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## Paradigm shift: young voters are moving further right

Young European voters are turning to right-wing parties. That's news you didn't expect, which contradicts long-held beliefs. And it challenges preconceived notions. Therefore, the survey conducted by the Foundation for Political Innovation (Fondation pour l'innovation politique, Fondapol) a French think-tank created in 2004 and described as "liberal, progressive and pro-European", is most welcome. In its research on voters' political self-placement conducted in four major West European countries (Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy), Fondapol highlights the rightward shift of public opinion, but above all it identifies the shift in the political preferences of young voters in the 18-34 age group. *The big news is that those who identify with the right are mostly members of the younger generation.* In all four countries surveyed 41% of those who identify as right-wing are in the age group 18-34, slightly more than those aged 65 and over, at 40%. On the opposite side of the political spectrum, 24% of young people identify with the left, while those over 65 are 31%. In a nutshell, the classical cliché according to which 'we are born revolutionaries and we die conservatives' has been debunked. The turn of the century, with its globalisation processes, has ushered in a paradigm shift. *Many observers have pointed out that the interplay of increasing existential and job insecurity, coupled with the pandemic factor, has resulted in a growing demand for personal and social security.* Not to mention the fears linked to unrestrained immigration and Islamic penetration. These critical issues are arguably more readily exploited by European right-wing movements than by the Left, which is objectively struggling and has already lost votes in Spain and Great Britain. The electoral significance of young people's right-wing vote may well have already been manifested in those countries. It is certainly too early to regard this new political consensus landscape as an established fact. Indeed, numerous uncertainties weigh on the lives of European citizens, starting with the definitive resolution of the war against Covid and the overall economic circumstances that are now being "doped" by the European funds of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan ( NRRP). But let us return to young people. *First of all, there are three hanging questions.* The first is: which right wing do they identify with? Is it the former ideological right marked by the prevailing triad God, Fatherland and Family? It's hardly possible to give this label to generations of young Europeans who have been shaped by social media, immersed in secularisation, bombarded by public service campaigns, living within an overwhelming 'gender' culture, accustomed to seeing the immigrant as their next-door neighbour. The sweeping changes (if not upheavals) that have taken place in the past twenty years do indeed have a bearing even on young self-described right-wingers... Second question: which are the moral values of these young people? Should we not be investigating the individualist model, a product of globalisation, which is clearly successful in the West, to the detriment of the model of solidarity and communitarianism? Perhaps these young right-wingers are simply more liberal and libertarian. To a very large extent, democratic. *Lastly, how does the ecclesial community respond to this radical change in the attitude of young people, all of whom (irrespective of political affiliation) are increasingly distant, distinct and distant from religious practice and attendance at ecclesial gatherings? What kind of dialogue do we have with them, which values are proposed, which horizons of commitment are envisaged?* These questions are especially crucial in Italy, given that the Fondapol survey highlights one fact: *the largest percentage of voters on the right of the political spectrum are found in Italy, with 44% of declared right-wingers.* The UK (40%), France (38%) and Germany (36%) are close behind. Believers are challenged by this issue and how to deal with it, especially from a cultural (even more than political) angle. May it suffice to point out that the answer should not necessarily be confrontational. Sincere dialogue with everyone is preferable. To the right and to the left.