

THE NEXT WAVE

How Religious Extremism
Is Reclaiming Power

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The Next Wave:

*How Religious Extremism
Is Reclaiming Power*

*Written by Neil Datta, Executive Director of the European Parliamentary Forum
for Sexual and Reproductive Rights.*

Brussels, June 2025

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EPF is a network of members of parliaments from across Europe who are committed to protecting the sexual and reproductive health of the world's most vulnerable people, both at home and overseas.

We believe that women should always have the right to decide upon the number of children they wish to have, and should never be denied the education or other means to achieve this that they are entitled to.

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“Nothing changes instantaneously: in a gradually heating bathtub, you’d be boiled to death before you knew it.”

(Margaret Atwood, The Handmaids Tale)

ABSTRACT

The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Regaining Power is a groundbreaking report that documents the accelerating financial expansion of movements working to dismantle decades of hard-won sexual and reproductive rights across Europe. Covering the 2019–2023 period, it builds on prior analyses of the anti-gender movement presented in *Tip of the Iceberg* (2021) and *Restoring the Natural Order* (2018). Unprecedented in scope, *The Next Wave* offers a detailed account of the financial trajectories of over 270 anti-rights and religious extremist actors in Europe, tracing their growing access to political power, professionalisation, international networking, and — in some cases — their capture of entire institutions, political parties, and states. It also exposes emergent strategies, including the production of ideologically driven knowledge, the establishment of anti-gender service infrastructures, and the rise of elite public affairs firms and civil society fronts covertly directed by religious hierarchies. *The Next Wave* is essential reading for understanding how sexual and reproductive rights in Europe are being strategically eroded — and what must be done to defend both these rights and democratic governance.

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THE NEXT WAVE
How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power

PREFACE

The Next Wave is not coming; it is already here. It is the march of radical religious ideas from the fringes to the centre of political power, where they are increasingly attempting to shape laws and public discourse across Europe and beyond. This anti-feminist, anti-gender equality pushback rides in alliance with rising authoritarian strongmen and far-right populists who are capturing democratic institutions to hollow them out from within.

Behind this movement is money — generous, strategically placed and largely hidden. An emerging oligarchic class, composed of tech barons, industrial elites and old-money aristocrats, is underwriting a vast social engineering project. They seek not merely to cement their influence, but to undo decades of social progress perceived as a threat. Their methods are subtle and equally devastating: they are laundering a religious extremist agenda into a secularised, sanitised language of tradition, family and order — making it look palatable in mainstream politics while preserving its core reactionary aims.

The power of this movement lies in its ability to form coalitions and supporting networks. Across Europe, a parallel infrastructure of control is being built: Church-organised non-governmental organisations masquerading as civil society, anti-gender ‘services’ framed as care, far-right think tanks dressed up as research institutes. Media platforms, specialised political parties, elite education networks — there is simultaneous expansion and professionalisation of the movement that has moved on well past simple lobbying.

Unaccountable social media algorithms have amplified previously marginal ideas to more people than ever before, especially young men and boys. Misogynistic online influencers are working to sway the next generation with pseudo-traditionalist rhetoric, which has reinvigorated the anti-gender movement. It’s now clear that the scale of online radicalization among adolescents is far more extensive than we had realized. Loud extremists in virtual spaces threaten to drown out inclusive voices — unless we act quickly.

However, the epicentre of the anti-gender project today is politics. Religious ideologues are executing meticulous, long-term strategies for power, using moral panic as a pathway to authoritarian consolidation. Other aspiring authoritarians, at the same time, are happy to form opportunistic coalitions with anyone who is willing to challenge and destabilise open, rights-based society. When such radical populist alliances succeed, women and minorities are the first to feel the consequences of human rights contestation used as a political strategy.

Political legitimisation also gives religious extremists a say over the distribution of state funds. Once in power, anti-rights actors unlock new streams of public funding. Where the far-right rules, we see government grants being funnelled into private religious ventures, allowing extremist agendas to flourish under the guise of service provision, cultural preservation and education. What might be portrayed as defending religious freedom or cutting government expenses is too often an attack on women and minorities through a transfer of public wealth into sectarian hands.

The Next Wave is an organised counter-revolution unfolding all over Europe. While it presents itself as a return to traditional values of the imaginary past that never existed, it is in fact a seizure of the future. This report provides a fascinating in-depth analysis of how this is happening — and gives valuable ideas about what we can all do to ensure that our hard-won rights endure.



Hon. Guillaume Gouffier Valente, MP (France)

President, European Parliamentary Forum
for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLJ	American Center for Law and Justice
ADF	Alliance Defending Freedom
BGEA	Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
COMECE	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union
ChONGO	Church-organized non-governmental organisation
CPAC	Conservative Political Action Conference
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
CSO	Civil society organisation
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECI	European Citizens' Initiative
ECLJ	European Centre for Law and Justice
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EU	European Union
FAFCE	Federation of Catholic Family Associations
FJL	Fondation Jérôme Lejeune
GONGO	Government-organized non-governmental organization
HDC	Human Dignity Curriculum
HLI	Human Life International
ICLN	International Catholic Legislators Network
IFTCC	The International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice
ITI	International Theological Institute
JzL	Ja zum Leben
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and intersex
LoC	Legionaries of Christ
MCC	Mathias Corvinus Collegium
NatCon	National Conservatism Conference
NaPro	Natural Procreative Technology
NFP	Natural family planning
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PfE	Patriots for Europe
PNfV	Political Network for Values
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SGS	Sovereign Global Solutions
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TFP	Tradition, Family and Property
UNAV	University of Navarra
WCF	World Congress of Families
WRPC	World Russian People's Council
WYA	World Youth Alliance

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S NEW SINCE 2021?

“To wage war, you need first of all money; second, you need money, and third, you also need money.”

(Raimondo Montecuccoli, Military leader, 1609 – 1680, Austria)

The *Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power* analyses the shifting landscape of anti-gender activism in Europe between 2019 and 2023, building directly on two foundational European Parliamentary Forum (EPF) studies: *Restoring the Natural Order* (2018)¹ and *Tip of the Iceberg* (2021).² Familiarity with these earlier works is essential to grasp the full scope of the present analysis.

The 2018 report traced how European anti-gender actors, supported by strategic partners in the USA and the Russian Federation, forged a coordinated network known as Agenda Europe. Originating in 2013 as a loose coalition of roughly 300 organisations and individuals across Europe, Russia and the USA, it coalesced around an annual summit, a shared manifesto and a digital mailing list.

By 2021, *Tip of the Iceberg* detailed how this movement had mobilised over US\$700 million between 2009 and 2018, channelling resources to establish five pan-European platforms: an anti-abortion coalition, an anti-LGBTQI network, a Christian political party, a social media mobilisation hub and a pseudo-Catholic far-right alliance. *The Next Wave* follows up on this and identifies an equivalent of US\$1.18 billion in anti-gender funding between 2019 and 2023. This funding is spread between seven main types of organisations: advocacy and lobbying, public engagement and media, grant-making foundations, anti-gender service providers, political parties and think tanks, strategic litigators and others. Geographically, the study looks at funding of organisations

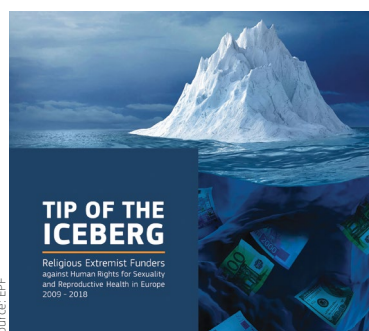
across three regions: Europe, split between European Union (EU) and non-EU countries; Russia; and the European spending of US-based organisations.

Building on the foundation of *Tip of the Iceberg*, and drawing on the work of academics, investigative journalists and activists, the current report maps the evolution of the anti-gender movement across five intertwined dimensions: religious ideology, civil society organisation, political engagement, knowledge production and geopolitical reach. Each dimension is followed up with a specific case study or subchapter that introduces new analytical concepts: Church-organised non-governmental organisations (ChONGOs) and anti-gender services, shadowy power brokers, media engagement, as well as a case study of European actors exporting the anti-gender movement to Africa. At the intersection of these five dimensions, a reflection on the role of Viktor Orbán's Hungary as a nexus for the anti-gender, illiberal coalition is presented.

While anti-gender activism often unfolds sequentially — beginning with ideological framing and culminating in geopolitical ambitions — different dimensions frequently develop simultaneously, each advancing at its own pace in its environment. In some contexts, movements have even leapfrogged early stages to directly pursue political or geopolitical objectives. Understanding these multiple dimensions and the funding behind them is vital for developing effective defences and strategic responses to mitigate the impact of anti-gender contestation on human rights and democratic values.

¹ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2018). *Restoring the Natural Order*. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/175>.

² European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). *Tip of the Iceberg*. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>.



METHODOLOGY

The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power builds on the framework set out in *Tip of the Iceberg* (2021), which includes: the definition of anti-gender actors; determining the sample of actors to analyse; and choosing primary and secondary reference sources. The result of this approach is a live database which tracks anti-gender funding over time.

The Next Wave defines as anti-gender those associations, businesses, political parties and other organisations that are engaged in undermining sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), LGBTQI rights, children's rights, and policies and social attitudes favouring gender equality. Considering strategies beyond advocacy, a previously overlooked group of actors has been included in the anti-gender definition: anti-gender service providers. This is a new concept which postulates that when services such as natural family planning are promoted with the goal of discouraging mainstream health interventions such as contraception, the negative effects are similar to those of restricting access to SRH services. Therefore, the service can be considered part of the anti-gender effort.

The research sample, formed by the snowball technique, is thus more expansive than *Tip of the Iceberg*, growing from 117 organisations to 275. Of these, 97 are small and micro entities, each with a combined five-year income below US\$1 million. As in *Tip of the Iceberg*, the geographical scope of the actors analysed roughly corresponds to the Council of Europe. Overall, at least one anti-gender organisation's funding was counted in 27 European countries, which is combined with data from Russia. For US-based organisations, only the reported amounts spent in Europe are counted, not the overall income. Some double-counting of funds spent by US-based organisations and incomes of established European branches of these organisations is possible.

The report is based on open-source information, specifically financial reports which are, depending on the country, available from an official business or charity registry, or have been self-published on the organisation's website. One of the goals of *The Next Wave* was to make this heterogeneous data from national sources comparable across borders. Exceptionally, for a few non-transparent organisations, financial data from secondary journalistic sources was referenced.³ The funding amounts referred to in the report represent an organisation's total income for a given year, which is converted into US dollars using the historic exchange rate for that year. The amounts are not adjusted for inflation.

This methodology has three principal limitations. First, there is no publicly available financial information for around 170 identified anti-gender organisations, due to lax transparency requirements, organisations operating as Churches or other reasons. Most though not all of these, however, appear to be small entities unlikely to significantly influence the total count. Second, for big, multifaceted organisations, it is impossible to ascertain what share of the overall funding is spent specifically on anti-gender campaigning, as opposed to strictly spiritual activities, for example. Lastly, the financial reports typically do not disclose where the funds originate. The best answer on where the anti-gender funding comes from relies on available data about public funding and analysis of known donors.

³ For example: Enrech, A., & Palà, R. (2024). Quants diners públics reben els grups antiavortistes? El Crític. <https://www.elcritic.cat/investigacio/quants-diners-publics-reben-els-grups-antiavortistes-221493>.

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HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

FUNDING OVERVIEW

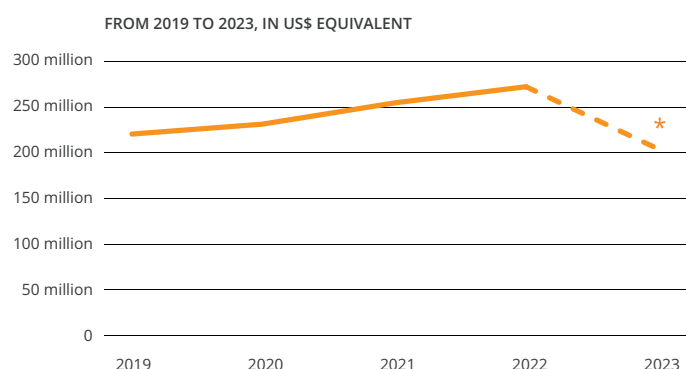
Between 2019 and 2023,⁴ funding equivalent to a total of US\$1.18 billion generated by 275 organisations involved in anti-gender initiatives in Europe. Around 73% of this funding (US\$869.5 million) originated from 27 countries in geographic Europe, while the Russian Federation contributed 18% (US\$ 211.9 million), and US organisations spending in Europe accounted for 9% (US\$104.3 million). The five countries with the highest anti-gender funding were Hungary (US\$172.2 million), France (US\$165.7 million), the UK (US\$156 million), Poland (US\$90.7 million) and Spain (US\$66.4 million).⁵

FUNDING GROWTH TRENDS

Total annual anti-gender funding in Europe rose each year from US\$220 million in 2019 to US\$271 million in 2022 — a 23% increase in four years. The largest driver of this growth came from the Russian Federation, whose anti-gender funding effectively doubled from US\$42.9 million in 2019 to US\$86.7 million in 2022. All other European funding rose by an average of 9% from US\$153 million in 2019 to US\$167 in 2022. Spending in Europe by the US Christian Right remained steady, averaging US\$22 million per year, followed by a notable decrease in 2022, with a total of only US\$16.8 million spent in 2023. It appears that branches of US groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom have increased their revenue in Europe to offset a decline in funding from the USA.

FIGURE 1

ANNUAL COMBINED ANTI-GENDER FUNDING IN EUROPE



* The 2023 decrease is due to incomplete financial data at the time of writing.

FIGURE 2

ANNUAL EUROPEAN ANTI-GENDER FUNDING WITHOUT RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND USA

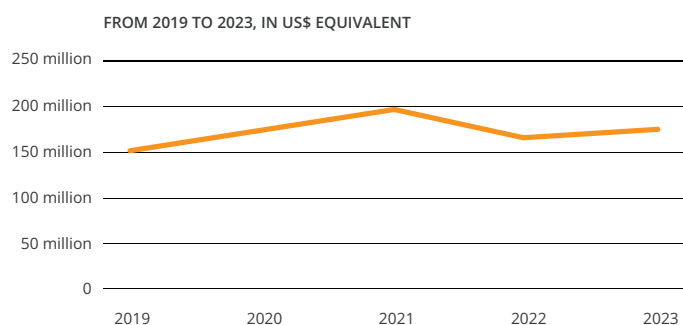
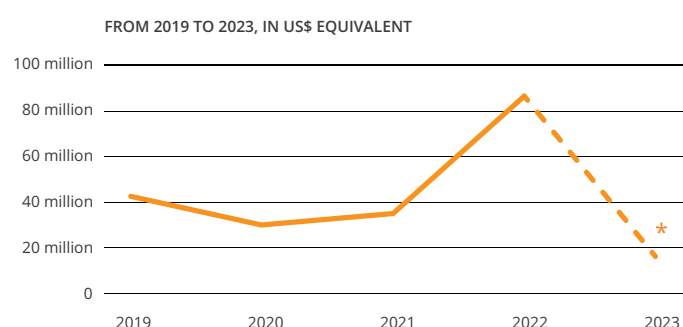


FIGURE 3

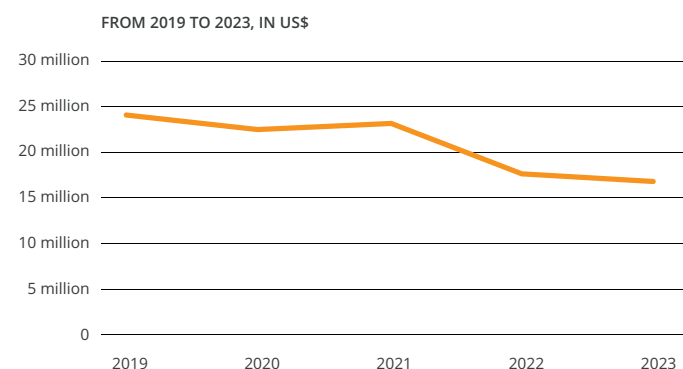
ANNUAL RUSSIAN ANTI-GENDER FUNDING



* The 2023 decrease is due to incomplete financial data at the time of writing.

FIGURE 4

US CHRISTIAN RIGHT ANTI-GENDER FUNDING IN EUROPE



⁴ Some financial data from the Russia Federation remains unavailable for 2023 at the time of writing.

⁵ The real number for Spain is likely significantly higher due to a lack of transparency for over 20 identified anti-gender associations.

TABLE 1
THE TOTAL ANTI-GENDER FUNDING IN EUROPE

Funding origin	Sum of total 2019 - 2023 (US\$ equivalent)
EU	703,170,791.82
Hungary	172,180,379.00
France*	165,675,937.00
Poland	90,733,494.00
EU	66,408,777.00
Spain*	59,662,471.82
Netherlands	44,833,430.00
Italy*	18,936,592.00
Ireland	12,725,749.00
Romania	10,792,390.00
Austria	11,800,999.00
Slovakia	9,996,008.00
Croatia	9,899,457.74
Czechia	5,491,622.00
Slovenia	4,551,369.00
Belgium	4,185,955.00
Estonia	3,786,576.00
Portugal*	3,905,669.46
Germany**	3,073,331.00
Lithuania	2,224,302.00
Denmark	1,020,752.00
Finland**	878,479.00
Bulgaria	165,383.00
Malta**	144,161.80
Latvia	97,507.00
Russia***	211,940,787.00
US European spending	104,341,921.00
UK and other Europe	165,340,710.65
UK*	156,044,133.00
Switzerland**	9,110,292.00
Serbia	186,285.65
Grand Total	1,184,794,210.47

* Some financial data is unavailable. ** Very incomplete data due to minimal transparency requirements for associations. *** Missing significant data for 2023.

TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING ANTI-GENDER FUNDING

The anti-gender funding originating from 275 organisations fell into six broad categories⁶: advocacy organisations and lobbyists (127 organisations), anti-gender service providers (80), grant-making foundations (18), public engagement and media organisations (6), litigation and lawfare (11), and political parties and think tanks (30).

ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS

The largest share of anti-gender funding came from 127 advocacy and lobbying organisations, accounting for US\$339.6 million or around 28.8% of total anti-gender funding identified between 2019 and 2023. Most of these organisations had a broad anti-gender profile, with notable specialisations including 45 organisations focused on anti-abortion advocacy, and two small clusters lobbying against LGBTQI rights (10) and comprehensive sexuality education (7).

Several advocacy organisations played a crucial role in the anti-gender movement. The most affluent advocacy organisation is the Hungarian Center for Fundamental Rights. Some of the best-funded lobbyists also include 14 organisations affiliated with the Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) movement across Europe, of which two organisations, Fédération Pro Europa Christiana (FPEC) and the Rev. Piotr Skarga Christian Culture Association from Poland, were among the most influential. In France, the Mouvement Catholique des Familles and Alliance Vita were significant actors, while in the UK, the Christian Institute and Christian Action, Research and Education (CARE UK) contributed significant amounts of funding, as did the UK branch of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

The six media organisations accounted for 23.2% of anti-gender funding — a total of US\$273.6 million over five years. The largest anti-gender media organisations originated from just three countries, each broadcasting religious content aligned with a distinct Christian denomination. In the Russian Federation, the Orthodox Television Fund (Телеканал «Спас») and Tsargrad (Царьград) were significant actors engaged in promoting Orthodox militarism. In the UK, the UK branch of the US-based evangelical Christian Broadcasting Network was a dominant actor in the gender-related culture wars, while in Poland, a whole ecosystem of ultra-Catholic media organisations, such as TV Trwam and Radio Maryja, is associated with the Lux Veritatis Foundation. Spain's CitizenGO and HazteOír were also key players whose funding grew steadily over the years, as they operate an online anti-gender petition platform and an offshoot media platform,

⁶ Three anti-gender organizations were not classified as either of the six analysed types.

TABLE 2

ANTI-GENDER FUNDING IN EUROPE BY ORGANISATION TYPE FROM 2019 TO 2023, IN US\$ EQUIVALENT, MILLIONS

Organisation type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-year total	% increase
Advocacy/lobbying	63.7	65.9	69.9	67.6	72.5	339.6	28.8%
Public engagement and media	45.3	49.6	62.3	85	31.5*	273.6	23.2%
Grant-making foundations	49	60.7	57	57	40.2	263.7	22.4%
Anti-gender services	23.9	24.9	29.1	25.2	27	130.1	11.0%
Political parties and think tanks	25.1	16.5	23.9	20	22.6	108.1	9.2%
Litigation/legal	10.7	10	10.4	11	9.3	47	4.0%
Other	2.2	2.2	2.2	5.7	4.5	16.7	1.4%
Grand total	220	230	255	271.3	207.6	1,180	

* Some of the data for 2023 from the Russian Federation was unavailable at the time of writing, meaning the real value would be higher.

Actual. Other notable media platforms included TFP-affiliated Polonia Christiana, Salon Beige (GT Editions), and European and Hungarian conservative digital media.

GRANT-MAKING FOUNDATIONS

A large share of anti-gender funding came from 18 grant-making foundations, accounting for over 22.4% of total funding over the five years (US\$263.7 million). One of the largest grant-making foundations, Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (France) played a central role by distributing grants and research fellowships that combine genetic research and anti-abortion advocacy. Other key actors included two Hungarian government-controlled foundations, namely Bethlen Gábor Fund Management⁷ and the Batthyány Lajos Foundation, which support the authoritarian GONGO ecosystem in Hungary. The St. Basil Charitable Fund in Russia, which is controlled by sanctioned far-right oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, also featured in the top ten.

ANTI-GENDER SERVICE PROVIDERS

Anti-gender service providers (80 organisations) accounted for US\$130.1 million or just 11% of the total anti-gender funding in Europe in 2019–2023.⁸ Most anti-gender services are delivered through a decentralised network of micro entities. The largest anti-gender service providers were primarily crisis pregnancy centres, including Life 2009 Ltd (UK), Aktion Leben (Austria), Siriz (Netherlands), Vita Nova Foundation (Italy), and Fundació Pro Vida de Catalunya and Red Madre (Spain). Other

organisations focused on abstinence-only education, such as Cler Amour et Famille (France), or natural family planning, such as Fertilitas Servicios de Naprotecnología (Spain). A small subset of organisations centred on anti-LGBTQI ‘reintegrative counselling’ was identified in the UK (e.g. Core Issues Trust, IFTCC).⁹

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THINK TANKS

A total of 30 political parties and political think tanks were particularly active in the anti-gender movement, with a combined five-year budget of US\$108.1 million (12% of the total identified amount) in 2019–2023. From the USA, the Heritage Foundation — the organisation behind Project 2025 — poured significant resources into Europe. From the Russian Federation, the now-defunct Dialogue of Civilizations Group was a major soft power initiative, while in France, the Institut des sciences sociales, économiques et politiques (ISSEP) played a key role.

At the European level, three political parties were highly involved in anti-gender mobilisation: the European Conservative and Reformist Party (ECR), the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), and the Identity and Democracy Party (ID; Now Patriots.eu).¹⁰ Political foundations linked to these and major European national parties were also significant, including the Fidesz-affiliated Foundation for a Civic Hungary, New Direction Foundation (ECR Foundation), and Fundación Disenso, affiliated with Spain’s Vox party.

⁷ Only the managing organisation’s budget is counted, as the pool of funds distributed is much larger.

⁸ For more on anti-gender services, see Chapter 5a on Anti-gender services.

⁹ Financial data for IFTCC is unavailable due to lenient financial transparency requirements for non-charitable micro-entities.

¹⁰ For more on the role of European parties in the anti-gender movement, see Chapter 6 on the Political dimension.

PART 1

SOURCES OF FUNDING

This section uncovers the data behind an equivalent of US\$1.18 billion of private and public funds funnelled into anti-gender organizations in Europe and Russia between 2019 and 2023. For US-based organizations, spending on projects in Europe is analysed.



1

US ANTI-GENDER FUNDING IN EUROPE

“They [Alliance Defending Freedom] are way more powerful than many are aware, and they are using that power for — I’ll say it — bad.”

(John Oliver, TV Host)

US Christian Right funding in Europe totalled US\$104.3 million between 2019 and 2023,¹ with average annual spending of US\$20 million, which represents a substantial investment. US funding remains concentrated in 19 non-profit organisations, the most notable of which are Alliance Defending Freedom International (ADFI), the European Center for Law and Justice (ECLJ) and the World Youth Alliance (WYA). Some US organisations appear to have decreased their spending in Europe, such as the Leadership Institute, Cato Institute and Family Watch International. Others have increased, such as ADFI, Heartbeat International and the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP).

1.1 US ANTI-GENDER ACTORS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

There are several types of US anti-gender actors in Europe which fall into three broad categories: the litigators, the civil society organisations and the right-wing and libertarian think tanks.

THE LITIGATORS

After the Christian Broadcasting Network, which spent over US\$60 million in Europe over the five-year period (See Chapter 7a: ‘Dissemination: An anti-rights hall of mirrors’), the two largest US Christian Right actors in Europe are ADFI² and the ECLJ,³ accounting for 29% of all US funding. They specialise in litigation, bringing decades of professional capacity on social issue lawfare in the USA to the European continent.

ADFI is the organisation that brought *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*⁴ before the US Supreme Court, thereby overturning over 30 years of jurisprudence on abortion rights in the USA. It is the largest US Christian Right civil society organisation by spending in Europe and boasts 35 wins before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).⁵ It is also designated as an anti-LGBTQI hate group



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► Flag on the facade of the offices of the European Centre for Law and Justice in Strasbourg.

¹ The 2023 financial report for Alliance Defending Freedom is not included in this count, as it had still not been made public at the time of writing.

² See <https://adfinternational.org/>.

³ See <https://eclj.org>.

⁴ ADF International. (2021). Press Statement: Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization. ADFI, 1 December. <https://adfinternational.org/news/press-statement-dobbs-v-jackson-womens-health-organization>.

⁵ See <https://adfinternational.org/>.

by the Southern Poverty Law Center.⁶ With an annual average of US\$5–6 million funding for its European operations, ADFI maintains permanent offices in Brussels, Geneva and London, with its European headquarters in Vienna.⁷ Indeed, Europe is the region where ADF spends the most outside the USA.

ADFI has five main areas of focus: life, religious freedom, freedom of speech, marriage and the family, and parental rights.⁸ Its activities take two main forms: litigation and advocacy. In terms of litigation, ADFI is active in ongoing cases before the ECHR on a range of issues, including arguing against the right to die in dignity/euthanasia,⁹ buffer zones around abortion providers,¹⁰ and hate speech laws which criminalise harmful speech towards sexual minorities.¹¹ For example, ADFI was involved in the case of Finnish former Minister Päivi Räsänen in her legal actions for hate speech,¹² and it is acting on behalf of the pro-Orbán Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) regarding the attempted cancellation of the National Conservatism Conference in Brussels in April 2024.¹³

ADFI is also active in advocacy efforts, such as criticising the decision of the European Parliament to recommend inclusion of the right to abortion in the European Union (EU) Charter of Fundamental Rights;¹⁴ promoting the anti-abortion rights

Geneva Consensus Declaration,¹⁵ alleging that the United Nations undermines parental rights by promoting ‘gender ideology’;¹⁶ and arguing against the proposed World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic treaty.¹⁷ An emerging area of work for ADFI is undermining children’s rights and public education by emphasising parental rights¹⁸ (see also the section below on Ziklag). It is for this type of activism that ADFI is considered a hate group, and in 2021 the Global Project on Hate and Extremism (GPHE) dedicated a special report to ADFI.¹⁹ In Europe, much of ADFI’s advocacy work is directed at the European Parliament, focusing its efforts on influencing the behaviour of European People’s Party (EPP), European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity and Democracy (ID, now Patriots for Europe) MEPs.²⁰

The ECLJ is the Strasbourg-based arm of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), whose chair represented President Donald Trump in his first impeachment hearings in 2019.²¹ The ACLJ spent US\$5.1 million in Europe between 2019 and 2023 through an annual grant to the ECLJ averaging US\$1 million per year. This US support has allowed the ECLJ to continue its engagement with the European judicial system by focusing on undermining the credibility of the ECHR — for example, by publishing a report titled ‘The Impartiality of the ECHR

⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center. (2020). Why is Alliance Defending Freedom a Hate Group? SPLC, 10 April. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/stories/why-alliance-defending-freedom-hate-group/>.

⁷ ADF UK. (2025). Our International Engagement. <https://adfinternational.org/en-gb/our-model/#international-engagement>.

⁸ See <https://adfinternational.org/>.

⁹ ADF International. (2024). Countries cannot be forced to introduce assisted suicide, rules Europe’s top human rights court. ADFI, 13 June. <https://adfinternational.org/news/echr-confirms-protection-from-euthanasia>.

¹⁰ ADF International. (2022). 40 Days for Life group rejoices as court rules in favor of right to pray in the vicinity of abortion counseling facility. ADFI, 31 August. <https://adfinternational.org/news/german-court-rules-in-favor-of-right-to-pray>.

¹¹ ADF International. (2024). Ireland’s hate speech law could “censor the entire internet”, warns Michael Shellenberger. ADFI, 27 June. <https://adfinternational.org/news/shellenberger-irish-censorship>.

¹² ADF International. (2024). Defence filed in Bible Tweet “hate speech” case headed to Finland’s Supreme Court. ADFI, 20 May. <https://adfinternational.org/news/defence-filed-in-bible-tweet-hate-speech-case-headed-to-finlands-supreme-court>.

¹³ ADF International. (2024). NEW: ADF International backs emergency legal challenge after Brussels police shut down “NatCon” conference citing views on abortion, marriage, and the European Union. ADFI, 16 April. <https://adfinternational.org/news/nat-con-legal-challenge>.

¹⁴ ADF International. (2024). EU Parliamentarians endorse abortion in non-binding resolution; international law continues to protect life of both mother and baby. ADFI, 11 April. <https://adfinternational.org/news/eu-parliament-vote>.

¹⁵ ADF International. (2022). Global Coalition of 37 Governments Recommits to Pro-Life Women’s Health Policy. ADFI, 17 November. <https://adfinternational.org/news/global-coalition-of-37-governments-recommits-to-pro-life-womens-health-policy>.

¹⁶ ADF International. (2024). How the UN Undermines Parental Rights by Pushing Gender Ideology. ADFI, 25 January. <https://adfinternational.org/commentary/how-un-undermines-parental-rights-pushing-gender-ideology>.

¹⁷ ADF International. (2024). WHO Pandemic Treaty, ‘Infodemics’ and Freedom of Speech. ADFI, 6 May. <https://adfinternational.org/commentary/who-pandemic-treaty-need-know>.

¹⁸ Documented. (2023). ADF Education Litigation Funding Proposal to Ziklag, May 2021. Documented, 17 October. <https://documented.net/media/adf-litigation-funding-proposal-to-ziklag-may-2021>.

¹⁹ See Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. (2021). From America with Hate: The Alliance Defending Freedom’s role in advancing anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-woman agendas in Eastern Europe. <https://globalextrmism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ADFI-FINAL06.pdf>.

²⁰ Haar, K. (2024). Who are the Alliance Defending Freedom and why are they lobbying Brussels? Corporate Observatory Europe, 21 May. <https://corporateeurope.org/en/2024/05/who-are-alliance-defending-freedom-and-why-are-they-lobbying-brussels>.

²¹ Perez, A. (2024). Right-Wing Legal Crusades Have Made This Ex-Trump Lawyer Super Rich. Rolling Stone, 3 April. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/trump-lawyer-super-rich-right-wing-crusades-1234939528/>.



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programme (See Chapter 3a: 'Public funding' and Chapter 4a: 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing? The worrying emergence of Church-organised non-governmental organisations (ChONGOs).

