I .

Popular Party wins elections in Austria. Conservative leader, Sebastian Kurz, may join the far right to form the government.

Migration, Defense and Brexit will be discussed this week at the European Council meeting. In this MAGAZINE EUROPE we look at the last round of negotiations of Brexit European Union believes that they are not progressing with the desired progresso.

And still in today's edition: President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, threatens to expel ambassadors from countries of the European Union.

II.

Welcome to the Europe Magazine!

Sebastian Kurz, 31, a native of Vienna from Austria, Minister of Foreign Affairs, leader of the Austrian People's Party. In a nutshell this is the profile of the winner of the early elections in Austria. It also indicates that he will be the youngest chancellor in the country and the newest leader of a nation of the European Union.
The results of Sunday's parliamentary elections in Austria reveal that the population responded with a YES to the changes Kurz instituted in the Popular Party, namely a hardening of migration policy.
Conservatives won 31.6% of the vote. Sebastian Kurz is already talking about establishing a new political attitude.

Sebastian Kurz, Leader of the Popular Party
I promise today that I will go with all my strength to fight for change in this country and I would like to invite you to make this journey with us. We have much to do, we have to institute a new political and cultural attitude.

Austria has been governed for a decade by a central bloc coalition. This mandate, predicted until 2018, was shaken by an internal crisis in the Popular Party, culminating in the resignation of leader Reinhold Mitterlehner. Sebastian Kurz happened.
The coalition has decided to hold early elections, but Socialist leader Christian Kern has rejected a new coalition from the outset.
The Socialists reached 26.9% of the votes in these elections, slightly above the far right party that with 26% became the third political force of the country. The far right now has the open road to join the Popular Party and return to government more than a decade later.
With us, on the telephone from Brussels is Victor Ângelo, a resident commentator of Magazine Europe and an international consultant based in the Belgian capital.

Victor, you could already guess these results. Although a coalition with the extreme right is pointed out, Sebastian Kurz does not put aside other hypotheses. What are the possible scenarios?

It is true that such results were expected, but it is also true that an alliance of the popular with the far right would be extremely ill-seen in Brussels. However, this coalition may exist. There has already been an alliance between the Popular Party and the party called Freedom Party which is a party very close to fascism and very close to pro-Nazi ideas, a party also anti-European. There was an alliance of this kind between 2000 and 2005. At that time, the European Union countries imposed a series of diplomatic and other restrictions on Austria because they condemned this type of alliance between the popular and the fascists. This time, after 12, 13 years, will European leaders be publicly opposed to the possibility of such a new coalition? I do not think so and that is what has changed a lot in Europe in recent years, that is, there is a greater tolerance towards this type of coalitions, although of course this brings great concerns to whoever is for the European Union, stronger and more united, and also for those who are for democratic freedoms and against xenophobia.
What we are going to see in the coming days and in the coming times is a lot of pressure on the young leader of the Popular Party, Sebastian Kurz, to guide his attempt to create a governmental coalition, not towards the far right party, but yes in the direction of the Social Democratic Party.

Not only was Europe an issue away from the election campaign, but this was also a campaign with many anti-immigration promises. At the time we recorded the program, we still have to count the votes by correspondence but according to the results so far advanced, the far right became the third political force in the country, how did this happen?
The problem of emigration is a pressing problem, a problem that is present in the life of the Austrians. The Austrians last year and the previous year had been a passageway for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, notably towards Germany. Many of these immigrants ended up staying in Austria. Austria, which is a country with a relatively small population - less than 9 million inhabitants - has received a large proportion of immigrants in proportion and this is being exploited politically, not only by the far right, but also by the right wing of Sebastian Kurz. In fact, this campaign in Austria was probably the poorest in terms of substance, and the richest in terms of xenophobia and insults.

III.

The European Council will meet this Thursday and Friday. Migration, Defense, Foreign Affairs will be on the table ... Brexit is also one of the topics to be debated. Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, will tell the European Council that there has not been sufficient progress in the negotiations, as Andrea Neves of Antena1 says.

