

AGENDA

ISSUE 12 / JULY - AUGUST 2025

Carlos Díaz-Rosillo / Julián Obiglio / Peter Sessions / Nicolás Albertoni /
Carlos Floriano / Jeb Bush / José María Paz Logatto / Juan Salafranca / George Heisel /
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THE WEST IN ITS LABYRINTH

While Europe faces an agenda of urgent challenges, the United States is experiencing economic turbulence and fighting battles across the globe. Latin America is torn between the forces of freedom and the authoritarian drive. Does this labyrinth have a way out?

In Central America, the Digital Newspaper República.com Is Gaining Influence

The U.S. and Its Educational Policy Reforms

Spain Plays a Key Role in the Cultural Battle

Mercosur-EFTA: The Agreement Nobody Is Watching

Bolivia Complex Prospects for the Presidential Runoff

The European Union and Its Privileged Relationship with Latin America



Carlos Díaz-Rosillo, Ph.D. 

Founding Director of the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom (FIU).

Monthly reflection

Florida is the Place to Be

When Americans ask, “Where should I live, work, and play?” one place stands out: Florida. Known for its sunshine, sandy beaches, and lively communities, Florida is more than just a vacation spot; it offers a trifecta of economic opportunities, educational excellence, and an unmatched lifestyle. Much of this success comes from the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis and the ongoing influence of President Donald J. Trump, who now proudly calls Florida home. Florida isn’t just a spot on the map; it’s the place to be.

A Booming Economy Fueled by Strategic Leadership

Florida’s economy isn’t just strong; it’s leading the nation. According to U.S. News & World Report, Florida ranks #1 in Economy and #1 in Growth, making

it a top choice for individuals and businesses alike. In fact, Florida has the highest GDP growth and is #1 in net migration, meaning people aren’t just visiting; they’re staying.

A key part of this thriving economy is Florida’s lack of state income tax, which leaves more money in the pockets of families and businesses. Under Governor Ron DeSantis and then-Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, now the 7th president of Florida International University, this pro-business and low-tax environment has

“Florida has the highest GDP growth and is #1 in net migration, meaning people aren’t just visiting; they’re staying.”

only strengthened. Governor DeSantis has kept Florida's low corporate tax structure, which encourages business investment and responsible spending. His administration has consistently produced budget surpluses, cut wasteful spending through the Florida State Department of Governmental Efficiency (DOGE) task force, and focused on impactful investments in infrastructure and workforce development.

Governor DeSantis's "Moving Florida Forward" infrastructure initiative has committed billions to improve transportation and reduce traffic congestion, crucial steps to support Florida's fast-growing population and economy. Additionally, the Job Growth Grant Fund has directed millions into local economic development and skills training for emerging industries, ensuring Florida stays prepared for the future.

The Trump Factor: Florida as a National Symbol of Opportunity

Equally important is the national attention President Donald J. Trump has brought to Florida. In 2019, President Trump made the state his official residence, moving from New



York City to his beloved Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach. This action highlighted a strong message: Florida is at the heart of America's future.

President Trump's administration implemented policies that spurred Florida's growth, including cutting federal taxes, easing regulations, and boosting the national economy, which in turn helped strengthen Florida's already robust business environment. His focus on energy independence, manufacturing, and conservative values struck a chord with many Floridians, shaping the state's political and economic identity.

Florida has since emerged as a symbol of freedom, opportunity, and American excellence. That reputation is backed by President Trump's continued presence and influence.

Education and Opportunity Go Hand in Hand

Florida leads the nation in educational choice, allowing parents to select the best learning environment for their children. Charter schools, magnet programs, and school vouchers offer flexibility and creativity in K-12 education, ensuring students are ready for success no matter where they live. With options like traditional universities, technical colleges, and innovative leadership programs, Florida's investment in education is preparing a new generation of informed citizens, skilled professionals, and principled leaders who can drive the state and the nation forward.

Florida continues to invest in its future. Ranked #1 in Higher Education by U.S. News & World Report, the state's universities and colleges offer quality, affordable education options. From institutions like the University of Florida and Florida State University to rising academic leaders like Florida International University, Florida's higher education system serves as a model for the nation. In fact, four of Florida's public universities have recently been ranked among the top 50 public

"Florida leads the nation in educational choice, allowing parents to select the best learning environment for their children."

institutions in the country. These rankings showcase the Sunshine State's competitive academics and strong career pathways that prepare students for success.

At the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom, we support these values through innovative academic programs. The Center launched this month a Bachelor of Science in Business and Government Leadership and is set to launch a Master of Science in Business and Government Leadership in 2026. These interdisciplinary programs will equip students with the essential skills necessary for making informed leadership decisions in both the private and public sectors. Students will explore leadership through theory and practical application. With guidance from experienced academics and practitioners, including top public and

private sector leaders, students will engage with real-world decision-makers and policymakers at the highest levels, graduating ready to lead with purpose.

A Thriving Job Market

Florida's economic growth is supported by a diverse job market across many industries, including tourism, aerospace, real estate, healthcare, technology, finance, and logistics. The state's business-friendly atmosphere continues to attract companies and entrepreneurs, creating many job opportunities for Florida residents. From multinational firms establishing regional headquarters to local businesses thriving in their communities, Florida is a center of innovation and employment.

Moreover, Florida's rapid population growth, driven by both domestic and international migration, is significant. It shows that people and families across the country view the state as a place of opportunity. Florida continues to draw households from states like New York, California, and Georgia, thanks to its no-income-tax policy and warm weather.

This mix of economic freedom, diverse industries, and population growth makes Florida the best place to build a career, start a business, and achieve the American Dream.

Florida's Future is Bright

As the United States looks ahead, Florida stands out as a model of resilience, growth, and opportunity. Thanks to strong leadership, the state has shown its ability to bounce back from crises. Whether handling the pandemic or facing hurricanes, Florida has consistently demonstrated its capability to overcome challenges while prioritizing freedom and prosperity.

It is a place where economic freedom meets educational excellence, where innovation thrives alongside natural beauty, and where people can thrive. As more Americans seek states that emphasize freedom, growth, and opportunity, the answer is clear: Florida is the place to be.



Monthly Editorial

Julián Obiglio

General Coordinator AGENDA Magazine
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Leaders Without Parties and Parties Without Leaders

Western nations are undergoing a transition in how political ideas are expressed, promoted, and presented. Until recently, those ideas were shaped and defended within the institutional structures of political parties. Even when different visions coexisted within a single party, they were debated and ultimately decided by the majority of its supporters. What was clear, however, was that the ideas championed by a party represented all its members and were presented to society through its leader—typically as a candidate for the highest office in the land.

In that system, voters chose between political parties, aligning themselves with the ideas and proposals each put forward. Support for the party itself—

and therefore for its leaders—was relatively stable. Of course, the leader's personality and communication skills influenced the level of support, but there was always a party that provided political sustainability, an identity-based platform, and the foundation to forge alliances, build majorities, and govern effectively.

The 21st century has brought a new development whose outcome remains uncertain: the rise of leaders without parties. These are public figures who run for the highest offices



"El siglo XXI nos ha presentado una novedad que no termina de asentarse y aún no sabemos en qué derivará. Se trata del surgimiento de los líderes sin partido".

without the support of party structures to define their values, sustain them in building national and regional majorities, or provide an institutional platform from which to engage with other political actors, whether allies or opponents.

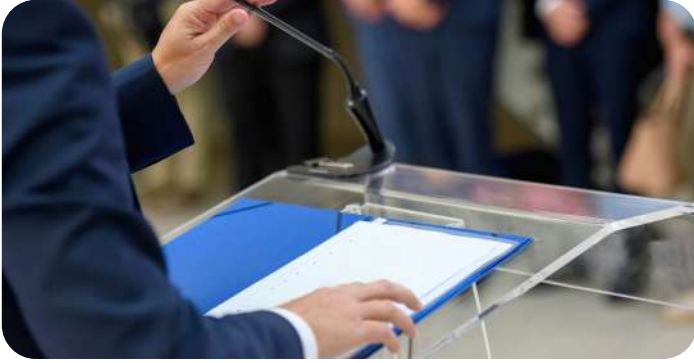
This shift stems from several factors, including:

- Public fatigue with traditional politics and the declining credibility of established leaders has left many parties without figures capable of making them electorally competitive.
- The blurring of party ideals in efforts to create "catch-all parties."
- A lack of credible spokespersons to communicate those ideals.
- Individual figures are willing to take major risks, in contrast to risk-

- averse party structures.
- The rigidity of party platforms contrasts with the limitless flexibility of leader-centered campaigns.
- The rise of new media and social networks has allowed a single individual, without a party machine, to amplify their message and quickly build mass followings.
- Increasingly fragmented voting patterns.

