

Manifiesto for the repeal of the agreements with the “holy see”

Manifiesto por la derogación de los acuerdos con la “santa sede”

Manifiesto pela revogação dos acordos com a “santa sé”

Europa Laica

observatorio@laicismo.org

Abstract

We believed that a progressive government would open the door to profound reforms. However, between fragile support and the resurgence of old reactionary forces, these transformations have either not materialized or have stalled. The time for excuses is over. The remainder of this legislative term must be a time for courage. In the 21st century, Spain maintains a Concordat with the Holy See under the name of the 1976 and 1979 Agreements.

Keywords: Bilateral agreement, education administration, Catholicism, extremism, religious fanaticism, history of education, church-state relations, religious sects.

Resumen

Creímos que un gobierno de vocación progresista abriría la puerta a reformas profundas. Sin embargo, entre apoyos frágiles y el resurgir de viejos reaccionarismos, esas transformaciones no han llegado o han quedado a medio camino. El tiempo de las excusas ha terminado. Lo que queda de legislatura debe ser tiempo de valentía. En pleno siglo XXI, España mantiene un Concordato con la Santa Sede bajo la denominación de Acuerdos de 1976 y 1979.

Palabras clave: Acuerdo bilateral, administración de la educación, catolicismo, extremismo, fanatismo religioso, historia de la educación, relación iglesia-estado, sectas religiosas.

Resumo

Creditávamos que um governo progressista abriria as portas a reformas profundas. No entanto, entre o frágil apoio e o ressurgimento de antigas forças reaccionárias, estas transformações ou não se concretizaram ou estagnaram. Chega de desculpas. O resto desta legislatura deverá ser um período de coragem. No século XXI, a Espanha mantém uma Concordata com a Santa Sé, sob a designação dos Acordos de 1976 e 1979.

Palavras-chave: Acordo bilateral, administração da educação, catolicismo, extremismo, fanatismo religioso, história da educação, relações entre a Igreja e o Estado, seitas religiosas.

In the twenty-first century, Spain still maintains a Concordat with the Holy See under the framework of the 1976 and 1979 Instruments of Ratification: a treaty that entrenches privileges for Catholicism while undermining citizens' freedom of conscience. The continued use of public funds to finance the clergy is an anachronism. The allocation of billions of euros to sustain Catholic schools and religious indoctrination within classrooms constitutes a democratic anomaly. The fact that our educational, fiscal, and tax legislation remains conditioned by international agreements with the Vatican represents a distortion of popular sovereignty.

Concordats are not neutral instruments. Historically, they have functioned as mechanisms of institutional protection within authoritarian regimes such as those of Adolf Hitler (Bastante, 2023), Benito Mussolini (Hernández-Echevarría, 2024), Francisco Franco (Robles, 2025), and António de Oliveira Salazar (Coordinadora Recuperando, 2024). This is no coincidence (Castro, 2019).

The parliamentary groups currently supporting the Government have defended, within their electoral platforms, the need to repeal these agreements. Parliament itself has likewise called for their revocation in previous legislative terms (Europa Press, 2018).

No genuine educational reform can be achieved while this Concordat remains in force (Tamayo, 2022).

Freedom of conscience cannot be fully guaranteed so long as legally entrenched privileges continue to exist.

Nor can a truly democratic State be built upon a confessional exception embedded within its legal architecture.

The Agreements of 1976 and 1979 constitute the final legal trench protecting ecclesiastical privileges. And every trench can be dismantled.

For all these reasons, the undersigned organizations and individuals demand that the Government fulfill its electoral commitments and immediately initiate the procedures necessary for the denunciation and repeal of the Agreements with the Holy See.

Spain must take a step forward. It must definitively close a legacy inherited from Francoism that no longer reflects a plural, diverse, and mature society. We are not asking for privileges for anyone. We are asking for equality. We are asking for institutional neutrality. We are asking for genuine freedom of conscience for all people, regardless of what they believe, or choose not to believe.