The WYA asserts that it was "founded by young people to be a global voice for human dignity", including "recognizing the inviolable dignity of each person, from conception to natural death".²⁸ However, its leadership features some of the most high-ranking and influential Catholic dignitaries both within and outside the Church, often with an extensive track record of campaigning against human rights in sexuality and reproduction.²⁹

❶ Finnish former Minister Päivi Räsänen.

— Concerns and Recommendations²² in 2020, with an update in 2023,²³ alleging that most of the ECHR judges were "agents of George Soros". The ECJ has also been active in promoting conspiracy theories about the WHO, alleging a vast programme aimed at de-population,²⁴ and campaigning against the WHO's proposed pandemic treaty.²⁵ In 2023 and 2024, it was active in campaigning against the inclusion of the right to abortion in the French Constitution through direct engagement with French MPs by sending them plastic fetuses and publishing no fewer than seven reports and articles.²⁶

THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

There are several US civil society organisations active in Europe. For example, the World Youth Alliance (WYA),²⁷ with six regional chapters across the globe and an office in Brussels, spent US\$2.4 million between 2019 and 2023 on its activities in Europe. A unique aspect of the WYA is its ability as a US organisation to tap into EU funding, receiving an equivalent of just under US\$1 million since 2019 through the Erasmus

The WYA's European chapter has been active in EU-level advocacy, offering a youth voice to promote the social doctrine of the Catholic Church on human dignity. To achieve this, it has developed anti-rights position papers on a range of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) topics, including family planning; maternal health; sexual education; the family; and EU development aid.³⁰ In addition, WYA Europe has developed a pathway for raising youth anti-gender leadership, starting with a certified training programme which, once successful, allows the candidate to apply to the WYA Advocacy Academy, which in turn offers the possibility of securing an internship at the WYA.

In 2017, the WYA developed an offshoot targeting young women, namely Fertility Education and Medical Management (FEMTM),³¹ which serves as a menstrual tracking application, as a form of natural family planning according to Catholic religious principles. The Board of FEMM includes the WYA founder, Anna Halpine, as well as US "anti-abortion billionaire", far-right Catholic philanthropist Sean Fieler, whose Chiaroscuro foundation is a prominent supporter of FEMM.^{32,33}

²² European Center for Law and Justice. (2023). The Impartiality of the ECHR – Concerns and Recommendations. <https://ecjl.org/echr-impartiality-concerns-and-recommendations>. ²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bonneau, J.-L., & Puppink, G. (2024). 70 Years of Population Policy: History of the Human Reproduction Program of the World Health Organisation 1950-2020. Ethics Press. <https://ethicspress.com/products/70-years-of-population-policy>.

²⁵ Itangiviza, M.G. (2024). Revision of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the WHO Pandemic Agreement. European Center for Law and Justice, 30 May. <https://ecjl.org/geopolitics/un/revision-of-the-international-health-regulations-2005-and-the-who-pandemic-agreement>.

²⁶ See <https://ecjl.org/>. ²⁷ See <https://wya.net/>. ²⁸ See <https://wya.net/>.

²⁹ These include their Royal Highnesses Prince Nikolaus and Princess Margaretta of Liechtenstein, H.E. Renato Cardinal Martino, H.E. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn as Patrons, the late Rocco Buttiglione and Senator Francisco Tatad of the Philippines as Advisors, and Elisabeth Hohenberg (see 'Aristocracy') and Jean-Baptiste de Franssu, President of the Vatican Bank <https://www.ior.va/content/ior/en/governance/jean-baptiste-bouville-de-franssu.html>, on the WYA Board of Directors. See World Youth Alliance. (2021). 2021 Annual Report. New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2021-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>, on the WYA Board of Directors. See World Youth Alliance. (2021). 2021 Annual Report. New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2021-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>.

³⁰ World Youth Alliance. (2022). White Papers. <https://wya.net/white-papers/>.

³¹ See <https://femmhealth.org>.

³² Demirhan, A. (2024). This Anti-Abortion Billionaire Is Trying to Manipulate the Election for the GOP. Truthout. <https://truthout.org/articles/this-anti-abortion-billionaire-is-trying-to-manipulate-the-election-for-the-gop/>.

³³ Papenfuss, M. (2019). Women's Fertility App Secretly Bankrolled By Anti-Abortion Activists: Report. HuffPost. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/fertility-app-anti-abortion-activists-bankroll_n_5cf21cf6e4b0a1997b6abc95.

Another significant US civil society organisation is 40 Days for Life,³⁴ an “internationally coordinated 40-day campaign that aims to end abortion locally through prayer and fasting, community outreach, and a peaceful all-day vigil in front of abortion businesses”.³⁵ 40 Days for Life has increased its financial presence in Europe over the past five years to reach a total of US\$910,500 between 2019 and 2023. It is active in 13 European countries and has a strong presence in Croatia, Germany, Spain and the UK.³⁶ Its prayer vigils outside abortion providers have served as the catalyst for the introduction of buffer zones in several countries, including Germany³⁷ and Scotland.³⁸

Heartbeat International³⁹ specialises in setting up disinformation systems to prevent women from accessing a legal abortion, either through crisis pregnancy centres or through hotlines.⁴⁰ It works with partners around the world, often offering them ready-made materials and templates, to implement their abortion dissuasion strategies, which hover in the grey zone of legality. In Europe, Heartbeat International works with the Italian Movimento per la Vita and in Spain with Provida, in a data-driven partnership described as ‘hunting’ for women in need of abortion.^{41,42}

A US non-governmental organisation with a considerable level of international visibility is Family Watch International (FWI),⁴³

and its President, Sharon Slater. FWI only declared spending US\$20,000 in Europe between 2019 and 2023; however, Sharon Slater was a speaker at Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s 2023 Demographic Summit in Budapest,⁴⁴ along with other anti-gender personalities.⁴⁵ During the same period, FWI has been active in engaging with the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC)⁴⁶ and African policymakers, having served as the catalyst for the 2023 homophobic legislation adopted in Uganda.⁴⁷

Another US civil society organisation active in Europe is the TFP,⁴⁸ which spent US\$976,000 in Europe between 2019 and 2023. It is part of the wider TFP network across Europe, with such members as Ordo Iuris in Poland and Civitas Christiana in the Netherlands⁴⁹ (See Chapter 5 on Civil society), which have extensive transnational financial transactions among themselves directed by the TFP headquarters in France and Brazil.⁵⁰

Human Life International (HLI)⁵¹ is a Catholic anti-gender organisation established by two far-right priests. It focuses on abortion, LGBTQI, family planning, end-of life and assisted reproduction issues. HLI promotes chastity education, anti-abortion training, pregnancy care centres and legal activism. It is active in several European countries and has

³⁴ See <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en>.

³⁵ 40 Days for Life. (2024). Helping to end the injustice of abortion. <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/about-overview.aspx>.

³⁶ 40 Days for Life is present in Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Spain and the UK. 40 Days for Life. (2024). Find a 40 days for life vigil location to be a part of. <https://www.40daysforlife.com/en/vigil-search.aspx>.

³⁷ Whittle, H. (2024). Germany steps up crackdown on anti-abortion protests. Deutsche Welle, 24 January. <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-steps-up-crackdown-on-anti-abortion-protests/a-64877764>.

³⁸ Clark, G. (2025). More than 100 anti-abortion protesters target Glasgow hospital. The National, 14 April. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/25088171.100-anti-abortion-protesters-target-glasgow-hospital/>.

³⁹ See <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/>.

⁴⁰ Provost, C., & Naira Archer, N. (2020). Trump-linked religious ‘extremists’ target women with disinformation worldwide. Open Democracy, 10 February. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/trump-linked-religious-extremists-global-disinformation-pregnant-women/>.

⁴¹ Heartbeat International. (2025). Movimento per la Vita: Partnership with Movimento per la Vita, Heartbeat unveiled. <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/international/international-partners/mpv>.

⁴² Del Castillo, C. (2019). Big data contra el aborto: Una red global ayuda a grupos locales en España a ‘cazar’ mujeres que quieren abortar. El Diario, 22 July. https://www.eldiario.es/tecnologia/organizacion-internacional-impulsa-uso-data_1_1426806.html.

⁴³ See <https://familywatch.org/>.

⁴⁴ Budapest Demographic Summit. (2023). V. Budapest Demographic Summit in 2023 – Family: The Key to Security. <https://budapestdemografiacsucs2023.hu/en#program>.

⁴⁵ These include representatives of ADFI, TFP, Jordan Petersen and the ICLN. See Budapest Demographic Summit. (2023). V. Budapest Demographic Summit in 2023 – Family: The Key to Security. <https://budapestdemografiacsucs2023.hu/en#program>.

⁴⁶ Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. (2022). OIC Secretary-General Discusses with the President of FWI Ways to Empower Institution of Marriage and Family and Preserve its Values. OIC, 15 August. https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=37354&t_ref=25844&lan=en.

⁴⁷ Titeka, K. (2024). The American religious right and the anti-LGBTQ movement in Uganda: Family Watch International, Sharon Slater and the ‘Entebbe conference’. Democracy in Africa. <https://democracyinafrica.org/the-american-religious-right-and-the-anti-lgbtq-movement-in-uganda-family-watch-international-sharon-slater-and-the-entebbe-conference/>.

⁴⁸ See <https://www.tfp.org>.

⁴⁹ Datta, N. (2020). Modern Day Crusaders. Brussels: European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Modern%20Day%20Crusaders%20in%20Europe%20-%20TFP%20Report_1.pdf.⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See <https://www.hli.org/>.

satellite offices in Rome, Austria, Ireland and Poland.⁵² The Population Research Institute⁵³ is another far-right Catholic organisation established by priests which produces anti-gender advocacy materials. The Leadership Institute⁵⁴ provides training to conservative activists on a range of issues and earned fame in the 2010s for having trained Tea Party activists in the USA.⁵⁵

THE US RIGHT-WING AND LIBERTARIAN THINK TANKS

Several US conservative think tanks have a long history of engagement in Europe. They include the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty,⁵⁶ which has a European office in Rome; the Cato Institute,⁵⁷ which has argued against a constitutional right to abortion in the USA,⁵⁸ against LGBT rights⁵⁹ and in favour of privatising public education;⁶⁰ and the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies,⁶¹ which is described as a “legal and political powerhouse that has been involved in almost every high-profile conservative judicial appointment of recent decades, including those to the Supreme Court”.⁶² The Federalist Society argues for an ‘originalist’ interpretation of legal tradition and has devised legal strategies to undermine the right to abortion and LGBTQI rights.⁶³ Together, these three conservative and libertarian US think tanks spent US\$6 million in Europe over the past five years.

However, the Heritage Foundation⁶⁴ stands out for its recent activity in Europe. While not the most prominent actor in terms of its financial footprint in Europe — spending only \$802,000 over the past five years — it has been active in forging partnerships with the continent’s newly established think tanks. One of the most prestigious and successful conservative US think tanks, it gained further notoriety in 2024 for its involvement⁶⁵ in Project 2025: Presidential Transition Project.⁶⁶ Moreover, the Heritage Foundation’s newly forged partnerships with several European think tanks has provided a channel to presented Project 2025 in European settings⁶⁷ (See Chapter 7: ‘Knowledge production’).

1.2 WHERE US ANTI-RIGHTS FUNDING ORIGINATES

The US anti-gender actors mentioned above spend money in Europe; however, the original source is located further upstream following a three-step process. The ultimate source for the vast majority of US anti-gender funding is the right-wing billionaire class, as exemplified by several families. The wealthy families also fund the many organisations that devised Project 2025.⁶⁸ They include the DeVos family, behind the Amway retail chain, with an estimated fortune of

⁵² See <https://www.hli.at/> (Austria); <https://humanlife.ie/> (Ireland); and <https://www.hli.org.pl/pl/> (Poland).

⁵³ See <https://www.pop.org/>.

⁵⁴ See <https://leadershipinstitute.org/>.

⁵⁵ TeaPartyTraining. (2010). Reclaiming America Through Action – Online, On-Demand Training, Launched July 4, 2010. <https://teapartytraining.org/FAQ/TPT.pdf>.

⁵⁶ See <https://www.acton.org>.

⁵⁷ See <https://www.cato.org/>.

⁵⁸ Levy, R.A. (2022). No Constitutional Authority for a National Abortion Law. Cato Institute, 11 July. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/no-constitutional-authority-national-abortion-law>.

⁵⁹ Olson, W. (2023). Human Rights Campaign’s LGBTQ ‘Emergency’ Is All about Money and Politics. Cato Institute, 8 June. <https://www.cato.org/commentary/human-rights-campaigns-lgbtq-emergency-all-about-money-politics>.

⁶⁰ Hroncich, C., & Buckland, J. (2024). ‘Helping Families Navigate the Changing Education Landscape’. Policy Analysis 976. Washington, DC: Cato Institute. <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/helping-families-navigate-changing-education-landscape>.

⁶¹ See <https://fedsoc.org>.

⁶² Ward, I. (2024). The cloudy future of the Federalist Society. Politico, 13 June. <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-nightly/2024/06/13/the-cloudy-future-of-the-federalist-society-00163329>.

⁶³ Hogue, I. (2022). A “Woodstock” for Right-Wing Legal Activists Kicked off the 40-Year Plot to Undo Roe v. Wade. The Intercept, 10 May. <https://theintercept.com/2022/05/10/roe-v-wade-federalist-society-religious-right/>; and Accountable. (2023). The Federalist Society: An Extremist Institution. <https://accountable.us/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/The-Federalist-Society-Extreme-Views-compressed.pdf>.

⁶⁴ See <https://www.heritage.org/>.

⁶⁵ Chretien, S. (2023). Project 2025. The Heritage Foundation, 31 January. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/project-2025>.

⁶⁶ Project 2025 is a 900-page document providing a detailed blueprint for any successful Republican candidate to the US White House in the 2024 US Presidential elections to radically reshape US policies and the public administration towards an ultra-conservative agenda. Project 2025 benefits from the support of all leading US Christian Right organisations, including ADF and the ECLJ. See <https://www.project2025.org/>.

⁶⁷ Danube Institute. (2024). Preparing for the Next Conservative Administration featuring Troup Hemenway. Danube Institute, 13 February 2024. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/preparing-for-the-next-conservative-administration-featuring-troup-hemenway>.

⁶⁸ Fassler, J. (2024). 6 Billionaire Fortunes Bankrolling Project 2025. De Smog, 14 August. <https://www.desmog.com/2024/08/14/project-2025-billionaire-donor-heritage-foundation-donald-trump-jd-vance-charles-koch-peter-coors/>.

⁶⁹ According to the US tax authority, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), known as a 501c3 charity.

US\$5.4 billion; the Uihlein family, active in office supplies and breweries, with an estimated worth of US\$4 billion; the Koch brothers, active in a series of industries, with an estimated worth of US\$67.5 billion; the Green family of Hobby Lobby, with an estimated US\$15 billion; and the Wallers family, behind the Jockey underwear company, with US\$17.3 billion. These right-wing billionaires have three options for channelling their financial resources to the anti-rights causes dear to them: through private foundations, through a donor-advised fund (DAF) or directly to an entity registered as a non-profit charity, known as a 501c3 charity.⁶⁹

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

Several billionaire families have established their own private foundations, resulting in the DeVos Foundation and the Koch Foundation (see *Tip of the Iceberg*, 2021). Others have taken leadership roles in private foundations, such as the Bradley Foundation,⁷⁰ which provided financial support to the Acton Institute, DonorsTrust and the Cato Institute, among others. These right-wing billionaire foundations then have two options: to fund a recognised 501c3 charity directly or place their funding in a DAF; in some cases, they do both.

DARK MONEY ATM: DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

The DAF⁷¹ route is preferred by funders who wish to remain anonymous but still channel their financial resources to specific activities or organisations, while benefiting from a tax break. The largest DAF engaged in religious extremist activism is DonorsTrust.⁷² Established in 2006, it targets “conservative- and libertarian-minded donors” who “believe in preserving the ideals of limited government, personal responsibility, and free enterprise”.⁷³ DonorsTrust had accumulated assets surpassing US\$1.3 billion by 2022 and donated more than US\$2 billion to over 3,000 anti-rights and anti-gender entities, such as ADF and the ACLJ.⁷⁴ It had also funded climate change-denying



► Paul Coleman serves as Executive Director of ADF International from its headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

entities,⁷⁵ as well as Project Veritas, which has produced misleading hidden videos alleging to depict abortion providers in the USA engaging in illegal acts.⁷⁶

Another DAF is the National Christian Charitable Foundation (NCF),⁷⁷ which has provided ADF with generous funding of at least US\$89 million since 2016. The NCF offers its investors “shared biblical values, innovative charitable solutions, and highly personalized service so you can give more strategically and with greater purpose”, which has allowed it to invest US\$18 billion in churches, ministries and charities since its founding in 1982.⁷⁸

Growing out of the NCF is another DAF, namely the Servant Foundation, which operates as the Signatry,⁷⁹ which describes itself as “a Christian ministry seeking to build the kingdom of God by inspiring world-changing generosity”. The Signatry has provided over US\$50 million to ADF since 2018 and has financially supported the Heritage Foundation and other anti-gender groups.⁸⁰ The Signatry earned 15 minutes of fame in 2023 for sponsoring the Jesus-themed advertisement ‘He gets us’ which aired during the NFL Super Bowl.⁸¹

⁷⁰ See <https://www.bradleyfdn.org/>.

⁷¹ For more about DAFs, see Fidelity Investments. (2025). What is a donor-advised fund (DAF)? A simple, flexible, and tax-advantageous way to give to your favorite charities. <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/guidance/philanthropy/what-is-a-donor-advised-fund.html>.

⁷² See <https://www.donorstrust.org/>.

⁷³ DonorsTrust. (2024). DonorsTrust has granted out approximately \$2 billion to more than 3,000 charities. <https://www.donorstrust.org/who-we-are/>.

⁷⁴ Influence Watch. (2025). DonorsTrust. <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/donorstrust/>.

⁷⁵ <https://www.desmog.com/who-donors-trust/>

⁷⁶ Jadeed, L. (2024). Inside the Rise and Fall of Project Veritas. Rolling Stone, 20 June. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/project-veritas-james-okeefe-rise-fall-1235036748/>.

⁷⁷ See <https://www.ncfgiving.com/>; and Influence Watch. (2025). National Christian Charitable Foundation. <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/national-christian-charitable-foundation/>.

⁷⁸ See <https://www.ncfgiving.com/about/>.

⁷⁹ See <https://thesignatry.com/>; and Influence Watch. (2025). Servant Foundation. <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/servant-foundation/>.

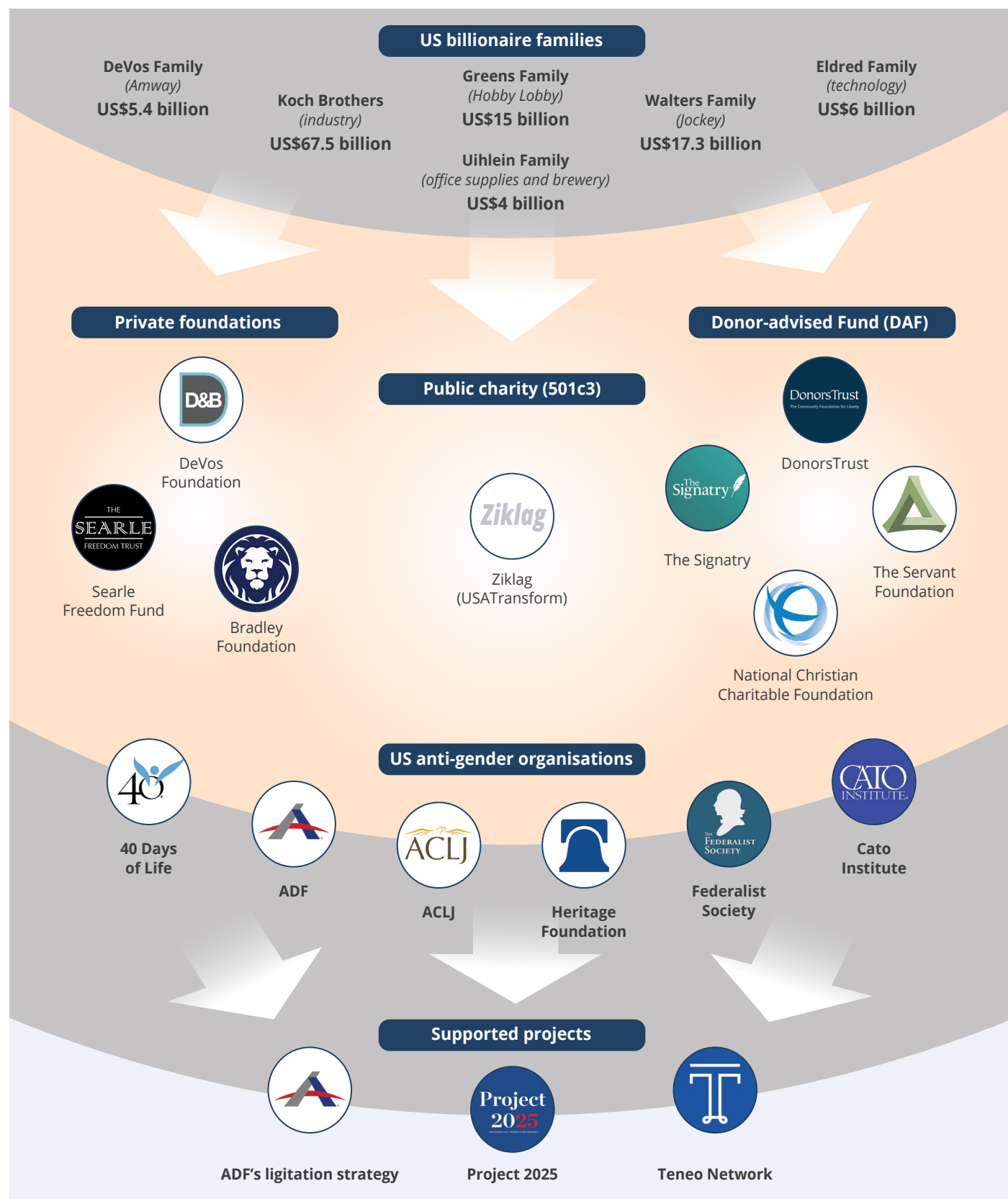
⁸⁰ Americans United for Separation of Church and State. (2025). The Servant Foundation: the power behind the ads. <https://www.au.org/the-servant-foundation/>.

⁸¹ Forbes. (2023). This Billionaire Is A Donor Behind The Jesus-Focused Super Bowl Ads. Forbes, 13 February. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kerryadolan/2023/02/13/this-billionaire-is-a-donor-behind-the-jesus-focused-super-bowl-ads/>.

⁸² Americans United for Separation of Church and State. (2025). Christian Nationalism is destroying our democracy. <https://www.au.org/the-shadow-network/>.

FIGURE 5

HOW US ANTI-GENDER FUNDING REACHES EUROPE



Americans United for the Separation of Church and State alleges that the above-mentioned DAFs, and their billionaire backers and their grantees such as ADF and the Heritage Foundation, are part of a 'shadow network' of Christian nationalists working to undermine democracy and amend laws and policies to "ensure that White Christians hold onto power and privilege".⁸²

ZIKLAG: CHRISTIAN NATIONALIST FUNDING

One example of such a Christian nationalist shadow network is Ziklag, which serves as the third possible route for US anti-gender funding, namely a public charity. ProPublica reported in June 2024 the creation in 2017 of a new entity designed to serve a specific Christian nationalist agenda, known as Ziklag, and legally registered as USA Transform.⁸³ Gathering together a subset of the US right-wing billionaire class (such as the Uihlein, Green and Waller families) concerned specifically with promoting "Christian dominionism",⁸⁴ Ziklag is a closed and secretive group of funders. Headed by the US tech entrepreneur Ken Eldred, Ziklag (which refers to a city in Judah where King David sought refuge, according to the Old Testament) strives for Christians to reach dominion over the 'seven mountains' — namely, arts and the media, business, Church, education, family, government, and science and technology. By 2022, Ziklag had amassed US\$12 million and was making grants to ADF and the ACLJ, as well as other anti-rights causes. In addition, ProPublica exposed Ziklag's explicit political agenda aiming to ensure Republican victory in the 2024 US elections.⁸⁵

In October 2023, Documented reported how ADF had put forward a US\$2–3 million proposal to Ziklag funders for a litigation strategy to "take down the education system as we know it" by launching a series of lawsuits across various jurisdictions in the USA on parental rights to choose their children's education and advocating for school vouchers.⁸⁶

Because "Ideologies like critical race theory (CRT) and gender theory are permeating school curricula, leading children to become confused about who they are and how they are to treat one another", ADF developed the Charter on Parental Rights.⁸⁷ ADF expected to set judicial precedent in favour of school choice and for it to "be ruled unconstitutional by the court to allow public money to support any one belief system". ADF boasted that "an investment of approximately \$3,000,000 could result in a \$237.9 billion flow of funds out of public school into private-homeschool. By any measure, this would be an excellent 3-year return on investment!"⁸⁸

ADF is already implementing its parental rights strategy. In the USA, it is an active participant in *Mahmoud vs. Taylor* before the US Supreme Court in 2025, which is to determine "whether public schools burden parents' religious exercise when they compel elementary school children to participate in instruction on gender and sexuality against their parents' religious convictions and without notice or opportunity to opt out".⁸⁹ In September 2024, ADFI presented its Parental Rights Charter at the annual strategy meeting of the secretive Vision Network Europe (formerly the Agenda Europe network) in Zagreb to fellow religious extremist activists.

Another component of the Christian nationalist shadow network is the Teneo Network⁹⁰ founded by Leonard Leo,⁹¹ co-chair of the Federalist Society (see above). The Teneo Network aims "to recruit, connect, and deploy the most talented and influential conservatives who lead opinion and influence the industries that shape society".⁹² Since its founding in 2019, it has grown to generate over US\$5 million in 2022. Supported by the same cast of billionaires, their foundations and the ultra-conservative DAFs,⁹³ Teneo operates as a secret network of influential personalities who have trained JD Vance, US Vice President; Josh Hawley, Republican Senator from Missouri; and Ben Shapiro, columnist and right-wing political commentator.⁹⁴

⁸³ Kroll, A., & Surgey, N. (2024). Inside Ziklag, the Secret Organization of Wealthy Christians Trying to Sway the Election and Change the Country. ProPublica, 13 July. <https://www.propublica.org/article/inside-ziklag-secret-christian-charity-2024-election>.

⁸⁴ Ladner, K. (2022). The quiet rise of Christian dominionism. The Christian Century, November. <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/quiet-rise-christian-dominionism>.

⁸⁵ Kroll, A., & Surgey, N. (2024). Inside Ziklag, the Secret Organization of Wealthy Christians Trying to Sway the Election and Change the Country. ProPublica, 13 July. <https://www.propublica.org/article/inside-ziklag-secret-christian-charity-2024-election>.

⁸⁶ Documented. (2023). Inside the Secret Right-Wing Plan to "Take Down the Education System as We Know It". Documented, 17 October. <https://documented.net/investigations/inside-the-secret-right-wing-plan-to-take-down-the-education-system-as-we-know-it>.

⁸⁷ ADF International. (2025). Charter on Parental Rights. <https://adfinternational.org/resources/parental-rights-charter#:~:text=Charter%20on%20Parental%20Rights&text=%E2%80%93%20This%20Charter%20sets%20forth%20principles,data%20pertaining%20to%20their%20children>.

⁸⁸ Documented. (2023). ADF Education Litigation Funding Proposal to Ziklag, May 2021. Documented, 17 October. <https://documented.net/media/adf-litigation-funding-proposal-to-ziklag-may-2021>.

⁸⁹ Scotus Blog. (2024). Mahmoud v. Taylor. [Web log post]. <https://www.scotusblog.com/cases/case-files/mahmoud-v-taylor/>.

⁹⁰ See <https://www.teneonetwork.com/>.

⁹¹ Influence Watch. (2025). Leonard Leo. <https://www.influencewatch.org/person/leonard-leo/>.

⁹² Bradley Impact Fund. (2023). In Their Words: A Conversation with Teneo. [Web log post] Ideas to Impact Blog. <https://www.bradleyimpactfund.org/blog/in-their-words-a-conversation-with-teneo>.

⁹³ Kroll, A., Bernstein, A., & Surgey, N. (2023). Inside the "Private and Confidential" Conservative Group That Promises to "Crush Liberal Dominance". ProPublica, 9 March. <https://www.propublica.org/article/leonard-leo-teneo-videos-documents>.

⁹⁴ Monitoring Influence. (2025). Teneo Network. <https://www.monitoringinfluence.org/org/teneo-network/>.

2

RUSSIAN FUNDING: THE HOUSE OF SANCTIONS - RUSSIAN FUNDING TURNS INWARDS

“A strong large family, its protection and well-being, an increase in the birth rate and the fight against abortion should be placed at the centre of all state policy.”

(Mandate of the 2024 World Russian People's Council)

Between 2019 and 2023, Russian funding for anti-gender initiatives is estimated at US\$211.8 million, primarily directed to anti-abortion activism. This includes a state-supported network of crisis pregnancy centres, oligarch-funded foundations and a well-financed ultra-Orthodox propaganda channel. As such, the Russian Federation is the largest financier of religious extremism in Europe.

These funding figures require contextualisation. First, financial reporting is incomplete.¹ Second, data are recorded in rubles, a currency subject to significant fluctuation against the US dollar and other Western currencies, which complicates cross-currency comparisons. Nonetheless, due to international sanctions imposed since 2014 and intensified after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, this financial activity remains largely confined within the Russian Federation.

This analysis is structured in three parts. The first examines the role of oligarchs and their influence networks. The second analyses the organisation and funding of Russia's domestic anti-abortion movement. The third presents a historical assessment of a recently uncovered document evidencing Russia's long-standing strategy to infiltrate and mobilise the European Christian Right in pursuit of geopolitical objectives. The Orthodox Television Fund is covered in the chapter on media and communications.

2.1 RUSSIAN OLIGARCHS AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST NETWORKS

As documented in *Tip of the Iceberg*,² Russian oligarchs Konstantin Malofeev and Vladimir Yakunin sit at the core of sprawling influence networks dubbed ‘factories of influence’ by scholars — closely aligned with Kremlin foreign policy and rooted in religious extremism. Their goal is to destabilise liberal democracies abroad while positioning Russia as the guardian of an ‘authentic’ Christian European civilisation. Since sanctions were imposed in 2014, and especially after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, public alignment with Russian actors has become increasingly toxic for European anti-gender movements.

KONSTANTIN MALOFEEV: RUSSIA'S ‘ORTHODOX OLIGARCH’

With an estimated fortune of US\$1.5 billion, Konstantin Malofeev strategically fuses wealth and ideology. His flagship entity, the St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation, serves as a hub for funding affiliated ventures, including the Tsargrad

¹ For example, data is missing for the Orthodox Television Fund (Телеканал «Спас») for 2023, creating a gap of US\$20–30 million assuming similar funding levels as previous years.

² European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). *Tip of the Iceberg*. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>.

Media Group³ and the World Russian People's Council (WRPC) (See Chapter 4 on Religious dimension). This constellation — Malofeev's 'influence factory' — accounts for US\$61.3 million, or 29% of all Russian anti-gender funding, making him the second-largest financial force behind these initiatives.