This undeniable reality has complicated the functioning of democratic institutions. The formation of governing majorities has become more difficult, while opposition forces struggle to fulfill their essential role of oversight and accountability.

We are seeing more outsiders proposing populist or unrealistic platforms, with little interest in building governing majorities and no respect for their peers in the political system. Such leaders have emerged across Europe and Latin America, on both the right and the left. Some have



won power—with generally disappointing results—while others remain in opposition, weakening traditional parties within their ideological spectrum.

The United States offers a unique case: despite strong bipartisan traditions, Donald Trump launched his political career without the institutional support of the Republican Party. Over time, the party structure became integrated into his first administration and ultimately served as the official platform for his second campaign and presidency.

We must be realistic: this dynamic of leaders without parties and parties without leaders will persist for some time. But those of us who believe democracy remains the best system for citizen representation and public administration must work to

strengthen political parties as essential vehicles for uniting people around shared ideas and values, and for offering candidates capable of governing responsibly.

That means investing in leadership development and values-based identity, fostering substantive debate, and promoting pre- and post-electoral coalitions as the foundation for stable governance and effective opposition.

These challenges—and many others across the Atlantic Triangle—are at the core of this new issue of **AGENDA** Magazine. We open this number with a must-read article by Carlos Díaz-Rosillo on why Florida has become a hub of political, economic, and cultural influence. We then turn to key articles on Europe's agenda for the months ahead, followed by in-depth analysis of new initiatives from President Trump and Governor DeSantis, and perspectives on Latin America, particularly Central America, Mercosur, Bolivia, and Mexico. Don't miss it!

AGENDA

Magazine

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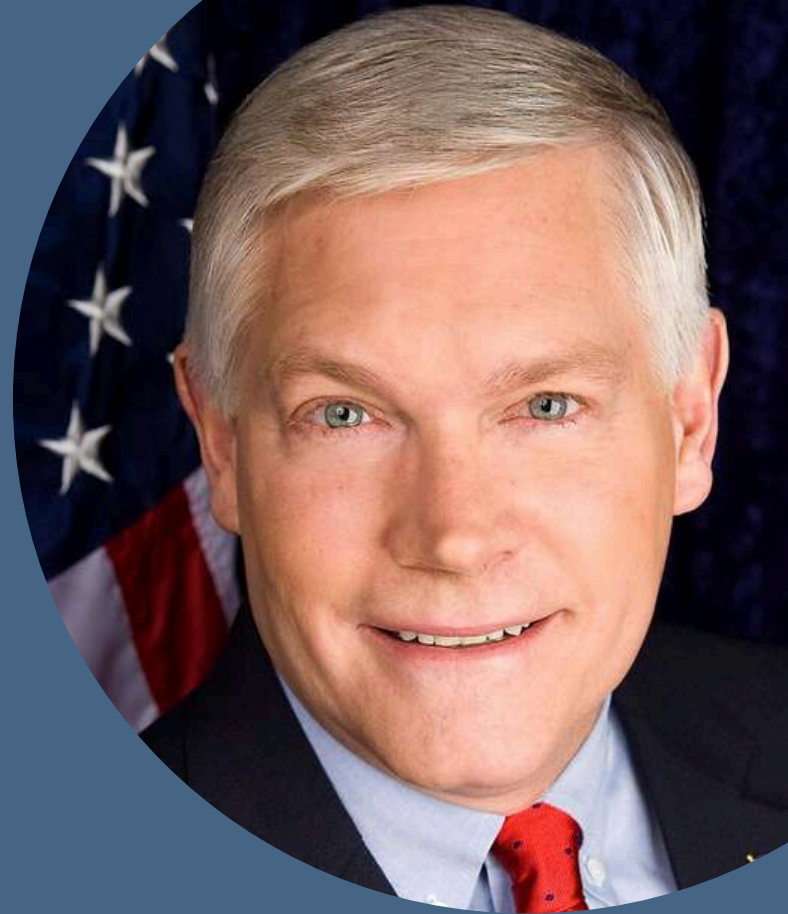
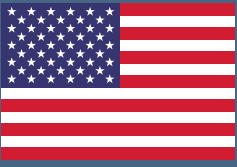
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Peter Sessions

He is a United States Representative for Texas's 17th District.

From 2013 to 2019, he chaired the House Rules Committee and, prior to that, led the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC).

First elected in 1996, he has been consecutively reelected, building a long-standing career in the Legislative Branch.

The Future of American Education Is at Stake

The author refers to the policies of the Trump administration aimed at reducing the size of the state, eliminating bureaucratic structures, and ensuring a more efficient use of public resources.

In particular, he analyzes the initiatives being promoted in the field of education and the restructuring of the Department of Education, offering strong criticism of previous administrations which, in his view, pursued debt forgiveness policies and increased spending that proved highly detrimental to society.

He also criticizes what happened under past administrations, which heavily involved the state in defining the moral issues of students and their families. Peter Sessions defends the new policies implemented in this area.

Since January 21, Americans have seen President Trump's vision for improving efficiency in the federal government. Government efficiency impacts every area of public administration, affecting millions of Americans who care about the quality of service provided by various agencies. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the ongoing debate surrounding the Department of Education (ED).

At the heart of this debate is a fundamental Republican principle: reducing the size and power of the federal government to return decision-making to the people. The previous administration imposed politically motivated policies that disrupted America's educational framework, family structures, and moral compass. Now, conservatives seek to undo those policies and restore education to local control.

President Biden's mass forgiveness of student loans was financially irresponsible and displayed a lack of integrity. He baited the issue of free

education to millions of people who owed hundreds of billions of dollars back in student loans. The Supreme Court originally ruled against Biden's broad.

\$400 million forgiveness plan on June 30, 2023, finding the administration overstepped its authority. He ignored the Court and persisted in unconstitutionally wasting taxpayer dollars, managing to forgive more student debt than any previous president, totaling \$188.8 billion during his time in office.

Furthermore, reaches in education by Democrats across the country resulted in unpopular woke policy changes forced into our schools against the interests of parents



and independent school districts. Under President Biden and Congressional Democrats, the ED, the Department of Labor, and Health and Human Services ordered schools and universities to enforce policies that interfere with education, sports, and medicines. The Department of Education took up unwise policy decisions, including student loan forgiveness, pressuring the NCAA to encourage transgender competitors against biological girls and women, and employing the Department of Justice to arrest parents speaking up at school board meetings under misdemeanor violations. They have weaponized the combined force of the federal government to take power away from the American people.

Republicans want to correct these unbalanced federal policies from the last three Democratic presidents and make changes that return power to the American people:

- Reduce 10,500 ED employees to 100 who would become experts in areas of education, such as

"Under President Biden the ED, the Department of Labor, and Health and Human Services ordered schools and universities to enforce policies that interfere with education..."

- autism, loss of vision, Down syndrome, graduate education, and student loan programs.
- Maintain the funding levels sent to states in 2024 for FY2025.
- Stop requiring the school district to send expensive and laborious reports to Washington, D.C. that are rarely reviewed by the Department of Education.

The U.S. House of Representatives will soon hold hearings on these and other policy issues that will shape funding decisions for fiscal year 2026. The question remains: Will we continue down a path of federal overreach, or will we return power to states, communities, and families? The future of American education is at stake.



Nicolás Albertoni

Deputy Foreign Minister of Uruguay during President Luis Lacalle Pou's administration (2022–2025). Masters in Latin American Studies and current Visiting Researcher at Georgetown University. PhD in Political Science and International Relations and Masters in Economics from the University of Southern California.



MERCOSUR – EFTA: A Pragmatic Agreement in Uncertain Times

Global trade competition compels countries to open their markets and define their strategic international partners. Within this context, MERCOSUR has taken significant steps moving beyond ideological divides and focusing on mutually beneficial trade relations.

