this subsidy. However, not simultaneously²⁵.

In the case of maternity benefit, it can be claimed during pregnancy. In general, the recipient period maternity benefit corresponds to the period of maternity leave. Pregnant women may determine the start of the maternity benefit between the eighth and sixth week before the expected date of delivery. Maternity benefits can also be claimed after giving birth. The period in which the benefit is granted varies:

- 28 weeks of pay for a woman giving birth to a single child;
- 37 weeks for mothers giving birth to multiple children;
- The child’s father or the mother’s husband is entitled to 22 weeks of benefits from the time he takes over the care of the newborn child;
- The father of the children or the mother’s husband is entitled to 31 weeks of benefits from the time he takes over the care of multiple newborn children.

As can be seen, the period of paternity leave in the Czech Republic is significantly longer than what currently exists in Spain, which stands at 16 weeks for both parents.

Housing policies

Countries that share this vision for the future of Europe also include, in their social policy portfolio, many other policies that support the family. An important one is that of housing policies. For example, in Hungary, women under 40 years of age are eligible for loan of up to 10 million guilders (31,200 euros) from the State and can apply for it. If they have two children, a third of the loan will be forfeited. If they have three or more children, the entire loan will be forfeited²⁶. Taking into account that the country’s minimum

wage is lower than 550 euros, this benefit acquires first-rate relevance.

In the case of the Czech Republic, there is also a programme of housing subsidies. If housing costs represent an excessive part of a person’s or family’s budget, they can claim housing allowance (“příspěvek na bydlení”, in Czech) from the state. Both owners and tenants can claim this subsidy regardless of whether it is a flat or a house. However, this must be the permanent residence. The number of people in the

05.02.21. Available online: <https://gaceta.es/actualidad/hungria-un-ejemplo-para-europa-asi-ha-logrado-proteger-la-familia-y-aumentar-los-matrimonios-y-la-natalidad-20210205-1155/>

21 Family 500+ programme. Ministry of Family and Social Policy. 14.09.17. Available online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/family-500-programme>

22 Ibidem.

23 Good Start programme. Ministry of Family and Social Policy. 22.07.19. Available online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/good-start>

24 “Your social security rights in Poland”, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission, 2021.

25 Czech Republic- Child benefits, *European Commission*. Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1106&langId=en&intPageId=4469>

26 “Préstamos a fondo perdido para futuras madres: la fórmula de Orban para fomentar la natalidad en Hungría”, *El Economista*, 11.02.19. Available online: <https://www.eleconomista.es/economia/noticias/9693500/02/19/Prestamos-a-fondo-perdido-para-futuras-madres-la-formula-de-Orban-para-fomentar-la-natalidad-en-Hungria.html>

household and their income are taken into account when granting this benefit²⁷.

The basic condition is habitual residence in the Czech Republic, and other EU citizens can also apply for this subsidy. Such eligibility only applies to the registered permanent residence of the applicant. At the same time, this aid is conditional on several factors:

- The “decisive” income of the family unit (rozhodný příjem).
- Housing expenses.

The determining income of the family is the sum of the income of all its members who have permanent residence in a given place within the country. Earnings, as well as some social benefits, for example child allowance and parental allowance, are included in this total sum of income.

The first condition to be eligible for aid is that housing costs exceed 30% —or 35% in Prague— of the ‘decisive’ income of the family unit. The second condition is that housing costs are within the limits set by the Czech government. The country’s Ministry

of Labor and Social Affairs specifies the limited costs for the year (normativní náklady na bydlení, in Czech). These are determined in relation to the type of dwelling, its location and the number of people residing in it.

Once both requirements have been met, the State contributes the difference between the standardized housing costs and 30% or 35% of the decisive income threshold of the family unit. Let us see these two examples to help illustrate this measure:

- A pensioner in Prague has an income of CZK 10,500. 35% would be CZK 3,675. The costs standardized by the Government for 2021 are CZK 8,775. Therefore, the amount of the sum that the State will contribute to the pensioner will be CZK 5,100, about 207 euros (8,775-3,675).
- A family with 3 members in Brno has an income of CZK 35,000. 30% would be CZK 10,500. The costs standardized by the Government for 2021 are CZK 13,099. Therefore, the amount of the sum that the State will contribute to the family will be CZK 2,599, about 105 euros (13,099-10,500).

Tax reduction: The golden rule for growth and social welfare

As we have pointed out, the Visegrad countries —in particular Poland and Hungary— have a wide range of social policy programmes that aim to protect their citizens and the European way of life. In particular, through the promotion of the family and birth. However, these actions would have a very limited effect on their own. That is why governments such as the Polish have initiated a powerful fiscal plan that includes extensive reductions in tax rates. Above all, for those who tax basic goods and products.