ST. BASIL THE GREAT CHARITABLE FOUNDATION – PIVOT TO CHILD KIDNAPPING

Although its website disappeared around 2018,⁴ the St. Basil Foundation remains active, regularly reporting to Russia's Ministry of Justice. Once a bridge to Western far-right networks, the Foundation has shifted its focus to occupied Ukrainian territories. This pivot is closely tied to Malofeev's marriage in 2024 to Mariya Lvova-Belova, Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights, who left her Orthodox priest husband and ten children, including some reportedly abducted from Ukraine, to marry him.⁵

Lvova-Belova has collaborated with St. Basil through the Happy Childhood initiative, credibly linked to the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children into Russia for forced adoption⁶ — a violation of international humanitarian law.⁷ Investigations reveal that St. Basil raises funds via accounts at OTP Bank's Moscow branch to support participating orphanages.⁸ In March 2023, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Lvova-Belova over these deportations.⁹ Yet, as of early 2025, the St. Basil Foundation remains unsanctioned.¹⁰

The St. Basil's Foundation's former director, Elena Milskaya, now leads the Foundation of the Archangel Michael (FMA), indicating the presence of an oligarch-funded anti-gender ecosystem in Russia.¹¹ The FMA promotes ultra-Orthodox

ideology dedicated to "preserving and propagating traditional family structure and traditions of the Russian world"¹² and campaigns for the decriminalisation of corporal punishment of children. It hosted a 2019 World Congress of Families (WCF) panel denouncing "globalist anti-family values".^{13,14} Another NGO led by Milskaya is the National Monitoring Centre for Assistance to Missing Children (АОГ "НМЦППИПД"), which has been described as a "charitable front for economic and political activity", which is also involved in forcibly removing Ukrainian children from Russian-occupied territories.¹⁵

MALOFEEV'S FAILED VENTURES

Malofeev has pursued his religious-extremist agenda through three key initiatives: Tsargrad TV, the International Agency for Sovereign Development (IASD) and the World Russian People's Council (WRPC). All have suffered significant setbacks.

● Konstantin Malofeev, the "Orthodox oligarch"



³ The Tsargrad Media Group integrates several formerly distinct entities, including Tsargrad TV, the Tsargrad Social Organisation for Historic Development, the Tsargrad Charitable Fund and the Tsargrad Institute (a rebranded version of the Katehon think tank). See also Chapter 8: 'Dissemination: An anti-rights hall of mirrors'.

⁴ See <https://fondsvv.ru/>.

⁵ Вёрстка. (2024). Мария Львова-Белова ушла от мужа-священника к олигарху Малофееву. <https://verstka.media/mariya-lvova-belova-ushla-ot-muzha-k-malofeevu>. ⁶ Ibid.

⁷ ГУР МО України. (2025). МАЛОФЕЕВ Константин Валерьевич. War & Sanctions. <https://war-sanctions.gur.gov.ua/ru/kidnappers/persons/376>.

⁸ Pronczuk, M., & Hopkins, V. (2023). Western Banks Helped Fund Blacklisted Oligarch's Charity. The New York Times, 27 August. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/europe/blacklisted-oligarch-western-banks-russia.html>.

⁹ International Criminal Court. (2024). Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/maria-alekseyevna-lvova-belova>.

¹⁰ Except for sanctions imposed by Ukraine. See <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-erwwERw9tPpyh4XSJu2R6u/>.

¹¹ See <https://amfond.ru/>.

¹² Фонд Архистратига Божия Михаила. (2025). О Фонде. <https://amfond.ru/about/>.

¹³ Фонд Архистратига Божия Михаила. (2017). Защита традиционных семейных ценностей. <https://amfond.ru/zashhita-traditsionnyih-semeynyih-tsennostey/>.

¹⁴ Фонд Архистратига Божия Михаила. (2019). Facebook post, 30 March. <https://www.facebook.com/voskresnaiashkola/posts/pfbid02cvKDzPGcWHaf93RosijfQQ7RdKThM6gzbEULN2gS6LWtmEB4EhETJ7TQoag6CZE8l>.

¹⁵ Meduza. (2023). У главы МЧС России есть тайная жена—Елена Мильская. Она помогает похищать украинских детей и строит центры «патриотического» воспитания, где будут готовить школьников к войне Главное из расследования «Проекта». <https://meduza.io/feature/2023/08/21/u-glavy-mchs-rossii-est-taynaya-zhena-elena-milskaya-ona-pomogaet-pohischat-ukrainskih-detey-i-stroit-tsentry-patrioticheskogo-vospitaniya-gde-budut-gotovit-shkolnikov-k-voyne>.

TABLE 3

RUSSIAN ANTI-RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST FUNDING SOURCES

Category	Legal entity	Total income in US\$ equivalent (2019 - 2023)
Orthodox Television Fund – TV Spas	• Фонд православного телевидения (Orthodox Television Fund) – TV Spas	113,152,456.00
Konstantin Malofeev	Core Malofeev: • Благотворительный фонд святителя Василия Великого (St. Basil Charitable Fund)	28,041,518.00
	• Tsargrad Media; Общероссийская Общественная Организация Общества Содействия Русскому Историческому Развитию “Царьград” (Tsargrad All-Russian Social Organisation for Historical Development)	32,073,690.00
	Malofeev-adjacent: • Всемирный Русский Народный Собор (World Russian People’s Council)	1,142,452.00
	• Фонд Архистратига Божия Михаила (Archangel Michael Foundation) • АОГ “Нмцппид” (National Monitoring Centre for Assistance to Missing Children)	328,097.00 7,987,742.00
Vladimir Yakunin	• Фонд Целевого Капитала “Истоки” (Istoki Endowment Fund – expenses on Sanctity of Motherhood and related)	6,496,816.00
	• Фонд Андрея Первозванного (St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation)	8,672,564.00
	• АНО “Диалог Цивилизаций” (Dialogue of Civilisations non-profit)	2,176,769.00
Anti-abortion	• Дом для мамы (Mothers’ House)	2,176,769.00
	• Благотворительный Фонд “Женщины За Жизнь” (Pro-life Women’s Charitable Fund)	1,495,471.00
	• «Спаси жизнь» (SOS-Life)	1,226,574.00
	• АНО “За жизнь” (Pro-Life non-profit)	1,207,143.00
	• Presidential Grants Fund (anti-abortion projects)	486,588.00
Other	• АБ “Славянский Правовой Центр” (Slavic Centre for Law and Justice, ACLJ)	485,157.00

Founded in 2014, Tsargrad TV promotes virulent Christian-nationalist and anti-LGBTQI rhetoric (See Chapter 7 on Knowledge Production).¹⁶ After being banned by YouTube in 2020, it launched legal action against Google in multiple jurisdictions,¹⁷ and a Russian court later ordered Google’s local subsidiary to transfer 1 billion rubles to Tsargrad after seizing its accounts. Malofeev pledged to redirect the sum to support Russia’s war in¹⁹

The IASD, launched in 2019 with Malofeev as chairman of its Supervisory Board, aimed to facilitate Russian financial cooperation with African States to evade Western sanctions. It co-organised the 2019 Russia–Africa Summit²⁰ but was dissolved in 2022 without public explanation.²¹

Malofeev also held a senior role in the WRPC, led by Patriarch Kirill. Between 2019 and March 2024, he served as

¹⁶ Настоящее время (2017). “Царьград” закрывается: о чем вещал канал “православного большинства”. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/28888625.html>.

¹⁷ Nypost. (2024). Russia seizes \$100M from Google to fund war propaganda: Report. https://nypost.com/2024/08/26/business/russia-seizes-100m-from-google-to-fund-war-propaganda-report/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

¹⁹ Meduza. (2022). «Царьград» заявил, что получил от Google неустойку в один миллиард рублей. Телеканал направит деньги «на поддержку специальной военной операции». Meduza, 1 April. <https://meduza.io/news/2022/04/01/tsargrad-zayavil-cto-poluchil-ot-google-neustoyku-v-odin-milliard-rubley-telekanal-napravit-dengi-na-podderzhku-spetsialnoy-voennoy-operatsii>.

²⁰ Russia–Africa Summit. (2019). Summit and Forum Results 2019. <https://summitafrica.ru/archive/2019/summit-outcomes/>.

²¹ Tbank (2024). Ано Международное Агентство Суверенного Развития Инн 9702016897 Москва. <https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/legal/1207700165727/>.

deputy head and principal funder,²² promoting an agenda of ‘traditional values’ and anti-abortion advocacy.^{23,24} He stepped down in 2024 after tensions with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), following his controversial marriage to Maria Lvova-Belova.

In 2025, Malofeev’s influence has diminished markedly. Once a major sponsor of international initiatives such as the WCF, he has refocused on Russia and Russian-occupied Ukraine. Malofeev’s international standing was further undermined after he and his aide, Alexey Komov, were indicted by a US District Court in 2022 and 2024, respectively, for sanctions violations linked to their roles in Russia’s 2014 invasion of eastern Ukraine.²⁵

VLADIMIR YAKUNIN

Vladimir Yakunin ranks as Russia’s second most significant anti-gender financier, spending an estimated US\$22.1 million — approximately 10.4% of total Russian anti-gender funding — between 2019 and 2023. His activism operates through two interrelated structures: (1) the Istoki Endowment Fund, one of Russia’s 20 largest endowment funds, financed by private sector contributions;²⁷ and (2) the St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation, which implements projects supported by Istoki.²⁸ On the other hand, Yakunin’s Dialogue of Civilizations think tank, headquartered in Berlin, with offices in Vienna and Moscow, was dissolved in 2023 in the wake of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.²⁹

The flagship initiative funded by Istoki and implemented by the St. Andrew Foundation is the ‘Sanctity of Motherhood’ programme,³⁰ overseen by Yakunin’s wife, Natalia Yakunina.



● Vladimir and Natalia Yakunin, patrons of the “Sanctity of Motherhood” anti-abortion campaign, meeting with ex-first lady Svetlana Medvedeva.

This programme promotes traditionalist reproductive norms and dissuades abortion, serving as a key pillar of Yakunin’s anti-gender agenda. As part of the programme, Istoki finances the ‘You Are Not Alone’ project³¹ which aims to dissuade women from seeking abortions, and the ‘Mass Media’ project³² which propagates so-called ‘traditional family values’ in public discourse. Istoki also gives out awards to select ‘pro-family’ organisations, which include Churches and crisis pregnancy centres.³⁴

Between 2018 and 2019, the Sanctity of Motherhood became a focal point of international coalition-building. The 2018 Sanctity of Motherhood Forum was held in Minsk, featuring

²² Stepanov, A.D. (2024). Why did Malofeev leave? Russian Folk Line, 26 March. https://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2024/03/26/pochemu_ushel_malofeev.

²³ Kommersant. (2023). Константин Малофеев призвал Татарстан отказаться от аборт. Kommersant, 21 November. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6351057>.

²⁴ Tass. (2024). Malofeev left the World Russian People’s Cathedral. Tass, 25 March. <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20352649>.

²⁵ US Department of Justice (2022). Russian Oligarch Charged with Violating US Sanctions. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/russian-oligarch-charged-violating-us-sanctions>.

²⁷ Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences. (2020). Анализ рынка эндаументов в РФ был представлен на первом заседании Клуба «Целевого капитала». MSSES, 4 June. <https://msses.ru/news/analiz-rynka-endaumentov-v-rf-byi-predstavlen-na-pervom-zasedanii-kluba-tselevogo-kapitala/>.

²⁸ Rusprofile (2024). Центр Национальной Славы Москва (ИНН 7725204533) адрес и телефон. <https://www.rusprofile.ru/id/1751049>.

²⁹ In 2023, Dialogue of Civilizations was dissolved first in Germany and a few months later in Russia. See Tbank. (2024). Общественный Форум Диалог Цивилизаций Инн 7705518933. <https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/legal/1077799020628/>. Its supporting Swiss endowment, World Public Forum, has also been in liquidation since 2024. See Fundraiso. (2025). Endowment for the World Public Forum - Dialogue of Civilizations - DofC, in Liquidation. <https://www.fundraiso.com/en/organisations/endowment-for-the-world-public-forum-dialogue-of-civilizations-dofc>.

³⁰ Istoki Endowment Fund. (n.d.). The All-Russian Program “Sanctity of Motherhood”. <https://istoki-foundation.org/en/programs/all-russian-programme-sanctity-of-motherhood/>.

³¹ Istoki Endowment Fund. (n.d.). “You not alone” project. <https://istoki-foundation.org/en/programs/all-russian-programme-sanctity-of-motherhood/you-are-not-alone-project/>.

³² Istoki Endowment Fund. (n.d.). “Mass media” project. <https://istoki-foundation.org/en/programs/all-russian-programme-sanctity-of-motherhood/mass-media-project/>.

³⁴ Istoki Endowment Fund. (2019). 3 миллиона рублей для НКО в поддержку семьи. <https://istoki-foundation.org/3-milliona-rublej-dlya-nko-v-podderzhku-semi/>.

participants such as Brian Brown, a Polish natural family planning advocate,³⁵ and speakers from China, Iran and Israel.³⁶ The following year, the seventh edition of the forum convened in Belgrade.³⁷ These international gatherings ceased thereafter due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and resulting sanctions. Since 2016, the Russian Ministry of Health has supported the 'Sanctity of Motherhood' programme.³⁸

Istoki's primary grantee, the St. Andrew Foundation, has implemented a range of similar anti-abortion initiatives. It launched the 'Happiness of Motherhood' YouTube channel,³⁹ and introduced courses in 'perinatal psychology' for crisis pregnancy counselling, developed in partnership with the People's Friendship University of Russia and supported by the Presidential Grants Fund.⁴⁰ In 2023, the Foundation recognised the best specialists in crisis pregnancy counselling, as part of its "strategic engagement with government institutions" aimed at "people preservation" (народосохранение) and "encouragement to give birth" (родовспоможение).^{41,42}

STATE-SPONSORED ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVISM

A vibrant community of anti-abortion actors has emerged across the Russian Federation, comprising numerous entities operating regionally, often in close collaboration with the ROC. Four of the largest — Дом для мамы (Mothers' House), Благотворительный Фонд "Женщины За Жизнь" (Pro-life Women's Charitable Fund) and АНО "За жизнь" (Pro-Life non-profit), which function as crisis pregnancy centres, and «Спаси

жизнь» (SOS-Life), which focuses on advocacy — collectively received over US\$6 million between 2019 and 2023.

Although Russia's abortion laws remain relatively liberal, President Vladimir Putin declared in late 2023 his intention to reduce abortion rates, citing demographic concerns and declaring 2024 the Year of the Family.⁴³ While ruling out a ban on abortion, Putin supported regional measures restricting access and prioritised encouraging women to continue pregnancies by promoting traditional family values via mass media and legislation, as well as offering direct financial incentives and supporting organisations that provide alternatives to abortion.^{44,45}

The Presidential Grants Fund,⁴⁶ the sole state body funding non-governmental organisations, primarily allocates funds for purposes unrelated to reproductive health. However, between 2019 and 2023, it financed at least 19 'family values', anti-abortion projects through competitive grants, reaching an equivalent of approximately US\$486,500, as shown in Annex 3. Notably, six of these projects began in 2023, indicating a recent increase in state support to restrict abortion access.

The prevention of abortion is framed not only as a moral imperative but also as a pragmatic strategy to boost demographic growth.⁴⁷ Recurring recipients of Presidential Grant funding include Vladimir Yakunin's St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation, ROC-affiliated entities and crisis pregnancy centres (see below). Both the ROC and oligarch Konstantin Malofeev play central roles in advancing the pro-natalist agenda.⁴⁸

³⁵ A Board member of the Polish Association of Natural Family Planning Teachers. See Rejestr. (2025). Polish Association of Teachers of Natural Family Planning. <https://rejestr.io/krs/99539/polskie-stowarzyszenie-nauczycieli-naturalnego-planowania-rodziny>. See also Chapter 5a: 'Anti-gender services'.

³⁶ Sanctity of Motherhood. (2018). VI Форум Программы «Святость Материнства». <https://bogodelo.by/images/sv-materinstva/programma-sv-materinstva.pdf>.

³⁷ Р. И. А. Новости. (2019). Международный форум программы 'Святость материнства' открылся в Белграде. <https://ria.ru/20191108/1560707665.html>.

³⁸ FAP (2024). Международный Конкурс Фонда Андрея Первозванного «Святость материнства». <https://fap.ru/konkurs-svyatost-materinstva>.

³⁹ See https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDFZyTrbeD_nktGcW8nzqvA.

⁴⁰ FAP. (2024). Обучающие программы. <https://fap.ru/obuchayushchiye-programmy>.

⁴¹ FAP. (2023). Награждены финалисты Международного конкурса «Святость материнства-2023» СЗФО и УФО. <https://fap.ru/news-publications-svyatost-materinstva/tpost/c7d6afmia1-nagrazhdeni-finalisti-mezhdunarodnogo-ko>.

⁴² FAP. (2023). Образ крепкой семьи—Образ будущего России. <https://fap.ru/tpost/pncukc53i1-obraz-krepkoi-semi-obraz-buduschego-ross>.

⁴³ Smolevskaya, I. (2024). Putin's "Year of the Family": How Russia Revives and Reverses US Cold War Rhetoric. The Public Eye, 16 May. <https://politicalresearch.org/2024/05/16/putins-year-family>.

⁴⁴ Agence France-Presse. (2023). Putin Says Abortions Against State Interests, But Opposes Ban. Agence France-Presse, 14 December. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/putin-says-abortions-against-state-interests-but-opposes-ban-4674694>.

⁴⁵ Rickleton, C. (2025). Russia's 'Year Of The Family' Has Meant A War On Abortion And Divorce. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 13 January. <https://www.rferl.org/a/33273068.html>.

⁴⁶ See <https://xn--80afcdbalict6afooklqi5o.xn--p1ai/>.

⁴⁷ For example, one approved 2019 grant application (number 19-2-013818) says: "The relevance of the problem of artificial termination of pregnancy in Russia is determined by the demographic situation in the country."

⁴⁸ Перцев, А. (2025). Все для рождаемости. Как одержимость Путина демографией бьет по системе власти. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2025/02/russia-demographic-politics?lang=ru>.

2.2 CASE STUDY: A 2013 BLUEPRINT FOR RUSSIAN INFILTRATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN RIGHT

In 2022, the Russian political watchdog Dossier Centre (Центр «Досье»)⁴⁹ uncovered a July 2013 document titled ‘List of Projects’ as part of its investigation, ‘Nazification: The Kremlin and the Far-Right’. The investigation revealed numerous Kremlin-backed attempts to forge alliances with Western right-wing political circles. Alexey Komov, Malofeev’s right-hand man, is believed to have authored this document, which provides rare insights into the strategies employed by Russian social conservatives in 2013 — figures such as Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev — to build partnerships with Europe’s emerging Christian Right. The document outlines eight key activities and identifies prospective partners, targets and Russian financial backers, including Yakunin’s St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation and Malofeev’s St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation.

With the benefit of a decade’s hindsight, the document reveals how Russian state interests sought to infiltrate Europe’s Christian Right and the ‘pro-life’ movement, aligning these forces with Moscow’s geopolitical aims. Russian support has contributed significantly to the rise and consolidation of Europe’s anti-rights ecosystem over the past ten years. The eight projects listed focus on strategic domains such as culture, information, politics, knowledge production, civil society mobilisation, engagement of economic elites, grass-roots activism and cultivation of youth leadership. The projects are described below, along with analysis of their implementation.

CULTURE: FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN CULTURE

• Concept:

The proposed festival, planned for May 2014 on Red Square, aimed to celebrate traditional European Christian culture and unite ‘sane international forces’ defending a Christian worldview. Framed as a reaction to perceived ‘racism and

chauvinism’ in European schools — particularly narratives critical of white Europeans and Christianity — it sought to counter what organisers saw as cultural marginalisation. Identified partners included Roberto De Mattei⁵⁰ and Juan Miguel Montes⁵¹ of the Italian Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) network, alongside Russian actors Alexey Komov, Yakunin’s St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation and Malofeev’s St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation.

• Implementation status: Partially successful

On 21 November 2013, Russian news agency TASS reported that President Vladimir Putin, during a meeting with Pope Francis, had discussed strengthening ties between the ROC and the Vatican. Central to the dialogue was the promotion of joint cultural initiatives, notably the Festival of Traditional European Christian Culture, planned for 24 May 2014 in Moscow, and the WCF, held in the city on 10–12 September 2014.⁵²

INFORMATION: INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN WEB PORTAL

• Concept:

The proposed objective was to develop a multilingual portal available in English, French, Russian and Spanish, aiming “to strengthen the unity of Christians in upholding traditional views on the family and morality in the face of aggressive secular-liberal attacks”. The portal was envisioned to “pay special attention to the common Christian roots of all Europeans... to fight the persecution of Christians and mockery of faith, to protect the natural family (man + woman) from liberal attacks and defend religious freedom”. This initiative was named ‘In Hoc Signo Vincas’ (IHSV), meaning ‘under this sign, conquer’, a reference to the battle cry of the fourth-century Roman Emperor Constantine against non-Christians. The development of this portal would be spearheaded by Alexey Komov and the St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation on the Russian side, with potential partnerships including Lawrence Jacobs of the WCF, Fabrice Sorlin of the French Rassemblement National and the WCF, and Ignacio Arsuaga of HazteOír/CitizenGO in Spain.

• Implementation status: Partially successful

There is substantial evidence that several key figures were actively involved in efforts to implement IHSV. For instance, a 2014 activity report by Larry Jacobs details his progress on

⁴⁹ See <https://dossier-center.appspot.com/>.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.robertodemattei.it/fr/>; and Société française pour la défense de la Tradition, Famille, Propriété. (n.d.). Trois questions à Roberto de Mattei. <https://tfp-france.org/quest-ce-que-la-tfp/documents-historiques-2/trois-questions-a-roberto-de-mattei/>.

⁵¹ Machado, M. (2022). Entrevista de Juan Miguel Montes (Roma) sobre a libertação da Lituânia e invasão da Ucrânia. Instituto Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, 14 March. <https://www.ipco.org.br/entrevista-de-juan-miguel-montes-roma-sobre-a-libertacao-da-lituania-e-invasao-da-ucrania>.

⁵² Tass. (2013). Russian president, Pope to discuss Syria November 25. Tass, 21 November. <https://tass.com/world/708374>.

his segment of the project, which reads like the actions of an unwitting Russian operative collecting sensitive information on the political climate within Washington, DC's conservative and Christian Right circles and relaying it directly to Moscow.⁵³ Similarly, documentation associated with Ignacio Arsuaga includes a series of ten monthly invoices, each amounting to €5,000, labelled as payments for the implementation of the IHSV project between late 2013 and early 2014.⁵⁴

Although there is no IHSV portal in existence today, several other initiatives led by the same group of actors have emerged, fulfilling a similar role as international Christian web platforms. One prominent example is Arsuaga's CitizenGO, which operates in 11 languages and has received financial backing from Malofeev and Yakunin. Komov served on its Board until 2022.⁵⁵ Another notable project is I-Fam News,⁵⁶ spearheaded by Brian Brown, also affiliated with the WCF, which aims "to build the first truly global pro-family and pro-life news outlet",⁵⁷ available in eight languages. Meanwhile, Fabrice Sorlin, labelled an agent of 'Kremlin influence', currently resides in exile in Moscow.⁵⁸

POLITICS: INTER-PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

• Concept:

The inter-parliamentary forum was envisioned as a gathering of 50–60 parliamentary leaders in Vienna in December 2013, under the auspices of the State Duma Movement for the Preservation of Christian Values. The primary objective of the forum was to establish "a socio-political movement grounded in Christian values that unite parliamentarians from Russia, Europe and America". Leo van Doesburg and the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) were identified as the primary international partners responsible for co-organising this parliamentary event, alongside Malofeev's St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation on the Russian side.

IMPLEMENTATION: SUCCESSFUL WITH MODIFICATION

While van Doesburg and the ECPM had maintained relations with Russian actors prior to 2013, there is no evidence that these interactions culminated in the proposed inter-parliamentary conference. In 2011, van Doesburg stated, "They [the Russians] suggested organizing a conference in the Russian Parliament, an inter-parliamentarian conference to discuss human dignity within the Russian context. If there is central approval, they would like to organize this in collaboration with the ECPM."⁵⁹ However, no such conference appears in the ECPM's official records. The organisation continued engaging with Russian actors until at least 2015, including participation in a Moscow Prayer Breakfast. That same year, however, it adopted a resolution explicitly condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine, marking a change in its stance.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, a closed-door meeting of 40 far-right politicians did take place in Vienna in May 2014, organised not by the ECPM but by Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev.⁶¹ This indicates that Malofeev pursued the objective of hosting a meeting of European parliamentarians and political figures but switched partners. Instead of the Christian-oriented ECPM, Malofeev veered towards far-right political parties such as France's Rassemblement National, the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) and Bulgaria's Ataka.

IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE: PAN-EUROPEAN THINK TANK

• Concept:

The proposal envisaged the creation of a pan-European think tank intended to "strengthen the expert and scientific basis of the Christian international movement" by providing intellectual support to the Christian Right's political agenda across

⁵³ See IHSV June Through September 2013 Project Report by Larry Jacobs.

⁵⁴ See IHSV Spanish Invoice September from September 2013 to April 2014.

⁵⁵ Datta, N. (2022). We know Russia funds Europe's far-right. But what does it get in return? Open Democracy, 6 April. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/russia-ukraine-war-putin-europe-far-right-funding-conservatives/>.

⁵⁶ See <https://ifamnews.com/en>.

⁵⁷ International Family News. (2022). Our Leadership. <https://ifamnews.com/en/about>.

⁵⁸ Tronchet, S. (2023). Les "influenceurs du Kremlin", ces Français qui ont choisi de relayer la propagande russe depuis Moscou. France Info, 18 December. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/europe/manifestations-en-ukraine/reportage-les-influenceurs-du-kremlin-ces-francais-qui-ont-choisi-de-relayer-la-propagande-russe-depuis-moscou_6251514.html.

⁵⁹ Van Doesburg, L. (2011, 27 April). Russian trip part V (final): Goodbye Moscow. [Web log post] ECPM. <https://leovandoesburg.blogspot.com/2011/04/russian-trip-part-v-goodbye-moscow.html>.

⁶⁰ European Christian Political Movement. (2015). ECPM Yearbook 2015. https://ecpm.info/ECPM-Yearbook_2015.pdf.

⁶¹ Odehnal, B. (2014). Gipfeltreffen mit Putins fünfter Kolonne. Tagesanzeiger, 3 June. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/gipfeltreffen-mit-putins-fuenfter-kolonnen-335546606907>; and Zubrin, R. (2014). The Wrong Right. National Review, 24 June. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2014/06/wrong-right-robert-zubrin/>.

Europe. Key Russian institutions identified as collaborators included the Russian Institute of Strategic Studies, the Center for Scientific and Political Thought and Ideology, and the St. Basil the Great Foundation.

Western partners proposed for this initiative included Michael Modrikamen, leader of an ultra-conservative party in Belgium and later of The Movement, aligned with Steve Bannon's populist agenda; Alexandre del Valle, a French geopolitician and publicist; and Claude Guéant, former Interior Minister under President Nicolas Sarkozy.

• Implementation status: Successful

The concept of establishing a pan-European think tank appears to have materialised as the Katehon think tank (Analiticheski Tsentri Katekhon),⁶² which was founded in 2014 under the direction of Konstantin Malofeev and is now part of Malofeev's Tsargrad Institute.⁶³ Katehon prominently features the writings of far-right ideologue Alexander Dugin, along with contributions from other similarly fringe thinkers from various countries. The US Mission to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has characterised Katehon as "another Russian proliferator of virulent far-right, anti-Western propaganda... a Moscow-based so-called 'think-tank' with clear links to the Russian state and Russian intelligence services".⁶⁴

CONVENING CSOS: WORLD CONGRESS OF FAMILIES

• Concept:

The proposal called for hosting the WCF in Moscow in September 2014, with major venues such as the Kremlin Palace of Congresses and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Aimed at drawing 5,000 participants from the Russian Federation, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and beyond, the event sought to establish "a global alliance of pro-family forces led by Russia (Russian Orthodox Church and State) and

the Vatican". Key proponents included Vladimir and Natalia Yakunina, Konstantin Malofeev, Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov and Alexey Komov. The organising bodies were the WCF, the St. Basil the Great Foundation, the Sanctity of Motherhood programme under the St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation, and the Patriarchal Family Commission of the State Duma.

• Implementation status: Successful

The event proceeded as scheduled but underwent substantial rebranding due to the geopolitical repercussions of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and ensuing Western sanctions. Renamed the 'Large Families — The Future of Humanity' International Forum,⁶⁵ the programme, speakers and participants remained largely intact, although the WCF formally distanced itself from the event.⁶⁶

Subsequent investigations revealed that Russian organisers continued to fund the participation of Western attendees.⁶⁷ Foundations linked to Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev were also financial backers of the WCF held in Tbilisi in 2016.⁶⁸ Malofeev, Natalia Yakunina, Alexey Komov and ROC representatives remained key figures at the 2019 WCF in Verona.⁶⁹ Russian delegates were only excluded in 2022, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, when the WCF convened in Mexico City.

ECONOMIC ELITES: A DAVOS-STYLE SUMMIT OF BUSINESS LEADERS

• Concept:

The initiative proposed the creation of a Davos-style international forum centred on the 'real economy', explicitly excluding bankers. Its goal was to establish a high-level platform for dialogue among political and business leaders rooted in the productive economic sector and aligned with a Christian worldview. The forum aspired to become an annual event promoting economic models based on biblical principles, rejecting speculation and profit maximisation. It

⁶² See <https://katehon.com/>.

⁶³ Katehon. (2024). Institute of TsG. <https://katehon.com/ru/o-nas>.

⁶⁴ Open Sanctions. (n.d.). Analiticheski Tsentri Katekhon OOO. <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-JkaFn4ssz5uTWbvjdCaaik/>.

⁶⁵ Russian Orthodox Church. (2014). International forum on "The Large Family and the Future of Humanity" opens in Moscow. <https://mospat.ru/en/news/51117/>.

⁶⁶ Standard Newswire. (2014). Statement Regarding 'Large Families - The Future of Humanity' International Forum in Moscow, September 10-11. Standard Newswire, 8 September. <http://www.standardnewswire.com/news/668879572.html>.

⁶⁷ The following Western anti-gender personalities are listed as confirming their participation and having their costs covered by Yakunin's St. Andrew the First-Called Foundation: Katalin Novák (then Minister for Family in Hungary and later President of Hungary; Antonio Brandi of Italy's Provita Onlus; Alex van Vuuren of the Netherlands' Schreeuw om Leven; Francisco Tatad of the Philippines, also on the Board of the WYA; Ewa Kowalewska of HLI-Poland; and Ignacio Arsuaga of HazteOír/CitizenGo. Feder, J.L., & Armitage, S. (2014). Emails Show "Pro-Family" Activists Feeding Contacts To Russian Nationalists. BuzzFeed News, 8 December. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/lesterfeder/emails-show-pro-family-activists-feeding-contacts-to-russian>.

⁶⁸ Coalson, R. (2016). 'Family Values' Congress Brings Pro-Moscow Message To Georgia. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 17 May. <https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-confress-families-antigay-moscow-oligarchs-bush/27741199.html>.

⁶⁹ See <https://wcfverona.org/>.

sought to attract conservative politicians and business figures from Russia, Europe and beyond. Key organisers included Prince Alexander Trubetskoy (French-Russian Dialogue Association), Prince Zurab Chavchavadze (St. Basil the Great Foundation), Michael Modrikamen, Alexandre del Valle, Konstantin Malofeev and Igor Sechin,⁷⁰ CEO of Rosneft.