The MERCOSUR–EFTA agreement, though often overshadowed by the prominence of the MERCOSUR–EU deal, carries major importance. Uruguay's former Deputy Foreign Minister reviews the landscape and highlights the relevance of this integration between trade blocs.

The signing of the agreement between MERCOSUR and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) represents one of those quiet yet decisive moves in an uncertain world, where opportunities for major multilateral agreements appear to be narrowing. Although less high-profile than other trade deals, such as the recently concluded MERCOSUR–EU agreement, it embodies a commitment to effective multilateralism and a long-term geoeconomic vision.

WHAT IS EFTA AND WHAT IS MERCOSUR SEEKING?

EFTA brings together four developed economies (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) that, while not part of the European Union, seek to expand their global trade presence. In this context, Latin America emerges as a region rich in strategic resources but still facing challenges in global integration.

For MERCOSUR, which continues to work on consolidating its external profile after decades of institutional

inwardness and internal barriers, this agreement offers concrete opportunities: diversifying markets, attracting investment, and signaling openness at a time when uncertainty dominates.

A TRADE AGREEMENT AND BEYOND

Once in force, the agreement will cover goods, services, investment, intellectual property, public procurement, and sustainable development. It is estimated that it will eliminate tariffs on 95% of MERCOSUR exports to EFTA, leading to a substantial increase in bilateral trade, particularly in agribusiness, pharmaceuticals, and machinery.

Yet beyond tariff reduction, the true value of the agreement lies in its institutional dimension. While the MERCOSUR–EU deal faces political hurdles and mounting



environmental demands, the text with EFTA advances quietly, guided by a pragmatic logic that prioritizes commerce over ideology. Even so, from a political standpoint, EFTA countries may wish to see the MERCOSUR–EU agreement signed and effectively implemented before fully sealing their own deal with MERCOSUR.

A LESSON FOR THE REGION

In a global context marked by geopolitical tensions and growing competition for critical resources, agreements such as MERCOSUR–EFTA should also be understood as tools of strategic positioning. Europe seeks to secure access to food, energy, and minerals, while Latin America needs investment, technology, and clear rules.

Such treaties can serve as platforms



"In a global context marked by geopolitical tensions and growing competition for critical resources, agreements such as MERCOSUR–EFTA should also be understood as tools of strategic positioning. "

to test cooperation mechanisms with blocs that share values such as institutional transparency, respect for international law, and an openness-oriented outlook. They also allow MERCOSUR countries to negotiate and, ultimately, deliver meaningful results as a bloc, something essential for competing in the top tier of global trade.

PENDING RATIFICATION: OPPORTUNITY OR RISK?

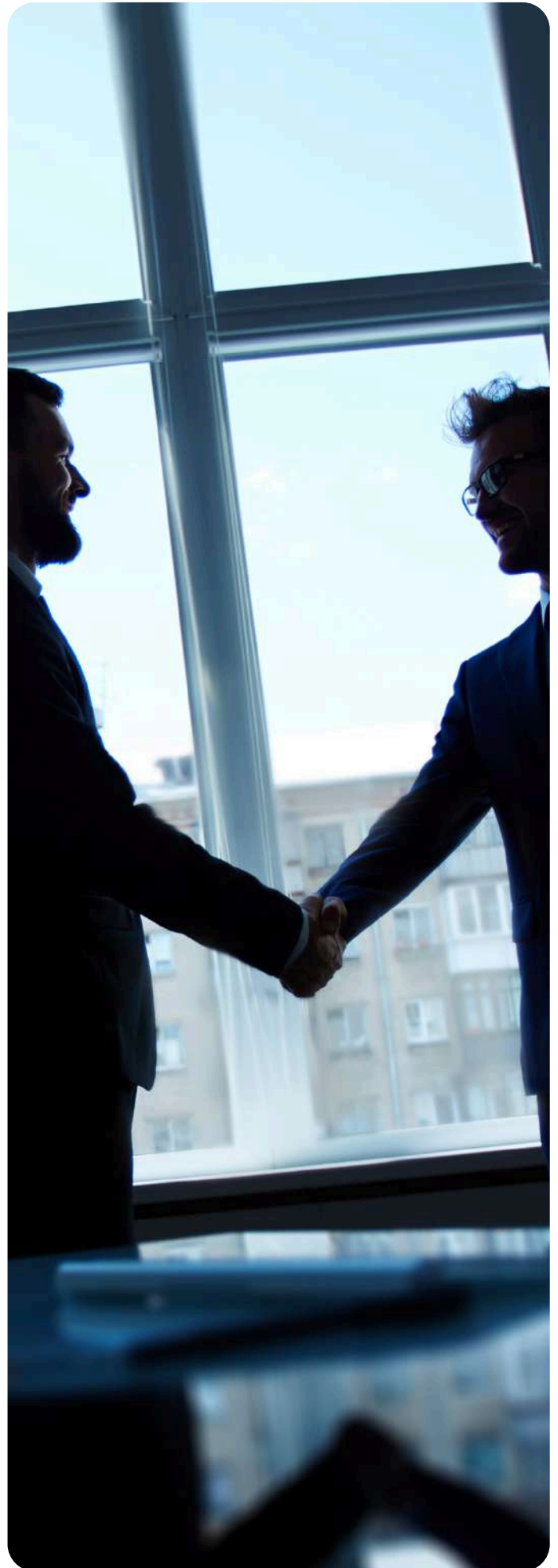
The agreement still awaits signature and subsequent legislative ratification in member countries. Although it is generally expected to avoid the ideological hurdles that have delayed other deals, the ongoing delay reflects a frequent disconnect between

domestic politics and international opportunities. The region cannot continue to squander agreements that, while not perfect, open doors at a time when many others are closing. MERCOSUR–EFTA is no panacea, but it represents a concrete step toward more effective and less rhetorical integration.

Conclusion

In a world where global competition increasingly plays out on the commercial stage, Latin America cannot afford the luxury of turning inward. The MERCOSUR–EFTA agreement shows that even in uncertain times, it is possible to build stable, predictable, and mutually beneficial relationships.

Smart integration is neither ideological nor short-term, it is strategic, realistic, and demands continuity. On that path, every agreement like this one counts.





Carlos Floriano Corrales

Member of Parliament for the Popular Party representing the province of Cáceres, Spain. Spokesperson for foreign affairs of the Popular Parliamentary Group in the Congress of Deputies. He has also served as senator, deputy secretary-general for organization and electoral affairs of the Popular Party, and president of the Popular Party of Extremadura. Associate professor of applied economics.



The Fearsome Advance of Authoritarianism

The world is facing a serious democratic setback: less than 30% of the population lives under liberal systems, while the majority lives under authoritarian regimes.

Populism is fueling this decline by portraying democracies as ineffective and corrupt, and autocracies as faster and more patriotic. This weakens institutional checks and balances. The trend feeds on social discontent and the influence of social media, which reinforces the image of a strong leader and erodes trust in democracy.

The author analyzes this situation and argues that the challenge for liberal democracies is to show they can deliver results without abandoning their core values, and to reclaim a convincing narrative against the appeal of authoritarian efficiency.

The Varieties of Democracy Institute leads the V-Dem project, a database that measures the democratic standing of states through multiple indices and indicators related to political regimes, human rights, civil society, and the rule of law. Its 2024 report shows that, for the first time in more than two decades, fewer than 30% of the world's population live in a liberal democracy, while about 70% live under some form of autocracy. The democratic decline is so marked that, in the past ten years, the number of countries moving toward autocracy has tripled.

This global rise of despotism is plain to see and, in many cases, takes root within democracies themselves. These regimes build legitimacy on an emotional and simple, yet highly effective narrative. At the center of this narrative lies populism, which, by offering simplistic solutions to complex problems, mobilizes voters against their representatives and justifies replacing liberal democracies with supposedly more efficient autocracies.

Liberal democracies are portrayed as slow, bogged down by bureaucracy, corrupt, and controlled by the elites' intent on protecting their privileges. Autocracies, by contrast, are presented as modern, agile, patriotic, and determined to solve problems. In short, the effectiveness of democracies is put into question, while the supposed efficiency of concentrated power is offered as the alternative.