In the context of uncontrolled inflation that, for the moment, has put an end or a severe slowdown to the economic recovery of the EU after the coronavirus pandemic, the Polish Executive has approved a

historic²⁸ tax cut. The plan of the government headed by Mateusz Morawiecki includes the elimination of VAT on food and fertilizers —currently taxed at 5%— from February 1, 2022 and for the following six months. The fiscal package also provides for the reduction of VAT of gasoline from 23% to 8%, which will translate into a reduction of about 12 cents per liter of fuel²⁹.

This package of measures has been baptised by the Polish government as «Anti-Inflation Shield 2.0», and also consists of a 5% drop in electricity bill for households, and the creation of a fund —endowed with 2,200 million euros— that will be distributed among households with low income and in order to compensate for the rise in gas prices.

For this same purpose, the Government will apply a special reduced tax rate on gas to the premises of charitable associations and churches. In addition, the country’s Strategic Reserves Agency will be able to use public funds to acquire and maintain gas and other energy sources of strategic value for Poland.

Along these same lines, the Hungarian government also applied, since the end of last year, a tax reduction of 2,044 million euros³⁰. Some of the specific measures of this plan are the following:

- Employee social security contributions will be reduced by 2 percentage points, from 17% to 15% from January 1, 2022, and the tax system will be further simplified.
- The self-employed will not have to pay personal income tax up to half of the annual minimum wage and those interested may also benefit from the possibility of family tax relief. According to the Hungarian finance minister, this action will help 70,000 companies.
- Reduction of the tax rate on cryptocurrencies which will be decreased from 30.5% to 15%.

As we can see both governments are showing that they are aware of the need for prior robust economic and demographic growth and have designed policies

that aim to these targets, as well as greatly help reduce poverty and social exclusion. There are many more examples that could be referred to in these countries, yet one of the actions of the Magyar government should be especially highlighted. Since 2017, corporate tax in Hungary has been reduced to 9%. Until that date, there were two types in Hungary:

- 10% for companies with annual profits of less than 1.6 million euros.
- 19% for companies with higher profits.

With the application of this measure, Hungary became the country with the lowest tax rate of the twenty-seven. Member states, ahead of Bulgaria (10%) or Ireland (12.5%)³¹, and the fifth globally³². Thus, the purpose of this tax reduction is to attract foreign capital, which will inevitably have repercussions on job creation.

In this regard, it is imperative to point out the comparative advantage that Hungary has in this matter as compared to other EU counterparts. According to data from the *Tax Foundation*, this Central European country is well below the tax rates applied in countries such as Portugal (31.5%) or Spain (25%) and thus attracts foreign investment and major global corporations that seek lower corporate taxes.

27 Czech Republic- Housing allowance, *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission*. Available online:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1106&langId=en&intPagId=4470>

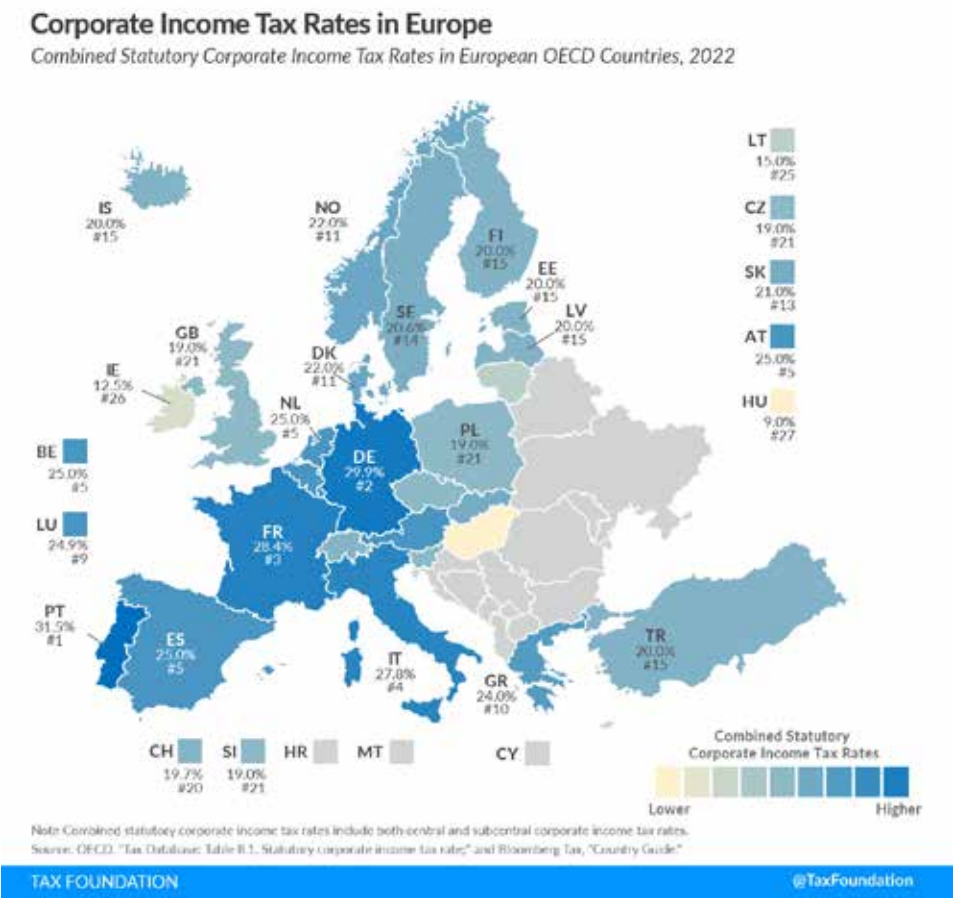
28 FAES, Ignacio: “Polonia sigue la receta de Alemania y baja 4.500 millones los impuestos”, *El Economista*, 07.02.22. Available online: <https://www.eleconomista.es/economia/noticias/11604104/02/22/Polonia-sigue-la-receta-de-Alemania-y-baja-4500-millones-los-impuestos.html>