• Implementation status: Partial

Although Western sanctions following the annexation of Crimea curtailed the planned large-scale public forum, the French-Russian Dialogue Association continued to enable high-level engagements between Russian and Western figures. In September 2014, Sergey Ivanov, then Chief of Staff of the Russian Presidential Executive Office, received a delegation from the Association that included French National Assembly member Thierry Mariani — its co-chair — and Vladimir Yakunin.⁷¹ By 2022, however, the Association and several affiliated French parliamentarians, including Mariani, were under investigation for alleged corruption and illicit influence on behalf of Russian interests.⁷²

GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM: MARCHES FOR LIFE AROUND EUROPE

• Concept:

This initiative involved Russian participation in the growing Marches for Life occurring in various cities across Europe, with the goal of “strengthening the interaction between supporters of life and family values in Europe and Russia”. The focus areas for this collaboration included Christian bioethics and opposition to abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, juvenile justice and drug use. The strategy aimed to place Russian speakers at these events, thereby amplifying Russian perspectives on these topics within the European pro-life and pro-family movements. Key figures tasked with advancing this initiative included Konstantin Malofeev, Roberto de Mattei, Juan Miguel Montes, Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov and Alexey Komov.

• Implementation status: Partial

The Marches for Life proceeded as planned in Madrid and Rome in 2014, organised by the partners identified. In Spain, the platform *Derecho a Vivir*, an initiative of *HazteOír* led by Ignacio Arsuaga, organised a March for Life in March 2014 which attracted approximately 100,000 participants.⁷³ Similarly, a March for Life took place in Rome in May 2014, drawing over 40,000 participants. This event was organised by Virginia Coda Nunziante, whose family has ties to the TFP network.⁷⁴

YOUTH LEADERSHIP: YOUTH ORGANISATION FOR GREATER EUROPE

• Concept:

This initiative sought to develop a cohort of young voices aligned with Russian interests through the Youth Association for a Greater Europe. Its objective was to promote dialogue and disseminate narratives supporting the concept of a ‘Greater Europe’ that included Russia, fostering mutual understanding between Russian and European youth. A key proposal was the organisation of a joint summer camp at the International Seliger youth camp in Russia’s Tver region. Entities tasked with implementation included the Youth Association for a Greater Europe, Rosmolodezh (Federal Agency for Youth Affairs), Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for CIS Affairs and International Humanitarian Cooperation), the Seliger camp and the St. Basil the Great Foundation.

• Implementation status: Unknown

The Youth Association for a Greater Europe currently appears to be active only as a Facebook group.⁷⁵ It is also listed as a partner of the Institute for a Greater Europe;⁷⁶ however, its credibility is questionable, as it provides an incorrect or outdated registration number on the European Parliament Transparency Register.

⁷⁰ Rosneft. (2024). Board of Directors: Igor Sechin. <https://www.rosneft.com/governance/board/item/6078/>.

⁷¹ President of Russia. (2014, 11 September). Sergei Ivanov met with heads of the French-Russian Dialogue Association. <http://www.en.kremlin.ru/catalog/persons/81/events/46600>.

⁷² El Idrissi, A., & Michel, A. (2022). Two French politicians under investigation for Russia-related corruption. *Le Monde*, 26 October. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2022/10/26/two-french-politicians-under-investigation-for-russia-related-corruption_6001787_7.html.

⁷³ Aleitea. (2014). España: unas 100.000 personas en la Marcha por la Vida de Madrid. Aleitea, 23 March. <https://es.aleitea.org/2014/03/23/espana-unas-100-000-personas-en-la-marcha-por-la-vida-de-madrid>.

⁷⁴ Marcia per la Vita. (2014, 15 January). Quarta Marcia nazionale per la Vita domenica 4 maggio 2014, a Roma. <https://marciaperlavita.it/quarta-marcia-nazionale-per-la-vita-domenica-4-maggio-2014-a-roma/>.

⁷⁵ See <https://www.facebook.com/GreaterEurope/>.

⁷⁶ Institute for a Greater Europe. (n.d.). Our Support and Partners. <https://institutegreatereurope.com/about/partners/>.

ANALYSIS: RUSSIA'S USEFUL IDIOTS OR EAGER LAPDOGS?

Analysis of the eight project proposals reveals that Komov and his Russian collaborators identified four principal entry points into the European Christian Right: the ECPM; the TFP network; key figures in CitizenGO and WCF, including Ignacio Arsuaga and Larry Jacobs; and individual political influencers such as Bannon-ally Michael Modrikamen.

While engagement with the ECPM failed, the TFP became a crucial intermediary for Russian interests. The most active Russian-aligned partners were CitizenGO and the WCF. Arsuaga secured funding from Malofeev's St. Basil the Great Foundation for HazteOír's IHSV project and the launch of CitizenGO, with Komov joining its Advisory Board until 2022. Jacobs, meanwhile, functioned as a de facto liaison to Moscow.

Since 2019, most Russian anti-gender funding has been redirected to domestic campaigns focused on anti-abortion messaging and the promotion of 'traditional family' norms — priorities that resonate with the current political agenda of the Putin regime. Notably, the concern with boosting demographic growth is a point of convergence between Vladimir Putin and other prominent anti-gender leaders in the West, such as Viktor Orbán and Donald Trump.



CONCLUSION

The Russian Federation stands apart from other European countries in the scale of its anti-gender funding — both in relative and absolute terms — as well as in the accompanying social transformations. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted cross-border networks and funding channels between Russian and European anti-gender actors, a disconnect that was later cemented by international sanctions and reputational fallout following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

This shift reflects, in part, the success of international sanctions, which have driven Russian anti-gender financial resources inwards, concentrating them on domestic activities. The transnational dimension of Russian anti-gender mobilisation, previously documented in *Tip of the Iceberg*,⁷⁷ has declined significantly. However, parallels can still be drawn between anti-gender mobilisation in Russia and other countries.

⁷⁷ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). *Tip of the Iceberg*. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>.

3

OLD MONEY, NEW CRUSADES: PRIVATE WEALTH IN THE WAR ON RIGHTS

“The inequalities that arise from accidents such as virtue, talent, beauty, strength, family, tradition, and so forth, are just and according to the order of the universe.”

(Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property - TFP)¹

A powerful private funding machine is driving anti-rights and religious extremist activism across Europe. Beyond traditional foundations, deep-pocketed aristocrats, ultra-conservative tech elites, and ideologically aligned corporate players are funneling money into the movement. Small family businesses are being tapped for donations under the guise of defending “Christian values.” Meanwhile, a Catholic financial network is quietly gaining ground — not just bankrolling activism but reshaping Europe’s political playing field.

3.1 PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

Private philanthropic foundations constitute a major source of funding for anti-rights and religious extremist activism. While comprehensive data on these foundations is limited, substantial evidence demonstrates their influence, particularly in France and Germany. These foundations contribute resources that sustain and expand the reach of extremist networks, shaping policy and public discourse in ways that align with their ideological objectives.

FRANCE: CATHOLIC PHILANTHROPY

The landscape of anti-gender private foundations in France is characterised by significant financial resources and transnational influence, rooted in French Catholic traditions. Totalling US\$94.5 million between 2019-2023, these foundations integrate their activities with religious initiatives, including social welfare and scientific research. The four principal actors in this movement are Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (FJL), Fonds du Bien Commun, GT Editions and Stella Domini, complemented by several smaller but impactful organisations.

Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (FJL)² is the largest and most established anti-gender private foundation in France, with a budget exceeding US\$90 million since 2019. While presenting itself as Europe’s leading funder of genetic disease research, it dedicates approximately 14% of its budget to anti-gender activism.³ FJL disseminates manuals⁴ targeting students on gender theory,⁵ euthanasia, surrogacy and assisted reproduction, framing religious perspectives as scientific fact.

¹ Corrêa de Oliveira, P. (2002). Revolution and Counter-Revolution, p. 37

² See <https://www.fondationlejeune.org/>.

³ The FJL’s 2023-24 annual report states that it allocates 14% of its budget to ‘defence’ (of life) causes. Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (2024). Rapport d’activité: Exercice 2023-2024. Transmettre notre expertise, la passion qui nous anime. Paris: FJL. <https://www.fondationlejeune.org/la-fondation/qui-sommes-nous/rapport-activite/>.

⁴ Lebel, A., & A. Petit. (2024). En arrière toutes. La Déferlante, 29 July. <https://revue.ladeferlante.fr/en-arriere-toutes/>.

⁵ Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (n.d.). Défense: Les manuels de bioéthique à votre disposition. <https://www.fondationlejeune.org/defense-vie-humaine/education/manuels-bioethiques/>.

It also finances marches for life, the One of Us Federation⁶ and strategic litigation for embryo rights.⁷ Operating transnationally, FJL has branches in Washington, DC, Spain and Argentina.⁸ The Lejeune family extends this influence, with David Lejeune, former head of FJL's US branch, collaborating with the ADF in filing amicus briefs⁹ opposing abortion and assisted dying in the USA.¹⁰

The **Fonds du Bien Commun** (Common Good Foundation), founded in 2018 by billionaire Pierre-Édouard Stérin,¹¹ uses crowd-funding via CrédoFunding¹² and gala fundraisers, 'Nuits du Bien Commun', generating up to €500,000 per event.¹³ CrédoFunding supports global Christian causes, including anti-abortion efforts.^{14,15} Stérin aligns with France's far-right, maintaining ties to the Rassemblement National and Reconquête.¹⁶ In 2024, L'Humanité revealed Stérin's €150 million PERICLES plan, aimed at securing far-right victory in the 2027 presidential elections.¹⁷

The **Fonds de dotation GT Editions**, founded by Guillaume de Thieulloy, operates at the nexus of traditional Catholicism and far-right politics, financing digital infrastructure for ultra-conservative Catholic media in France.¹⁸ GT Editions also funds the European Conservative and Reformist (ECR) political party in the European Parliament. Thieulloy, active in right-wing politics, has worked for a National Assembly member since 2017.¹⁹



● **French Catholic billionaire Pierre-Édouard Stérin, co-founder of Fonds du Bien Commun.**

Stella Domini, founded in 2018 by Loïc Labouche, allocates an annual budget of \$2.5 million to anti-abortion activism. In 2023, investigative journalists identified it as the main financier of a Paris-based disinformation hotline on abortion.²⁰ Other religious funders operate under the Fondation Notre Dame,²¹ a donor-advised fund hosting the Fondation Identité et Dignité,²² Fondation Accueillir la Vie (supporting crisis pregnancy centres)²³ and Fondation AFC, linked to the Catholic Families Association.²⁴ These organisations collectively reinforce anti-gender initiatives within France and beyond.

⁶ Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (n.d.). Défense: Influence. <https://www.fondationlejeune.org/defense-vie-humaine/influence/>.

⁷ Jacquin, J.B. (2024). Comment la Fondation Jérôme Lejeune entrave la recherche française. Le Monde, 16 September. https://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2024/09/16/comment-la-fondation-jerome-lejeune-entrave-la-recherche-francaise_6320472_1650684.html.

⁸ See FJL USA: <https://www.lejeunefoundation.org/>; FJL Spain: <https://fundacionlejeune.es/>; and FJL Argentina: <https://fundacionlejeune.org/>.

⁹ An amicus brief is a set of legal arguments submitted to the courts in the course of a pending legal case by actors which are not directly involved in the case.

¹⁰ Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (2025). Rutledge v. Little Rock Victory. <https://www.lejeunefoundation.org/rutledge-v-little-rock-victory>.

¹¹ Laemle, B., & I. Trippenbach. (2024). Qui est Pierre-Édouard Stérin, ce milliardaire catholique candidat au rachat de « Marianne » ? Le Monde, 2 May. https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2024/05/02/pierre-edouard-sterin-milliardaire-catholique-pret-a-racheter-marianne_6231186_3234.html.

¹² See <https://www.credofunding.fr/>.

¹³ See <https://www.lanuitdubiencommun.com/>.

¹⁴ CredoFunding. (2025). Défense de la vie. <https://www.credofunding.fr/en/explore/tags/defense-de-la-vie>.

¹⁵ Such as funding FJL's Summer University for Life (<https://www.credofunding.fr/en/lejeune-academie-ete-2024>), crisis pregnancy centres (<https://www.credofunding.fr/en/la-maison-de-rosalie>) and the publication of an anti-abortion manual titled 'Abortion Without Taboos' (<https://www.credofunding.fr/en/IVG-40ans-de-combat>).

¹⁶ Des Déserts, S. (2023). Pierre-Édouard Stérin, le drôle d'allié catho de Montebourg et Bolloré. Libération, 12 April. https://www.liberation.fr/societe/pierre-edouard-sterin-le-drole-dallie-catho-de-montebourg-et-bollore-20230412_QQ5A6KXGCFWJA2K7RVPJC24CM/.

¹⁷ Lemahieu, T. (2024). Pierre-Édouard Stérin, saint patron de l'extrême droite française #4. Exclusif : Périclès, le projet secret de Pierre-Édouard Stérin pour installer le RN au pouvoir. Humanité, 18 July. <https://www.humanite.fr/politique/bien-commun/exclusif-pericles-le-projet-secret-de-pierre-edouard-sterin-pour-installer-le-rn-au-pouvoir>.

¹⁸ GT Editions is the main financial backer of the following far-right, traditionalist Catholic websites: Le Salon Beige, Riposte Catholique, l'Observatoire de la Christianophobie, Info Catho, Réponses Catholiques and Notre Dame de Kabylie. See <https://don.gteditons.fr/>.

¹⁹ Plottu, P., & M. Macé. (2020). Lafont et Thieulloy : collaborateurs de sénateurs LR et piliers de la fachosphère. Libération, 14 December. https://www.liberation.fr/france/2020/12/14/lafont-et-thieulloy-collaborateurs-de-senateurs-lr-et-piliers-de-la-fachosphere_1808521/.

²⁰ Arte. (2023, 2 November). Avortement : la croisade en ligne des anti-IVG. [YouTube]. Citizen Facts (3/5). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjRG42uZjsg>.

²¹ See <https://www.fondationnotredame.fr/>.

²² Fondation Notre Dame. (2023). Fondation Identité et Dignité. <https://www.fondationnotredame.fr/fondation/fondation-identite-et-dignite#:~:text=La%20Fondation%20C2%AB%20Identit%C3%A9%20et%20Dignit%C3%A9,d'un%20int%C3%A9r%C3%AAt%20touristique%20majeur>.

²³ See <https://www.fondationaccueillirlavie.fr/>.

²⁴ Fondation Notre Dame. (2024). Fondation des AFC. <https://www.fondationnotredame.fr/fondation/fondation-des-afc>.

GERMANY: ARISTOCRATIC PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

The German religious extremist funding landscape is dominated by aristocrat-led foundations, including Stiftung Ja zum Leben, Stiftung für Familienwerte and Stiftung Karl Ballestrem. Unlike their French counterparts, none of the German foundations discloses financial information.

Stiftung Ja zum Leben, founded in the 1980s by a German countess, includes several aristocrats²⁵ on its Board and does not disclose financial information. Its website lists 46 funded projects,²⁶ with analysis showing that 76% focus on anti-rights activism. These include 12 anti-abortion projects such as Bundesverband Lebensrecht; 4 religious indoctrination initiatives, including Teen STAR and World Youth Alliance (WYA); 4 homophobic campaigns such as La Manif Pour Tous and Demo Für Alle; 7 crisis pregnancy centres in Germany and Austria; and 1 hate group, ADF.

Beyond funding, Ja zum Leben's leadership is deeply involved in these networks; its president, Marie Elisabeth Hohenberg, sits on the WYA Board,²⁷ and her daughter, Princess Johanna of Hohenberg, worked at ADF International's Vienna office.²⁸ Stiftung Ja zum Leben plays a pivotal role in channelling the financial efforts of Europe's wealthiest aristocratic families towards actionable anti-gender policy changes.

Stiftung für Familienwerte is led by Karl-Heinz B. van Lier, who has close ties to Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.²⁹ Its Board includes figures such as Tilman Rüsche of the Siemens family and Friedrich Graf zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld.³⁰ It supports anti-abortion activism (Aktion Lebensrecht für Alle), anti-feminist

movements (Frau – Familie – Freiheit), homophobic campaigns (Demo Für Alle), and religious indoctrination programs for youth (Teen STAR).³¹ It has also promoted conspiracy theories about the World Health Organization, alleging efforts to "sexualise children".³²

Karl Ballestrem Stiftung, named after the late Dr. Karl Graf Ballestrem, a political scientist at the Catholic University of Eichstätt,³³ operates the Media Academy for Catholic Apologetics (MAKA). This initiative bridges ultra-conservative Catholicism and mainstream centre-right politics through collaborations with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. MAKA events feature anti-gender activists such as members of the Loretto Community³⁴ and Dr. Martin Kugler of Kairos PR.³⁵ The foundation has also supported the WYA, with Countess Consuela von Ballestrem³⁶ serving on its Advisory Board and endorsing Stiftung Ja zum Leben.

SPAIN: FUNDACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA SAN PABLO CEU AND FUNDACIÓN FORTIUS

Spain's **Fundación Universitaria San Pablo CEU**, a private foundation of the Asociación Católica de Propagandistas, operates schools and universities while supporting anti-gender organisations. It endorsed the 2021 'Sí a la vida' manifesto³⁷ and frequently hosts anti-abortion events featuring speakers from ADF and FJL.³⁸ With a pan-European reach, San Pablo CEU organised a 2023 Brussels conference opposing the inclusion of abortion in the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.³⁹ In 2024, its Institute of Family Policy Studies gave an award to far-right Spanish MEP Margarita de la Pisa Carrión for 'Public Defence of Life'; past

²⁵ These include Marie Elisabeth Hoheberg, Nikolaus Hoheberg, Emanuel Prinz zu Salm and Princess Gloria of Thurn und Taxis.

²⁶ For projects supported, see Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Projekte. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/projekte-2/>.

²⁷ For the Board of Directors, see World Youth Alliance. (2022). WYA Staff. <https://wya.net/staff/>.

²⁸ Royal Musings. (2020, 13 June). A noble engagement: Hohenberg-Waldstein-Wartenberg. [Web log post] Royal Musings. <https://royalmusingsblogspot.com.blogspot.com/2020/06/a-noble-engagement-hohenberg-waldstein.html>.

²⁹ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. (2025). Karl-Heinz B. van Lier. <https://www.kas.de/de/mitarbeiter/detail/-/content/karl-heinz-b.-van-lier>.

³⁰ A prominent member of the Eulenburg-Hertefeld family, Prince Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld, was accused of homosexuality in a political scandal which shook elites in the German Empire between 1906 and 1909 known as the 'Harden-Eulenburg affairs'. Wikipedia. (2025). Harden-Eulenburg-Affäre. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harden-Eulenburg-Aff%C3%A4re>.

³¹ Stiftung für Familienwerte. (2022). Partner der Stiftung für Familienwerte. <https://www.stiftung-familienwerte.de/partner>.

³² Stiftung für Familienwerte. (2022). Aktuelle Beiträge. <https://www.stiftung-familienwerte.de/familienwerte-nachrichten>.

³³ Verlag C.H. Beck. (n.d.). Karl Graf Ballestrem. https://www.beck-shop.de/karl-graf-ballestrem/creator/21179?srsId=AfmBOopTXSqXJ0-FCJ6opK2y0QkwS2pPlJfQ8ifACPd_43wO77yRPQk.

³⁴ Bistum Regensburg. (2023). Online-Seminar „Komm, Heiliger Geist!“. <https://bistum-regensburg.de/news/online-seminar-ueber-den-heiligen-geist>.

³⁵ Kairos Consulting. (2025). Dr. Martin Kugler. <http://www.kairos-pr.com/team/dr-martin-g-kugler.html>.

³⁶ World Youth Alliance. (2011). 2011 Annual Report. New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2011-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>.

³⁷ Martín Campos, A., & N. López Trujillo. (2021). Este es el dinero público que han recibido las entidades privadas a las que Madrid remite en el sobre que da a las mujeres que quieren abortar. Newtral, 14 December. <https://www.newtral.es/subvenciones-aborto-madrid-sobre-dinero-publico/20211214/>.

³⁸ El Debate. (2025). La Universidad CEU San Pablo acogerá los próximos 7 y 8 de marzo el XXVII Congreso Nacional Provida. El Debate, 6 March. https://www.eldebate.com/sociedad/20250306/universidad-ceu-san-pablo-acogera-proximos-7-8-marzo-xxvii-congreso-nacional-provida_276482.html.

³⁹ One of Us. (2023, 10 February). One of Us' Post. [Facebook]. https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=489038660098950&id=100069784612633&m_entstream_source=timeline&_rdr.

recipients include a Hungarian ambassador to Spain, US anti-abortion lobbying organisation 40 Days for Life, and Spanish far-right ex-politician Jaime Mayor Oreja.⁴⁰

A new player, **Fundación Fortius**,⁴¹ is linked to Fortius Consulting.⁴² Founded in 2023 by Juan Soto, former international director of the Disenso Foundation and an Opus

Dei member,⁴³ it aims to replicate France's Fonds du Bien Commun in Spain. Fortius raised €80,000 for projects such as 'Escuela Hispánica', which promotes the '*Dignitas Infinita*' encyclical, with Soto on its Board. It has also co-organised high-profile fundraising galas, including a 2024 event honouring Argentinian President Javier Milei⁴⁴ and closely followed the 2025 ARC Conference.⁴⁵

TABLE 4

LEADING ANTI-GENDER GRANT-MAKING FOUNDATIONS, FROM 2019 TO 2023

Grant-maker	Country	5-year total (US\$ equivalent, millions)
Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (Jérôme Lejeune Foundation)	France	90.157
Bethlen Gábor Alapkezelő Zrt (Bethlen Gábor Fund Management)	Hungary	74.399
Batthyány Lajos Foundation (incl. Danube Institute)	Hungary	27.585
Благотворительный фонд святителя Василия Великого (St. Basil Charitable Fund)	Russia	27.145
Fundacja Lux Veritatis (Lux Veritas Foundation)	Poland	11.154
Hintze Charitable Foundation	UK	11.027
Фонд Целевого Капитала "Истоки" (Istoki Endowment Fund)	Russia	8.054
Фонд Андрея Первозванного (St. Andrew the First-Called Fund)	Russia	7.417
Talenting Foundation	Netherlands	2.688
GT Fond de dotation	France	1.923
Fonds du Bien Commun	France	1.853
Fundación Universitaria San Pablo (CEU)	Spain	1.270*
Fonds de dotation Stella Domini	France	1.139
Fundacja Rodziny Witaszków (Witaszko Family Foundation)	Poland	1.117
Presidential Grants Fund (anti-abortion projects)	Russia	0.605
Związek Stowarzyszeń "Konfederacja Inicjatyw Pozarządowych Rzeczypospolitej" (Confederation of Non-Governmental Initiatives of the Republic of Poland (KIPR))	Poland	0.427
Donors Trust	USA	0.294

* Identified public funds only.

⁴⁰ Jaime Mayor Oreja is Honorary President of the Political Network for Values.

⁴¹ See <https://fundacionfortius.org/>. ⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Soto Gómez, J.A. (2024, 10 October). Post. [X]. <https://x.com/JuanASotoG/status/1844384040331219053>.

⁴⁴ Fortius Consulting. (n.d.). Organización de la Cena de la Libertad del Instituto Juan de Mariana 2024. <https://fortiusconsulting.org/organizacion-de-la-cena-de-la-libertad-del-instituto-juan-de-mariana-2024/>.

⁴⁵ Fortius Consulting. (n.d.). Aliances. <https://fortiusconsulting.org/alliances/>.

OTHER COUNTRIES

There are noteworthy foundations in several other countries, including the Netherlands, Poland, the UK and the Russian Federation (See Chapter 2 for Russian foundations). The **Talenting Foundation** in the Netherlands serves as a vehicle for Dutch political actors to finance anti-rights advocacy while avoiding reputational damage. Closely linked to the Talenting Group, it shares Board members with ties to the Dutch Reformed Church and its political arms, the Christian Union (CU) and Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP), both driving forces behind the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM).⁴⁶ Initially, ECPM was listed as a sponsor of the Political Network for Values (PNfV) until 2019,⁴⁷ after which the Talenting Foundation and Group assumed sponsorship.⁴⁸ The foundation also funds Christian News Europe (CNE.news), a religious fundamentalist news outlet focused on European Union countries.⁴⁹

Poland's **Witaszko Family Foundation** (Fundacja Rodziny Witaszków) is backed by the investment firm PZW Inwestycje, owned by brothers Paweł and Franciszek Józef Witaszek.⁵⁰ It has funded religious extremist initiatives, including the Pro-Right to Life Foundation, the now-defunct Collegium InterMarium of Ordo Iuris, and anti-LGBT billboard campaigns using mobile advertising vans.⁵¹

The UK's **Hintze Family Charitable Foundation**, founded by billionaire and Conservative Party donor Sir Michael Hintze, operates with an annual budget of approximately US\$3 million. In 2019, it awarded a three-year, €240,000 grant to the International Theological Institute (ITI), a Catholic institution instrumental in anti-gender activism and ideological dissemination.⁵²

In Liechtenstein and Austria, the **Thoolen Foundation and Stiftung Marienheim** fund anti-abortion initiatives of the local branches of Aktion Leben. However, Italy's **Fondazione Novae Terrae**, once an active promoter of anti-rights efforts across Europe, is now defunct following the corruption-related incarceration of its founder and president.

3.2 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ELITES – CHRISTIAN PRIVATE FUNDING

Economic and social elites play a key role in financing anti-gender initiatives across Europe: high-profile figures such as Pierre-Édouard Stérin, founder of the Fonds du Bien Commun, and British-Australian billionaire Sir Michael Hintze, through the Hintze Family Charitable Foundation, demonstrate how private foundations channel substantial financial resources to anti-gender campaigns. These foundations support initiatives that range from traditional family advocacy to opposition to reproductive rights and Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

In addition to these prominent figures, other elites leverage various channels to influence policy. Some European remnant aristocratic families, with their social status and wealth, back traditionalist and anti-gender causes under the guise of preserving 'family values'. Likewise, high-net-worth individuals in technological sectors — often referred to as 'tech entrepreneurs' — are increasingly directing funds to anti-gender movements, combining technological influence with social conservatism. Family-owned businesses also contribute through localised philanthropy and sponsorship of socially conservative movements. Additionally, the emerging Catholic finance network allows socially conservative investors to pool resources aligned with traditional Catholic teachings.

CLERICAL-ARISTOCRATIC NETWORKS

A curious feature of the anti-rights and far-right landscape is the prominence of European aristocrats. Dozens of archdukes, countesses, princes and princesses appear as avid supporters of religious extremist causes which may at first appear exotic, until one understands that this involvement demonstrates a continuity going back to a past almost forgotten in 21st-century Europe. Despite losing political power after the First

⁴⁶ See Talenting Group. (2025). Management. <https://www.talenting.com/en/about-talenting-groep/management/>; and Talenting Foundation. (2025). Bestuur. <https://talentingfoundation.com/bestuur/>.

⁴⁷ See Political Network for Values (2019). Transatlantic Summit III Colombia 2019. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iii-colombia-2019/>.

⁴⁸ Political Network for Values (2021). Transatlantic Summit IV Budapest 2021. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iv-budapest-2021/>; Political Network for Values (2023). V Transatlantic Summit New York 2023. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/v-transatlantic-summit-new-york-2023/>; and Political Network for Values (2024). VI Transatlantic Summit Madrid 2024. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/madrid2024/>.

⁴⁹ Talenting Group. (2025). CNE.news – Christian Network Europe nieuws. <https://www.talenting.com/nl/ondernemingen/cne-news-christian-network-europe-nieuws/>.

⁵⁰ Aleo. (2025). Fundacja Rodziny Witaszków. <https://aleo.com/pl/firma/fundacja-rodziny-witaszkow>.

⁵¹ Cieśla, W. (2017). Prezes, woda i aborcja. Newsweek Polska, 2 May. <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/paweł-witaszek-kim-jest-goracy-przeciwnik-aborcji/nwjw2z3>.

⁵² Charity Commission. (2025). The Hintze Family Charitable Foundation. <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/4005727/accounts-and-annual-returns>.

World War in various countries, many were able to preserve their wealth and real estate, and remain some of Europe's wealthiest families.⁵³

Far from being just an exotic feature of the religious extremist community, European aristocrats bring three essential components in addition to their wealth and perceived prestige value: a generalised disdain for democracy and liberal values;⁵⁴ a worldview based on religious legitimisation for inherited social, political and economic inequality; and being part of a vast, transnational and endogamous network.⁵⁵ German academic Andreas Kemper identifies this as an 'aristo-clerical network', drawing from the examples of aristocrats in Central Europe.⁵⁶

THE HABSBURGS: BRAND AMBASSADORS FOR ILLIBERALISM

Modern descendants of the Habsburg-Lorraine family actively promote anti-gender ideologies, lending a charismatic face to illiberal authoritarianism. The family serves multiple roles in anti-rights advocacy: as brand ambassadors for Orbán-inspired authoritarianism, as facilitators among Europe's aristocratic elites, and as financiers through Catholic-aligned investment networks.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has strategically incorporated Habsburg descendants into his political network. Among them, Archduke Edouard von Habsburg

stands out as the most public-facing figure. Currently Hungary's ambassador to the Holy See, he has also cultivated a social media presence, blending personal musings with advocacy for traditional values and subtle monarchist ideals. His 2023 book, *The Habsburg Way: Seven Rules for Turbulent Times*,⁵⁷ ostensibly offers self-help guidance but subtly promotes monarchy as a viable political system, contrasting Habsburg values of honour and piety with what he portrays as the narcissism of contemporary democratic leaders.⁵⁸

This ideological alignment is evident in Hungary's 2017 establishment of the Otto von Habsburg Foundation under the state-controlled Bethlen Gábor Foundation, tasked with fostering a 'future-oriented European ideology' rooted in Otto's legacy.⁵⁹ Otto's grandson, Georg von Habsburg, is also a Hungarian diplomat and serves on the Advisory Board of Hungary Helps, a state agency that focuses almost exclusively on aid to 'persecuted' Christians.⁶⁰

Other members of the Habsburg family further reinforce this ideological agenda. Imre von Habsburg-Lorraine, an alumnus of the WYA,⁶¹ founded the European Fraternity,⁶² a secretive network promoting Christian ethics and morality under the guise of advancing the 'common good'. In February 2023, he spoke at a One of Us event opposing the inclusion of abortion in the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.⁶³ Similarly, Archduke Michael von Habsburg and

⁵³ For example, eight of the ten wealthiest families in Belgium are from the aristocracy. See L'Echo. (n.d.). Parmi les dix familles belges les plus riches, huit sont nobles. L'Echo. <https://www.lecho.be/dossier/noblesse/parmi-les-dix-familles-belges-les-plus-riches-huit-sont-nobles/9870825.html>; and for Germany, see Neßhöver, C. (2017). Wer schon vor 100 Jahren auf Deutschlands Reichstenliste stand - und heute immer noch. Manager Magazine, 13 January. <https://www.manager-magazin.de/unternehmen/artikel/die-reichsten-deutschen-altes-geld-a-1128904.html>; and Baden, R. (2024). Deutsche Adelige und ihre Millionendeals mit dem Staat. Berliner Morgenpost, 7 May. <https://www.morgenpost.de/vermishtes/article242275364/Deutsche-Adelige-und-lukrative-Millionendeals-mit-dem-Staat.html>.

⁵⁴ For example, many German aristocrats were drawn into support for the Third Reich. See Caplan, J. (2021). No heroes here: A shared hatred of democracy bound most aristocrats to Hitler. The Times Literary Supplement, 2 April. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/history/twentieth-century-onwards-history/nazis-and-nobles-stephan-malinowski-review-jane-caplan>. This remains relevant today because the descendants of Hitler's Finance Minister are involved in the leadership of Germany's far-right AfD party (Beatrix von Storch) and head several national branches of the ultra-conservative TFP network (Paul, Duke of Oldenburg).