This is not a theoretical concern, it can be clearly seen in how some leaders, who came to power through democratic elections, have concentrated power step by step. They do so by draining political pluralism of its content while maintaining the appearance of elections; reshaping institutions to



dominate them or favor more centralized structures; deliberately weakening judicial and legislative checks; and promoting narratives that delegitimize any form of mediation between power and citizens.

Often, these strategies rest on high levels of popular approval and are built around a narrative that glorifies the leader as the only path to national salvation, while portraying the state or traditional institutions as obstacles to be dismantled. In other cases, as we are now seeing, autocracy is displayed to the world as efficient, contrasted with an alleged liberal decline. In other words, economic growth and centralized control are presented as proof that liberal democracy is no longer synonymous with progress.

These narratives thrive on public discontent. In many countries, confidence in democracy has fallen sharply. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer 2024, more than 50% of respondents in advanced economies believe their country is “in decline,” and most no longer believe

“The democratic decline is so marked that, in the past ten years, the number of countries moving toward autocracy has tripled.”

voting has a real impact on their lives. In Latin America, the Latinobarómetro survey shows that only 48% of citizens support democracy as the best form of government, while more than 25% would accept a non-democratic government if it solved problems.

Populism translates this frustration into a seductive message: the system is broken, and only a strong leader can fix it. Concepts like judicial independence, institutional checks and balances, or press freedom are framed as obstacles to change rather than safeguards of liberty. Democracy is no longer seen as a system that corrects mistakes, but one that repeats them; And, in the populist discourse, pluralism becomes synonymous with paralysis.

In this environment, social media has become a powerful ally of

authoritarian populism. By allowing direct communication between the leader and “the people,” it makes representatives seem unnecessary as a check on government action, weakens public debate, and spreads simplified or false narratives at viral speed. Emotion replaces evidence, polarization replaces consensus, and spectacle replaces accountability.

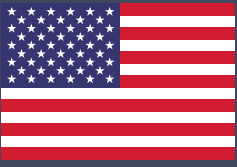
Faced with this, liberal democracy must defend itself by proving it can still deliver results in terms of security, economic prosperity, and social welfare, without abandoning the core principles on which it rests: individual freedom, equality before the law, limits on state power, and the protection of fundamental rights. These are the values that sustain open, plural, and tolerant societies, where justice, freedom, and civic participation are the cornerstones of the political system.

At the same time, liberal democracies must also learn to connect with the emotions that populists have managed to monopolize, because

today narrative is a decisive factor. Democracies must regain the initiative so that the discourse of authoritarian efficiency does not continue spreading from within.

It is not a choice between order and freedom, between speed and pluralism, or between a strong state and individual rights; it is about building a model that does not sacrifice one in the name of the other. History—and our present reality—shows that efficiency without freedom ends up as nothing more than a more sophisticated form of domination.





John Ellis "Jeb" Bush

443rd Governor of the State of Florida. Served two terms from 1999 to 2007. Member of the Republican Party. Candidate for President of the United States in the 2016 Republican primaries. Chairman of the Board of Directors of ExcelinEd.



Student Achievement Depends on a Commitment to Strong Accountability

The future of the United States depends on quality education, yet low reading and math scores reveal a systemic failure. Successful experiences in Florida and Mississippi show that high standards, accountability, and effective school choice significantly improve student performance.

Former Governor Bush argues that, to prevent the next generation from falling behind, it is crucial to prioritize academic recovery, train teachers in evidence-based methods, expand access to quality school options, and maintain transparent assessments.

America's future has always been built on opportunity, and I believe that opportunity begins with access to quality education. Economic and social mobility can be driven by strong schools, engaged families, and dedicated educators.

Today, we are falling short on that promise. The latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, reveal a disheartening reality: just 28% of eighth graders in America are proficient in math, and only 30% are proficient in reading.

These numbers should stop us in our tracks. They represent millions of students who are not prepared for high school, let alone college, military service, or employment in well-paying jobs. They tell the story of systemic failure that cuts across states, districts, and demographics.

Thankfully, we know what works because we developed and implemented comprehensive solutions to these challenges in

"The latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, reveal a disheartening reality: just 28% of eighth graders in America are proficient in math, and only 30% are proficient in reading."

Florida decades ago.

Education was my top priority as Governor, and in partnership with state policymakers, Florida created a strong framework of transparency, accountability, and educational opportunity. We raised academic expectations, created a transparent system that grades schools based on student performance, and gave parents the power to choose the right educational setting for their children. These weren't easy choices, and these policies weren't always popular. But they produced real results—taking Florida from near-bottom in reading and math achievement to the top ten

—and other states followed our lead.

In 2011, Mississippi was mired in a literacy crisis, with almost four out of five fourth graders scoring below proficient on NAEP. Leaders adopted comprehensive literacy policy along with a strong school accountability system, both modeled on Florida’s laws, to measure what matters, provide schools, students, and educators with interventions and supports, engage parents, reward results, and close learning gaps.

The transformation—often called the “Mississippi Miracle”—is undeniable, especially among student populations that historically have fallen behind. Mississippi’s fourth-grade Black students rose to third in the nation in both reading and math on the 2024 NAEP, and Hispanic and low-income students are now in the top spots in reading and second place in math nationwide.

We continue to see these kinds of improvements when states focus on the fundamentals: school



accountability, early literacy, high expectations, rigorous curriculum, and school choice.

The playbook requires strong leadership and staying power, which has been waning in states across the nation in recent years. Coming out of the pandemic, and in an attempt to obscure learning loss, some states have watered down accountability systems. Others have stalled the implementation of evidence-based reading strategies. And far too many are leaving parents in the dark about how their children’s schools are

performing. In this moment of declining student performance and widening achievement gaps, that's unacceptable.

Instead of stepping back, we need to double down. That means prioritizing academic recovery with the urgency it deserves. It means providing teachers with the tools and training they need to teach evidence-based reading, not flawed methods. It means expanding access to high-quality school options, including public charter schools and universal parent choice. It also means recommitting to annual statewide assessments and transparent school ratings so parents and the public can see how schools are doing and where improvement is needed.

The countries that outperform the United States on international benchmarks don't waste time debating whether education matters. They invest in excellence, set high standards, and hold systems accountable for results. The same should be true here.

"Instead of stepping back, we need to double down. That means prioritizing academic recovery with the urgency it deserves. "

As we continue pushing states to focus on the fundamentals of reading and math, we must ensure that we measure progress accurately and consistently.

There has been much discussion about whether recent changes at the U.S. Department of Education will affect the administration of the NAEP test every two years.

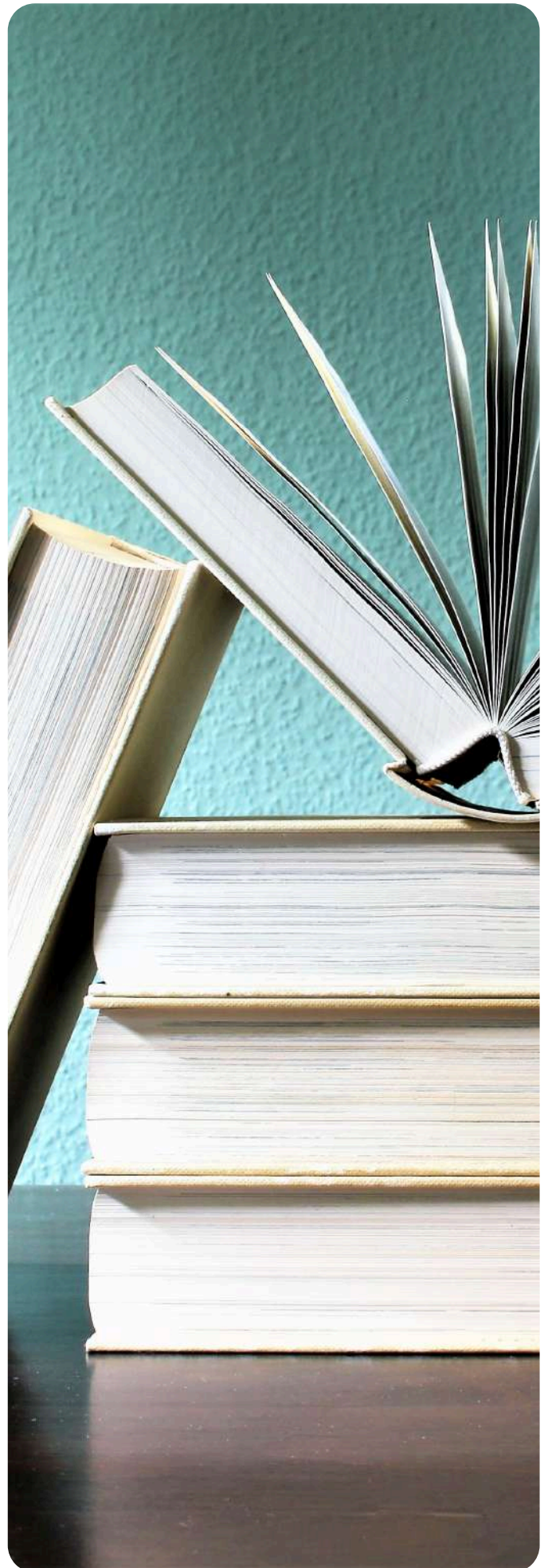
As some states consider lowering expectations or rolling back school accountability measures, NAEP is a consistent, rigorous, and objective measure of student performance. It highlights success and, most importantly, points to where urgent action is needed to close learning gaps.