[There is a constructive spirit in the negotiations. Michel Barnier, the European Union's negotiator for Brexit, reaffirmed it, but says that does not mean real progress in the divorce agreement. That is why one can not begin to speak of a future commercial relationship. Barnier does not advise him.
"I am not in a position, in the current state of affairs, to propose to the European Council next week the opening of discussions on the future relationship."
The European Union negotiator says that there has not been much progress on citizens' rights, especially as regards the right to family reunion and the right to future social benefits. But it is the financial issues that most concern Michel Barnier.
"In the speech in Florence, Theresa May said that the United Kingdom would honor the commitments made with the other members of the Union. This week the United Kingdom told us that it is not yet in a

position to specify what these commitments are. We are in a moment of impasse that is extremely worrying. "
A position different from that of the British minister to Brexit, who denied the existence of a stalemate. David Davis has called on European leaders to meet in council on the 19th and 20th of this month.
"The work of our teams and the substantial progress we have made these months prove that we are moving forward. We hope that at the European Council next week the Member States will recognize the progress made and can take a step forward in the spirit of Theresa May's Florence address. "
There are already five business rounds, five meetings between the parties, but without significant progress. Theresa May said this week she is prepared for Brexit, including in a non-agreement scenario. Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, replied that he would prefer not to, but that the parties may have to start preparing for this scenario.]

Victor, also Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission has already said that London has to pay an invoice with respect to Brexit and while this issue is not addressed, the negotiations do not advance to a second phase. What progress has been made after five business rounds?
Progress was very insignificant. And that is why we are entering this week, which is the week of the European Council with a lot of concerns about the Brexit process and where we are even talking about the possibility of not being able to reach an agreement at the end of the process. This is so serious that Britain's Prime Minister decided earlier this week - yesterday and today - to have a series of contacts with European leaders to influence her views on the Brexit negotiations so that that these leaders when they are later - Thursday and Friday - in Brussels can approve the opening of trade negotiations with the United Kingdom. I think, however, that this is not going to happen, because in fact the fundamental question, which is the question of the conditions of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, has not yet been resolved, there is no progress in this area. That is the fundamental question of the amount that the United Kingdom must pay to the European Union. Not the amount because of the divorce is the amount because of financial commitments made by the UK over the last few years and which are multiannual commitments, go well beyond the year 2019 and those commitments the UK will have to assume them, it is I need to set the amount and this is the most thorny problem right now.

And what more can we expect from this meeting of the European Council?
The most important topics at this time on the table remain the themes of the common borders, the protection of the European Union frontier and to what extent progress is made in this area. It is crucial for certain countries to return from Brussels after the summit with clear guarantees that they can explain to their populations that there is an effort to strengthen the entry control, notably from emigration candidates. The question also of the common defence and I think that there will be progress in certain areas, notably in the areas of joint exercises, in the areas of industrial production linked to defence and also in the area of defence information exchange and there will probably be a very strong communication on rel Action to the nuclear agreement with Iran, as the European Union must play a leading role in maintaining this agreement which is currently being threatened by President Donald Trump's administration.

We were just talking about Jean-Claude Juncker. The declarations by the President of the European Commission given during a speech at the University of Luxembourg,

which spoke directly from the situation of Catalonia. Let's hear the declarations of Juncker:

Jean Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission
It's not our business, but if we allow Catalonia to become independent, others will do it and I didn't like it to happen. I would not want the European Union to be composed of 90 states in 15 years.