⁵⁵ Urbach, K. (2016). Go-Betweens for Hitler [review of the book *Lobbying* by Richard J. Evans, 2016]. London Review of Books, 38(6), 17 March. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v38/n06/richard-j.-evans/lobbying>.

⁵⁶ Kemper, A. (2015). Christlicher Fundamentalismus und neoliberal-nationalkonservative Ideologie am Beispiel der 'Alternative für Deutschland'. In L. Billmann (Ed.), *Unheilige Allianz: das Geflecht von christlichen Fundamentalisten und politisch rechten am Beispiel des Widerstands gegen den Bildungsplan in Baden-Württemberg*. Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung.

⁵⁷ Habsburg, E. (2023). *The Habsburg Way: Seven Rules for Turbulent Times*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press. <https://sophiainstitute.com/product/the-habsburg-way/>.

⁵⁸ Christman, M. (2023). Why Does the Right-Wing Scion of a Failed European Dynasty Want to Tell Us How to Live? In 2023 even Habsburgs are influencers. Slate, 21 April. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2023/04/eduard-habsburg-advice-book-twitter.html>.

⁵⁹ Otto von Habsburg Foundation. (n.d.). Collections. <https://habsburgottoalapitvany.hu/en/collection/>.

⁶⁰ Prime Minister's Office. (2016). State Secretariat for the Aid of Persecuted Christians and for the Hungary Helps Program. <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/prime-minister-s-office/state-secretariat-for-the-aid-of-persecuted-christians-and-for-the-hungary-helps-program>.

⁶¹ World Youth Alliance. (2022). World Youth Alliance meets Munich! <https://wya.net/blog/world-youth-alliance-meets-munich/>.

⁶² See <https://europeanfraternity.com/>.

⁶³ O'Reilly, T. (2023). 'One Of Us' Pro-Life Movement: Call To Resist Abortion in EU Charter. The European Conservative, 10 February. <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/one-of-us-pro-life-movement-call-to-resist-abortion-in-eu-charter/>.

Duchess Christiana von Habsburg met with the Albanian Pro Life & Family Coalition in June 2023, further cementing the family's role in anti-gender activism.⁶⁴

The Hohenberg family, a lesser-known branch of the Habsburg dynasty who relinquished their claim to the imperial title,⁶⁵ have nonetheless emerged as key figures in the anti-gender movement. Marie Elisabeth Hohenberg and her spouse, Dr. Nikolaus Hohenberg, serve as President and Board Member, respectively, of the German Stiftung Ja zum Leben.⁶⁶

Beyond advocacy, the Habsburg family also engage in financial ventures aligned with Catholic social teachings. Archdukes Christian and Imre von Habsburg-Lorraine have founded investment firms such as Aliter Invest and MultiPlus Finance, channelling resources into initiatives that support socially conservative causes (see 'Catholic finance').

PRINCESS GLORIA VON THURN UND TAXIS: FAR-RIGHT GLOBAL NETWORKER

Among the most glamorous anti-rights aristocratic personalities is the German Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis, who stands "against condoms for young people, against marriage for all, against abortion and denies man-made climate change".⁶⁷ With a fortune estimated at €3 billion, and the largest landowner in Germany with six castles and 20,000 hectares of forest real estate,⁶⁸ Princess Gloria rests at the centre of a vast international network of far-right political actors.



© Panther Media GmbH / Alamy

▲ Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis, a notable aristocratic supporter of the anti-gender movement.

She is a regular speaker at international events such as the World Congress of Families⁶⁹ and the National Conservatism Conference.⁷⁰ She is a Board member of Stiftung Ja zum Leben⁷¹ and close to the ultra-conservative German Cardinal Gerhard Müller.⁷² She was a member of the Supervisory Board of Yakunin's now defunct Dialogue of Civilizations.⁷³ Princess Gloria's affinity for Russia and the Putin regime led to her defending Russia's aggression in Ukraine and advocating for Russian conservatism.⁷⁴ Princess Gloria also has close relations with a range of US far-right actors, including ADF, Steve Bannon, US Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, and Lenoard Leo, who is behind the Teneo network.⁷⁵

⁶⁴ Albanian Pro Life & Family Coalition. (2023). Meeting with the Archduke Michael Habsburg-Lothringen and Duchess Christiana von Habsburg. Albanian Pro Life & Family Coalition, 21 June. <https://www.profamiljes.al/meeting-with-the-archduke-michael-habsburg-lothringen-and-duchess-christiana-von-habsburg/>.

⁶⁵ Kemper, A. (2023). Adelsnetzwerke und der Geschlechterkampf von rechts. Antifaschistisches Infoblatt, 29 September. <https://antifainfoblatt.de/aib139/adelsnetzwerke-und-der-geschlechterkampf-von-rechts>; and Kemper, A. (2019). Der antifeministische Familienclan des „Adels“, Andreas Kemper, 5 June. <https://andreakemper.org/2019/06/05/antifem-familienclan/>.

⁶⁶ Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Unsere Stiftungsleitung. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/startseite/ueber-uns/unsere-stiftungsleitung/>.

⁶⁷ Sackmann, C. (2024). Mehr als drei Milliarden Euro: Die Fürstin enteignen? So groß ist das Vermögen von Gloria von Thurn und Taxis. Focus, 2 April. https://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/mehr-als-drei-milliarden-euro-die-fuerstin-enteignen-so-gross-ist-das-vermoegen-von-gloria-von-thurn-und-taxis_id_259805938.html. ⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ World Congress of Families. (2019). Her Serene Highness, Gloria. <https://wcfverona.org/en/gloria-1/>.

⁷⁰ National Conservatism. (2024). A Conference in Brussels, Belgium, April 16 - 17, 2024: Gloria von Thurn-und-Taxis. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/presenters/gloria-von-thurn-und-taxis/>.

⁷¹ Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Unsere Stiftungsleitung. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/startseite/ueber-uns/unsere-stiftungsleitung/>.

⁷² Katholisch. (2019). Fürstin setzt ihre ganze Hoffnung auf zwei Männer – Gloria: Kardinal Müller ist der Donald Trump der katholischen Kirche. Katholisch, 28 October. <https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/23410-gloria-kardinal-mueller-ist-der-donald-trump-der-katholischen-kirche>.

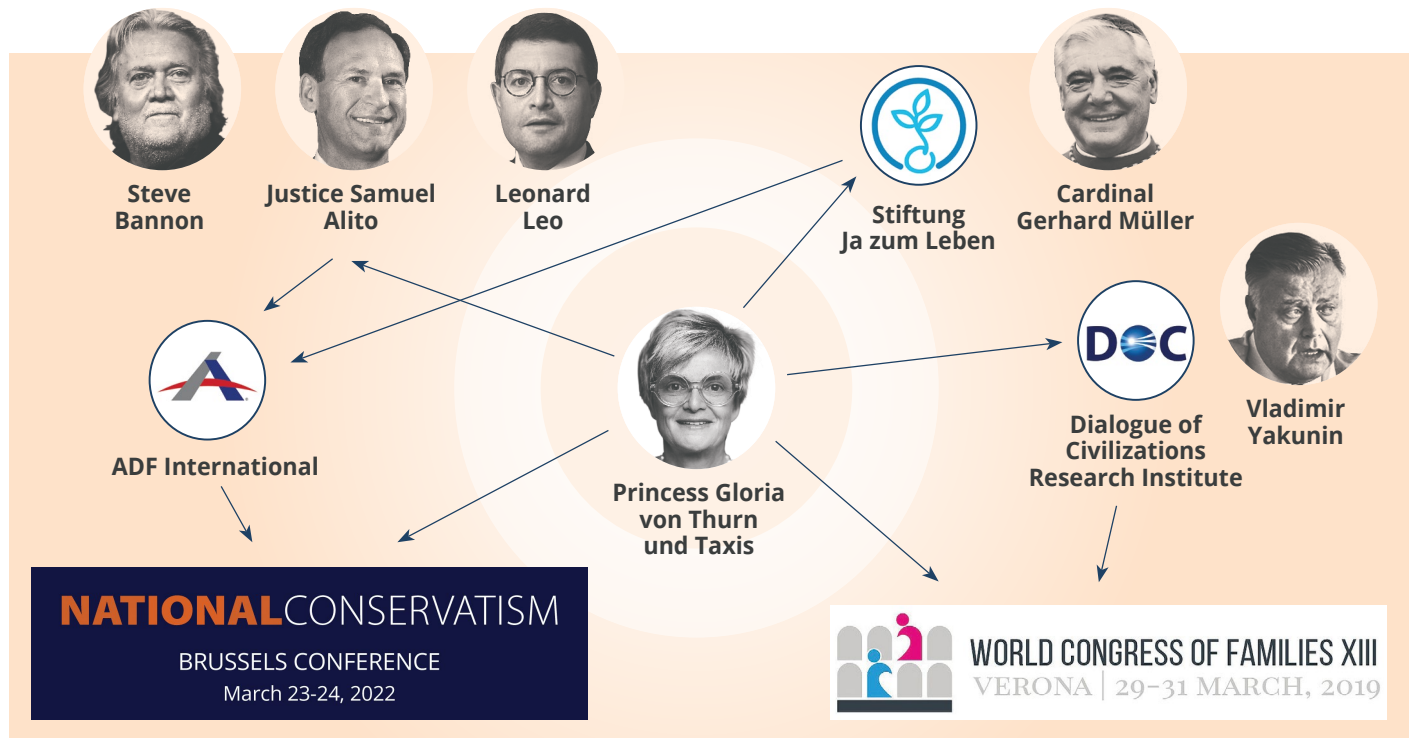
⁷³ PR Newswire. (2017). Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis Joins DOC Research Institute Board. PR Newswire, 28 June. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/princess-gloria-von-thurn-und-taxis-joins-doc-research-institute-board-631290843.html>.

⁷⁴ Regis, J., V. Gantenberg, & A. Maus. (2022). Putin und Kyrill: Glaubenskrieger gegen das Böse. Das Erste, 28 July. <https://www1.wdr.de/daserste/monitor/sendungen/putin-und-kyrill-100.html>.

⁷⁵ Pengelly, M. (2024). Samuel Alito and German rightwing aristocrat linked to US anti-abortion activist. The Guardian, 17 September. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/17/samuel-alito-leonard-leo-gloria-von-thurn-und-taxis-napa-institute>; and Vanderhoof, E. (2024). Princess TNT Confirms Justice Samuel Alito and Steve Bannon Are Part of Her Cozy Conservative Catholic Circle. Vanity Fair, 23 October. <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/story/princess-tnt-confirms-justice-samuel-alito-and-steve-bannon-are-part-of-her-circle>.

FIGURE 6

THE INFLUENCE NETWORK OF PRINCESS GLORIA VON THURN UND TAXIS



OTHER ARISTOCRATS

Russian aristocracy also plays a role in anti-rights initiatives, often serving as instruments of the Kremlin's soft diplomacy across Europe.⁷⁶ Notable figures include Prince Alexander Trubetskoy, head of French-Russian Dialogue, and Prince Zurab Mikhailovich Chavchavadze, General Director of the St. Basil the Great Foundation. Konstantin Malofeev has even financed efforts to establish a Noble's Assembly, envisaged as a potential replacement for the State Duma should Russia transition back to a monarchy.⁷⁷

The Mayr-Melnhof family, an Austrian baronial dynasty with an estimated wealth of €3.9 billion derived primarily from forestry holdings,⁷⁸ is another example of aristocratic elites

engaged in anti-gender activism. Georg Mayr-Melnhof⁷⁹ founded the Loretto Community,⁸⁰ a charismatic Catholic renewal movement that has expanded significantly in Austria and beyond. Combining traditional Catholic teachings with modern outreach methods, the movement has become an influential force in religious and socially conservative activism and is listed in Agenda Europe.

Other influential figures include Christiaan Alting von Geusau, from a Dutch aristocratic family, who served as rector of the International Theological Institute in Vienna (see 'Knowledge production') and founded both the International Catholic Legislators' Network (ICLN) (see 'Wolves in sheep's clothing — ChONGOs') and Ambrose Advice (see 'Shadowy power brokers').⁸¹

⁷⁶ Fishman, D. (2023). Compatriots 3. How descendants of White Russian emigres became the Kremlin's key agents of influence in France. The Insider, 21 February. <https://theins.ru/en/politics/259554>.

⁷⁷ Moskovsky Komsomolets. (2018). Konstantin Malofeev: "There was a fear that Putin would leave." According to the leader of the Russian monarchists, GDP would be a beautiful king. Moskovsky Komsomolets, 13 March. <https://www.mk.ru/politics/2018/03/13/konstantin-malofeev-poyavilas-boyazn-chto-putin-uydet.html>.

⁷⁸ Owning over 32,400 hectares of forest, they are the largest private landowners in Austria and rank among the country's ten wealthiest families. See: Sempelmann, P. (2023). Österreichs Reichste: Familie Mayr-Melnhof, der Holzadel [Porträt]. Trend, 6 July. <https://www.trend.at/personen/familie-mayr-melnhof>.

⁷⁹ Loretto. (n.d.). Gemeinschaftsleiter & Rat. <https://loretto.at/ueber-uns/wer-wir-sind/>.

⁸⁰ See <https://loretto.at>.

⁸¹ ITI Catholic University. (2017). Curriculum Vitae: Christiaan W.J.M. Alting von Geusau. https://www.iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Academic_CV_ALTING_von_GEUSAU_02-2017.pdf.

TABLE 5

LEADING ARISTOCRATS INVOLVED IN THE RELIGIOUS ANTI-RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Name	Country	Religious anti-rights engagement
Christian von Habsburg-Lorraine	Austria	Aliter Invest, MultiPlus Finance
Imre von Habsburg Lorraine	Austria	Aliter Invest, MultiPlus Finance, Agenda Europe, World Youth Alliance
Georg Mayr-Melnhof	Austria	Loretto Community, Agenda Europe
Marie Elisabeth Hohenberg	Germany	Stiftung Ja zum Leben, World Youth Alliance
Dr. Nikolaus Hohenberg	Germany	Stiftung Ja zum Leben
Johanna Hohenberg	Germany	ADF International, Holy See Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York
Dr. Emanuel Prinz zu Salm	Germany	Stiftung Ja zum Leben
Gloria Fürstin von Thurn und Taxis	Germany	ADF Stiftung Ja zum Leben, Dialogue of Civilizations (Yakunin), NatCon 2024 Brussels, Steve Bannon, Stiftung Ja zum Leben, Ultra-conservative Catholic Cardinals, World Congress of Families
Friedrich Graf zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld	Germany	Stiftung für Familienwerte
Ludwig Graf Yorck von Wartenburg	Germany	Stiftung für Familienwerte
Bolko von Reinersdorff	Germany	Stiftung für Familienwerte
Paul Herzog von Oldenburg	Germany	Pro Europa Christiana Federation, TFP Deutschland
Countess Consuelo von Ballestrem	Germany	World Youth Alliance, Karl Ballestrem Stiftung
Georg von Habsburg	Hungary	Member of the International Advisory Board at Hungary Helps
Edouard von Habsburg	Hungary	Hungary's ambassador to the Holy See
Prince Nikolaus and Princess Margareta of Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein	World Youth Alliance
Christiaan Alting von Geusau	Netherlands	ICLN, ITI, Ambrose Advice
Prince Zurab Chavchavadze	Russia	St. Basil the Great Charitable Foundation

RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST ARISTOCRATIC HUBS

Aristocratic involvement is notable in two key organisations: ADF International and the WYA. Both ADF International and the WYA feature on Stiftung Ja zum Leben's list of projects,⁸² suggesting that both receive grants from the foundation. Both organisations feature members of the Liechtenstein princely

family (Europe's wealthiest princely family) on their respective Boards.⁸³ Johanna Hohenberg, the daughter of Stiftung Ja zum Leben's president, served as a Communications Officer at ADF International in Vienna before joining the Holy See Permanent Mission to the United Nations in 2020.⁸⁴ Further, Alan Sears, ADF founder, is reportedly close to Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis.⁸⁵

⁸² Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Projekte. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/projekte-2/>.

⁸³ Business Standard. (2023). Europe's richest royal family builds nearly \$300 billion finance empire. Business Standard, 29 September. https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/europe-s-richest-royal-family-builds-nearly-300-billion-finance-empire-123092901398_1.html.

⁸⁴ Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. (2021). Newsletter, 12 February. <https://holyseemission.org/contents/newsletters/6026f3895168a.php>.

⁸⁵ Pengelly, M. (2024). Samuel Alito and German rightwing aristocrat linked to US anti-abortion activist. The Guardian, 17 September. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/17/samuel-alito-leonard-leo-gloria-von-thurn-und-taxis-napa-institute>.

The WYA is particularly distinguished by its aristocratic affiliations across governance, membership and funding. Its Board has included Countess Consuelo Ballestrem⁸⁶ and Elisabeth Hohenberg.⁸⁷ Notably, a significant proportion of WYA Europe's members hail from aristocratic families, including Imre von Habsburg⁸⁸ and Carla Sophia Alting von Geusau,⁸⁹ who both served as WYA interns. Former WYA Europe Regional Directors such as Elisabeth Gudenus⁹⁰ (Austrian baronial family)⁹¹ and now FEMM contact point for Austria,⁹² Leila d'Ansembourg⁹³ (Dutch aristocracy),⁹⁴ Caroline de Dorlodot⁹⁵ (Belgian aristocracy)⁹⁶ and Diana Doat Pinto da Costa (Portuguese aristocracy,⁹⁷ founder of WYA UK)⁹⁸ exemplify this trend. Financially, the WYA benefits from economic support from two friendship associations: Förderverein Weltjugendallianz Deutschland, established by Karl Ballestrem and the Gudenus family,⁹⁹ and Stiftung Ja zum Leben for both core activities and related initiatives such as FEMM.¹⁰⁰

BILLIONAIRES AND TECH BROS

In addition to prominent figures such as Michael Hintze, Pierre-Édouard Stérin and members of the Habsburg family, a range of other billionaires and economic elites have supported anti-gender and religious extremist causes across the globe. These individuals include traditional wealthy people and emerging economic elites, such as tech industry leaders.

From Germany, Dr. Tilman Rüsç, of the Siemens family, which has an estimated combined worth of €7.3 billion,¹⁰¹ is both a Board member of Stiftung für Familienwerte and a personal donor to the ECR Party.¹⁰² Similarly, from Romania, George 'Gigi' Becali, a controversial and flamboyant figure, has become a central backer of anti-gender activism. Becali is the sole sponsor of the Alexandra Crisis Pregnancy Centre¹⁰³ and has led both the Pro-Life March¹⁰⁴ and the March for Normality¹⁰⁵, a protest against LGBTQI Pride events. In France, Stéphane

⁸⁶ World Youth Alliance. (2022). 2013 Annual Report. New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2013-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>.

⁸⁷ World Youth Alliance. (2022). WYA Staff. <https://wya.net/staff/>.

⁸⁸ World Youth Alliance. (2022). World Youth Alliance meets Munich! <https://wya.net/blog/world-youth-alliance-meets-munich/>.

⁸⁹ World Youth Alliance. (2024, 8 May). Meet Our Interns: Carla-Sophia Alting von Geusau. [Instagram]. <https://www.instagram.com/wyaeurope/p/C6tHz6fvQt/>.

⁹⁰ World Youth Alliance. (2020). ELC 2020, An Opportunity to Learn about Women's Health. <https://wya.net/blog/elc-2020-an-opportunity-to-learn-about-womens-health/>.

⁹¹ Geneall. (n.d.). Baronesses of Gudenus. <https://geneall.net/en/title/10115/baronesses-of-gudenus/>.

⁹² FEMM Health. (2025). Elisabeth Gudenus. <https://femmhealth.org/teacher/elisabeth-gudenus/>.

⁹³ Alamy. (2003). Leila d'Ansembourg de World Youth Alliance parle au rassemblement contre l'euthanasie propositions organisé par choisir la vie du mouvement. <https://www.alamyimages.fr/leila-d-ansembourg-de-world-youth-alliance-parle-au-rassemblement-contre-l-euthanasie-propositions-organise-par-choisir-la-vie-du-mouvement-image650880.html>.

⁹⁴ Töpfer, J. (2017). BinnensteBuiten: Leila van Lidth de Jeude née gravin de Marchant et d'Ansembourg. Adel in Nederland, 30 January. <https://www.adelinnederland.nl/binnenstebuiten-leila-lidth-jeude-nee-gravin-marchant-et-dansembourg/>.

⁹⁵ World Youth Alliance. (2018). WYA 2018 Kathryn Hoomkwap Awardee, Caroline de Dorlodot: "WYA awakened in me a thirst for truth". <https://wya.net/blog/wya-2018-kathryn-hoomkwap-awardee-caroline-de-dorlodot-wya-awakened-in-me-a-thirst-for-truth/>.

⁹⁶ Delcampe International. (n.d.). Suarlee Château de la BOVERIE Marie-Caroline de Dorlodot 1859-1935 née Marchienne-au-pont. https://www.delcampe.net/fr/collections/faire-part/deces/suarlee-chateau-de-la-boverie-marie-caroline-de-dorlodot-1859-1935-nee-marchienne-au-pont-1005380287.html?srsltid=AfmBOorbFdtieNW0Wu3h4zMaSf_Zo_vOqBxLk2CAeOqu2xjR6EmAhh.

⁹⁷ La Gaceta Regional de Salamanca. (2022). El nuevo conde portugués de Lumbrales conoce la villa y asegura que la promocionará en su país. La Gaceta Regional de Salamanca, 18 February. <https://www.lagacetadesalamanca.es/provincia/el-nuevo-conde-portugues-de-lumbrales-conoce-la-villa-y-asegura-que-la-promocionara-en-su-pais-JA10456942>.

⁹⁸ World Youth Alliance. (2018). Meeting The 2018 Viktor Frankl Awardees. <https://wya.net/blog/meeting-the-2018-viktor-frankl-awardees/>.

⁹⁹ See North Data. (n.d.). Förderverein Weltjugendallianz Deutschland e. V., Munich, Germany. <https://www.northdata.de/F%C3%B6rderverein%20Weltjugendallianz%20Deutschland%20e%C2%B7%20V%C2%B7,%20M%C3%BCnchen/Amtsgericht%20Ingolstadt%20VR%20200139>.

¹⁰⁰ Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Projekte. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/projekte-2/>.

¹⁰¹ Neßhöver, C. (2017). Das sind Deutschlands reichste Sippen. Manager Magazin, 5 October. <https://www.manager-magazin.de/politik/deutschland/porsche-hueck-merck-das-sind-deutschlands-reichste-sippen-a-1171177.html>.

¹⁰² Donation Watch. (2025). Top donors of ECR. <https://donation.watch>.

¹⁰³ The 'Pregnancy Crisis' Franchise: from the United States to Romania, Scena 9, 14 June 2019, <https://www.scena9.ro/en/article/pregnancy-crisis-franchise-from-the-united-states-to-romania>.

¹⁰⁴ Gigi Becali, condamnă avortul! Latifundiarul, în fruntea „Marşului pentru viaţă” din Capitală: “O femeie care face asta este o criminală”, Cancan, 25 March 2017, <https://www.cancan.ro/gigi-becali-condamna-avortul-latifundiarul-in-fruntea-marsului-pentru-viata-din-capitala-o-femeie-care-face-asta-este-o-criminala-16859196>.

¹⁰⁵ Realitea.net, Marşul LGBTQ+ s-a suprapus cu Marşul Normalităţii în Bucureşti. Gigi Becali, marele absent, 30 June 2024, https://www.realitea.net/stiri/actual/marsul-lgbtq-sa-suprapus-cu-marsul-normalitatii-in-bucuresti-gigi-becali-marele-absent_6680e5b7770a001aca7ff6f3.

TABLE 6

LEADING TECH ENTREPRENEURS INVOLVED IN THE RELIGIOUS ANTI-RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Name	Company	Country	Religious anti-rights engagement
Elon Musk	X, Tesla	South Africa/Canada/USA	XY Worldwide, Far-right political parties
Peter Thiel	PayPal, Palantir	Germany/USA	Teneo Network
Marek Španěl	Bohemia Interactive	Czech Republic	Aliance pro rodinu
Fredrik Wester	Paradox Interactive	Sweden	New Direction Academy

Bolloré, part of the influential Bolloré family, has taken over several major media outlets, realigning them with his socially conservative, Catholic leanings, thus amplifying far-right and anti-gender narratives through the media.¹⁰⁶

A new class of nouveau riche tech entrepreneurs, often referred to as ‘tech bros’, has also emerged as significant backers of religious extremist and far-right causes all over the globe. Among them, Elon Musk, owner of X (formerly Twitter), has garnered attention for his increasingly far-right positions and support for far-right political leaders across the world, including Argentina’s Milei, Brazil’s Bolsonaro, Canada’s Poilievre, Germany’s Weigel, Hungary’s Orbán, Italy’s Meloni and Romania’s Teodorescu.¹⁰⁷ Musk has publicly condemned his transgender daughter¹⁰⁸ and promoted conspiracy theories, such as the great replacement theory, which ties into fears about demographic shifts.¹⁰⁹ Musk has also been rumoured to back XY Worldwide, an initiative led by Katalin Novák, the former Hungarian president, to address declining birth rates, aligning him with pro-natalist and anti-gender movements.¹¹⁰

Another tech magnate making waves is Peter Thiel, the German-American founder of PayPal and Palantir Technologies, who has become a major patron of far-right causes, including the Teneo Network¹¹¹ and the 2022 Senatorial campaign of Vice-President JD Vance.¹¹² Thiel’s support demonstrates the alignment of certain tech elites with socially conservative and anti-gender agendas despite his own identity as an openly gay man.

In Europe, several tech entrepreneurs with similar profiles have emerged. For example, Marek Španěl, a Czech billionaire and CEO of Bohemia Interactive, has financially supported the Aliance pro rodinu (Alliance for the Family), a group opposing LGBTQI rights and abortion.¹¹³ Španěl, whose company specialises in military-themed simulation games, has an estimated net worth of CzK15.3 billion (US\$660 million),¹¹⁴ placing him among the top 50 wealthiest individuals in the Czech Republic.¹¹⁵ Another gaming mogul involved in far-right movements is Fredrik Wester, the CEO of Paradox Interactive, a Swedish company valued at US\$472

¹⁰⁶ Dodman, B. (2024). Comment Bolloré et son empire médiatique ont porté l’extrême droite aux portes du pouvoir. France 24, 2 July. <https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20240702-comment-bollor%C3%A9-et-son-empire-m%C3%A9diatique-ont-port%C3%A9-l'extr%C3%Aame-droite-aux-portes-du-pouvoir>.

¹⁰⁷ Ingram, D., & B. Horvath. (2025). How Elon Musk is boosting far-right politics across the globe. NBC News, 16 February. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/elon-musk/elon-musk-boosting-far-right-politics-globe-rcna189505>.

¹⁰⁸ Ingram, D. (2024). Elon Musk’s transgender daughter, in first interview, says he berated her for being queer as a child. NBC News, 26 July. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/elon-musk-transgender-daughter-vivian-wilson-interview-rcna163665>.

¹⁰⁹ Leparmentier, A. (2024). Les obsessions d’Elon Musk : repeupler la planète et « détruire le virus woke ». Le Monde, 13 August. https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2024/08/13/les-batailles-d-elon-musk-repeupler-la-planete-et-detruire-le-virus-woke_6278987_3210.html.

¹¹⁰ Scheffer, J. (2024). Elon Musk Potential Sponsor Behind Former President Novák’s New Organization. Hungarian Conservative, 26 September. <https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/current/elon-musk-katalin-Novák-xy-worldwide-giorgia-meloni-demographic-challenges-birthrate/>; and Hungary Today. (2024). Elon Musk Supports Former President Novák’s Fight against Global Birth Rate Decline. Hungary Today, 26 September. <https://hungarytoday.hu/elon-musk-supports-former-president-Novák-s-fight-against-global-birth-rate-decline/>.

¹¹¹ Kroll, A., A. Bernstein, & N. Surgey. (2023). Inside the “Private and Confidential” Conservative Group That Promises to “Crush Liberal Dominance”. ProPublica, 9 March. <https://www.propublica.org/article/leonard-leo-teneo-videos-documents>.

¹¹² Kladman, D. (2024). The billionaire who fueled JD Vance’s rapid rise to the Trump VP spot — analysis. CBS News, 16 July. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/jd-vance-trump-vp-peter-thiel-billionaire/>.

¹¹³ Pokorná, Z. (2024). Miliardář poslal Alianci pro rodinu opakovaně stovky tisíc. Spolek přitom tvrdí, že žije z drobných dárců. Deník, 11 July <https://denikn.cz/1472507/miliardar-poslal-alianci-pro-rodinu-stovky-tisic-spolek-pritom-tvrdi-ze-zije-z-drobnych-darcu/?ref=tit>.

¹¹⁴ Forbes. (2025). Marek Španěl. <https://forbes.cz/lists/nc22/marek-spanel/>.

¹¹⁵ Forbes. (2025). Marek Španěl—100 nejbohatších Čechů 2023. <https://forbes.cz/lists/nc23/marek-spanel/>.

million,¹¹⁶ known for strategy video games such as Europa Universalis.¹¹⁷ In 2024, Wester was a keynote speaker at the New Direction Academy in Eskilstuna, Sweden.¹¹⁸

Their involvement highlights the role of the gaming industry in fostering ideological radicalisation and polarisation. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) has extensively documented how the subculture of online gaming has contributed to the radicalisation of young people, making gaming spaces a fertile ground for extremist indoctrination.¹¹⁹

3.3 THE MITTELSTAND AS A RESERVOIR FOR RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST FUNDING

The *Mittelstand*, comprising small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is the economic backbone of many industrialised economies, often contributing to around 50% of GDP and employing up to 70% of the workforce.¹²⁰ Despite their vast collective financial potential as funders of anti-gender initiatives, documentation of their involvement remains limited. Representing a millionaire rather than a billionaire class, these enterprises wield substantial influence at local and national levels.

Examples from Austria, France and Germany illustrate their engagement. In Austria, regional chapters of Aktion Leben in Salzburg and Tirol have secured sponsorship from both major corporations and local enterprises.¹²¹ In France, beyond Loïc Labouche of Stella Domini, the 2022 booklet for Lyon's Pro-Life March featured advertisements from local businesses, reflecting regional financial support for anti-abortion causes,¹²² while AXA (a large French insurance and financial management firm) engages in corporate fundraising for a crisis pregnancy centre.¹²³ Similarly, in Romania, Pro Vita București has acknowledged sponsors such as Carrefour (a French supermarket chain), local breweries and energy suppliers.¹²⁴ In Germany, Hans-Christian Limmer, active in the food sector through Bäckwerk (a bakery chain) and Hans im Glück (a hamburger chain), attended a secret 2023 AfD meeting where plans for 'remigration' (mass deportations of non-ethnic Germans) were discussed.¹²⁵

More structured efforts to engage the *Mittelstand* have also emerged. At the 2021 PNfV Trans-Atlantic Summit, the Secretary-General of European Family Businesses and the President of Family Business Network Hungary participated, signalling a strategic effort to involve these economic elites.¹²⁶ Additionally, the French Fondation des Entrepreneurs et Dirigeants Chrétiens, housed within Fondation Notre Dame, channels philanthropic contributions from Christian entrepreneurs and business leaders.¹²⁷

¹¹⁶ Market Screener. (2025). Per Fredrik Wester. <https://www.marketscreener.com/insider/PER-FREDRIK-WESTER-A0G0FP/>.

¹¹⁷ Paradox Interactive. (2021). Paradox Interactive AB (publ) changes CEO and Chairman of the Board. Paradox Interactive, 1 September. <https://www.paradoxinteractive.com/media/press-releases/press-release/paradox-interactive-ab-publ-changes-ceo-and-chairman-of-the-board>.