You can't fix what you don't measure.

Without clear data, policymakers, parents, and educators are left in the dark, with no ability to compare students in their state over time and to the national landscape.

That kind of transparency builds trust just as strong accountability drives progress. In Florida, we've seen a generation of students from all backgrounds lifted up by that philosophy.

We cannot afford to lower the bar and let the next generation fall behind. This is a moment for leadership. I urge policymakers, education leaders, and families to come together around a shared vision that includes high expectations, proven academic strategies, and student-centered policies to guide the path forward. If we get the fundamentals right, the future for our students will be bright.





José María Paz Logatto

Technical Secretary of the Bolivian civil society alliance La Ruta de la Democracia and President of the Bolivian Political Science Association. He holds a Master's degree in Political Studies from Spain and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Management from Chile. He has served as a representative of the Carter Center in Bolivia and has worked with several international cooperation projects, the National Electoral Court, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Municipality of La Paz.



Historic Runoff in Bolivia

For the first time, Bolivia will hold a presidential runoff. On October 19, voters will have to choose between Rodrigo Paz Pereira and Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga. Both candidates could be considered center-right and represent the end of 20 years of populist hegemony.

The country is facing a severe economic crisis: inflation, shortage of foreign currency, fuel scarcity, and a state without reserves. The next president will have to take unpopular but urgent measures, such as reforming fuel subsidies and building consensus in a fragmented Parliament.

The author summarizes the key proposals of each candidate and argues that Bolivia now faces a unique opportunity to break free from stagnation and embark on a path toward development.

For the first time in its history, Bolivia will hold a runoff election by universal suffrage on October 19. Citizens will choose between the two leading candidates from the August 17 general elections, which—unexpectedly—gave a relative majority to Christian Democrat Rodrigo Paz Pereira with 32.06% of the vote, followed by Jorge “Tuto” Quiroga Ramírez of the Alianza Libre with 26.70%.

It is also important to highlight the third force, Alianza Unidad, led by businessman Samuel Doria Medina, which received 19.69% of valid votes. Although it will not participate in the runoff, it also opposes the current government of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and will hold a significant number of seats in the Legislative Assembly.

The August 17 elections marked the end of a 20-year cycle of electoral dominance and parliamentary control by authoritarian populism, which plunged the country into a multidimensional crisis. The most

pressing concern for Bolivians is the economy: rising inflation, shortage of foreign currency, and fuel scarcity, which has led to long lines of cars, trucks, and buses waiting for gasoline and diesel.

The winners of this election fall within an ideological spectrum ranging from the center to the right. Yet, although they reject socialism, they also tend to dismiss the traditional left-right categories. This is largely because Bolivia’s popular and Indigenous classes were indoctrinated by MAS to vote against the right.

Paz Pereira successfully focused his campaign on these groups, traveling to at least 220 of the country’s 340 municipalities. He did so by car and motorcycle, an effort that partly



explains his success in persuading traditionally MAS-loyal constituencies to redirect their vote. By contrast, his rivals ran campaigns concentrated mainly in capital cities and on social media, which proved insufficient.

The key issue now lies in the differences between the government programs of Rodrigo Paz and Tuto Quiroga, particularly in determining who offers the best plan to lift the country out of economic crisis, and guide it toward a more democratic and less statist future.

The next president will most likely inherit a bankrupt state, without international reserves, without dollars to purchase fuel, and burdened by external debt obligations that must be met to avoid default.

Tuto Quiroga proposes securing freely available funds from the IMF, seeking over one billion dollars to finance and manage public debt. He also suggests reducing the fiscal deficit from 10% to 3%, adopting a variable exchange rate, reforming the

"The key issue now lies in the differences between the government programs of Rodrigo Paz and Tuto Quiroga, particularly in determining who offers the best plan to lift the country out of economic crisis..."

Hydrocarbons Law, and strengthening the private sector.

Paz, by contrast, rejects IMF loans and instead focuses on redistributing central government resources to the regions on a 50/50 basis (currently 85/15). He advocates opening markets through what he calls "capitalism for all," which would provide affordable credit to small and medium-sized producers. His platform also includes rationalizing and increasing transparency in public spending, forgiving taxes for businesses, creating a currency stabilization fund to unify exchange rates, and replacing the current customs authority with a public-private institution.

Both Paz and Quiroga agree on lowering taxes, reviewing the efficiency of state-owned enterprises, adopting technological and digital reforms to improve public administration, and reviving the hydrocarbons sector. They also propose greater international integration to attract investment and reestablish relations with countries such as the United States and Chile, while distancing Bolivia from others like Iran and Russia. Economists generally view Paz's proposals as gradualist and Quiroga's as shock-oriented.

Both candidates recognize that in the short term they must resolve the issue of fuel subsidies. Reducing or eliminating these subsidies will be unpopular but necessary, as they are draining the economy and creating a massive public deficit. At the same time, dollars are needed to import fuel and restore normal supplies of gasoline and diesel.

Without these immediate solutions, it will be impossible to move forward with the broader reforms the country



requires, some of which may demand constitutional amendments. To achieve this, both candidates must also tone down the fierce smear campaign they have waged against each other, which has so far been damaging and counterproductive.

Regardless of who becomes the next president, both will be forced to build agreements and consensus in Parliament, including with legislators from Doria Medina's third force. This will be the only way to successfully implement the urgent measures in the correct sequence. Only then will the structural transformations Bolivia needs be possible, preventing a collapse that could pave the way for the return of authoritarian populism, a formula that has already caused significant harm in the region and beyond.



Juan Salafranca

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European Union: Resuming Activities Amid Enormous Challenges

Europe enters the autumn season confronted with multiple crises and global challenges. The summer of 2025 left behind devastating wildfires, renewed trade frictions with the United States, a controversial tariff agreement, and an increasingly diminished role for the European Union in addressing the war in Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East.

The Union also faces pressing debates on rearmament, the possible reintroduction of mandatory military service, proposed reductions to the Common Agricultural Policy, and complex negotiations regarding enlargement.

This article examines the political agenda awaiting Europe as it resumes activities after the summer recess, emphasizing the Union's need to reclaim its position as a global actor by balancing security, competitiveness, and internal cohesion in an increasingly adverse international environment.

In the European Union (EU), the end of August typically marks not only the beginning of the academic year but also the resumption of political activity.

This period also coincides with an assessment of the damage caused annually by wildfires across the Union. The summer of 2025, one of the hottest on record, produced the most devastating wave of fires since EU-wide data collection began.

According to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS), established in 2006 under the Copernicus program, over one million hectares of woodland were consumed by flames this year, surpassing the previous record of 980,000 hectares in 2017. Nearly half of this total (415,000 hectares) was in Spain, followed by 275,000 hectares in Portugal, making the Iberian Peninsula by far the most severely affected region. Romania ranked next, with 125,000 hectares destroyed.

Despite the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the

mobilization of national and European resources, firefighting capacity proved insufficient, and coordination among EU, national, regional, and local authorities revealed significant shortcomings.