29 Ibidem.

30 VELASCO, Sergio: “Hungria vs España: Orbán bajará más los impuestos pese a tener el tipo de Sociedades más bajo de la UE”, *Libremercado*, 15.02.22. Available online: <https://www.libremercado.com/2021-12-15/hungria-vs-espana-orban-bajara-mas-los-impuestos-pese-a-tener-el-tipo-de-sociedades-mas-bajo-de-la-ue-6843529/>

31 “Hungria anuncia una fuerte bajada del impuesto de sociedades”, *ICEX*, 21.11.16. Available online: <https://www.icex.es/icex/es/Navegacion-zona-contacto/revista-el-exportador/noticias/NEW2016676559.html>

32 BRAY, Sean: “Corporate Tax Rates around the World, 2021”, *Tax Foundation*, n.º. 783, nov.2021, p.6. Available online: <https://files.taxfoundation.org/20211207171421/Corporate-Tax-Rates-around-the-World-2021.pdf>



Source: Tax Foundation.

Moreover, tax cuts were not limited corporate taxes and businesses, but were also meant to benefit individuals. Since Viktor Orban came to power, the minimum wage in Hungary has risen from 78,000 guilders (280 euros) to 200,000 (541 euros) ³³. In the Polish case, the increase in the Minimum Wage has also been significant: from PLN 1,750 (400 euros) in 2015 to PLN 3,010 (660 euros) in 2022³⁴.

Since 2016, the personal income tax has been reduced to 15%³⁵. In Hungary, this percentage is applied to all taxpayers. This means that Hungary does not penalize top earners, but instead has a fairer structure, where the “price” for all income is the same³⁶.

Likewise, the above mentioned mentioned Plan of Action for the Protection of the Family also includes the exoneration of paying income tax for life for those women who raise at least four children³⁷. These tax cuts also cover the acquisition of larger vehicles, in line with the support for the birth rate³⁸.

Another relevant case within the Visegrad Group is that of the Czech Republic. Just as it is the case of Poland and Hungary, the Czech Republic is not part of the eurozone, having the Czech crown (CZK) as its national currency, and thus maintaining its monetary sovereignty. This being the case, it has not been used to carry out expansive monetary policies —devaluations, for example— but quite the opposite.

In the Czech case, we are facing a highly attractive economy for foreign investment. Its corporate tax rate for is 19%, ranking 21st out of 27 EU member states. A rate that is valid regardless of the size of the company or the number of benefits.

As a consequence, Czech corporate tax is lower than that of major European countries, including Spain (25%), France (31.3%) and Germany (29.8%). Likewise, since December 2019 the Tax on Real Estate Transactions has been eliminated. However, the tax was also increased (to 15%) on the profits obtained after the sale of the property with capital gains. Previously, these were exempt from tax after five years³⁹.

As for the VAT in the Czech Republic, it stands at levels very similar to those of its European counterparts. The general bracket is 21%. The first reduced tranche is 15% and is used for a wide variety of products, including some food, water, hotels, bars and restaurants, health, as well as cultural establishments and events.

The second reduced tranche is 10% and is used for certain food, pharmaceutical, newspaper and book products, including electronic books. Finally, financial services, including insurance, and international transport are exempt from VAT⁴⁰.