Jean-Claude Juncker speaks here of the dangers of a contagion effect to other European regions. What reading can be made of the words of the European leader?
There are several messages that Jean-Claude Juncker has sent with this kind of intervention: on the one hand that the European Union is not prepared to play any kind of role in the Catalan issue. Consider the Catalan question an internal matter. On the other hand, another message is that the European Union does not support the Catalan independence movement and does not support other types of movements of that kind in other parts of Europe. It is already very difficult, as Jean-Claude Juncker said, reaching an agreement when we have 27 or 28 countries, it would be practically a miracle if we had near 90 Member States of the European Union. On the other, the Juncker side also sent a very clear message that Brussels, and in particular the European institutions, support the policy followed by Mariano Rajoy. It has also repeated the idea that those who leave one of the European Union countries are leaving the European Union, i.e. when there is fragmentation, this fragmentation means leaving European space. This is called Prodi's doctrine

And the President of the European Commission spoke at a time when the government of Spain gave Catalonia a deadline to say whether it declares independence. Puigdemont didn't answer. According to El Pais, the chairman of the Catalan government addressed a four-page letter to Madrid where he asks the Spanish government to terminate the repression against the Catalan people. What can you expect for the next few days?
It was the letter that was expected, ie a very ambiguous letter in which he fundamentally does not say he said, but on the other hand he seeks to give image that the government of Madrid is a repressive government, which oppresses the Catalan population and that is the key in which it will continue to Insist. He will try to make a parallel between the situation in Catalonia and the situation in Kosovo, which was also said that the Serbs crushed and did not recognise the democratic rights of the Kosovar. What will happen in the next few days is that the government of Madrid will take autonomy to Catalonia and will impose an administration that will be under the direct dependence of Madrid, ie we will probably watch a worsened conflict at the end of the week In which, on the one hand, there will be the government of Catalonia without constitutional authority and, on the other hand, there will be an organisation, a type of administration imposed by Madrid in the constitutional framework, but which will not be accepted by a part of the Catalan institutions.

IV.

The President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, threatened last week to expel the ambassadors from the nation of the European Union. This will happen if the Brussels representatives in the UN attempted to exclude Manila from the Human Rights Council. In a speech marked by violent declarations, the leader said that he will not tolerate any European criticism of the country's drug war. A campaign that has killed more than 4000 people since Duterte has risen to power 15 months ago.
The European Union delegation in the country has already reacted and said that it has been a misunderstanding. Just over a week ago, a representative of the Human Rights Watch organisation stated in Geneva that the Philippines could be expelled from the Council on human duties due to abuses of the anti-drug campaign.
The declarations coincided with the visit to Manila of European delegates from the Progressive Alliance, which have called attention to the consequences that the drug campaign may have in trade between the Philippines and the European Union.

Victor, the truth is that the relationship of the Philippine regime with the European Union has not been easy. And the fight against drugs in the country has already caused thousands of deaths and also international disproving. How should the EU relate to the regime and respond to President Duterte's declarations?
The key is to continue to say that the legitimacy of the President of the Philippines is recognized as President-elect. But on the other hand, we cannot in any way close our eyes to repeated violations of human rights, international norms, including the diplomatic norms that President Duterte continues to do. The truth is that the way he expressed himself in relation to the European Union or other international leaders is a way of expressing that it is not in any way acceptable in international relations. And he has to be careful with that because, in fact, that kind of affirmations can be extremely harmful to his country. It is true that the European Union is the third trading partner of the Philippines, after China and the United States, and President Duterte cannot in any way think that it will continue to attack the European Union without any kind of response to the economic level. At trade level and probably some sanctions in that direction. But at the moment, the fundamental role of Brussels and the role of the European institutions in relation to Manila is very clear: clarify, calm the game and also continue development cooperation with the Philippines, as the European Union has more than a hundred projection CTOs currently running in the Philippines and benefiting a population that is extremely poor and living in extremely difficult conditions.

V.

With us on the phone Victor Angelo, the Magazine Europa commentator. And as always, before finishing, a cultural note.
The iconic Atomium in Brussels inaugurated an exhibition of René Magritte. The

Mostra celebrates, moreover, the anniversary of the two Belgian icons: from the building itself Atomium, which completes 60 years in 2018, and the Surrealist painter René Magritte, who died half a century ago.
This sensory exposure, which transforms some of the Belgian's works into 3d structures, will be open to the public over a year. It occupies two levels of this metallic structure which has become a symbol of the Belgian capital since it was erected for the Expo1958.
We'll stay here. See you next week!

[Technical Sheet]

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