The summer also marked a turning point in the sphere of EU trade policy, following the tariff war provoked by the arrival of a new U.S. administration in January. At the end of July, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, responsible for conducting trade negotiations under the EU's institutional framework, traveled to a golf resort in Scotland owned by Donald Trump to finalize an agreement establishing a 15 percent average tariff on EU goods and services entering the United States.



Subsequent revelations regarding the detailed provisions of the agreement—particularly the concessions demanded by Washington, such as broad market access for U.S. industrial and agricultural products and open-ended European commitments on investment and energy purchases—sparked an intense debate within the Union. This debate is expected to intensify as the new legislative session begins.

A widespread perception persists that the EU yielded too swiftly and too easily to the demands of the American president. Yet the non-rhetorical question remains whether any alternative truly existed in the face of the unilateral imposition of prohibitive tariffs by the new Republican administration.

"A widespread perception persists that the EU yielded too swiftly and too easily to the demands of the American president..."

Confronted with a “take it or leave it” scenario, the EU opted to limit the damage by accepting a general tariff rate of 15 percent, even though many products and sectors will face significantly higher rates. Nonetheless, it is expected that the agreement will be ratified by both the Member States and the European Parliament, as the costs of a full trade war would likely be far greater.

In this context, the diversification of trade pursued by the EU, particularly through the Mercosur agreement and the modernization of the EU–Mexico Global Agreement, may offer critical relief. Their timely ratification would provide renewed momentum for the Union’s external economic relations.

The ratification process, especially regarding Mercosur, will not be straightforward; however, reason and pragmatism are likely to prevail, particularly in the current volatile international climate. Ironically, without the disruptive presence of President Trump, progress on these

agreements might not have been possible at all.

Yet the broader debate will remain contentious. Deindustrialization, technological and demographic stagnation, and Europe's comparatively stringent environmental standards vis-à-vis the United States and China are contributing to a perception of the EU's declining global relevance. Once a leading commercial and financial power, the Union now suffers from its limited capacity to influence international political developments. Despite repeated attempts, the EU's influence has proven modest in addressing the defining global challenges of our time; most notably, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the ongoing crisis in the Middle East.

Even U.S. efforts to mediate have been disregarded by President Vladimir Putin, further highlighting the EU's marginal role in this conflict. The extensive solidarity demonstrated by Member States

through economic, military, political, and humanitarian measures has not translated into meaningful political weight for the Union in shaping a resolution. Ukraine's legitimate demands, fully endorsed by the EU, remain distant from consideration in negotiations where the Union itself is absent. The escalation of hostilities in recent weeks renders the prospect of a lasting peace increasingly remote.

The forthcoming nineteenth package of sanctions against Russia, expected to be adopted unanimously by the twenty-seven Member States, is unlikely to inflict the desired damage on the Russian economy or its military capacity, since China and India remain willing to sustain Moscow through continued trade and financial support. These sanctions will also prove ineffective without more forceful and credible



pressure from the United States. In the Middle East, particularly in Gaza, Europe's presence has also diminished. The lack of a coherent and unified EU stance toward Israel's actions in Gaza has further undermined its international credibility. A similar pattern is evident with respect to Iran, where decisive action has been led primarily by Israel and the United States, leaving the EU in a secondary role.

Closely connected to these challenges are questions of rearmament, security, and the Union's geostrategic posture. The commitment to increase military expenditure to five percent of GDP imposed by President Trump at the most recent NATO summit in The



"The extensive solidarity demonstrated by Member States has not translated into meaningful political weight for the Union in shaping a resolution "

Hague and reluctantly accepted by all allies despite Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's objections, presents immediate challenges for European partners. EU institutions have acknowledged that, to exercise global influence, Europe must assume greater responsibility for its own security and defense. This recognition has prompted debates in several Member States regarding the possible reinstatement of mandatory military service, although public opinion remains deeply divided.

These developments also shape the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034), in which defense and competitiveness are identified as priorities. The proposed reallocation of resources, particularly through reductions to the Common

Agricultural Policy, is controversial and has already provoked strong reactions from farmers' organizations. Institutional conflict appears likely as negotiations advance, since any budgetary decision requires both unanimity in the Council and majority approval in the European Parliament.

Simultaneously, enlargement remains high on the Union's agenda, as countries in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighborhood continue to pursue accession.

In view of this demanding landscape, the EU faces a formidable task: reforming its institutional structures while maintaining stability and continuity. Yet the resilience of the European project (historically capable of regaining momentum even after setbacks) provides grounds for cautious optimism. The challenges ahead are immense, and addressing them will require not only institutional determination but also the best of Europe's collective political will.





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Why Brazil Matters

The United States has regained a decisive role in the world, and Brazil is central to its hemispheric agenda: the largest economy in Latin America, with significant influence in defense, energy, and innovation.

The author emphasizes that, in the face of China's growing influence, Washington must act decisively, and that tools such as tariffs or the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) can strengthen the alliance and secure American leadership in the region.

Latin America matters. And Brazil is the gateway.

Since President Donald J. Trump took office, the United States has returned to the global stage with unmistakable strength and resolve. This is not a vision for the future. It's already happening. In just a few months, we've witnessed decisive action, bold leadership, and a renewed sense of purpose. The United States is defending its interests with full awareness of its global influence and the power at its disposal.

In this context, Brazil is not just a partner. It is a strategic asset that aligns squarely with the priorities of an America First foreign policy. That is why the attention Brazil has recently received from President Trump is not simply about supporting a former fellow head of state and ally but about defending the rule of law and the fair adjudication of justice. It is also about protecting American companies. It also presents an opportunity for the United States to start paying greater attention to a country that could significantly help advance American interests in the region.

A few weeks ago, President Trump sent a letter to current President of Brazil threatening Brazil with 50% tariffs over the country's current prosecution of its former President, which Trump called an "international disgrace." According to the letter, posted on Truth Social, Trump said this is also about responding to "Brazil's insidious attacks on Free Elections and the fundamental Free Speech Rights of Americans (as lately illustrated by the Brazilian Supreme Court, which has issued hundreds of SECRET and UNLAWFUL Censorship orders to U.S. Social Media platforms) .".

I believe the recent attention Brazil has been getting from the Trump administration is important. Brazil is Latin America's largest economy and ranks among the top globally. It



accounts for nearly half of all defense spending in the region, boasts a diversified industrial base, a domestic market of over 200 million consumers, and growing export capabilities. Brazil is uniquely positioned to contribute to hemispheric economic growth, regional stability, and the projection of American power in our own neighborhood. For U.S. businesses, it represents a vibrant market and a high-value destination for strategic investment.

The urgency of prioritizing Brazil, however, goes beyond economics; it is about global competition. China has made significant inroads and is aggressively positioning itself as Brazil's top strategic partner. The United States must take this challenge seriously. We cannot allow rival powers to gain ground in our own hemisphere. Standing still is not an option.

The United States must lead, without being trapped by the political cycles of foreign governments.

"The recent attention Brazil has been getting from the Trump administration is important. Brazil is Latin America's largest economy and ranks among the top globally"

Administrations change. Strategic interests do not. Our strength must not depend on temporary ideological alignments with other countries. Even when dealing with governments that do not share our values, we retain leverage — and we must use it. Tariffs, even if unpopular to some in the short term, could serve as useful leverage to help advance our long-term strategic interests.

American power is real, and now is the time to use it smartly and decisively to expand our reach where it matters. Brazil offers an opportunity to shape a long-term agenda across trade, energy, innovation, and security. But a partnership of this scale requires action.

In addition to tariffs, the United States can also leverage several other tools. For example, this is the ideal moment to apply one of President Trump's most strategic foreign policy tools created during his first administration, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC). The DFC mobilizes private-sector investment to advance America's interests and counter the influence of adversaries like China. Nowhere is this more important than in Brazil. Deploying the DFC's resources there would not only deepen U.S.-Brazil commercial ties but also reinforce our geopolitical presence in the Western Hemisphere.

For a vision committed to making America great again, looking south is not a distraction — it's a strategic imperative. Latin America matters, and Brazil is the gateway. Defending the rule of law and standing up for what is right will project American influence and secure a hemisphere aligned with the values and interests we defend.

Brazil is not a distant neighbor. It is a

historic opportunity in an era of renewed American greatness.