¹¹⁸ New Direction. (2024). 14th-16th June 2024, New Direction Academy, Eskilstuna, Sweden. https://newdirection.online/event/new_direction_academy_2024_sweden.

¹¹⁹ Davey, J. (2021). Gamers Who Hate: An Introduction to ISD's Gaming and Extremism Series. Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 12 August. <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/gamers-who-hate-an-introduction-to-isds-gaming-and-extremism-series/>; and O'Connor, C. (2021). Gaming and Extremism: The Extreme Right on Twitch. Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2 September. <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/gaming-and-extremism-the-extreme-right-on-twitch/>.

¹²⁰ McKinsey. (2022). Helping small and medium-size enterprises thrive. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/beyond-financials-helping-small-and-medium-size-enterprises-thrive>.

¹²¹ Notable supporters include DM Drogerie (a German retailer with €15 billion in revenue), M Preis (an Austrian supermarket chain, €1 billion revenue) and HiPP (a Swiss baby product manufacturer, €600 million revenue). Local sponsors include Tiroler Versicherung (mutual insurance association, €157 million income), Tiroler Tageszeitung (media) and Innsbrucker Kommunalbetriebe (public contractors). Smaller supporters include Druckerei Pircher Tirol (printer), Innsbrucker Soziale Dienst (social enterprise – nursing homes), UNIQA General Agentur (insurance), Börsen Strategien (financial advisers), Die Seilwerker and Immo Konrad (real estate). See the annual reports of Aktion Leben Salzburg and Tirol for 2018–2022.

¹²² Rebellyon. (2024). La bourgeoisie réactionnaire lyonnaise finance le mouvement « pro-vie ». Rebellyon, 21 January. <https://rebellyon.info/La-bourgeoisie-reactionnaire-lyonnaise-25588>.

¹²³ For AXA Mécénat's fundraising for the CPC's La Maison de Marthe et Marie, see Messissi, B. (n.d.). Béangère Messissi's Post. [LinkedIn]. <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7174335043249602560/>.

¹²⁴ AntiProVita. (n.d.). Lista completa cu cei care sustin Pro Vita. <https://antiprovita.wordpress.com/lista-completa-cu-cei-care-sustin-pro-vita/>.

¹²⁵ Tillar, J., V. Robertz, & T. Kaiser. (2024). Rechtsextreme Kontakte: Wer ist Unternehmer Hans-Christian Limmer? Capital, 11 January. <https://www.capital.de/wirtschaft-politik/hans-im-glueck-und-afd-wer-ist-unternehmer-hans-christian-limmer-34354722.html>.

¹²⁶ Political Network for Values (2021). Transatlantic Summit IV Budapest 2021. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iv-budapest-2021/>.

¹²⁷ See <https://www.fondation-edc.org/>.

Fundraising among SMEs has taken various forms. A side event at the 2023 European Prayer Breakfast, the Business Leaders' Lunch,¹²⁸ provided a platform for corporate contributions to conservative causes. Further, the CCI developed a sponsorship plan to mobilise business support in the Netherlands, the USA and Canada.¹²⁹ The Germany-based World Evangelical Alliance Business Coalition (WEA-BC), a 2019 donor to Sallux, connects "Christian leaders in business, Church, and investment."¹³⁰

These examples underscore the strategic engagement of SMEs in anti-gender and socially conservative movements. While their contributions often remain localised, their collective financial and logistical capacity constitutes a significant force within the broader anti-gender network.

3.4 CATHOLIC WEALTH MANAGEMENT

A new force in financing religiously conservative activism across Europe is emerging from Catholic wealth management. Key players include investment firms linked to the Habsburg family, French billionaire Pierre-Édouard Stérin and other private entities.

THE HABSBURG FINANCIAL EFFORT FOR THE COMMON GOOD: ALITER INVEST, BACKBONE AND MULTIPLUS FINANCE

Founded in 2013 by Archdukes Christian and Imre von Habsburg-Lorraine, Aliter Invest integrates Catholic social teachings into financial strategies, aiming to keep "finance

at the service of the Human Person".¹³¹ The firm directs investments towards philanthropic projects, including anti-abortion initiatives.¹³² By 2023, it reported assets of €1.3 million¹³³ and launched a Christian investment fund aligning ethical investment with Catholic principles.¹³⁴

Aliter Invest operates within a broader network that includes Luxembourg-based BACKBONE,¹³⁵ an investment firm focused on "human dignity through social inclusion and economic advancement", where Archduke Imre serves as an adviser. Archduke Christian, meanwhile, founded MultiPlus Finance,¹³⁶ a Swiss firm specialising in patrimonial wealth management and philanthropic strategies which align with Catholic dogma.

CHRISTIAN CROWDFUNDING AND FINANCIAL NETWORKS

Aliter Invest's beneficiaries include anti-abortion organisations supported by the Stella Domini Foundation and the Christian crowdfunding platform Crédofunding.¹³⁷ These interconnected financial actors bolster socially conservative agendas across Europe.

CrédoLending,¹³⁸ an extension of Crédofunding, hosts the annual Day of Integral Finance,¹³⁹ promoting investments aligned with Catholic social doctrine since 2021. The 2024 event convened approximately 15 Catholic-led investment funds, including Fonds du Bien Commun and Aliter Invest. Additionally, CrédoLending published a guidebook¹⁴⁰ offering strategies for integrating Catholic principles into financial decisions, further cementing its role in facilitating religiously motivated investment.

¹²⁸ European Prayer Breakfast. (2024). Side Events. <https://europeanprayerbreakfast.eu/side-events/>.

¹²⁹ See Christian Council International. (2024). CCI Business and Public meeting February 29, Kesteren, NL. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/events/cci-business-and-public-meeting-february-29-kesteren-nl>; and Christian Council International. (2024). Fundraiser Meeting & Presentation, January 30, Monarch AB, Canada. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/events/fundraiser-meeting-presentation-january-30-monarch-ab-canada>.

¹³⁰ See <http://wea-bc-germany.de/>.

¹³¹ See <https://aliter-invest.com>.

¹³² Aliter Invest <https://www.aliter-invest.com/blank-4> (see support for Choisir la Vie)

¹³³ North Data. (n.d.). Aliter Partners Sàrl, Luxembourg. <https://www.northdata.com/Aliter+Partners+S%C3%A0rl,+Luxembourg/B214187>.

¹³⁴ Van den Bos, D. (2024). Autoriteit Financiële Markten geeft toestemming voor christelijk beleggingsfonds Aliter Invest in Nederland. Revive, 25 October. <https://revive.nl/aliter-invest-ontvangt-goedkeuring-van-afm-voor-distributie-van-eerste-christelijke-gebalanceerd-mixfonds-van-nederland/>.

¹³⁵ See <https://backbone.lu/>.

¹³⁶ See <https://www.multiplusfinance.com/>.

¹³⁷ CredoFunding. (n.d.). Une maison médicale à Nantes au service de la vie. <https://www.credofunding.fr/en/association-medicale-gabriel-nantes>.

¹³⁸ CredoFunding. (n.d.). Investir pour le Bien Commun: La finance intégrale au service de l'épanouissement de la personne humaine. https://www.credofunding.fr/fr/menu_item_pages/investir.

¹³⁹ See <https://finance-integrale.fr>.

¹⁴⁰ Association Ora et Labora. (2024). Guide pratique pour un investissement intégral. <https://finance-integrale.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Guide-Pratique-pour-un-investissement-integral.pdf>.

MEESCHAERT: FINANCE AND IDEOLOGY

French investment firm Meeschaert, owned by Laurent Meeschaert, plays a significant role in conservative Catholic finance. In addition to wealth management, Meeschaert founded¹⁴¹ Fondation Identité et Dignité,¹⁴² which funds

crisis pregnancy centres opposing abortion.¹⁴³ Among its beneficiaries is the Institut de Théologie du Corps, a Catholic organisation promoting traditional views on sexuality and reproduction.¹⁴⁴ Meeschaert extends his influence into media and politics. He owns¹⁴⁵ L'Incorrect,¹⁴⁶ a publication bridging far-right and mainstream conservative politics, and in 2023 he became an adviser to far-right French politician Éric Zemmour, illustrating the overlap between financial, ideological and political networks.¹⁴⁷

PROCLERO: INSTITUTIONAL CATHOLIC INVESTMENT

Founded in 2012, ProClero manages €71 million in assets for the St. Martin ecclesiastical community under Vatican authority.¹⁴⁸ Its investment strategies prioritise 'integral human ecology', opposing abortion, euthanasia and embryonic stem cell research.¹⁴⁹ Led by Swiss priest and investor Pascal-André Dumont,¹⁵⁰ ProClero collaborates closely with Meeschaert Asset Management and Fondation Identité et Dignité. Dumont also founded Pro Persona, an initiative providing ethical investment guidance based on Catholic social teaching, reinforcing the ideological coherence of these financial networks.¹⁵¹

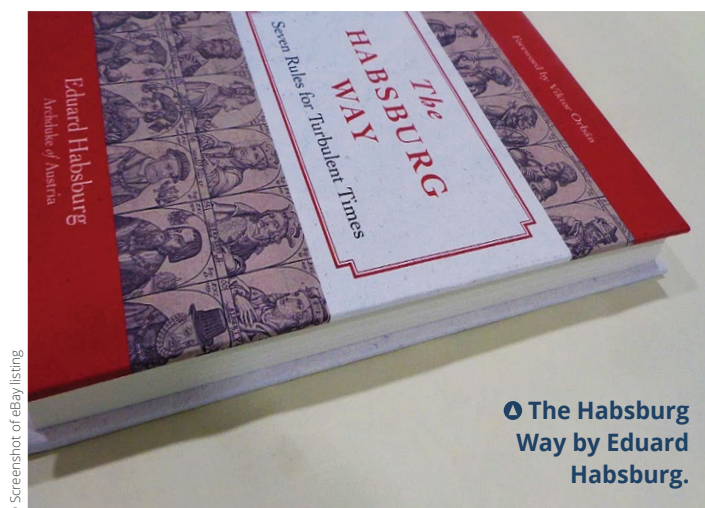


TABLE 7

CATHOLIC FINANCIAL MECHANISMS AND THEIR STEWARDS

Person	Objective	Financial mechanism/organisation
Laurent Meerschaert	Social doctrine of the Catholic Church and convergence of right and far-right in France and Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fondation Identité et Dignité • Meerchaert Asset Management • ProClero • Pro Persona
Pierre-Édouard Stérin	Social doctrine of the Catholic Church and convergence of right and far-right in France and Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CrédoFunding • Fond du Bien Commun
Habsburg family	Social doctrine of the Catholic Church, including the defence of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aliter Invest • BACKBONE • MultiPlus Finance

¹⁴¹ Vasylic. (2021). Fondation Identité & Dignité. <https://vasyclic.com/fondation-identite-et-dignite/>.

¹⁴² Fondation Notre Dame. (2022). Fondation Identité et Dignité. <https://www.fondationnotredame.fr/fondation/fondation-identite-et-dignite>.

¹⁴³ "Contribuer au respect de la dignité de toute vie humaine, de la conception à la mort naturelle, notamment par l'aide : aux associations apportant un soutien aux femmes enceintes en difficulté morale et matérielle, aux personnes en fin de vie, aux personnes handicapées et à leurs familles." See Fondation Notre Dame. (2022). Fondation Identité et Dignité. <https://www.fondationnotredame.fr/fondation/fondation-identite-et-dignite>.

¹⁴⁴ See <https://institutdetheologieducorps.org/>.

¹⁴⁵ nfonet. (2025). L'Incorrect. <https://nfonet.fr/entreprises/83229062100016-l-incorrect/>.

¹⁴⁶ See <https://lincorrect.org/>.

¹⁴⁷ La Lettre. (2023). Le propriétaire de L'Incorrect devient conseiller culture d'Eric Zemmour. La Lettre, 7 July. https://www.lalettre.fr/fr/medias_presse-ecrite/2023/07/07/le-propretaire-de-l-incorrect-devient-conseiller-culture-d-eric-zemmour,110001288-bre.

¹⁴⁸ See <https://proclero.com/>.

¹⁴⁹ Proclero. (n.d.). Les critères éthiques de l'écologie humaine intégrale. <https://proclero.com/une-gestion-ethique-et-innovante/les-criteres-ethiques-de-lecologie-humaine/>.

¹⁵⁰ Pro Persona. (2025). Qu'est-ce que Pro Persona ? <https://www.propersona.fr/qui-sommes-nous/quest-ce-que-pro-persona/>.

¹⁵¹ Pro Persona. (2025). Nos mécènes. <https://www.propersona.fr/qui-sommes-nous/nos-mecenes/>.

3a

EUROPEAN PUBLIC FUNDING: THREE MODELS OF SUPPORT FOR ANTI-RIGHTS MOBILISATION

“The EU should not be naive and hand its opponents the stick to beat it with.”

(Manfred Weber, German MEP, President of the European People's Party - EPP)¹

Between 2019 and 2023, at least **US\$171 million** in public funds — **14% of the total US\$1.18 billion** flowing into anti-gender and religious extremist initiatives in Europe — can be traced to state or EU-linked sources. Far from marginal, public funding has become a significant enabler of anti-gender mobilisation, with its share expanding over the past five years.

In the political patronage model, anti-gender groups tap into state funding by aligning with illiberal governments, creating echo chambers of mutual legitimisation. The Hungarian model sees governments actively constructing anti-gender ecosystems by funnelling public money into loyal NGOs, media platforms, and think tanks. Meanwhile, the political party model channels public or state-aligned funds directly into far-right parties and their foundations, embedding anti-gender narratives in mainstream politics. Together, these models expose how European public institutions are increasingly bankrolling the forces working to erode democratic norms from within.

These models illustrate how public institutions — whether by design or neglect — are underwriting the very actors working to dismantle liberal democratic norms from within.

3.5 THE POLITICAL PATRONAGE MODEL

The political patronage model involves anti-gender and religious extremist groups being able to tap into public funding through discrete projects when their political allies gain access to power. While this model is potentially applicable in all countries, it has resulted in particularly generous sponsorship of anti-gender organisations by public funds from Poland, Spain and the European Union (EU) through the Erasmus programme. Under the far-right government in Poland, the focus was on religious public engagement organisations; in Spain anti-gender services thrive through sponsorship from right-wing regional governments; while the Erasmus programme is exploited by anti-gender projects ostensibly aimed at youth education.

The best example is that of Poland during the eight-year tenure of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS) (Law and Justice) party from 2015 to 2023. In January 2024, the government published a report detailing state subsidies allocated to these organisations and announced plans to terminate such financial support.² During this period, a network of anti-rights civil society organisations secured public funding from various ministries under PiS control. These organisations benefited from state resources, reciprocating this financial support by acting as ideological allies and amplifying government narratives.

¹ Cooper, H. (2017). Far-right feels squeeze on EU funding. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.eu/article/far-right-politicians-to-meps-we-want-eu-money-even-though-we-hate-the-eu-alliance-for-peace-and-freedom-apf/>.

² Fundusz Sprawiedliwości. (n.d.). Counteracting Crime. <https://www.funduszsprawiedliwosci.gov.pl/pl/konkursy/przeciwdzialanie-przestepczosci/>; and Najwyższa Izba Kontroli. (2024). NIK notifies the prosecutor's office regarding the Patriotic Fund. NIK, 18 June. <https://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/instytut-dziedzictwa-mysli-narodowej.html>.

A report published in November 2024 by Associació Drets Sexuals i Reproductius (ADSR — Catalan Association for Sexual and Reproductive Rights) revealed that 51 public institutions across Spain allocated €7.8 million between 2020 and 2024 to subsidise a network of 50 organisations opposing abortion rights.³ The primary recipient was Red Madre,⁴ a network of crisis pregnancy centres operating nationwide, which received €2.48 million. This public funding was closely linked to regions governed by right-wing political parties — predominantly the Partido Popular (PP). Notably, the region of Madrid allocated €2.7 million, followed by Andalusia and Galicia, all under PP control. These subsidies were highly decentralised, with 40 local branches of Red Madre variably accessing federal, regional and municipal funds under the guise of supporting pregnant women, while promoting anti-abortion messaging (see 'Anti-gender services').

Another example comes from the Netherlands, with the crisis pregnancy centre Siriz, which was able to expand to develop nine centres across the country made possible through state funding provided when political allies associated with the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) were in the Dutch coalition government (see 'Anti-gender services').



At EU level, the best example is the World Youth Alliance (WYA), which has benefited from Erasmus funding since 2009, beginning with a grant awarded by then-Youth Commissioner Jan Figel, a known ally of the anti-gender movement.⁵ Since 2019, various WYA branches⁶ have received over €1 million in EU funding. Related anti-gender services such as Teen STAR and the FEMM app have also received EU financial support (see 'Anti-gender services').

3.6 THE HUNGARIAN MODEL: GONGOS TO LEGITIMISE AUTHORITARIANISM

Hungary has become one of Europe's foremost state sponsors of the anti-rights movement, directing over **US\$172 million** to anti-gender initiatives between 2019 and 2023. Of this, **US\$134 million — 77%** — was channelled through five major state-controlled public foundations, established using state assets following the privatisation of public wealth into oligarchic structures.⁷ These foundations function as think tanks, media platforms, and advocacy organisations, producing research, publications, and lobbying efforts that align with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's ideological agenda. Simultaneously, the government mobilises GONGOs to simulate an autonomous civil society, which then partners with transnational anti-gender platforms to amplify Hungary's ideological reach abroad.⁸

This model represents one of the most structured and well-resourced anti-gender strategies in Europe, eclipsing traditional religious and ultra-conservative actors in both scale and coordination. It poses a significant threat to European democratic norms and gender equality. Key institutions driving this agenda include the **Batthyány Lajos Foundation**⁹ (for international outreach), **Mathias Corvinus Collegium**¹⁰ and its **MCC Brussels**¹¹ branch (targeting EU institutions), and the **Bethlen Gábor Fund**¹² (focused on domestic and regional influence).

³ Enrech, A., & R. Palà. (2024). Quants diners públics reben els grups antiavortistes? El Critic, 25 November. <https://www.elcritic.cat/investigacio/quants-diners-publics-reben-els-grups-antiavortistes-221493>.

⁴ See <https://www.redmadre.es/>.

⁵ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). Tip of the Iceberg. Brussels: EPF.

⁶ WYA Europe, WYA Croatia, WYA Southeastern Europe and WYA Spain.

⁷ This figure is a low estimate as it does not include funding from MCC-Brussels which had not disclosed its financial statements at the time of writing this report.

⁸ Political Capital. (2022). The building of Hungarian political influence – The Orbán regime's efforts to export illiberalism. Prague: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. https://politicalcapital.hu/pc-admin/source/documents/PC-Boll_HUNfluence_Study_ENG.pdf.

⁹ See <https://bla.hu/>.

¹⁰ See <https://www.corvinak.hu>.

¹¹ See <https://brussels.mcc.hu/>.

¹² See <https://bgazrt.hu/>.

HUNGARY'S INTERNATIONAL ANTI-RIGHTS OUTREACH: BATTHYÁNY LAJOS FOUNDATION

The Batthyány Lajos Foundation, named after Hungary's first 19th-century Prime Minister, has become a key conduit for public funding to pro-FIDESZ organisations.¹³ Founded in 2018 and designated a public institution in 2021, it spearheads anti-gender activism primarily through two entities: the Centre for Fundamental Rights (CfR)¹⁴ and the Danube Institute.¹⁵

The CfR, registered as the Rule of Law and Justice non-profit, has received substantial support — over HUF1 billion (≈US\$3.3 million) from the Batthyány Lajos Foundatio — to operate as a think tank advancing pro-Orbán narratives on the rule of law and anti-rights ideologies.¹⁶ It reframes human rights discourse to promote an alternative 'fundamental rights' concept, pursuing two key strategies: building alliances with ideologically aligned European think tanks — including Poland's *Ordo Iuris* and groups in the Czech Republic, Italy, and Slovakia — under the Alliance for the Common Good¹⁷; and organising major ultra-conservative events, notably hosting the 2022 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Budapest¹⁸ with reported funding of €1 million¹⁹, alongside co-sponsoring the 2023 and 2024 Transatlantic Summits of the Political Network for Values (PNFV).²⁰

The Danube Institute, a Batthyány project since 2013 led by British Conservative John O'Sullivan²¹, functions as an international-facing think tank promoting Orbán's anti-liberal,

anti-gender agenda. It hosts seminars and conferences on ultra-conservative themes, often partnering with US groups like the Heritage Foundation, exemplified by the annual Danube Geopolitical Summit since 2020.²² Beyond these think tanks, the Batthyány Lajos Foundation finances far-right political events such as the National Conservatism Conference in Brussels (June 2024)²³, sponsors media outlets like Hungarian Conservative and European Conservative²⁴ to amplify anti-gender voices²⁵, and supports far-right lobbyists and influencers in the United States²⁶, facilitating a transatlantic network of ultra-conservative activism.

HUNGARY'S EU ANTI-GENDER EMISSARY: MCC-BRUSSELS

A key actor directing its efforts towards the EU is MCC, which receives funding from multiple Hungarian state-controlled sources, particularly for its Brussels office, established in 2022. In Hungary, as well as in Austria and Slovakia, MCC functions primarily as a university, while its Brussels branch operates as a think tank specialising in European affairs and promoting narratives aligned with the Hungarian government's ideological positions.²⁷ These have included several events which challenges human rights in sexuality and reproduction (see 'Knowledge production').

MCC has benefited from substantial financial support from Hungarian state-affiliated entities. Notably, it has received an operating grant from the Tihany Foundation, an entity

¹³ Zubor, Z. (2023). Orbánism exported to America through a public interest foundation. *Atlatzo*, 14 December. <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2023/12/14/Orbanism-exported-to-america-through-a-public-interest-foundation/>.

¹⁴ See <https://alapjogokert.hu/>.

¹⁵ See <https://danubeinstitute.hu/>.

¹⁶ Sarkadi Nagy, M. (2021). PM's Cabinet Office finances government organized NGO through secretive foundation. *Atlatzo*, 12 March. <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2021/03/12/pms-cabinet-office-finance-govt-organized-ngo-through-secretive-foundation/#>.

¹⁷ See <https://theafcg.com/en/>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.cpachungary.com/en/>.

¹⁹ See <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2022/08/09/up-to-a-million-euros-was-spent-on-budapest-cpac-financed-by-the-hungarian-taxpayer/>.

²⁰ Political Network for Values. (2025). Transatlantic Summits. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/>.

²¹ Danube Institute. (2025). John O'Sullivan, President. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/authors/o-sullivan-john>.

²² Danube Institute. (2025). Exploring the Underground Writings of Jan Patočka: Politics and the Core of Mystery. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/the-fourth-danube-institute-the-heritage-foundation-geopolitical-summit-day-2>.

²³ National Conservatism. (2024). The National Conservatism Conference: Preserving the Nation-State in Europe. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/about/>.

²⁴ Rutai, L. (2023). Hungary's government is funding European publications. But have they had much success? *Euronews*, 16 September. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/09/16/hungarys-government-is-funding-european-publications-to-little-success>. See <https://www.hungarianconservative.com/about/>; and <https://europeanconservative.com/>.

²⁵ These include figures such as Rod Dreher (<https://europeanconservative.com/rod-dreher/>), John O'Sullivan, Stjepo Bartulica, Jorge Soley and David Engel (<https://europeanconservative.com/about-the-magazine/>).

²⁶ Zubor, Z. (2023). Orbánism exported to America through a public interest foundation. *Atlatzo*, 14 December. <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2023/12/14/Orbanism-exported-to-america-through-a-public-interest-foundation/>; and Barnóczki, B., & A. Horváth Kárai. (2023). Hungarian nonprofit paid American lobbyists to promote Orbán government. *Telex*, 14 December. <https://telex.hu/english/2023/12/14/hungarian-nonprofit-paid-american-lobbyists-to-promote-orban-government>.

²⁷ Corporate Europe Observatory. (2024). Orbán's oil funded thinktank is murky on transparency. *Corporate Europe Observatory*, 18 October. <https://corporateeurope.org/en/2024/10/orbans-oil-funded-thinktank-murky-transparency>.

financially sustained by a grant approved by the Hungarian Parliament. In 2020, the Tihany Foundation (named after an 11th-century Benedictine abbey) transferred its holdings to the MCC Foundation.²⁸ Additionally, MCC's funding is supplemented by its ownership of a 10% stake in the pharmaceutical company Gedeon Richter, a manufacturer of various contraceptives.²⁹

BETHLEN GÁBOR FUND FOR THE DOMESTIC ANTI-RIGHTS AGENDA

While the Batthyány Lajos Foundation serves as a vehicle for exporting Orbánism internationally, a separate entity, the Bethlen Gábor Fund, functions as the primary funding mechanism for the Hungarian state's support of civil society initiatives domestically, as well as targeting the Hungarian

diaspora. Named after Bethlen Gábor, a 17th-century Prince of Transylvania and King of Hungary, the Bethlen Gábor Fund has provided financial support for national ultra-conservative initiatives. Notably, it co-sponsored the 2022 PNfV Transatlantic Summit when it was hosted in Budapest,³⁰ and it has also supported the implementation of Teen STAR in Hungary³¹ (see 'Anti-gender services').

OTHER HUNGARIAN ANTI-GENDER FUNDING CHANNELS

Other key foundations involved in advancing the Hungarian government's ideological agenda include the Foundation for a Civic Hungary (Szövetség a Polgári Magyarorszáért Alapítvány),³² the political foundation closely aligned with the ruling FIDESZ party. This foundation was a consistent financial supporter of the PNfV Transatlantic Summits in 2019³³,

TABLE 8

HUNGARIAN GONGOS FINANCING ANTI-GENDER ACTIVISM

State-controlled foundations	Cumulative 5-year budget (2019 - 2023, US\$)	Anti-gender/far-right activism and engagement
Batthyány Lajos Foundation	27,002,216	Danube Institute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Danube Geopolitical Summit – Heritage Foundation National Conservatism Conference – Brussels Media: Hungarian Conservative and European Conservative US lobbyists and influencers Centre for Fundamental Rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPAC, PNfV 2023, 2024 Alliance for Common Good Funding to ID
Tihany Foundation/MCC Foundation ³⁹	314,660,210	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCC: Anti-gender seminars, reports and events in the Brussels EU bubble
Bethlen Gábor Alapkezelő Zrt. ⁴⁰ (Bethlen Gábor Fund Management)	80,119,637	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hungarian NGOs Funding PNfV Trans-Atlantic Summit – Budapest 2022 Teen STAR Hungary
Foundation for Research on Central and Eastern European History and Society (KKETTKK) ⁴¹	84,655,825	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding PNfV Trans-Atlantic Summit – Budapest 2022
Foundation for a Civic Hungary (FIDEZS) Szövetség a Polgári Magyarorszáért Alapítvány	24,825,099	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of PNfV in 2019, 2023, 2024
Sub-total	531,262,988	

²⁸ Hajba, M., & F. Naumann. (2023). Mathias Corvinus Collegium: Winning Hearts and Minds. 4Liberty.EU, 10 February. <https://4liberty.eu/mathias-corvinus-collegium-winning-hearts-and-minds/>.

²⁹ Dobson, P. (2025). NHS contraceptive pills funding Orbán 'propaganda' as Hungary restricts abortion. The Ferret, 5 January. <https://theferret.scot/nhs-pills-orban-propaganda-hungary-abortion/>.

³⁰ Political Network for Values. (2025). Transatlantic Summit IV Budapest 2021. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iv-budapest-2021/>.

³¹ See <https://TeenSTAR.hu/>.

³² See <https://szpma.hu/en>.

³³ Political Network for Values. (2025). Transatlantic Summit III Colombia 2019. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iii-colombia-2019/>.

2021³⁴, 2023³⁵ and 2024³⁶. Additionally, the Foundation for Research on Central and Eastern European History and Society (Közép- és Kelet-európai Történelem és Társadalom Kutatásáért Közalapítvány — KKETTKK)³⁷ also played a role in funding the 2022 PNfV Transatlantic Summit in Budapest.³⁸

These influence factories exemplify a well-coordinated effort by the Hungarian government to spread illiberal and anti-gender ideologies both within Europe and beyond. Through strategic alliances, high-profile events and influential media platforms, these entities play a crucial role in shaping conservative narratives and extending Hungary's ideological reach on the global stage.

3.7 THE POLITICAL PARTIES' MODEL

Finally, the third model consist in creating political support for anti-rights and religious extremist activism by leveraging public funding and state-aligned financial resources available to political parties. Three European-level political parties have followed this route: the European Conservatives and Reformists

(ECR), the Identity and Democracy (ID) party (rebranded in June 2024 as Patriots for Europe — PfE) and the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), which rebranded as the European Christian Political Party (ECP) in early 2025.

A first point of consideration is that the EU provides an explicit legal base to allocate public funding to European-level political parties reaching a threshold of elected officials at national level and to the European Parliament.⁴² This funding is determined based on their representation in the European Parliament and in the Member States, as defined by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations.⁴³ Eligible parties may receive an operating grant amounting to up to 90% of their projected annual budget, as well as allocations to establish and maintain a political foundation (which acts as a think tank) and a youth wing of the political party. Thus, these three political parties — ECR, ID/PfE and ECPM — as well as their political foundations, namely New Direction, ID/PfE Foundation and Sallux, respectively, all benefited from European Parliament operating grants totalling US\$35 million between 2019 and 2023, broken down as follows:

TABLE 9

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OPERATING GRANTS TO ANTI-GENDER POLITICAL PARTIES, FROM 2019 TO 2023⁴⁴

EU-level political party and foundation	Total operating grants from the European Parliament (US\$)	% of total funding
ECR Party and New Direction Foundation		
ECR Party	10,430,054.42	62%
New Direction Foundation	10,716,276.84	88%
ID		
ID Party	4,443,677.73	83%
ID Foundation	3,413,034.51	93%
ECPM and Sallux		
ECPM	4,017,365.51	88%
Sallux	2,005,673.76	88%
Total	35,026,082.77	

³⁴ Political Network for Values. (2025). Transatlantic Summit IV Budapest 2021. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iv-budapest-2021/>.

³⁵ Political Network for Values. (2025). V Transatlantic Summit New York 2023. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/v-transatlantic-summit-new-york-2023/>.

³⁶ Political Network for Values. (2025). VI Transatlantic Summit Madrid 2024. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/madrid2024/>.

³⁷ See <https://tortenelem.info.hu/#>.

³⁸ Political Network for Values. (2025). Transatlantic Summit IV Budapest 2021. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/what-we-do/transatlantic-summit/transatlantic-summit-iv-budapest-2021/>.

³⁹ Not included in the overall count of anti-gender funding.

⁴⁰ Here, data is for the management body of the fund only, which operates under the direction of the Prime Minister's Office. The Bethlen Gábor Fund itself is a much larger entity, and its budget is not included in the overall count of anti-gender funding.

⁴¹ Not included in the overall count of anti-gender funding.

⁴² Consolidated text: Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02014R1141-20190327#M1-1>; see Art. 17§4 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) No. 1141/2014 – chapter 2 art. 3 (conditions for registration) and chapter 5 art. 17–22 (funding) – specifically art. 19 (2018 regulations) and/ or European Parliament. (n.d.). European political parties. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/political-parties-and-foundations/european-political-parties>.

⁴³ See European Parliament. (n.d.). European political parties. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/political-parties-and-foundations/european-political-parties>; and Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations. (n.d.). How to apply. <https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/applications/how-to-apply>.