The opportunity exists. So does the responsibility. There are no excuses left.¹

¹ You may sign the manifesto by visiting the following link: <https://laicismo.org/mas-de-40-organizaciones-y-100-personalidades-firman-un-manifiesto-por-la-derogacion-de-los-acuerdos-con-la-santa-sede/>

Explanatory video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA0I9NlaQtU>

Media contact: José Antonio Naz Valverde, President of Europa Laica

Public Figures and Organizations Call for the Repeal of the Agreements with the Holy See Ahead of the Pope's Visit to Spain (Arques, 2026): Javier Sádaba (Coca, 2024), Nieves Concostrina (Santamarina, 2023), Benito Zambrano, Nazanin Armanian (2025), Leo Bassi (Díaz, 2025), Javier Pérez Royo (2020), Juan José Tamayo (Nuñez, 2024), Rosa Cañadell (Asturias Laica, 2022), Javier Ruibal, Julio Rodríguez, Lidia Falcón, together with a long list of writers, academics, artists, activists, and social organizations, support the manifesto promoted by Europa Laica demanding an end to the privileges of the Church.

Alongside this hundred-strong group of public figures from civil society stands a broad coalition of organizations committed to secularism and the neutrality of the State in matters of religion, including Fundació Ferrer i Guàrdia (2025), Derecho a Morir Dignamente (DMD) (2016), Plataforma Recuperando, atheist associations, Redes Cristianas, Asociación Internacional de Libre Pensamiento (AILP), and the European Secularist Network. All of them call, through the manifesto, for the repeal of the Agreements between the Spanish State and the Holy See.

The manifesto laments that a “progressive government” has failed to open the way toward “deep reforms,” while continuing, in the twenty-first century, to uphold a treaty that entrenches “privileges for Catholicism” and “erodes citizens’ freedom of conscience.”

These Agreements of 1976 and 1979, regarded by the organization as an extension of the Francoist Concordat of 1953, are described in the manifesto as incompatible with a genuinely non-confessional and democratic State. Europa Laica argues that these agreements preserve unjustified privileges and perpetuate an institutional relationship that violates the principle of separation between Church and State.

Through this document, the organization is launching a public signature campaign aimed at gathering broad social support for this demand. The campaign establishes as its first milestone the presentation of signatures before the Spanish Congress of Deputies on the date scheduled for an address by Pope Leo XIV before members of Congress and the Senate, an institutional appearance within the seat of national sovereignty that, according to Europa Laica (2026), represents an unacceptable confessional drift already publicly denounced by the organization.

The organization calls for public participation and for the support of all individuals and groups who defend a secular model of the State founded upon equality, institutional neutrality, and respect for diversity of belief and conviction.

References

Armanian, N. (September 22, 2025). La 'libertad religiosa' y los catorce errores de la izquierda occidental. *Público*. <https://www.publico.es/opinion/columnas/libertad-religiosa-catorce-errores-izquierda->

occidental.html?fbclid=IwY2xjawM_uSxleHRuA2FibQlxMQABHk8yZ5_0LoFc4SAsKqYFJfATf
qUsoqD5oFqU5JRRC5NDRAts9UsMkXxeB2ui_aem_jwuXioTB4FYHiFFgZC5Wzw

- Arques, L. (April 12, 2026). Más de 15 millones y privilegios a quienes más aporten: el precio de la visita del Papa a España. *El Plural*. https://www.elplural.com/sociedad/mas-15-millones-privilegios-quienes-mas-aporten-precio-visita-papa-espana_386292102
- Asturias Laica. (June 14, 2024). Las religiones en las aulas. Los conciertos educativos: una educación cautiva, por Rosa Canyadell. *Asturias Laica*. <https://asturiaslaica.com/2022/06/14/las-religiones-en-las-aulas-los-conciertos-educativos-una-educacion-cautiva-por-rosa-canyadell/>
- Bastante, J. (June 15, 2023). El Nuncio en Alemania defiende el Concordato con Hitler, aunque admite que "no impidió la lucha de la Iglesia nacionalsocialista". *Religión Digital*. https://www.religiondigital.org/mundo/Nuncio-Alemania-Concordato-Hitler-Iglesia-nazismo-reich-pacelli_0_2569543022.html
- Castro, I. (April 15, 2019). El PSOE deja fuera de su programa la denuncia del Concordato con la Santa Sede. *eldiario.es* https://www.eldiario.es/politica/psoe-programa-concordato-santa-sede_1_1594408.html
- Coca, C. (December 1, 2024). «Critico muchas veces a la iglesia, pero cuando lo hago con el Islam a algunos les parece mal». *El Correo*. <https://www.elcorreo.com/culturas/libros/critico-veces-iglesia-hago-islam-parece-mal-20241201002332-nt.html?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>
- Coordinadora Recuperando. (June 2, 2024). Archivo: ¿Por qué el patrimonio histórico de Francia y Portugal es propiedad de sus ciudadanos y en España, de la Iglesia? *Coordinadora Recuperando*. <https://www.recuperando.es/archivo-por-que-el-patrimonio-historico-de-francia-y-portugal-es-propiedad-de-sus-ciudadanos-y-en-espana-de-la-iglesia/>
- Derecho a Morir Dignamente. (2016). *Las religiones en contra de la eutanasia*. <https://derechoamorir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Revista-DMD-73-little-2.pdf>
- Díaz, N. (August 15, 2025). El 'Paticano', la iglesia de Leo Bassi en Lavapiés que venera a los patos de goma y arrasa en China. *eldiario.es* https://www.eldiario.es/madrid/somos/paticano-iglesia-leo-bassi-lavapiés-venera-patos-goma-arrasa-china_1_12453777.html
- Europa Laica. (March 4, 2026). Europa Laica denuncia la «claudicación del Estado», pide boicotear la presencia del Papa en el Congreso de los Diputados y que no se le reconozca como «jefe de Estado». *Europa Laica*. <https://laicismo.org/europa-laica-denuncia-la-claudicacion-del-estado-pide-boicotear-la-presencia-del-papa-en-el-congreso-de-los-diputados-y-que-no-se-le-reconozca-como-jefe-de-estad/>