NOTE: A version of this article appeared in The Miami Herald





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The EU and Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC): A Strategic Window in a Multipolar World

The EU faces a multipolar world with both internal and external challenges, while Latin America & the Caribbean confront political and climate-related uncertainties. By leveraging its economic power, diplomatic influence, and expertise in innovation, the EU can strengthen strategic partnerships with the region. Trade agreements, technological cooperation, and green and digital innovation projects are key to promoting stability, sustainability, and mutually beneficial relations.

This is the focus of the article by the two distinguished members of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the official think tank of the European People's Party, which aims to promote innovative ideas in center-right political thought.

The EU today faces a multipolar world where multilateral relations are increasingly neglected, economic stability stutters, and democracy is retreating globally. The Union's ever-old view of a constructivist Europe—of integration and appeasement through healthy economic relations and universal norms—is challenged by an unpredictable future of the transatlantic relations, internal political frictions, and the war in Ukraine and the Near East. Nevertheless, as Sir Winston Churchill once said, "the pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity, but the optimist sees opportunity in difficulty."

These obstacles might present windows of growth and expansion for the EU towards friends long left overlooked, like Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). This region, while inherently different, shares some similar challenges, values, and priorities and has deep historical ties with Europe, in culture, language, and migration fluxes.

In the last 10 years, the EU has paid

uneven attention to LAC, shifting its priorities towards Africa and the Middle East. Even though the EU is the third largest trade partner of LAC and commercial exchanges have recovered from the COVID-19 setback, volumes remain below the 2011–2014 period. The "unbreakable strategic partnership" declared at the Rio Summit in 1999 has now been overshadowed by the permanent US diplomatic and political presence, the overwhelming investment of China and trade relations, and growing political alignment with Russia, e.g., in Venezuela.

What has changed, and how does it offer an opportunity for the EU to reinsert itself in LAC? What is the comparative advantage of the EU, different from China and Russia?

One of the main consequences of the



war in Ukraine is the delay of the EU's 2030 energy transition. Europe must diversify its suppliers to meet its goals. LAC is an obvious and attractive option, given its immense natural resources, which are ideal for clean energy technologies.

Similarly, from LAC's perspective, recent changes in US foreign policy—especially under a renewed Trump administration—create new uncertainties. Meanwhile, LAC faces increasingly urgent climate challenges. Droughts, floods, and wildfires have already disrupted hydroelectric production in Ecuador, maritime trade in the Panama Canal and Magellan Strait, and even forced



"The EU should focus instead on its unique strengths: its economic power, diplomatic capability, and long experience in fostering political stability through dialogue and cooperation."

airport closures in Brazil (Americas Quarterly, 2025). While the clean energy transition is gaining ground politically in Latin America, most countries still lack the expertise and political stability needed to implement it. In these shared difficulties, EU–LAC relations might find renewed mutual value.

The EU should focus instead on its unique strengths: its economic power, diplomatic capability, and long experience in fostering political stability through dialogue and cooperation. It also holds a crucial comparative advantage in supporting innovation—especially for LAC's green and digital transitions.

On the trade side, we already saw remarkable progress with the December 2023 proposal for the EU–Mercosur Free Trade Agreement. It would significantly improve European companies' access to Latin American markets. European products would also benefit from better market conditions than their US or Japanese counterparts, helping reduce the current gap with China. 90% of bilateral trade would become tariff-free. The agreement also includes commitments to improve labour standards and enforce the Paris Agreement, reinforcing both political stability and environmental goals in the region.

In terms of political stability, the EU's approach stands in stark contrast to China or Russia. While Beijing and Moscow often form transactional or authoritarian-friendly partnerships, the EU's external policy is rooted in normative power, conditionality, and a long-standing commitment to good governance, rule of law, and institutional strengthening. Through technical assistance, capacity-

building, electoral observation, and support for civil society, the EU can help consolidate democratic institutions and improve governance in LAC. This is especially vital when corruption, weak institutions, and populist leadership undermine public trust and policy coherence.

Finally, to solidify its long-term presence in LAC, the EU should prioritize a structured innovation agenda. This partnership must include tailored technology transfer mechanisms, research partnerships, and joint innovation hubs, especially in sectors like renewable energy,



sustainable mining, and digital connectivity. The EU can bridge this gap by deploying its know-how through initiatives such as Horizon Europe and the Global Gateway strategy, creating regional centers for innovation and co-financing pilot projects for green hydrogen, solar energy, or smart grid systems. On the digital side, cooperation could include the development of local digital infrastructure and the promotion of open-source and AI solutions that meet both green standards and data sovereignty requirements.

In conclusion, while the EU faces undeniable internal and external challenges, the shifting global landscape and LAC's rising strategic importance offer a unique opportunity for the Union to reassert its global role. As history shows, times of crisis can also be moments of reinvention—and the EU's partnership with LAC might be the strategic renewal it needs.





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Authoritarianism in Stages: The Mexican Case

How are authoritarian regimes constructed, and what indicators reveal that a political system is moving in that direction? What strategies do autocrats employ to erode democracy from within, and how do they seek to avoid international scrutiny?

This article examines the Mexican case, where institutions and checks on power have been systematically weakened. Fundamental citizens' rights have been dismantled without the deployment of military force or the occurrence of a coup d'état.

Authoritarian regimes can be built without tanks or coups. This method is not new, yet it has proven highly effective. It consists of dismantling the institutional architecture of democracy from within, piece by piece. This is precisely what has unfolded in Mexico in recent years.

The model is as old as it is functional: first, oversight bodies are captured; next, the judiciary is subordinated; then, freedom of expression is curtailed; and, finally, the rules of the electoral process are manipulated. These measures are not implemented simultaneously, but, once all stages are completed, the result is identical: democracy retains its outward appearance, while its substance is hollowed out.

In Mexico, this path has been followed with striking precision. The initial targets were the so-called autonomous bodies—technical institutions designed to protect rights, ensure transparency, and regulate competition, independent from political power. The strategy was straightforward: financial suffocation, systematic public discrediting, and, ultimately, co-optation through

arbitrary appointments. The message was unequivocal: checks and balances cannot exist if all institutions are subordinated to a single authority. The Human Rights Commission was colonized[LBI], the transparency institute was shut down, and agencies responsible for competition, as well as for measuring education and poverty, were eliminated.

[LBI] Maybe changed to conquered? The context is not too fitting for that word

The next stage focused on the judiciary. In addition to systematic delegitimization, a reform was promoted that ostensibly aimed to bring justice closer to citizens but, in reality, it was made subject to political control. Under the pretense of democratization, judges were to be turned into candidates, transforming the administration of justice into a popular election devoid of guarantees.

This represents the theatricalization of



justice: it may appear legitimate, but it is stripped of technical rigor and independence.

Simultaneously, freedom of expression has been subjected to unprecedented attacks in recent decades. These are not limited to formal censorship, which has become unnecessary in the digital age, but include a strategy of daily harassment emanating from the highest levels of government. Presidential press conferences have evolved into tribunals of media stigmatization, where journalists are discredited, conspiracies are insinuated, and hostility toward dissent is actively promoted.

Critical journalism has been branded as treacherous, corrupt, or as an enemy of the people. In parallel, crimes against journalists have increased, with impunity as the prevailing norm. In several states, such as Puebla, Campeche, and Sonora, legislation has been enacted to facilitate the persecution of individuals who express opinions, including on social media, that displease the ruling party.

Finally, an electoral reform has recently

"Freedom of expression has been subjected to unprecedented attacks in recent decades. These are not limited to formal censorship strategy of daily harassment..."