A good summary of the macroeconomic situation of the Central European country could be the following:

“Something we should highlight about the Czech Republic is that taxes on income from work, savings and capital, and on business profits, are much more advantageous. That encourages people to work, save, invest and undertake. And it also serves as an incentive for large and small companies to continue growing and betting on the country.

For its part, taxes on consumption, such as VAT, are very similar to those of other countries, which indicates that the government does not seek to encourage consumption.

In other words, the government knows what generates long-term wealth (work, savings and investment) and what does not (consumption).”

As a result, the Czech Republic is one of the most successful countries in the world economically and has been over the last 30 years. The Czech GDP per capita went from 3,200 euros in 1993 to 22,320 euros in 2021. In other words, in less than 30 years the GDP per capita has multiplied by seven. More specifically, since 2011 GDP per capita increased by 50%. This figure is very close to the Spanish figure (25,460 euros in 2021), but with a negligible unemployment rate (2.4% compared to 12.6% in Spain), a debt to GDP ratio of 41.9% (compared to 118.4% in Spain) and a percentage of the population at risk of poverty of 9.5% compared to 21% in Spain⁴¹.

The Czech case is the maximum exponent of the economic policy carried out by the Visegrad countries. Thus, both Poland and Hungary and the Czech Republic itself presented growth figures well above the losses recorded during the pandemic caused by COVID-19. They also present more than acceptable levels in terms of the percentage of debt over GDP. In the Polish and Czech case, they reach 53.8% and 41.9%, respectively. Although it is true that the Hungarian debt is significantly higher (76.8%), it is also true that this ratio has suffered a sharp increase after the outbreak of the pandemic, standing at 65.5% in 2019. Despite this, it should also be noted that the government led by Orban has overlapped this increase with economic growth, something that has allowed it not to exceed the GPD to debt ratio of 2010 (80%).

All these data show that economic orthodoxy works. That the only way to provide their respective societies with a wide range of social policies without becoming excessively indebted or sinking the economy is through an attractive fiscal policy, with low tax rates that attract investment and stimulate the labor market. It is not through encouraging demand and consumption, but rather through savings and investment that robust long-term economic growth is built.

33 Salario Mínimo Interprofesional en Hungría, *Expansión- Datosmacro*, 2022. Available online: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/smi/hungria> .
34 Salario Mínimo Interprofesional en Polonia, *Expansión- Datosmacro*, 2022. Available online: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/smi/polonia>
35 HORVATH, Rita: “Novedades fiscales Hungría: Enero 2016”, *ICEX*, 2016. Available online: <https://www.icex.es/icex/es/navegacion-principal/todos-nuestros-servicios/informacion-de-mercados/paises/navegacion-principal/el-mercado/estudios-informes/DOC2016608909.html?idPais=HU>
36 VILA, Nacho: “Impuestos en Hungría [2021]- Análisis completo, *Finanzas Claras*, 25.12.21. Available online: <https://www.finanzasclaras.es/impuestos-hungria/>
37 ELLYATT, Holly: “Have four or more babies in Hungary and you’ll pay no income tax for life, prime minister says”, *CNBC*, 11.02.19. Available online: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/11/have-four-or-more-babies-in-hungary-and-youll-pay-no-income-tax-for-life.html>
38 “Hungría promete a las familias que tengan 4 hijos o más no volver a pagar impuestos”, *El Confidencial*, 12.02.19. Available online: https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/europa/2019-02-12/hungria-fomento-natalidad-exencion-impuestos_1820834/

39 VILA, Nacho: “Impuestos en la República Checa [2021]- Análisis completo, *Finanzas Claras*, 10.04.21. Available online: <https://www.finanzasclaras.es/impuestos-republica-checa/>
40 *Ibidem*.
41 Datos según *Expansión/ Datosmacro*. Disponible [en línea]: <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/paises/comparar/republica-checa/espana>

This pro-family and free market approach to politics and society part of a broader framework that includes social policies that aim to alleviate social exclusion and alienation, as this is another one of the EU maladies, where larger and larger parts of European population are being left behind. For instance, the rising cost of living across Europe is being counter by Poland by scrapping income tax for those under 26 years of age and Hungary for those under 25. Similar policies are being implemented in these countries and why allow young people to accumulate wealth, afford property and start families. Something that greatly contrasts with the rest of Europe, where young people are unable to pursue their life plans and some of which have already suffered the hit of three major crises: the financial crisis of 2008, the covid-provoked crisis of 2020 and the one we are currently undergoing, severely hardened by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The case of Vox in Spain: national sovereignty, free market and social protection.

There has also been a recent awakening beyond the Visegrad Group and parties with a similar worldview are also rapidly growing elsewhere. That is happening, for instance, in Italy and Portugal, and, in particular, in Spain with the case of VOX.

