

Elections in Spain: Spexit?

OE Watch Commentary: On 6 October, Spanish politician and leader of the Vox Espana party, Santiago Abascal gave a campaign-launching political harangue at a party rally at the Palacio Vistalegre convention center in Madrid. The speech is worthy of analysis as a possible milestone in Spanish political history and as a referent for the general election (11 November) campaign that is underway in that country.

As the accompanying passage demonstrates, in the speech, Mr. Abascal rejected uncontrolled immigration, stressed protection of the family and Christian religious faith, heralded Iberian global cultural influence, rejected further regional autonomy (Catalan in mind) and most importantly for the strategic moment, rejected leadership from Brussels (the European Union). The speech might be seen as an early milestone declaration of the Spanish movement to exit from the European Union, made during the month that British exit from that body is a centerpiece of European geopolitical focus.

The speech serves as a neat prompt to highlight the consequences of the election for Spain and for European political issues generally, several of which have obvious defense and security consequences, including for the United States. It is being emphasized and viewed in part because it contrasts Vox against what Mr. Abascal termed the ‘progressive consensus.’ Abascal distanced the new party from both of the old parties that have carried the polar flags of Spaniards’ political identities for decades: the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) and the People’s Party (PP), left and right respectively. In the current Spanish political firmament, left and right are apparently led by the Podemos party and Vox. Mr. Abascal used the Spanish national motto, Plus Ultra as his speech’s exclamation marks. That symbolism is as unmistakable as it is controversial. Vox is in effect coopting the motto of the national crest, which has a long etymology and evolved connotation. Today, it is as ad astra might be to a Kansan, extolling aspiration and striving. The term is also an obvious assertive allusion to Spanish nationalism. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Santiago Abascal.

Source: VOX Valencia via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(Santiago_Abasal\)_La_Espa%C3%B1a_Viva_en_Valencia_\(43737563140\)_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(Santiago_Abasal)_La_Espa%C3%B1a_Viva_en_Valencia_(43737563140)_(cropped).jpg), Public Domain.

“We have to protect our borders because we are not going to let anyone come live among us to tell us how we have to live, how we have to pray, what we have to eat and what our laws must be.”

Source: Santiago Abascal, “Discurso de Santiago Abascal en Vistalegre Plus Ultra (Santiago Abascal’s Plus Ultra speech at Vistalegre),” *VOX España*, 6 October 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDOvL1CDZeo>

“...without apology...we say here today...Spain Plus Ultra...We want the power to protect the Spanish people from its enemies...from their globalist positions [that] want to dissolve the existence of Spain in a multi-cultural magma...We have to protect our borders because we are not going to let anyone come live among us to tell us how we have to live, how we have to pray, what we have to eat and what our laws must be. Neither will we let them tell us from afar, from Brussels, tell us how we are to protect the walls of our house...”