- Europa Press. (February 21, 2018). El Congreso pide al Gobierno derogar los Acuerdos con la Santa Sede para dejar la Religión fuera del sistema educativo. *Europa Press*. <https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/educacion-00468/noticia-congreso-pide-gobierno-derogar-acuerdos-santa-sede-dejar-religion-fuera-sistema-educativo-20180221175808.html>
- Fundación Ferrer i Guardia. (2025). *Laicidad en Cifras 2025*. Fundación Ferrer i Guardia. <https://www.ferrerguardia.org/blog/publicaciones-3/laicidad-en-cifras-2025-341>
- Hernández-Echevarría, C. (February 11, 2024). Mussolini y la Iglesia: 95 años de una alianza de intereses. *La Vanguardia*. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/historiayvida/historia-contemporanea/20240211/9517246/pactos-letran-mussolini-iglesia-alianza-intereses.html>
- Instrumento de Ratificación de España al Acuerdo entre la Santa Sede y el Estado Español, hecho en la Ciudad del Vaticano el 28 de julio de 1976. *BOE*, 230, 1-3. [https://www.boe.es/eli/es/ai/1976/07/28/\(1\)/con](https://www.boe.es/eli/es/ai/1976/07/28/(1)/con)
- Instrumento de Ratificación del Acuerdo entre el Estado español y la Santa Sede sobre asuntos económicos, firmado en Ciudad del Vaticano el 3 de enero de 1979. *BOE*, 300, 28782-28783. [https://www.boe.es/eli/es/ai/1979/01/03/\(2\)](https://www.boe.es/eli/es/ai/1979/01/03/(2))
- Núñez, J. (June 15, 2024). Juan José Tamayo, teólogo: “La pederastia es un problema estructural legitimado por las más altas jerarquías de la Iglesia”. *El País*. <https://elpais.com/sociedad/2024-06-15/juan-jose-tamayo-teologo-la-pederastia-es-un-problema-estructural-legitimado-por-las-mas-altas-jerarquias-de-la-iglesia.html>
- Pérez, J. (July 7, 2020). Ausencia pedagógica. *eldiario.es* https://www.eldiario.es/contracorriente/ausencia-pedagogica_132_6089002.html
- Robles, P. (November 15, 2025). 'Franquismo e Iglesia: La legitimación de un régimen bajo palio'. *El Independiente de Granada*. <https://www.elindependientedegranada.es/politica/franquismo-e-iglesia-legitimacion-regimen-palio>
- Santamarina, M. A. (December 30, 2023). Nieves Concostrina: “Las religiones son un gran negocio”. *Zenda*. <https://www.zendalibros.com/nieves-concostrina-las-religiones-son-un-gran-negocio/>
- Tamayo, J. J. (January 13, 2022). Los acuerdos del Estado español con la Santa Sede, un concordato encubierto. *Religión Digital*. https://www.religiondigital.org/el_blog_de_juan_jose_tamayo/tamayo-acuerdos-iglesia-estado-espana-obispos-gobierno-concordato-renuncia-inmatriculaciones_7_2414228557.html