The current system reflects a tightening of the eligibility rules in 2018, which led to the rejection in 2020 of far-right political parties with strong anti-gender positions, namely the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF) and the European Alliance for Freedom and Democracy.⁴⁵

WHO IS IN CHARGE? FINANCIAL PERMEABILITY OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO ANTI-RIGHTS ACTORS

Despite receiving up to 90% of their annual budgets from European Parliament operating grants, all European political parties also rely on private donations. However, for two political parties, some of these donations originate from anti-rights and religious extremist actors. This raises critical concerns regarding external influence, with the possibility that ideological private funders are setting the agendas of European-level political parties.

Data compiled by DonationWatch.eu for the period 2018–2023 reveals that two European-level political parties and their affiliated foundations received financial support from actors classified as anti-rights or religious extremists: the ECR and the ECPM. The permeability of the ECR and the ECPM stands out, as no such link between ideological actors and political party financing could be detected when scrutinising private donations to any other political party. Specifically, the so-called progressive political parties such as the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe (ALDE), the Party of European Socialists (PES), European Greens and the European Left⁴⁶ do not seem to be benefiting from donations from like-minded progressive funders.⁴⁷ The infiltration of the ECR and the ECPM by anti-gender and religious extremist actors is thus unique.

The ECR and its affiliated New Direction Foundation demonstrated the highest level of financial permeability. Between 2020 and 2024, they received the largest total

sum of private donations among all European parties and foundations. Among their major contributors⁴⁸ — each donating €36,000 — were German billionaire Tilman Rüsche, a Board member of Stiftung für Familienwerte (see ‘Foundations’ chapter); the Fonds de dotation GT Editions, a financier of French-language far-right Catholic traditionalist media outlets (see ‘Foundations’ chapter); and the PNfV, an entity registered in Spain formally known as Asociación Red Política por los Valores (see more in the Chapter on Political dimension).

Additional private donors to the ECR and New Direction included David Lejeune (see ‘Shadowy power brokers’); Gript Media Ltd., an Irish alt-right media outlet known for promoting anti-abortion campaigners; and the Croatian Centar za Obnovu Kulture, directed by ECR-affiliated MEP Stephen Bartulica, who has served as PNfV’s president since December 2024.⁴⁹ Earlier, in 2018–2019, the ECR also accepted donations from Fundación para la Mejora de la Vida, la Cultura y la Sociedad, an organisation linked to the Church of Scientology in Spain. The ECR returns the favours to its allies, for example by hiring Lux Veritatis as a contractor between 2019–2023 and providing it with €109,000 EU funded ECR contracts.⁵⁰

The ECPM and its foundation Sallux also received funding from actors associated with anti-abortion and religious extremist agendas.⁵¹ Notable donors included the Acton Institute (see ‘USA’ chapter) and the FAFCE,⁵² a Vatican lobbying front (see ‘Wolves in sheep’s clothing’). The Sallux Board contains a staff member from the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ).⁵³ Indeed, the ECPM has served as a main entry point for anti-gender actors into European politics, with the ECPM’s president admitting in 2024 to Dutch investigative journalists that “in roughly its first ten years in the European Parliament, the ECPM functioned ‘much more like a lobby party’ than a political party”, having even co-sponsored Agenda Europe events.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations. (n.d.). Applications not approved or pending. <https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/applications/applications-not-approved>.

⁴⁵ Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations. (n.d.). Registered Parties. <https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/parties-and-foundations/registered-parties>.

⁴⁶ Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations. (n.d.). Registered Parties. <https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/parties-and-foundations/registered-parties>.

⁴⁷ Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists Party. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/ECR/donors>.⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Hernández, D.J. (2024). Stephen Bartulica is the new president of Political Network for Values. Political Network for Values, 4 December. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/2024/12/stephen-bartulica-is-the-new-president-of-political-network-for-values/>.

⁵⁰ European Parliament. (2025). Contracts awarded. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/public-procurement/contracts-awarded>. Note: data for previous years is no longer publicly available.

⁵¹ ECR/Sallux anti-abortion donors include the Irish ProLife Campaign (<https://prolifecampaign.ie/>) and two Dutch organisations: Schreeuw om Leven (Cry for Life) (<https://www.schreeuwomleven.nl/>) and Stichting Steunfonds Pro Life Zorg (Pro Life Care Support Fund Foundation).

⁵² Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: ECPM – European Christian Political Movement. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/ECPM/donors>.

⁵³ Christophe Foltzenlogel of ECLJ is on the Board of Sallux. Sallux. (n.d.). Sallux Board. <https://sallux.eu/our-board.html>.

⁵⁴ Van der Burgh, R., M. Rotman, & A. van der Woude. (2024). European party ECPM financed radical right wing lobby group. Investico, 4 April. <https://www.platform-investico.nl/onderzoeken/european-party-ecpm-financed-radical-right-wing-think-tank>.

TABLE 10

ANTI-GENDER ACTORS FUNDING POLITICAL PARTIES AND RELATED FOUNDATIONS, FROM 2018 TO 2023

	Organisation	Year	Amount	Anti-gender activism
ECR⁵⁵ and New Direction⁵⁶				
Tilman Rüsçh	ECR	2023, 2024	€36,000	Board member of Stiftung für Familienwerte
Fonds de dotation GT Editions	ECR New Direction	2023, 2024 2023	€36,000 €2,000	French far-right, ultra-Catholic world
Asociación Red Política por los Valores (PNfV – Spain)	ECR	2023, 2024 ⁵⁷	€36,000	Transnational anti-gender platform
David Lejeune	ECR	2023	€18,000	Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, Opus Fidelis
Gript Media Ltd.	ECR	2023	€18,000	Alt-right media featuring anti-abortion
Mejora de la Vida, la Cultura y la Sociedad	ECR	2018, 2019 ⁵⁸	€19,000	Church of Scientology
Centar za Obnovu Culture	New Direction	2023	€3,000	MEP Stjepo Bartulica , PNfV, Opus Dei
ECPM⁵⁹ and Sallux⁶⁰				
Irish Prolife Campaign	ECPM	2020, 2022, 2023 ⁶¹	€19,500	Anti-abortion
European Dignity Watch	ECPM	2018	€10,000	Anti-gender
FAFCE	Sallux	2018	€5,000	ChONGO
Schreeuw om Leven	Sallux	2023	€3,000	Anti-abortion
Stichting Steunfonds Pro Life Zorg	Sallux	2021	€5,000	Anti-abortion
Acton Institute	Sallux	2018	€2,000	US Christian Right
ECLJ	Sallux	Ongoing	On Board of Sallux	US Christian Right

⁵⁵ Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists Party. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/ECR/donors>.

⁵⁶ Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: New Direction – New Direction - The Foundation for European Reform. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/ND/donors>.

⁵⁷ Two separate donations of €18,000.

⁵⁸ Two separate donations: one of €2,000 in 2018 and another of €17,000 in 2019.

⁵⁹ Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: ECPM – European Christian Political Movement. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/ECPM/donors>.

⁶⁰ Donation Watch. (2025). Party donations: Sallux. <https://donation.watch/en/europeanunion/party/SALLUX/donors>.

⁶¹ Spread over three donations of €3,000 in 2020, €10,000 in 2022 and €6,500 in 2023.

BUYING FAR-RIGHT INFLUENCE: THE HUNGARIAN POLITICAL PARTY SHOPPING SPREE

A third and increasingly prominent model of influence emerges from the actions of Hungarian state-aligned actors closely associated with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his FIDESZ political party. These actors have been instrumental in financially supporting far-right political parties across Europe, as well as states and state-affiliated entities that share their ideological outlook. This transnational strategy is executed through semi-private financial institutions ideologically aligned with Orbán's administration, most notably MHB Bank.

MHB Bank is owned by Lőrinc Mészáros, one of Hungary's wealthiest individuals and a long-time personal associate of Prime Minister Orbán. The bank has been described as "a pure product of 'Orbánism'", characterised by a hybrid ownership structure in which the Hungarian state retains a 30% stake. Mészáros, who holds the majority share, is often cited as an embodiment of the country's system of 'crony capitalism'.⁶²

Recent media investigations have highlighted a series of financial arrangements between MHB Bank and far-right political parties across Europe. In 2022, the bank reportedly issued a loan of US\$11.34 million to France's Rassemblement National (RN) to finance its campaign against incumbent President Emmanuel Macron in the French presidential elections.⁶³ In late 2024, MHB Bank reportedly extended a loan of €9.2 million to Spain's VOX party.⁶⁴ Additionally, MHB Bank has facilitated support for Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ) through indirect channels: "The FPÖ's disinformation media platform Auf1, which operates on YouTube and Telegram, used an account opened at MBH Bank to collect donations."⁶⁵

This Hungarian 'political shopping spree' in support of far-right parties yielded tangible political returns in the wake of the June 2024 European Parliament elections. Prior to this, FIDESZ had found itself politically orphaned, having been compelled to leave the EPP in 2021⁶⁶ and never being welcomed in either the ECR or ID groups.



● Lőrinc Mészáros, owner of MHB Bank and his wife Andrea Várkonyi.

The 2024 European Parliament elections presented a strategic opening to restructure the hard-right and far-right bloc within the Parliament. FIDESZ took the initiative in forming a new political alliance, Patriots for Europe (PfE). The initiative rapidly gained momentum: notable defections from the ID group, including the FPÖ and RN, joined shortly after its creation. VOX followed in July 2024, formally departing the ECR. In November 2024, VOX leader Santiago Abascal was named the official leader of PfE.⁶⁷

This strategy proved highly effective. As of late 2024, PfE held 84 of the 720 seats in the European Parliament, making it the third largest political group.⁶⁸ Of these, 66 MEPs are from political parties with documented financial ties to Hungarian interests — namely, FIDESZ, RN, FPÖ and VOX. These developments illustrate a deliberate and well-financed attempt by Hungarian state-aligned actors to reshape the European far-right, leveraging financial instruments and cross-border alliances to consolidate ideological influence at the EU level.

⁶² Léotard, C. (2024). Hungary's Viktor Orbán, banker of Europe's far-right movements. La Croix International, 17 October. <https://international.la-croix.com/world/hungarys-viktor-orban-banker-of-europes-far-right-movements>.⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Körömi, C. (2024). Orbán's government denies role in mega bank loan to Spanish far-right party. Politico, 8 October. <https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-deny-bank-loan-spain-far-right-party-vox-santiago-abascal-mbh-bank-hungary/>.

⁶⁵ Léotard, C. (2024). Hungary's Viktor Orbán, banker of Europe's far-right movements. La Croix International, 17 October. <https://international.la-croix.com/world/hungarys-viktor-orban-banker-of-europes-far-right-movements>.

⁶⁶ Macek, L. (2021). History of a breakdown: Fidesz's departure from the EPP group at the European Parliament. Jacques Delors Institute, 5 May. <https://institutdelors.eu/en/publications/chronique-dune-rupture-le-depart-du-fidesz-du-groupe-ppe-au-parlement-europeen/>.

⁶⁷ Fleming-Jones, J. (2024). Spain's Vox leader to head Patriots for Europe party. Euronews, 16 November. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/11/16/spains-vox-leader-to-head-patriots-for-europe-party>.

⁶⁸ European Parliament. (2024). The Political groups of the European Parliament. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/political-groups>.

PART 2

THE FIVE

DIMENSIONS OF ANTI-RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST ACTIVISM

This section maps the five fronts of anti-gender activism: its religious roots, its uptake in civil society, political mobilizations, knowledge production and dissemination strategies, and finally, its entanglement in geopolitics.



4

FROM PULPIT TO POLICY: THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN EUROPE

“Alas! I had turned loose into the world a depraved wretch, whose delight was in carnage and misery.”

(Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*)

This chapter exposes how religious institutions serve as the engine room of anti-gender mobilisation in Europe. It does so across three fronts. First, it dissects the doctrinal opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advanced by religious groups with a proven record of anti-gender activism. Second, it follows the money — tracing financial flows that fuel these campaigns. Third, it maps the networks of influence that enable religious actors to shape, fund, and legitimise broader anti-rights agendas. These pillars set the stage for the chapters that follow, which examine how anti-gender mobilisation spreads across civil society, political systems, and knowledge production. The analysis centres on Europe’s three dominant Christian blocs: the Catholic hierarchy, traditionalist Protestant movements, and Orthodox churches.

4.1 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S ROLE IN ANTI-RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST ACTIVISM

DEVELOPMENTS IN CATHOLIC APPROACHES TO SRHR

The Catholic Church’s doctrinal opposition to SRHR, framed as opposition to ‘gender ideology’, is long-standing and has been extensively analysed and documented.¹ The most important new development in Catholic thinking on issues related to human sexuality and reproduction was the release of the ‘Declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith “Dignitas Infinita” on Human Dignity’² (*Dignitas Infinita*) in April 2024. *Dignitas Infinita* reaffirms Vatican positions on several key issues related to gender. For example, on abortion, it asserts that “procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out”. *Dignitas Infinita* goes beyond gender to address other social issues, such as euthanasia, stating that “helping the suicidal person to take his or her own life is an objective offense against the dignity of the person asking for it, even if one would be thereby fulfilling the person’s wish”.

Dignitas Infinita also takes on newer subjects, for example by asserting “the practice of surrogacy violates the dignity of the child...also violates the dignity of the woman, whether she is coerced into it or chooses to subject herself to it freely”. Its reaffirmation of previously stated positions on ‘gender theory’, and the clarification on emerging areas such as surrogacy, pave the way to provide theological backing for anti-human rights activism. For example, Pope Francis has called for a worldwide ban on surrogacy,³ which builds on the efforts of a subsection of anti-gender civil society organisations (CSOs) strategising on this issue (see ‘Civil society organisations’).

¹ Case, M.A. (2012). After Gender The Destruction of Man? The Vatican’s Nightmare Vision of the ‘Gender Agenda’ for Law. *Pace Law Review*, 31(3), 802. DOI:10.58948/2331-3528.1785; Vaggione, J.M. (2020). The conservative uses of law: The Catholic mobilization against gender ideology. *Social Compass*, 67(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768620907561>; Korolczuk, E. (2016). The Vatican and the birth of anti-gender studies. *Religion and Gender*, 6(2), 293–296.

² Holy See. (2024). Declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith “Dignitas Infinita” on Human Dignity, 08.04.2024. <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/04/08/240408c.html>.

³ John, T., C. Nicholls, & C. Lamb. (2024). Pope calls for ban on surrogacy, calling it ‘based on exploitation’. *CNN*, 8 January. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/08/world/pope-ban-surrogacy/index.html>.

FINANCIAL AND STRUCTURAL MECHANISMS OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY'S INFLUENCE IN EUROPE

The Catholic Church wields substantial influence across Europe through its dual identity: as the Holy See — a sovereign entity with diplomatic status — and as the Catholic Church, the continent's most widely followed religious institution. This dual structure enables the Catholic hierarchy to operate both as a state actor and a transnational religious authority, creating an extensive and multifaceted influence network that defies easy quantification.

Three primary categories of influence can be identified, encompassing around 15 distinct entry points. The first involves formal, overt engagement between Catholic institutions and policymaking bodies. The Holy See maintains Permanent Observer Status at major multilateral organisations headquartered in Europe.⁴ Notably, its 2021 acquisition of Permanent Observer Status at the WHO followed controversy, after it initially sought a status granting more rights than it enjoys in any other multilateral setting — a move reversed after public backlash over its potential impact on sexual and reproductive health policy.⁵

Within the European Union, the Holy See benefits from a dedicated EU representation, while the Church's institutional interests are channelled through the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE).⁶ Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty also mandates structured dialogue between EU institutions and religious, philosophical, and non-confessional organisations, providing the Catholic hierarchy with formal access to top EU officials.⁷

The second category includes informal but open political engagement. The European People's Party (EPP) has longstanding ties with the Catholic hierarchy, with high-level figures regularly visiting the Vatican.⁸ These encounters can produce tangible outcomes — for instance, the EU Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion Outside the EU was announced during a 2016 Vatican visit by EU presidents. The post was later filled by Jan Figel, a known anti-gender advocate, whose views on women's sexual rights drew criticism from MEPs.⁹

Other structured yet informal spaces include Parliamentary Prayer Breakfasts — now embedded within the European Parliament¹⁰ — and transnational anti-rights networks such as the Political Network for Values (PNfV) and the World Congress of Families (WCF), which facilitate ideological coordination (see 'Politics').

The third category concerns informal and often covert forms of influence. This operates through two main channels: first, via individuals with personal ties to the Catholic hierarchy or lay groups; second, through Church-organised NGOs (ChONGOs), which act as proxies for Church positions (see 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing').

Discreet transnational networks also play a key role. The International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN) and Agenda Europe (now the Vision Network) serve as platforms for coordination. Notably, eight senior Holy See and Vatican officials were listed as members of the 2016 Agenda Europe Google mailing list.¹¹ Meanwhile, Church-linked actors interface with policymakers through consultancy firms such as Ambrose Advisers and Kairos PR (see 'Shadowy Power Brokers').

⁴ Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. (2025). Diplomatic Relations of the Holy See. <https://holyseemission.org/contents/mission/diplomatic-relations-of-the-holy-see.php>.

⁵ Provost, C. (2021). Italy Pushes For Enhanced Vatican Role in World Health Assembly & WHO Executive Board. Health Policy Watch, 13 May. <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/italy-pushes-for-permanent-vatican-role-at-who/>.

⁶ See <https://www.comece.eu/comece/>.

⁷ European Commission. (2025). Dialogue with churches, religious associations and non-confessional organisations. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/dialogue-churches-religious-associations-and-non-confessional-organisations_en.

⁸ EPP Group. (2023). EPP Group to discuss future of Europe in Rome. EPP Group, 8 June. <https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/epp-group-to-discuss-future-of-europe-in-rome>; and Masotti, A. (2023). Pope: May the great dream of fraternity inspire good politics. Vatican News, 11 June. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-06/pope-may-great-dream-of-fraternity-inspire-good-politics.html>.

⁹ European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights. (2020). Letter to Margaritis Schinas, Commission Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life: Mandate of the EU Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief: Call to improve transparency and to appoint a candidate with a strong human rights record. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/EU%20Special%20Envoy%20on%20FoRB-%20Letter%20to%20Vice%20President.pdf>.

¹⁰ See: <https://europeanprayerbreakfast.eu/>.

¹¹ They are Katharina Brandner, Diocese of St. Pölten (Austria); Janusz Urbanczyk, Holy See, OSCE (Austria); Marinko Anatolovic, Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the International Organisations in Vienna (Austria); Jose Ramos Ascensao, COMECE (Belgium); Marija Zebec, Croatian Bishops' Conference (Croatia); Florian Kolffhaus, Secretary of State Vatican (Italy); Miroslaw Wachowsky, Secretary of State Vatican (Italy); Michel Remery, Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae (CCEE) (Switzerland).

TABLE 11

CATHOLIC HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES FOR LOBBYING EUROPEAN POLICY MAKING

Category of Influence	Mechanisms	Examples	Key actors/entities
Formal and overt engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomatic and observer status in multilateral organisations Institutional representation within EU policy structures Structured dialogue with EU institutions via Lisbon Treaty (Art. 17) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy See as Permanent Observer at the Council of Europe, OSCE, WHO/WHA, United Nations EU representation to the Holy See Participation in structured dialogue under Article 17 TFEU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy See COMECE EU institutions
Informal but open engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political party and leader interactions with the Catholic hierarchy Direct audiences with the Pope Outcomes from political–theological alignment Informal structured settings and transnational networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular political dialogue with the Vatican Hungarian leaders (Novák, Orbán) meeting the Pope Creation of EU Special Envoy for Religious Freedom after Vatican visit EU Parliamentary Prayer Breakfasts PNFV, WCF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key politicians The Pope PNFV, WCF
Informal and covert engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals acting on behalf of Church doctrine or interests Affiliations with Catholic lay groups Proxy advocacy via ChONGOs Delegation partnerships with anti-gender civil society actors Discreet influence networks Public affairs consultancy engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, Legionaries of Christ members in policy roles ECLJ in Holy See delegation to the Council of Europe FAFCE, WYA promoting Catholic doctrine ICLN, Agenda Europe/Vision Network Lobbying by Ambrose Advisers and Kairos PR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, Legionaries of Christ ECLJ FAFCE, WYA ICLN, Vision Network Ambrose Advice, Kairos PR

OPUS DEI: ANTI-RIGHTS PUPPET MASTERS

Contrary to its sensationalised and inaccurate depiction in popular fiction such as *The Da Vinci Code*,¹² Opus Dei is a legitimate ecclesiastical structure within the Catholic Church, comprising over 90,000 members — primarily laypersons — across more than 66 countries, with a notable presence in Europe and the Americas.¹³ Founded in Spain in 1928 by Saint Josemaría Escrivá,¹⁴ Opus Dei follows a conservative sexual ethics agenda, notably Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the*

Body,¹⁵ and has devoted substantial resources to advancing related priorities over the past three decades.¹⁶

A key vector for Opus Dei's ideological influence lies in its institutional investments in higher education. To date, 19 universities maintain formal spiritual care agreements with the Prelature.¹⁷ Through these academic outposts and associated networks of affiliated individuals — referred to as *numeraries and supernumeraries*¹⁸ — Opus Dei exerts significant influence in anti-rights and religious extremist activism. Since the 1960s, Saint

¹² Opus Dei. (2004). 'Da Vinci' code for Catholic bashing. Opus Dei, 1 February. <https://opusdei.org/nl/article/da-vinci-code-for-catholic-bashing/>.

¹³ Opus Dei. (2014). Christians in the Middle of the World. Opus Dei, 27 January. <https://opusdei.org/en/article/members/>.

¹⁴ Opus Dei. (2006). Historical Overview. Opus Dei, 3 July. <https://opusdei.org/en/article/historical-overview/>.

¹⁵ Opus Dei. (2019). Theology of the Body and 100 youth. Opus Dei, 19 March. <https://opusdei.org/en-ke/article/theology-of-the-body-and-100-youth/>.

¹⁶ Urquhart, G. (1997). Opus Dei: The Pope's Right Arm in Europe. Church and State. <https://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/03/opus-dei-the-popes-right-arm-in-europe/>.

¹⁷ Opus Dei. (2024). Educational and social initiatives which receive assistance from the Opus Dei Prelature. Opus Dei, 20 June. <https://opusdei.org/en/article/educational-and-social-initiatives-which-receive-assistance-from-the-opus-dei-prelature/>.

¹⁸ Opus Dei. (2014). Christians in the Middle of the World. Opus Dei, 27 January. <https://opusdei.org/en/article/members/>.

Josemaría actively encouraged the establishment of ‘corporate works’ in the form of universities, intended to demonstrate the compatibility of the gospel with intellectual pursuits.¹⁹ In practice, however, these institutions have served to embed conservative religious norms into public discourse and policy.²⁰

The University of Navarra (UNAV) in Spain is a prime example of this strategy. UNAV has been closely involved in the promotion of a range of anti-gender services, such as natural family planning²¹ and abstinence-based reproductive health initiatives, including the FEMM app,²² Natural Procreative (NaPro) technologies,²³ Teen STAR and Alive to the World²⁴ (see ‘Anti-gender services’). Furthermore, UNAV faculty and alumni maintain professional ties with a range of anti-gender and anti-rights organisations, such as ADF International,²⁵ the PNFV²⁶ and the Instituto Superior de Sociología, Economía y

Política (ISSEP) Madrid.²⁷ The university has also established formal partnerships with prominent actors in this space, including the WYA’s European chapter,²⁸ the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation²⁹ while numerous UNAV staff also participated at the WCF.³⁰

Beyond institutional affiliations, individual members of Opus Dei play pivotal roles in anti-rights advocacy. Several anti-gender organisations active in anti-rights and religious extremist activism have varying links to the Prelature.³¹ Among them, the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation, whose founder, the late Professor Jérôme Lejeune, a close associate of Opus Dei, stands out as the most financially powerful.^{32,33} This legacy continues through the foundation’s activities and its sponsorship of bioethics conferences.³⁴ The 2025 edition of this conference was co-organised with UNAV, the Pontifical

¹⁹ Opus Dei. (2024). Common Works and Auxiliary Societies of Opus Dei: What were they, and why did they cease to exist? Opus Dei, 16 September. <https://opusdei.org/en/article/opus-dei-common-works-auxiliary-societies/>.

²⁰ Urquhart, G. (1997). Opus Dei: The Pope’s Right Arm in Europe. Church and State. <https://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/03/opus-dei-the-popes-right-arm-in-europe/>.

²¹ RENAfer is a Spanish association promoting natural family planning. Its Advisory Board includes UNAV staff Jokín de Irala and Cristina López del Burgo. De Irala is a former president of the association. See RENAfer. (n.d.). Curso preparación de Expertos de Planificación Familiar Natural (PFN) online. https://www.renafer.org/images/50conf/contenido_del_curso_online_expertos.pdf. For academic publications in support of natural family planning by UNAV researchers such as de Irala, Miguel A. Martínez-González and Miguel Delgado-Rodríguez, see Martínez-González, M.A., & M. Delgado-Rodríguez. (n.d.). ¿Anticoncepción o conocimiento de la fertilidad?: Las ventajas de lo natural. Pamplona: University of Navarra. <https://www.unav.edu/documents/16089811/16155256/Las+ventajas+de+lo+natural.pdf>.

²² University of Navarra (n.d.). Women’s Health Goes Digital. <https://en.unav.edu/web/institute-for-culture-and-society/projects/women-s-health-goes-digital>.

²³ The International Institute for Restorative Reproductive Medicine (IIRRM) is a body specialised in NaPro technology. UNAV researchers speak and present at the IIRRM congress. See, for example, González de Canales Díaz, J. (2024). Updates in Post Coital Testing. International Clinical & Scientific Congress for RRM 2024. <https://iirm.org/product/iirm-virtual-congress-attendee-recordings/>. For the European Institute for Family Life Education’s ‘International Congress on Physiology and Fertility’, with the involvement of five UNAV staff, see Beitu Fertilidad. (2022). Congreso sobre fisiología y fertilidad, Bilbao, 2022. <https://www.beitufertilidad.org/congreso-sobre-fisiologia-y-fertilidad-bilbao-2022/>.

²⁴ The curriculum is co-authored by UNAV researcher Carlos Beltramo. Alive to the world. (2025). Our Team. <https://alivetotheworld.org/our-team/>.

²⁵ Guillermo A. Morales Sancho, PhD, serves as legal counsel, Europe, for ADF International. He previously lectured on constitutional and human rights law at UNAV. ADF International. (2025). Guillermo A. Morales Sancho, Legal Counsel, Europe. <https://adfinternational.org/es/nuestro-equipo/guillermo-a-morales-sancho>.

²⁶ UNAV researcher Carlos Beltramo is on the PNFV’s Committee of Experts. Political Network for Values. (2024). Committee of Experts. <https://politicsnetworkforvalues.com/en/who-we-are/council-of-experts/>.

²⁷ UNAV alumni and current staff – for example, Ricardo Calleja Rovira and Mariona Gúmpert – teach at ISSEP. Instituto Superior de Sociología, Economía y Política (2023). Programa de Liderazgo y Gobierno 2025/2026. Madrid: ISSEP. <https://web.archive.org/web/20250128123955/https://www.issep.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Dosier-VI-Programa-de-Liderazgo-y-Gobierno.pdf>.

²⁸ World Youth Alliance. (2022). WYA launches World Youth Alliance’s chapter in Pamplona. <https://wya.net/blog/wya-launches-world-youth-alliances-chapter-in-pamplona/>.

²⁹ Fundación Jérôme Lejeune. (2023). La Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Navarra y la Fundación Jérôme Lejeune suscriben un acuerdo para impulsar la formación en bioética y ética médica. <https://fundacionlejeune.es/la-facultad-de-medicina-de-la-universidad-de-navarra-y-la-fundacion-jerome-lejeune-suscriben-un-acuerdo-para-impulsar-la-formacion-en-bioetica-y-etica-medica/>.

³⁰ For speeches by researchers from UNAV – for example, Carlos Beltramo – see Congreso Internacional de las Familias. (2025). Speakers MID 2025. <https://wcfmexico.org/speakers-cifam-merida/>.

³¹ Most numerary and supernumerary members of Opus Dei, who tend to be recruited from higher-educated, privileged classes, are anonymous. Apart from the minority who openly disclose their membership, individuals are observed to be ‘close’ to Opus Dei through their participation in Opus Dei-led initiatives. Most organisations directed by members of Opus Dei are also formally considered independent of the prelature.

³² Opus Dei. (2012). Pour tout public. Opus Dei, 17 October. <https://opusdei.org/fr-fr/article/pour-tout-public/>.

³³ Urquhart. (1997). Opus Dei: The Pope’s Right Arm in Europe - Church and State. <https://churchandstate.org.uk/2015/03/opus-dei-the-popes-right-arm-in-europe/>.

³⁴ See <https://internationalbioethicscongress.org/>.

University of the Holy Cross (often referred to as the Opus Dei university for clergy and theologians)³⁵ and the Campus Bio-Medico University in Rome.³⁶

The WYA also maintains close ties to Opus Dei. One of the WYA's founding members, Gudrun Kugler, is married to a former spokesperson for Opus Dei in Central Europe.³⁷ Opus Dei members have served on the WYA's Board,³⁸ and many of its young leaders are recruited from Opus Dei-affiliated institutions. For instance, the WYA's current president, Paula López, is a graduate of the University of La Sabana, which she describes as having "an alliance" with the WYA.³⁹ Similarly, the WYA's African chapter regularly hosts events at Strathmore University in Nairobi, another Opus Dei-affiliated institution.⁴⁰ The WYA frequently invites high-ranking Opus Dei members to deliver keynote addresses at its conferences⁴¹ and employs numeraries at its various chapters.⁴²

Additional connections can be found in political and philanthropic circles. Croatian MEP Stephen Bartulica, a known Opus Dei supernumerary,⁴³ has been president of

the PNFV since December 2024. He also leads the Centar za Obnovu Kulture, a funder of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group. Carlos Beltramo of UNAV currently sits on the PNFV's Council of Experts.⁴⁴

The German private foundation Ja zum Leben illustrates the extended financial and ideological connections involved. The foundation, which supports numerous anti-gender organisations, (see 'European private funding'), is part of an informal network centred around the Forum of German Catholics, which includes Opus Dei members such as the late Jürgen Liminski.^{45,46} Ja zum Leben's founder, the late Countess Johanna of Westphalia, was close to Liminski, funding his anti-abortion 'bioethics' advocacy for years before his passing in 2021.^{47,48}

Another Catholic philanthropy with links to Opus Dei-adjacent organisations is the Pennsylvania-based Papal Foundation,⁴⁹ a private endowment "dedicated to fulfilling the requests of the Holy Father" with a governance structure consisting of 'members' and trustees made up of US-domiciled bishops

³⁵"The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross was born from the desire of St. Josemaría Escrivá, Founder of Opus Dei, to create a center of higher ecclesiastical studies in Rome at the service of the whole Church." Pontificia Università della Santa Croce. (2025). Profile & Mission. <https://en.pusc.it/chi-siamo>" <https://en.pusc.it/chi-siamo>.

³⁶The University Campus of Biomedicine is located at Via Álvaro del Portillo 21 in Rome, named after the second Prelate of Opus Dei. Cátedra Internacional de Bioética Jérôme Lejeune. (2024). Sponsors. <https://internationalbioethicscongress.org/> \l "sponsor" \h <https://internationalbioethicscongress.org/#sponsor>

³⁷ITI Catholic University. (2022). Curriculum Vitae: Dr. Martin G. Kugler. https://iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/user_upload/Academic-Life/Academic_CV_KUGLER_2020.pdf.