The appearance of the political party VOX in Spain has been a debate-opener on issues that until now remained buried under a false consensus. Issues such as the territorial integrity of Spain, the administrative system or gender ideology have been taboo topics for a Partido Popular —traditional center-right party in Spain— that refused to fight the battle of ideas against progressivism. Thus, a party was formed that was committed to confronting the progressive cultural roller, all its mantras and its supposed moral superiority. This is a brief analysis of some of the essential ideas or concepts for the future of Europe as outlined in VOX’s founding manifesto:

“A political project for the renewal and strengthening of Spanish democratic life with the aim of uniting the Nation, achieving State

As we can see, these policies are the result of a government resolution to protect a promote a worldview that it considers to be both instrumentally and morally better than the EU-mandated one. One which they consider to be better aligned to the founding principles of that same EU that has turned against them and, above all, better aligned to the values of the country where these policies apply.

This is something being currently branded as bigoted or backward by the EU institutions although it seems to be much less ideological and much more common sensical than the road taken by the mainstream view. However, the New Europe’s view facilitates child whereas the globalist transforms this into a luxury choice at the reach of very few people. And the New Europe’s view chooses a culture of life —higher fertility and opposition to abortion and euthanasia— whereas the mainstream view has chosen a culture of death —regardless of this death resulting from a substitution process.

efficiency, improving the quality of institutions, guaranteeing the honesty of public officials and promoting economic growth for the benefit of all citizens”⁴².

The concept of national sovereignty, central to international relations, is one of the main axes on which VOX pivots. A first approach to the interpretation of this concept by the party is that held by its First Vice President, Jorge Buxadé:

“Sovereignty is that genuine and proper way of governing modern nations, and it is at the same time, a guarantee of the liberties of the nation, and of the rights of its members, a way of cohesion of the national community, overcoming inequalities and conflicts, and an effective instrument for the entire national community to jointly advance towards individual progress and the common good”⁴³.

And he adds:

“Sovereignty is also a power immune to the power or right of other States. For this reason, it is decisive to establish the territorial or geographical delimitations of the nations, since in its limits, and towards heaven and hell, the State exercises its sovereign power; without a State being able to exercise its power outside its territorial scope. All contemporary private and public International Law has been built on this idea. When a State exceeds the limit and tries to impose its sovereign power on the territory of another State, a serious conflict arises that must be resolved, at best, through diplomatic relations, and, at worst, through war”⁴⁴.

VOX considers personal freedom and the rule of law as essential elements for democracy, something that is highly disputed by the coalition Government of socialists and communist currently in power. In addition, the indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation is an ‘indispensable pillar’ for the party led by Santiago Abascal —also highly contested by regionalist and pro-independence parties, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

These principles have a special transcendence since they allow an analogy with the interference of the European institutions on the sovereignty of EU Member States. With the aggravating circumstance that the European Union is not a sovereign nation.

A clear case that reflects this attack on national sovereignty is the process for the approval of the Lisbon Treaty. At first, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, also known as the Constitutional Treaty, was presented. The central ideas were the following:

- Consecration of the primacy of Union Law over national legislation. This was established in Part I, Title I, article 6 of the aforementioned Constitutional Treaty: “The Constitution and the Law adopted by the institutions of the Union in the exercise of the powers attributed to it shall prevail over the law of the Member States”.
- Replacement of unanimity by qualified majority as an ordinary decision-making process.

These disruptive modifications in the face of what had been the idea of the European Union, that is, a union of autonomous nations, were concocted for years by the European institutions outside any democratic process. However, a reform of this depth required the approval by referendum of all member countries. Thus, the nation became the last stronghold of sovereignty and popular will.

In this process, French and Dutch societies overwhelmingly rejected the project for a European constitution. In the French case, with a very high participation —close to 70%—, and 55% rejection. As for The Netherlands, rejection was even more resounding, with 61.2% of votes against the constitutional treaty. With two founding countries against the treaty, national governments and EU institutions chose to take a ‘reflection period’. After this stage and given that the popular vote process did not produce the desired effects, the decision was made to surpass it. This way, the European peoples were robbed of their sovereignty. And even so, the same undemocratic path was followed. In the case of Ireland, where a first referendum was contrary to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU authorities secured a new plebiscite.

Parties such as VOX in Spain, Fratelli in Italy, Fidesz in Hungary or Law and Justice in Poland, are totally opposed to EU overreach as a rule, and they are aware that the nation is the only refuge for citizens against globalism. In the specific case of the European Union, VOX understands that the European Union:

“Must be a community of free nations that cooperate and join forces in those areas in which common objectives can unequivocally be achieved more quickly, fairly and efficiently than separately. This implies respect for the sovereignty of each Nation, with clearly defined limits on the powers of the common institutions, which are currently constantly exceeded and reinterpreted by the Court of Justice of the Union”⁴⁵.

