



La nueva derecha conservadora: cómo ha cambiado y hacia dónde se dirige

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From its initial consolidation in Central Europe — with Viktor Orbán and Fidesz in Hungary since 2010 and with Law and Justice in Poland since 2015 — to its transatlantic projection with the victory of Donald Trump in 2016, the so-called “new conservative right” has consolidated itself as one of the most relevant political phenomena of the last decade. However, the movement is now undergoing a phase of profound transformation: it has reaped important victories, but also significant defeats that force it to reconsider its trajectory, its limits and its future challenges.

Since 2020, this movement has ceased to be a predominantly central European phenomenon to expand across the continent. While Fidesz and PiS were his clearest examples of the ruling conservative right wing, the broader European context evolved favorably to many of his theses: the migration crisis, energy insecurity, inflation, the war in Ukraine, mistrust of Brussels and growing cultural polarization caused many of his postulates to cease to be marginal to become increasingly mainstream positions.

The European elections of 2024 confirmed this trend: the national-conservative right-wing parties grew remarkably, although the traditional pro-European centre still maintained a global majority.

However, this growth has also led to growing fragmentation. There is no single “new European right.” Under this label very different sensitivities coexist: Atlantist conservatives, sovereignists, national populists, post-liberals, Christian Democrats and parties focused almost exclusively on the migration issue.

The three major engines: borders, sovereignty and identity

Three major issues have boosted the growth of this new right:

Fronteras. Since 2015, immigration has been the main factor in political mobilization, especially where large sections of the population perceive that their governments have lost control of borders.

Sovereignty. It has become the political language by which many voters express their frustration at the EU's over-limitation, judicial activism, globalisation or technocracy.

Identity. A broad concept encompassing religion, family, national memory, education and resistance to what many perceive as aggressive cultural progressivism.

However, the most successful conservative movements have not triumphed solely on the basis of identity slogans. Their success has been to connect these cultural concerns with material questions: cost of living, access to housing, security, demographic decline, energy prices and dignity of the working and middle classes. Hence, many of their proposals are presented as simple “common sense” rather than as conservative ideology.

Has the new right been institutionalized?

Partly yes. The new right is no longer a marginal phenomenon. It has government parties, relevant parliamentary groups, think tanks, media ecosystems, youth organizations and international conferences. It has managed to influence the political agenda even where it does not govern.

But electoral consolidation does not automatically amount to political or intellectual maturity.

In too many places, this movement continues to rely in excess of charismatic leaders, reactive rhetoric and protest energy. As Steve Bannon warned in his day, national-populism will need new fuels if it wants to survive in the long term: anger and fear mobilize, but they are fuels of rapid combustion.

The dilemma of institutionalization

Institutionalization represents both a need and a risk.

It is necessary because no movement can effectively govern without institutional maturity.

But there is also an obvious danger: domestication. By joining the system, many parties run the risk of adopting their language, internalizing their logics and forgetting why they were supported by their voters.

In addition, the institutionalization of the new right may favor the rapid emergence of more radical movements to its right that dispute its electorate.

The real challenge is to become serious without becoming harmless.

The conservative right must be able to translate popular concerns into public policies, institutional reforms, legislation and administrative capacity. Otherwise, it runs the risk of being trapped in a permanent protest: emotionally satisfactory, but politically sterile.

The main mistakes of the European Conservative Right

Despite its advances, the new right has made significant mistakes:

- 1\ Insufficient governmental competence. Too often you have better diagnosed problems than you have been able to solve them.
- 2\ Corruption and clientelism. In some cases, oligarchic practices have seriously eroded their credibility.
- 3\ Confusion between sovereignty and isolation. Not all patriotism demands withdrawal; not all national defense requires ideological tribalism.
- 4\ Lack of positive social program. He often knows better what he rejects than which country he wants to build.
- 5\ Importation of foreign cultural wars. Too many actors have imported foreign debates instead of rooting their conservatism in the history, institutions and concrete needs of their own nations.

But perhaps the most important problem is another: the growing tension between ideological affinity and national interest.

If patriotism wants to remain a founding principle of conservatism, it cannot coexist with the automatic defense of foreign actors simply because they perceive themselves as ideological allies, even when their actions harm the strategic or economic interests of their own country.

Too many self-called patriots today risk subordinating national interest to transnational ideological loyalties.

The defeats of Fidesz and PiS: strategic lessons

The recent setbacks of Fidesz and PiS illustrate these limits well.

In Poland, PiS lost power after the elections of 2023 as it was unable to form a majority in the face of an opposition mobilized around democratic renewal, tiredness with long periods of government and growing social polarization.

In Hungary, the defeat of Fidesz in 2026 against the Tisza party of Péter Magyar has been an even more profound turn after sixteen years of Orbán's rule. The main factors have been the institutional wear and tear, the accusations of corruption and a strong demand for democratic restoration.

The lesson is not that conservatism is over. The lesson is that no movement can live indefinitely of historical legitimacy, cultural rhetoric or personal charisma. Rule requires strong results, renewal and institutions.

European conservatism and strategic autonomy

The European conservative right must learn from its international allies without becoming a satellite of any of them. Maintaining close relations with partners such as the United States or Israel does not require subordinating one's own moral or strategic judgment to foreign leaders, however related they may result in ideological terms.

A truly mature conservatism must understand that international political affinity can never prevail over national interest. Its first duty remains to defend the common good of its own nation: the preservation of constitutional order, respect for moral limits in the exercise of power and the safeguarding of genuine strategic independence.

In a context of growing debate on European strategic autonomy and more transactional transatlantic relations, this autonomy of judgment is increasingly central to any serious conservative project.

Transatlantic influence and projection towards Latin America

The relationship between the new European right and Hispanic America is becoming more intense, but not unidirectional.

Hispano-America has its own conservative, Catholic, liberal-conservative and anti-communist traditions. What is new is the emergence of a transatlantic language shared around concepts such as sovereignty, anti-wokism, religious freedom, border control and criticism of global governance.

Europe has contributed with networks, think tanks, conferences and intellectual legitimacy, but Hispanic American movements are not mere imitations: they are shaped by contexts of organized crime, corruption, populism, institutional fragility and religious mobilization.

The final challenge: from protest movement to government philosophy

The future of the new European right will depend on its ability to stop being just a protest movement and become a true philosophy of government.

To this end, it will need to articulate partnerships and policies on three pillars:

That means defending borders, but also seriously reforming asylum systems.

It involves defending the family and demographic renaissance, but also providing housing, reconciliation and labour policies that make it possible to form a family.

It involves criticizing Brussels when necessary, but also understanding that Europe needs geopolitical weight in an increasingly dangerous world.

Only then can it be consolidated as a lasting historical force.

The new European right must demonstrate that it can become a true philosophy of government and not just a vehicle of protest. To achieve this, it must be patriotic without being provincial, Atlanticist without being submissive, European without being federalist and popular without being demagogic.

A different version of this analysis, in interview format, was published on 5 May 2026 in Longbrief:
[<https://longbrief.com/the-new-conservative-right-how-it-changed-and-where-its-headed-interview-with-angel-soto/>]
(<https://longbrief.com/the-new-conservative-right-how-it-changed-and-where-its-headed-interview-with-juan-angel-soto/>)