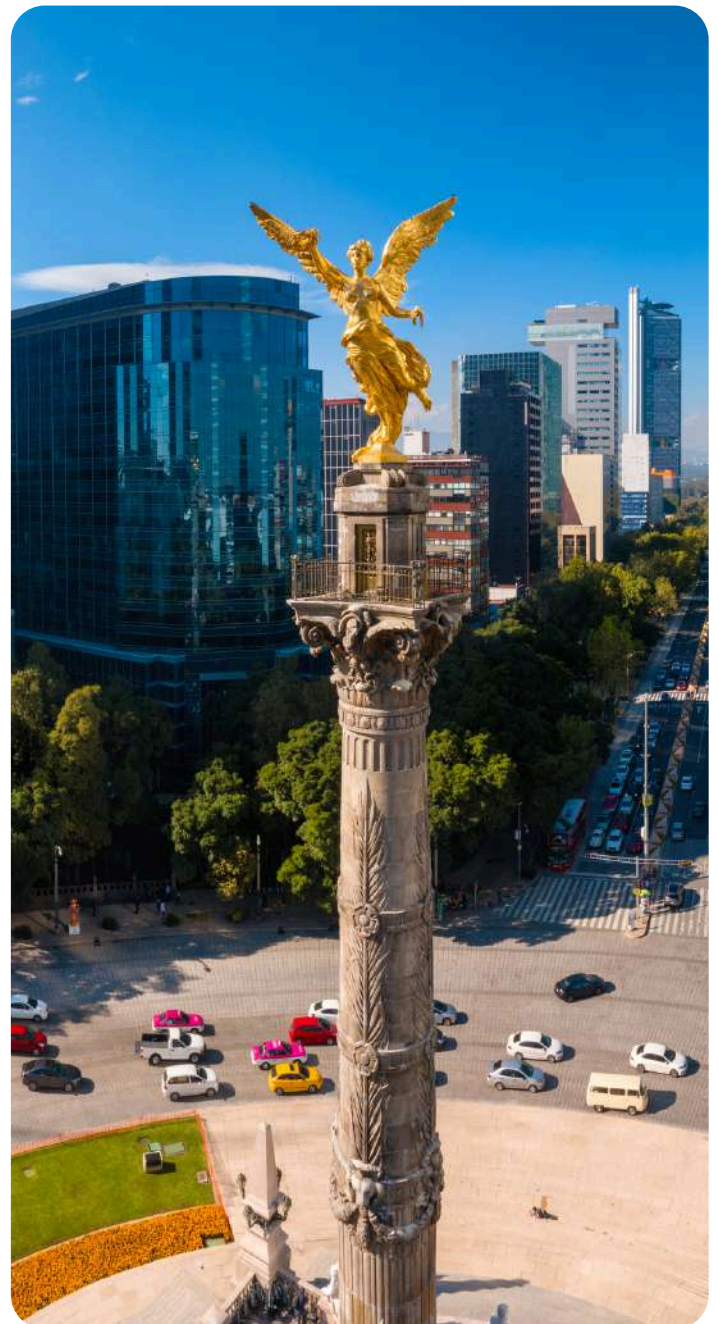
been proposed with the objective of controlling the democratic process from its very foundations. Once again, under the guise of "greater participation" and with the pretext of reducing costs, the reform seeks to dismantle technical institutions and transfer control of voter registries, regulations, and electoral organization to the ruling party. It also intends to abolish proportional representation and withdraw financial resources from opposition parties. In essence, this is not a reform but a demolition. If implemented, it would complete the cycle, leaving a system in which the same authority that governs is also responsible for certifying, organizing, and supervising elections. Such an arrangement, anywhere in the world, cannot be considered democracy.

The Mexican case is particularly significant as it demonstrates that 21st-century authoritarianism no longer requires the closure of Congress or the declaration of states of emergency. It suffices to delegitimize institutions, manipulate democratic discourse, and sustain a Manichean narrative: “us or chaos,” “the people versus the enemies,” “the ‘Fourth Transformation’ against the privileged.” This form of populism appropriates democratic forms only to deprive them of substance, using popularity as a blank check to exercise power without limits.

In Latin America, it is well known that authoritarianism can take multiple forms. At times it is imposed through force, at others, through electoral processes. Yet it invariably begins in the same manner: by weakening checks and balances, dismissing critical voices, and constructing a narrative of internal enemies. Mexico today serves as a case study of how authoritarianism can be consolidated step by step, without triggering alarms.

For democratic societies, the challenge lies not only in resisting but also in recognizing, in a timely manner, what

is at stake. Democracy is not lost suddenly, it erodes gradually; and, when the erosion becomes evident, there may no longer be actors capable of defending it. Democrats worldwide must unite and denounce what is occurring in Mexico and in other countries (such as El Salvador) that are openly authoritarian and advancing rapidly toward dictatorship.





Rodrigo Arenas

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República.com: A Beacon of Republican Principles in the Greater Caribbean

The emergence of new media outlets dedicated to advancing republican values (freedom, democracy, and human rights) in Latin America and the Greater Caribbean is a highly encouraging development.

The author, an entrepreneur, has created an innovative platform in his region, including Florida, offering high-level analysis and fostering constructive debate to promote development and prosperity.

In this article, he reflects on his experience and the challenges inherent in building a successful digital media platform committed to the ideals of liberty.

The cultural battle of ideas and values must be fought in different arenas. Without a doubt, the main one is the political field, but the second place is clearly reserved for the media. They inform society, but they also convey political, moral, and cultural visions. Leaving that space vacant has allowed the defenders of statism and populism to gain prominence and negatively influence society. Therefore, creating, promoting, and encouraging media outlets that provide alternative viewpoints is absolutely necessary for the triumph of freedom and democracy.

Since its founding, República.com has stood as a bastion of republican values and principles in a world where information can quickly become a double-edged sword. In today's global context, where truth is frequently distorted, our mission has remained clear: to promote freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. As founder, CEO, and Editor-in-Chief of República, I have

witnessed firsthand the impact that a committed news platform can have on shaping public opinion and guiding decision-making in our region.

Republican principles are essential to sustainable development and peace in our societies. These principles include the defense of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, anchored in the separation of powers, equality before the law, and active civic participation. In an environment where misinformation is widespread, República.com is committed to being not only an outlet for information but also a source of education and empowerment for citizens.

Our platform strives to deliver in-depth, well-founded analysis of critical issues affecting our countries. In doing so, we not only provide information but also foster healthy debate,



enabling citizens to better understand their environment, rights, and responsibilities.

Convinced that Florida represents the best-governed state in Latin America, and that Miami stands as the region's premier business hub, we established República Media Group in this city.

From there, we are building a community with business and political leaders in both Florida and the Greater Caribbean. Through this approach, we aim to influence decision-makers in the United States and across the Caribbean by providing accurate information and high-level analysis to help them better understand regional dynamics and engage effectively with their peers. The ultimate goal is to advance prosperity throughout this part of the Western Hemisphere.

The Latin American diaspora plays a crucial role in building cultural, political, and economic bridges both within the United States and across the Americas. By offering relevant, high-quality content, República.com

"The Latin American diaspora plays a crucial role in building cultural, political, and economic bridges both within the United States and across the Americas..."

not only informs but also connects and empowers this community to take an active role in the issues that directly affect it.

The influence of República.com extends far beyond the act of informing. In an interconnected world, decisions made in one country often reverberate throughout the region. For this reason, it is vital that leaders and policymakers have access to accurate information and rigorous analysis to ensure sound decision-making.

In the Greater Caribbean, where economies and political systems are deeply intertwined, it is critical that leaders understand their neighbors' realities. Through our platform, we

seek to foster community and constructive dialogue among nations and to promote policies that deliver benefits across the region.

Part of our strategy to broaden the reach of these ideas includes innovative formats such as podcasts. Notably, Republicast has proven to be a powerful tool for exploring current issues from multiple perspectives. This format enables listeners to engage in deeper discussions on the challenges facing our region and possible solutions.

Additionally, the Líderes podcast, which I have the privilege of hosting, focuses on the voices of those at the forefront of political, social, and business decision-making. These conversations not only shed light on the challenges our leaders face but also provide a platform for them to share their visions and strategies. Through these episodes, listeners gain a clearer understanding of how republican principles are applied in practice and how they can be harnessed for the common good.

In a world of constant challenges and growing threats to liberty, República.com stands as a beacon of republican principles. Our mission to promote freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights is more relevant today than ever before. With the launch of República in the United States, we are expanding both our reach and our capacity to influence regional decision-making.



Freedom of the press, exercised responsibly, is a fundamental pillar of the rule of law, a sine qua non condition for national development. At República.com, we are committed to this fight. Together, we can build a freer and brighter future for our nations.

That is why I call on all those who share these ideas and have the necessary means to do so to promote platforms and media outlets that inform objectively but also convey concrete ideas, values, and principles. If we do not take on this task, that space will be occupied by those who defend opposing ideas—and we already know what the outcome of that is.

"Freedom of the press, exercised responsibly, is a fundamental pillar of the rule of law, a sine qua non condition for national development..."



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