Among the measures proposed by VOX in relation to the European Union these stand out:

42 VOX official website. Founding manifesto. Available online at: <https://www.voxespana.es/espana/manifiesto-fundacional-vox>

43 BUXADÉ, Jorge, *Soberanía: por qué la nación es valiosa y merece la pena defenderla*, Homo Legens, Madrid, 2021, p.29. The author took Jean Bodin as a reference, one of the Western intellectuals who has had the greatest impact on legal and political matters.

44 Ibidem. P.32-33.

45 Agenda España, Epígrafe 15 “Unión Europea”.

- Advocate for a new treaty that returns the leading role to the Member States. This measure brings with it the primacy of national law over European law making effective the recovery of national sovereignty.
- Promote Southern Europe axis for the defense of common interests, both in the protection of borders and in the defense of agricultural, livestock and fishing interests; This measure could lead to the creation of a 'Mediterranean Visegrad Group', formed by countries such as Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, in order to increase the influence of these countries in EU decision-making.
- Review the application model of the Common Agricultural Policy. In this regard, VOX proposes that the aid be directed to the improvement and optimization of farms. In addition, a greater persecution of non-EU products that enter Europe and that do not comply with the phytosanitary controls —thus creating unfair competition— that are required for EU-produced products is proposed.
- Claim the exclusivity of the Member States in what refers to international relations and suppress all foreign political representation of regions or municipalities and ensure respect for the decisions of Spanish judges and reform the euro order. These two measures require a more detailed explanation.

On October 30, 2017, the then president of the Government of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, left Spain. On the same day, the State Attorney General's Office filed a complaint against the members of the Catalan regional government for rebellion, sedition and embezzlement before the National High Court⁴⁶. Days later, the Spanish justice system issued an arrest warrant against Puigdemont and four of his former advisers. Thus, Puigdemont has been arrested —and subsequently released— by the Belgian, German and Italian authorities, without having brought him before the Spanish justice. This is a clear example of the lack of cooperation between the national authorities and, above all, of the ineffectiveness of

EU mechanisms. This situation has also highlighted how the EU bureaucracy becomes an obstacle for the cooperation among countries.

At the economic level, VOX proposes 'Taxation for prosperity'. In this sense, a massive tax cut and ending the abusive tax rates intended to support the welfare state of politicians⁴⁷ is proposed. For this, some of the measures are the following:

- Protect Spaniards from the tax plunder to which they have been subjected in recent decades under national and regional governments of every political sign.
- Simplify regulations, red tape and procedures. Eliminate all types of useless public spending and minimize the procedures start a business, whatever the legal form it adopts.
- Expand the system of tax benefits for families, especially for large ones. Those people who dedicate themselves to the care of children or dependents should never be penalized fiscally.
- Audit and eliminate all ideological subsidies and ineffective and unnecessary public organizations and companies. End of subsidies to political parties, trade unions and employers' organizations.
- Reduce income tax in order to guarantee the economic strength of families and protect their savings and investment capacity.
- Cut and simplify of corporate taxes to favor the businesses and the creation of employment in Spain, as well as to attract the profits generated by Spanish companies abroad.

These measures are the obvious example of the erroneous branding of VOX as far right. What they do reflect is, for example, its firm commitment, through tax incentives, to the family. This is, without a doubt, one of the points on which the parties that have been cited in this document agree. Thus, VOX also dedicates an entire epigraph to the 'Family Perspective'. In this sense, it proposes:

- Creation of a Family Ministry and enactment of a Family Protection Law that recognizes it as an institution prior to the State.
- Make families the center of public policies so that their needs are considered.
- Following the successful model of other European countries, creating incentives for family formation and maternity. Progressive direct aid will be approved for the number of children, tax credits for large families, interest-free loans or bank guarantees for young couples with children.
- Combat discrimination, pressure and economic penalties that women who want to be mothers may suffer in the workplace.
- Dignify and reward the decision of one of the parents to dedicate himself exclusively to the care and education of the children.
- Repeal of the Gender Violence Law and approval of a domestic violence law.
- Defense of joint custody as a rule in case of separations to preserve and protect the right of minors to relate to their parents and grandparents.
- Establish a legal framework that prevents people who act in legitimate defense to protect their home and family from having to suffer a judicial hell until they prove their innocence.

As we can see, VOX proposals are very close to its Central and Eastern European counterparts. And these will not be just proposals for very long, as VOX has entered a regional government after the regional elections in Castilla y León. It is now part of a coalition government with the Partido Popular and VOX's postulates will surely become a reality, as some have already become a reality in Madrid, where VOX is not part of the regional government but is a necessary ally for the regional government of the Partido Popular to operate.

In sum, a new vision of Europe has awakened to counter EU's mainstream views as a wave sweeping Europe from East to West. However, this reaction to a globalist, anti-natalist and alienist approach to politics and the idea of Europe is not silent nor remains inactive. On the contrary, it has doubled down its efforts in light of this fierce resistance.

46 "Puigdemont, el relato de un fugado de la Justicia", *Cope*, 24.09.21. Available online: https://www.cope.es/actualidad/espana/noticias/puigdemont-relato-fugado-justicia-20210924_1518438

47 Agenda España. Epígrafe "Fiscalidad para la prosperidad", p. 21. Available online: [AgendaEspana_VOX.pdf \(xn--agendaespaa-beb.es\)](#)

EU OVERREACH AGAINST THE MEMBER-STATE SOVEREIGNTY.

Diametrically opposed to any debate that questions the course decided by Brussels, the EU bureaucracy censors the response of these countries, expressing once again the antagonism that Brussels feels towards another conception of Europe —every other conception that diverges from the mainstream view. In the Polish case, the Court of Justice of the European Union has imposed the largest fine to date: 1 million euros per day until this country reforms its judicial system. In addition to the freezing of the 24-billion-euro European Recovery Fund. Beyond any disquisition about the sentence or tendentious debates, the fact is that the European Union cannot act without the Member States having granted it powers to do so. At least that is what the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), article 4, first paragraph:

“In accordance with Article 5, competences not conferred upon the Union in the Treaties remain with the Member States”⁴⁸.

In this sense, article 5 of the TEU extensively includes the process of delimitation of competences. This is governed by the principle of attribution. Thus, the Union only acts within the limits of the powers attributed to it by the Member States in the Treaties in order to achieve the objectives they determine. Therefore, any competence that is not explicitly attributed to the EU institutions through the Treaties, will correspond to the Member States.

In addition, the need for these powers to be included in the Treaties, made explicit in the

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁴⁹ (TFEU), clearly expresses why the functional nature of European competence. However, the TFEU does make a clear and explicit classification of powers. It is the Lisbon Treaty which clarifies the distribution of powers between the European Union and the Member States. Competences which fall into three main categories: exclusive powers for the EU, shared competences and support competences.

However, there are two special types of competences that are the result of the particular situation in which there is no doctrinal consensus. The paradigmatic case is the common foreign policy and security policy, set out in articles 21 to 46 of the TEU. This example shows us the functionalist nature of the EU, since the TFEU hardly mentions examples of this type of competition and they are not, therefore, a general catalogue.

In this state of affairs, the defenders of the intervention of the CJEU take refuge in article 19 of the TEU, first paragraph:

“The Court of Justice of the European Union shall include the Court of Justice, the General Court and specialized courts. It shall ensure that in the interpretation and application of the Treaties the law is observed.

Member States shall provide remedies sufficient to ensure effective legal protection in the fields covered by Union law”.

⁴⁸Treaty of the European Union. Available online at: <https://www.boe.es/doue/2010/083/Z00013-00046.pdf>

⁴⁹ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Available online at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/ALL/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

Likewise, it is peremptory to highlight that the European Union is not a State, but “an organization of States whose reason for being is to manage the powers that they have unanimously granted it”⁵⁰. This is the key to the reason why countries like Poland and Hungary, and parties like VOX in Spain or Fratelli d'Italia in Italy, have decided to stand up to the impositions of Brussels.

The Brussels-based establishment, however, has caricatured the Visegrad Group and patriotic movements across Europe to the extreme. Racists, xenophobes, misogynists... These are some of the adjectives that the political representatives of these movements receive daily. However, the most recurrent qualifier is that of ‘far-right’. A conceptual fallacy to say the least, as Ware points out that Klaus von Beyme himself failed to group far-right parties into one spiritual family⁵¹. According to Ware:

“The parties we would include turn out to be a loose bundle united solely by the fact that the policies they espouse in a number of fields remain well to the right of the center of the political spectrum. von Beyme’s historical/ institutional approach [...] based on the classification of party families risks collapsing into a spatial (or Downsonian) approach”⁵².

Such is the difficulty involved in this definition, that they are branded as anti-liberal and and manifestation of an “extreme form of liberalism”⁵³ at the same time. Furthermore, Law and Justice in Poland, Fidesz in Hungary, or VOX in Spain, share more characteristics with the liberal and conservative spiritual families. In economic matters, for example, they propose attractive taxation for foreign investment, with a general tax cut and that does not suffocate the taxpayer. In social policy, both parties —following Burkean thought— bet on incentives for higher birth rates and support the family as the fundamental basis on which nations are built.

Finally, it is very striking that those who qualify as extremists and anti-democratic are the ones who shun intellectual debate and censor any exchange of ideas about the possibility of reconfiguring the EU and returning to its original conception. Moreover, those in favor of EU superposition seem to reserve their defense of human rights and freedoms exclusively at an EU level. Meanwhile, they continue to show reprehensible moral equidistance to repressive regimes such as the one exercised by the Chinese Communist Party.

50 BALLESTER, Rodrigo: “El chantaje Available online: <https://fundaciondisenso.org/2021/11/08/el-chantaje-financiero-de-la-union-europea-a-polonia/>

51 WARE, Alan, *Partidos Políticos...* op.cit. p.80.

52 Ibídem.

53 Ibídem. Ware points out that the origin is anti-liberal, but in turn, from the seventies, they are an extreme form of liberalism, comparable to the Libertarian Party of the United States of America.

6

CONCLUSION

There is a growing tension between what we have come to define as the ‘New Europe’ and the status quo one. Despite the validity of Lippset and Rokkan’s postulates, a new cleavage could be added to the list. A value-based one. First, there is the ‘Old Europe’, formed by an ever-growing and overreaching EU bureaucracy that aspires to assert prevalence over national constitutions, and protected by globalist elites, whose objective is to impose their dogmas on European societies.

Among its dogmas is the creation of a panoply of ‘new rights’, such as abortion or euthanasia. These so-called rights are one of the obvious signs of the moral decadence that the West and Europe is experiencing. The case of abortion is one of the many examples in which it is verified what post materialism has led to. For decades, the Old Europe and its globalist elites have been impregnating all social strata with this harmful ideology, full of guilt and moral relativism, in which Westerners —and, especially, the Europeans— must feel guilty for being so. Furthermore, these globalist elites also seek to dissolve national identity under the flag of multiculturalism on the one hand, and EU political integration, on the other.

For all these reasons, the social revolution that has already taken place within our societies is extremely necessary, structured by parties —let us remember Burke’s definition— which, far from any spurious interest, have the sole purpose of defending the values and European roots. What has come to be called the New Europe is, paradoxically, the one that seeks to safeguard the original ideas of the Old Continent. Despite the caricature, demonization and even censorship that these movements suffer from European institutions, they are increasingly acquiring greater political relevance in quantitative terms, a true reflection of plundered societies tired of supporting not the welfare state but the welfare of the state

and its elites. They are the ones who truly suffer the effects of the multiculturalism promoted from Brussels. Citizens who see their rights continually curtailed, who see their lifestyle and their traditions crossed out as retrograde. And now, with the 2030 Agenda, the EU institutions intend to do away with any vestige of what Europe once was. Given this, European societies cannot remain impassive in the face of these furious attacks.

At the international level, complacency with the revisionist powers that seek to break away from liberal international order has resulted in Western, and especially European, fragility. The EU institutions are demonstrating equidistance in the face of totalitarian communist regimes like China’s, which repress hundreds of millions of their citizens. A trend that may have changed very recently, in light of the unity Europe has shown before the Ukrainian crisis. However, this change has also been precipitated by EU Eastern countries such as Poland, which are pushing for the vision of the ‘New Europe’. As a result, recent developments show that it is this new vision that departs from EU institutions status quo the one being now supported across the entire EU. We have now realized that it is paramount to be strategic allies of NATO, although it is Putin who has had to wake us up from the Kantian dream of perpetual peace.

The EU has permanently been under revision ever since the 2008 financial crisis. It was so again during the 2015 refugee crisis, in 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic first struck, and it is now at stake again with Russia’s aggression of Ukraine. What we do over the next few months and few years will determine the EU that remains standing in the future. Advocates for a new Europe have been pushing for their vision of Europe, which paradoxically is more aligned with its founding



principles for quite some time but it is now, in a time of crisis and unrest, when the opportunity to show how superior this vision is for EU stability, prosperity and survival.

Domestically, the era of imposition and censorship must end. In the international sphere, conditioned by the strategic competition between great powers, the European institutions must not interfere in national competences, and must promote industrial cooperation —on equal terms— between member states. The fundamental idea in this sense is that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the true nucleus of European defense and, therefore, the creation of a

Europe of Defense is not the solution but a fictional strategic autonomy.

For all that, the time has come for European societies, heirs to the most brilliant pages of universal history, to once again be masters of their destinies. We must recover the purpose for which the EU was created, strengthen the member states capability in the face of an increasingly competitive and hostile world. All this without diluting either the sovereignty or the national identity of each one of them. A Europe of Nations, proud of its past and once again optimistic about its future, which will not exist without its peoples. This is the (only) future for Europe.

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