³⁸Former Philippine Senator Francisco Tatad, a long-time member of the WYA's Board, is reportedly a member. UCA News. (2001). Filipino Opus Dei Members Commemorate Founder Amid Political Crisis. UCA News, 23 January. https://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?post_name=/2001/01/24/filipino-opus-dei-members-commemorate-founder-amid-political-crisis&post_id=17726.

³⁹World Youth Alliance. (2022). Paula Andrea Lopez is selected as the 6th World Youth Alliance President. <https://wya.net/blog/6th-wya-president/>.

⁴⁰World Youth Alliance. (2015). WYA Africa Sixth Emerging Leaders Conference. <https://archive.wya.net/press-release/wya-africa-sixth-emerging-leaders-conference/>.

⁴¹At the 22nd WYA International Solidarity Forum on Gender Ideology in 2025, the keynote speaker was Susanne Kummer, head of communications of Opus Dei in Austria. World Youth Alliance. (2025). Detransitioners, Medical Professionals, and Human Rights Advocates Challenge Gender Ideology. WYA, 21 March. <https://wya.net/blog/tackling-gender-ideology-at-the-22nd-isf/>; Opus Dei. (2014). Opus Dei: Neue Website und neue Pressesprecherin. Opus Dei, 22 March. <https://opusdei.org/de-at/article/opus-dei-neue-website-und-neue-pressesprecherin/>.

⁴²World Youth Alliance. (n.d.). Let's welcome WYA at the University of Piura, Peru! <https://archive.wya.net/op-ed/lets-welcome-wya-at-the-university-of-piura-peru/>.

⁴³Bartulica confirmed his affiliation with Opus Dei in a 2020 interview with Croatian media outlet Teleskop. Teleskop. (2020). Stjepo Bartulica objasnio razliku između masona i članova Opusa Dei: Otkrio je što mu se ne sviđa kod HDZ-a i Plenkovića. Teleskop, 31 May. <https://teleskop.hr/hrvatska/stjepo-bartulica-objasnio-razliku-izmedu-masona-i-clanova-opusa-dei-sto-mu-se-ne-svida-kod-hdz-a-i-plenkovica/>.

⁴⁴Political Network for Values. (2024). Committee of Experts. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/who-we-are/council-of-experts/>.

⁴⁵Founded by Jürgen Liminski, a known member of Opus Dei. Opus Dei. (2008). Ist der Vater das Oberhaupt der Familie? Opus Dei, 28 May. <https://opusdei.org/de-de/article/ist-der-vater-das-oberhaupt-der-familie/>.

⁴⁶Meyer, A. (2013). Opus Dei in Köln: Die Numerarier sind unter uns. Stadt Revue, 10 December. <https://www.stadtrevue.de/artikel-archiv/artikelarchiv/4261-opus-dei-in-koeln-die-numerarier-sind-unter-uns/>.

⁴⁷Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (2021). Jürgen Liminski Preisträger der Stiftung Ja zum Leben ist verstorben. Stiftung Ja zum Leben, 11 June. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/juergen-liminski-preistraeger-der-stiftung-ja-zum-leben-ist-verstorben/>.

⁴⁸Meyer, A. (2013). Opus Dei in Köln: Die Numerarier sind unter uns. Stadt Revue, 10 December. <https://www.stadtrevue.de/artikel-archiv/artikelarchiv/4261-opus-dei-in-koeln-die-numerarier-sind-unter-uns/>.

⁴⁹See <https://www.thepapalfoundation.org/>.

and lay Catholics.⁵⁰ The Papal Foundation claims that, “Since its inception in 1988, The Papal Foundation and its Stewards of Saint Peter have allocated \$200 million in grants and scholarships around the world to more than 2000 projects selected by Popes Francis and Benedict, and Saint John Paul II”,⁵¹ which include both the WYA⁵² and the FAFCE⁵³ (see ‘Church-organised non-governmental organisations’).

4.2 EUROPEAN PROTESTANTISM: DOCTRINAL PLURALISM AND CONSERVATIVE MOBILISATION

Protestant engagement with SRHR in Europe diverges sharply from that of the Catholic world, primarily due to structural differences. Protestantism lacks a centralized authority like the Papacy, enabling individual churches and denominations to define their own doctrinal positions. This decentralization has allowed many mainstream Protestant churches — especially in Protestant-majority countries — to adopt progressively liberal stances. These include support for women’s ordination, acceptance of reproductive rights such as contraception and legal abortion, and recognition of sexual rights, including same-sex marriage officiated by clergy.

Yet, this liberal shift has not gone unchallenged. In every Protestant-majority country, traditionalist factions persist, often concentrated in so-called ‘Bible Belts’ — notably in the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.⁵⁴ In Eastern Europe, longstanding minority Protestant communities, shaped by centuries-old migration or conversion, often retain distinctively conservative theological identities. Though numerically small, these groups are bolstered by substantial ideological, financial, and strategic backing from larger conservative Protestant networks in North America.

Consequently, Protestant anti-rights activism in Europe is driven by three interlocking dynamics: (1) efforts by conservative actors to build doctrinal unity for greater

influence; (2) transatlantic support from North American allies; and (3) focused attempts to wield political power at national and regional levels.

DOCTRINAL UNITY IN DIVERSITY: THE NASHVILLE STATEMENT AND PROTESTANT ANTI-GENDER ALIGNMENT

In recent years, conservative Protestant communities have mobilised around the *Nashville Statement*⁵⁵, a doctrinal manifesto affirming a traditionalist Christian view of gender and sexuality. Drafted in 2017 by the US-based Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood (CBMW), the statement asserts a procreative model of marriage and explicitly rejects LGBTQI identities and relationships. Framed as a theological intervention, the CBMW presented it as a unified guide for churches confronting contemporary debates over gender and sexuality, aiming to “bear witness” to what it describes as biblical sexual ethics.

The statement quickly gained traction among evangelical and Reformed conservatives, particularly in the US and parts of Europe. In the Netherlands, it was officially endorsed in 2019 by prominent figures in the Dutch Reformed Church⁵⁶ — an institution rooted in Calvinist theology — provoking national controversy. For conservative Dutch Reformed communities, especially in the ‘Bible Belt’ and aligned with the Reformed Political Party (SGP), the *Nashville Statement* became a key ideological reference, reinforcing theological convictions and informing both ecclesiastical discourse and political engagement.⁵⁷ Politicians from the SGP, Christian Union (CU), and the far-right Forum for Democracy (FvD) have cited it in public and policy debates.⁵⁸

A notable Calvinist cluster of anti-abortion advocacy has emerged among diaspora communities with Dutch Reformed roots, particularly in Michigan, USA. Influential families such as the DeVos and Prince dynasties, and their affiliated foundations, form part of this network (see ‘USA Chapter’). The Michigan-based Life International, which describes its mission as spreading “the Father’s heart for life,” has established 10 global

⁵⁰ Wyland, M. (2018). Papal Foundation’s Troubles Show Religious Nonprofits Have More Than One Authority. The Nonprofit Quarterly, 5 March. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/papal-foundations-troubles-show-religious-nonprofits-one-authority/>.

⁵¹ See <https://www.thepapalfoundation.org/>.

⁵² World Youth Alliance (2018). Annual Report. New York: WYA.

⁵³ See <https://www.fafce.org/>.

⁵⁴ Stolk, M. (2025). How European Biblebelts face new challenges. CNE News, 3 January. <https://cne.news/article/4566-how-european-biblebelts-face-new-challenges>.

⁵⁵ Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood. (2025). The *Nashville Statement*. <https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement/>.

⁵⁶ Reformatorisch Dagblad. (2019). Nashvilleverklaring krijgt pastoraal nawoord. Reformatorisch Dagblad, 4 January. <https://www.rdn.nl/artikel/783397-nashvilleverklaring-krijgt-pastoraal-nawoord>.

⁵⁷ Trouw. (2019). Kritiek op orthodox anti-homo-manifest, OM doet onderzoek naar strafbaarheid. Trouw, 7 January. <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/kritiek-op-orthodox-anti-homo-manifest-om-doet-onderzoek-naar-strafbaarheid-b1ef31ef/>.

⁵⁸ Zorgdrager, H. (2022). Chapter 4 Theological Assessment of the Gender and Sexuality Debate in the Netherlands: The Case of the ‘Nashville Statement’. In *The Calling of the Church in Times of Polarization* (pp. 89–117). Leiden: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004527652_006.

hubs, focusing on ‘pregnancy education’ in Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁹ Among its partners is the Hungarian *Kiáltás az Életért Egyesület* (Cry for Life)⁶⁰, echoing the name and ethos of the Dutch *Schreeuw om Leven* (Cry for Life) organisation.

NORTH AMERICAN EVANGELICAL PRESENCE IN EUROPE

The largest Protestant anti-rights organisation active in Europe is the US-based Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA)⁶¹, known for orchestrating mass religious events across the continent. Registered as a church in the US, the BGEA is exempt from IRS financial disclosure, but filings from its UK office show it has spent over US\$20 million dollars annually on European operations since 2019. Its events have significantly shaped the political orientation of future anti-rights leaders. For example, Jan-Aage Torp — Head of Oslo Church and President of European Apostolic Leaders (EAL)⁶² — attributes his political engagement to a 1978 meeting with Billy Graham.⁶³ Similarly, Finnish MP Päivi Räsänen, a speaker at BGEA’s 2024 European Congress on Evangelism⁶⁴, has ties to Agenda Europe and ADF International, notably in connection to her prosecution for homophobic hate speech.⁶⁵ The BGEA also promotes anti-gender discourse, including public support for the US Supreme Court’s rollback of abortion rights.⁶⁶ Annual events are held in cities such as Berlin, London, Brussels, Tallinn, and Madrid, with expansions planned for 2025–2026.⁶⁷

A newer actor, the Awakening Church⁶⁸, merges evangelical Christianity with New Age mysticism through its California-based Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry.⁶⁹ Its European

branch, Awakening Europe⁷⁰, hosts large-scale, youth-focused ‘mega-church’ gatherings and operates a campus in Eimeldingen, Netherlands. Although the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE) lists the group as agnostic on LGBTQI issues, links exist between Bethel affiliates and the anti-LGBTQI International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC).⁷¹ Awakening Europe has also hosted prominent anti-rights politicians and religious figures at its events.⁷²

Other emerging actors include migrant evangelical communities — such as Brazilian-influenced groups in Portugal — that have publicly backed far-right parties like CHEGA and the religiously conservative National Democratic Alternative (ADN).⁷³

THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Lacking a central authority comparable to the Catholic Church and often positioned as minorities within their broader religious traditions, socially conservative Protestant groups have developed alternative strategies to gain visibility and influence in European policymaking. The key strategy has been the establishment of a European-level political party.

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) — renamed the European Christian Political Party (ECP) in April 2025 — remains one of the most prominent transnational conservative Christian political actors in Europe. Functioning as both a European political party and a hybrid advocacy platform,

⁵⁹ ProPublica. (n.d.). Life International Inc: Full text of “Full Filing” for fiscal year ending Dec. 2021. <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/383625693/202202239349301610/full>.

⁶⁰ Kiáltás az Életért Egyesület. (n.d.). Partnereink. <https://www.kialtasazeletert.org/partnereink.html>.

⁶¹ See <https://billygraham.org/>.

⁶² See <https://e-a-l.eu/>.

⁶³ European Apostolic Leaders (2025). The President. <https://e-a-l.eu/leadership/president>.

⁶⁴ Missions Box. (2024). 25 Speakers from 15 Countries Announced for May 2025 European Congress on Evangelism. Missions Box, 18 June. <https://missionsbox.org/news/25-speakers-from-15-countries-announced-for-may-2025-european-congress-on-evangelism/>.

⁶⁵ ADF International. (2024). Bible-tweet case to be heard at Finnish Supreme Court. ADF International, 19 April. <https://adfinternational.org/news/bible-tweet-case-to-be-heard-at-finnish-supreme-court>.

⁶⁶ Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. (2025). Life in Post-Roe America. BGEA, 8 April. <https://billygraham.org/articles/life-in-a-post-roe-america>.

⁶⁷ Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. (2025). Evangelistic Events. <https://billygraham.org/events>.

⁶⁸ See <https://awakeningchurch.org/>.

⁶⁹ See <https://bssm.net/>.

⁷⁰ See <https://awakeningeurope.com/>.

⁷¹ These include: Andrea Minichiello Williams founded Christian Concern UK; Pastor Elizabeth Woning teaches at the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry; and Gintautas Vaitoska MD, STL, directs the Studies on Marriage and the Family programme at the International Theological Institute in Trumau, Austria. International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice. (2023). The People: Some of the IFTCC leadership. <https://iftcc.org/people/>.

⁷² Awakening Austria featured Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, alongside prominent anti-gender personalities such as Gudrun Kugler and Cardinal Schönborn. Awakening Europe. (2025). 2019 Awakening Vienna in Austria. <https://awakeningeurope.com/past-events/awakening-austria>.

⁷³ Iacomini, F. (2024). Brazilian Evangelicals Bring Their Political Playbook to Portugal. Christianity Today, 5 March. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/03/brazilian-evangelicals-politics-po/>; and Courrier International. (2024). Une du jour. Les évangéliques à la conquête du Portugal. Courrier International, 11 June. <https://www.courrierinternational.com/une/une-du-jour-les-evangeliques-a-la-conquete-du-portugal>.

it serves as the institutional backbone of Dutch Reformed anti-rights mobilisation. The Christian Union (CU) and the Reformed Political Party (SGP), both ECPP members, have evolved from representing a domestic religious minority in the Netherlands to becoming central players in transnational anti-gender politics (see 'Politics' and 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing').

While the ECPP's core remains rooted in the Dutch Reformed tradition, it now includes a broader spectrum of minority conservative Christian communities and individual politicians across Europe. CU and SGP affiliates have also launched the *Talenting Foundation*, a grant-making body that sponsors anti-gender initiatives, including transatlantic summits organised by the *Political Network for Values* (PNV) (see 'Politics and Foundations').

4.3 ORTHODOXY UNBOUND: THE RISE OF ANTI-RIGHTS CHURCH ACTIVISM IN THE EAST

While the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) had been an early pioneer in anti-rights advocacy, other Orthodox Churches have rapidly caught up in the past five years. Nearly every national Orthodox Church has embarked on anti-rights activism targeting some aspect of gender equality or SRHR. Key features of Orthodox anti-rights activism are the increasing social conservatism, veering into quasi-theocratic fascism, the spread of anti-rights activism across the Orthodox world, and the geopolitical implications of such activism.

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE – TOWARDS THEOCRATIC FASCISM

The most alarming development in the world of Eastern Christian Orthodoxy was the meeting in March 2024 of the XXV World Russian People's Council (WRPC) entitled 'The Present and Future of the Russian World'.⁷⁴ The WRPC is meant to advise the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian political class on a range of policy issues by issuing a Mandate.^{75,76} It is presided over by Patriarch Kirill,⁷⁷ head of the ROC and



④ Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernandez presents the declaration 'Dignitas Infinita' during a press conference at the Vatican.

benefitted from the financial support of Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev (see Russia Chapter). The new Mandate has major implications for how the ROC views reproduction, sexuality, human rights and democracy, as well as how that should inform Russia's internal legislative framework and its geopolitical engagement with the world.

Specifically, the Mandate identifies "family and demographic policy" as the key priority areas, stating, "The main threat to the existence and development of Russia is the demographic catastrophe that our country is experiencing."⁷⁸ To remedy this, "the fight against abortion should be placed at the center of all state policy",⁷⁹ as the "attitude of Russian society to abortion must be radically changed".⁸⁰ To achieve this, the Mandate suggests a series of legislative measures to limit access to abortion care and calls for new natalist policies.

The Mandate also calls for the revival of the large, traditional family, with the goal of the population of Russia increasing to 600 million people in 100 years.⁸¹ It demands the protection of Russian civilisational identity through the "sovereignisation of the national educational system", which would entail a "cleans[ing] of the destructive ideological concepts and attitudes, primarily Western ones".⁸²

⁷⁴ World Russian People's Cathedral. (2024). Order of the XXV World Russian Folk Cathedral «The present and future of the Russian world ». World Russian People's Cathedral, 27 March. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/print/6116189.html>.

⁷⁵ See also Chapter 11: 'Church-organised non-governmental organisations'.

⁷⁶ Stepanov, A.D. (2024). Why did Malofeev leave? Russian Folk Line, 26 March. https://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2024/03/26/pochemu_ushel_malofeev.

⁷⁷ Patriarch Kirill has a long history of collaboration with the State. According to Swiss newspapers citing declassified archives, back in the 1970s, then Vladimir Gundayev (alias Mikhailov) was tasked by the KGB with infiltrating the World Council of Churches to turn it against the USA and its allies. Novaya Gazeta Europe. (2023). Media: Russia's church leader Patriarch Kirill spied for KGB in Geneva in 1970s. Novaya Gazeta Europe, 5 February. <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2023/02/05/media-russias-church-leader-patriarch-kirill-spied-for-kgb-in-geneva-in-1970s-en-news>.

⁷⁸ World Russian People's Cathedral. (2024). Order of the XXV World Russian Folk Cathedral «The present and future of the Russian world ». World Russian People's Cathedral, 27 March. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/print/6116189.html>. ⁷⁹ Ibid. ⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ In 2025, the population of the Russian Federation stands at 143.8 million people.

⁸² World Russian People's Cathedral. (2024). Order of the XXV World Russian Folk Cathedral «The present and future of the Russian world ». World Russian People's Cathedral, 27 March. <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/print/6116189.html>. ⁸³ Ibid. ⁸⁴ Ibid.

Geopolitically, the Mandate refers to Russia's international role as "the 'Restrainer', protecting the world from evil" and from the "onslaught of globalism and the victory of the West, which has fallen into Satanism".⁸³ It refers to the Russian aggression against Ukraine as a "Holy War", and states that the borders of the 'Russian world' are "much wider than the state borders of both the present-day Russian Federation"⁸⁴ (see also 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing').

THE ORTHODOX WORLD AWAKENS TO ANTI-RIGHTS ACTIVISM

By 2024, nearly all Orthodox Churches worldwide had become increasingly active in anti-rights mobilisation, particularly around issues related to gender and sexuality. This trend is most pronounced in contexts where Orthodox institutions maintain close ties with the ROC.

In Georgia, the convergence of the pro-Russian lobby and the Georgian Orthodox Church has driven a surge in anti-LGBTQI and anti-gender initiatives.⁸⁵ In 2023, the Georgian Church called for legislation against so-called 'LGBT propaganda',⁸⁶ which materialised in 2024 through a comprehensive legislative package framed as promoting 'family values' and protecting minors. This package, consisting of 19 laws, effectively bans same-sex marriage and adoption by

non-heterosexual individuals.⁸⁷ The initiative garnered support from local ultra-conservative actors such as Levan Vasadze, a pro-Russian oligarch with ties to the fascist philosopher Alexander Dugin.⁸⁸

Similar patterns have emerged in other Orthodox-majority countries with Moscow-linked churches. In North Macedonia, the Macedonian Orthodox Church led protests in June 2023 against gender equality and civil registration laws, with many demonstrators documented as having ties to Russian-affiliated networks.⁸⁹ In Serbia, the Orthodox Church has long fuelled anti-gender sentiment,⁹⁰ including by organising protests against Pride events in Serbia and Montenegro in 2022.⁹¹ Likewise in Romania, the Orthodox Church actively supported the 2018 constitutional referendum to restrict the definition of marriage.⁹² Meanwhile, the Romanian Federation of Orthodox Pro-Life Organizations has campaigned against abortion and "paedophile and LGBT propaganda".^{93,94} In Moldova, the Orthodox Church opposed recognition of same-sex couples in response to a 2023 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).⁹⁵

In Bulgaria, the Orthodox Church increasingly aligns with pro-Russian nationalist forces. In 2024, it supported a legislative ban on the teaching of 'non-traditional' gender identities in schools.⁹⁶ The election of Daniil Vidinsky as Patriarch in

⁸⁵ Rogava, K. (2023). The Role of The Georgian Orthodox Church in Resistance to LGBTQ Equality: Examining Discourses and Geopolitical Implications (Master's dissertation). <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/29551/thesis.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Civil Georgia. (2023). Patriarchate of Georgia Urges Legislative Action Against "LGBT Propaganda". Civil Georgia, 2 July. <https://civil.ge/archives/550337>.

⁸⁷ Light, F. (2024). Georgian parliament gives initial approval to sweeping curbs on LGBT rights. Reuters, 27 June. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/georgian-parliament-gives-initial-approval-sweeping-curbs-lgbt-rights-2024-06-27/>.

⁸⁸ Georgia Today. (2021). Dugin & Eurasianism – What We Need to Know. Georgia Today, 5 August. <https://georgiatoday.ge/dugin-eurasianism-what-we-need-to-know/>.

⁸⁹ Metamorphosis Foundation. (2023). Disinformation fuels church protest against gender equality in North Macedonia. Global Voices, 10 August. <https://globalvoices.org/2023/08/10/disinformation-fuels-church-protest-against-gender-equality-in-north-macedonia/#:~:text=On%20June%2029%2C%20the%20Macedonian,the%20capital%20of%20North%20Macedonia>.

⁹⁰ Lazda, M. (2024). Fri Sept 13 Antigenderism in Serbia. H-Announce, 9 September. <https://networks.h-net.org/group/announcements/20043037/fri-sept-13-antigenderism-serbia>.

⁹¹ Kajosevic, S. (2022). Orthodox Christians to Rally Against LGBT Pride March in Montenegro. Balkan Insight, 4 October. <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/10/04/orthodox-christians-to-rally-against-lgbt-pride-march-in-montenegro/>.

⁹² Orthodox Christianity. (2016). Romanian Orthodox Church: Marriage Only Between Man, Woman. Orthodox Christianity, 15 January. <https://orthochristian.com/89740.html>.

⁹³ Federația Provita Ortodoxă. (2024). Vino la Marșul pentru viață! [Facebook, 29 March]. https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=825518722943988&set=a.825518756277318&locale=ca_ES.

⁹⁴ Cultura Vieții. (2018). Federația Organizațiilor Ortodoxe Pro-Vita, în contextul difuzării la MȚR de filme obscene: „Opriti profanarea valorilor culturale naționale! Opriti propaganda pedofilă și lgbt din instituții culturale și de educație! Opriti violarea simbolurilor identitare românești!”. Cultura Vieții, 8 February. <http://www.culturavietii.ro/federatia-organizatiilor-ortodoxe-pro-vita-opriti-profanarea-valorilor-culturale-nationale-opriti-propaganda-pedofila-si-lgbt-120bpm-soldatii-poveste-ferentari-muzeul-taranului/>.

⁹⁵ Necsutu, M. (2023). Moldovan Church Urges Govt to Reject LGBT Couples' Rights. Balkan Insight, 31 January. <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/01/31/moldovan-church-urges-govt-to-reject-lgbt-couples-rights/>.

⁹⁶ Church Times. (2024). Bulgarian church backs ban on LGBT teaching. Church Times, 16 August. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/16-august/news/world/bulgarian-church-backs-ban-on-lgbt-teaching>.

June 2024 further entrenched this alignment; Vidinsky's outspoken pro-Russian stance drew criticism from Ukraine and several EU Member States.⁹⁷ Earlier that year, the Synod condemned the ECHR ruling in *Babulkova and Koilova v. Bulgaria*, which found Bulgaria in violation for failing to provide legal recognition to same-sex relationships.^{98,99}

Beyond the Russian sphere of influence, other Orthodox Churches have also adopted similar positions. In Greece, the Church condemned the 2024 passage of equal marriage legislation, calling for the excommunication of supporting parliamentarians.^{100,101} In Cyprus, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus criticised the Ministry of Education's plans for

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).¹⁰² Similarly, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church — the largest faith community in the country — issued statements condemning LGBTQI individuals, characterising them as foreign agents undermining national culture.¹⁰³

Together, these developments signal a coordinated, transnational shift in Orthodox Christian institutions, increasingly active in anti-rights advocacy. In many cases, this activism reinforces broader geopolitical alignments, particularly with pro-Russian positions, and contributes to rolling back hard-won human rights protections across multiple regions.

TABLE 12

SAMPLE OF ANTI-RIGHTS ACTIVISM OF NATIONAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Country	Year	Orthodox Church advocacy activities
Bulgaria	2024	Endorsement of CSE teaching ban proposal by a pro-Russian party
	2023	Denunciation of the ECHR judgement in <i>Babulkova and Koilova v. Bulgaria</i>
Cyprus	2023	Condemnation of CSE
Estonia	2023	Campaign against the Equal Marriage Bill
Ethiopia	2024	Condemnation of the LGBTQI community as foreign intrusion
Georgia	2023	Call for legislative action against "LGBT propaganda" (anti-LGBTQI law passed in 2024)
Greece	2024	Call for the excommunication of pro-gender equality parliamentarians
Moldova	2023	Call on the government to not recognise the ECHR ruling on same-sex partnerships
North Macedonia	2023	Organisation of protests against gender equality and civil registration laws
Russia	2024	Mandate of the XXV World Russian People's Council calls on authorities to adopt a militaristic, anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQI, anti-feminist, anti-education and authoritarian Orthodox theocracy
Serbia	2022	Anti-Pride rallies and a campaign to cancel EuroPride

⁹⁷ Todorov, S. (2024). Bulgaria's New Patriarch Sparks Alarm Over Pro-Russian Views. Balkan Insight, 1 July. https://balkaninsight.com/2024/07/01/bulgarias-new-patriarch-sparks-alarm-over-pro-russian-views/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR3a5ryQVvVt6kMWJSyLyOBOyLQEy7_IH8q3ktUnrpwR_nGAhIk0W2VcA_aem_B9SwGkOdgGgEavOnNd8fhg.

⁹⁸ Orthodoxy Cognate Page Society. (2023). Bulgarian Orthodox Church Stands Firm Against ECHR Decision on Same-Sex Relationships. OCPS, 1 December. <https://ocpsociety.org/bulgarian-orthodox-church-stands-firm-against-echr-decision-on-same-sex-relationships/>.

⁹⁹ See also Merdjanova, I. (2022). The Orthodox Church, Neosecularisation, and the Rise of Anti-Gender Politics in Bulgaria. Religions, 13(4), 359. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/13/4/359#:~:text=The%20anti%2Dgender%20alignment%20of,and%20in%20the%20job%20market.>

¹⁰⁰ Smith, H. (2024). Greek Orthodox church calls for excommunication of MPs after same-sex marriage vote. The Guardian, 7 March. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/07/greek-orthodox-church-calls-for-excommunication-of-mps-after-same-sex-marriage-vote>.

¹⁰¹ Paphitis, N. (2024). Greece becomes first Orthodox Christian country to legalize same-sex civil marriage. Associated Press, 16 February. <https://apnews.com/article/greece-same-sex-marriage-law-parliament-church-5be190dd6a7628d7a057be683256b8c2>.

¹⁰² Orthodox Christianity. (2023). "Depriving our children of spiritual fortitude"—Cypriot hierarch condemns compulsory sex education. Orthodox Christianity, 7 September. <https://orthochristian.com/155912.html>.

¹⁰³ Itai, D. (2024). Ethiopia's largest church condemns LGBTQ community. Washington Blade, 7 March. <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2024/03/07/ethiopias-largest-church-condemns-lgbtq-community/>.

HOW ANTI-GENDER IDEOLOGY SERVES RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS

At the intersection of Russian state interests and the ROC, a coherent anti-gender policy package has emerged. This typically includes bans on so-called “LGBT propaganda,” measures to shield children from “gender ideology,” and opposition to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). Framed as moral protectionism, these policies function geopolitically — advancing ideological divides between Russia and Europe.¹⁰⁴ Countries adopting this package, such as Georgia, increasingly drift toward Russian alignment, as prospects for European integration diminish.¹⁰⁵

The ROC’s strategic opposition to rulings by the ECHR on sexual and reproductive rights — especially in Eastern Europe and the Balkans — is aimed at undermining trust in the broader European human rights framework. This aligns with Russia’s long-term objective of weakening pan-European institutions. In September 2024, the Russian Duma escalated this antagonism by formally requesting the Prosecutor General designate the Council of Europe an “undesirable organisation,”¹⁰⁶ echoing Russia’s own withdrawal in March 2022.¹⁰⁷

In response to the ROC’s growing geopolitical role, several neighbouring states have taken defensive action. In 2025, Estonia’s Parliament voted to sever all legal and canonical ties between the Estonian Orthodox Church and the Moscow Patriarchate, citing its support for Russia’s war in Ukraine.¹⁰⁸ Estonia’s Internal Security Service had previously warned that the ROC was one of the last unregulated vectors for Russian influence operations.¹⁰⁹ In Ukraine, a 2024 presidential decree formally banned the ROC and affiliated entities, codifying a split that began after the 2022 invasion.¹¹¹

RELIGIOUS ACTIVISM AND DOCTRINAL CONSERVATISM

Over the past decade, conservative currents within Catholic, Orthodox, and traditionalist Protestant circles have moved beyond theological debate to assert growing political clout. No longer confined to pulpits or synods, these actors are actively shaping laws, policies, and public discourse — most often by targeting gender equality, LGBTQI rights, and reproductive freedoms.

One of the most striking developments is the rise of ChONGOs: Church-organised NGOs that rebrand theological agendas as civil society advocacy. Their growing footprint signals a shift in the infrastructure of influence, from religious authority to policy penetration. This evolving architecture poses a direct challenge to secular governance and undermines the credibility of rights-based frameworks at both national and international levels.



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▲ Patriarch Kirill celebrates Easter service at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow.

¹⁰⁴ Prodromou, E., Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy Policy Brief #5, Diplomacy, Geopolitics, and Global, Orthodox Christianity in the Twenty-First Century, Berkeley Center for Peace and Religion, November 2023, <https://religionanddiplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/231120ProdromouDiplomacyGeopoliticsGlobalOrthodoxChristianityTwentyFirstCentury.pdf>.

¹⁰⁵ Nikolova, V. (2023). Kremlin speaking: homophobia as geopolitics. Factcheck, 1 June. <https://factcheck.bg/en/kremlin-speaking-homophobia-as-geopolitics/#>.

¹⁰⁶ Novaya Gazeta Europa. (2024). The State Duma asked the Prosecutor General to recognize the Council of Europe «as undesirable» organization. Novaya Gazeta Europa, 24 September. <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2024/09/24/v-gosdume-poprosili-genprokuraturu-priznat-sovet-evropy-nezheletelnoi-organizatsiei-news>.

¹⁰⁷ Council of Europe. (2022). Russia ceases to be a Party to the European Convention on Human Rights on 16 September 2022. Council of Europe, 23 March. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/russia-ceases-to-be-a-party-to-the-european-convention-of-human-rights-on-16-september-2022>.

¹⁰⁸ ERR. (2025). Estonia tightens church law to curb foreign influence, protect national security. ERR, 9 April. <https://news.err.ee/1609659044/estonia-tightens-church-law-to-curb-foreign-influence-protect-national-security>.

¹⁰⁹ Estonian Internal Security Service. (2024). Annual Review 2023-2024. Tallinn: Estonian Internal Security Service, p. 17. https://kapo.ee/sites/default/files/content_page_attachments/Annual%20review%202023-2024.pdf.

¹¹⁰ RFE/RL. (2024). Zelenskiy Signs Law Banning Russian Orthodox Church In Ukraine. RFE/RL, 24 August. <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-russia-orthodox-religion-ban/33091200.html>.

4a

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING? THE RISE OF CHURCH-ORGANISED NGOS (CHONGOS)

“Beware the wolf in sheep’s clothing; sometimes the kindest smile hides the darkest secrets.”

(Elena Hart)

The growth of religious extremist activism increasingly relies on a proliferation of anti-gender civil society organisations masquerading as non-governmental organisations (NGOs).¹ While the 2018 report *Restoring the Natural Order* exposed the transnational networks behind these groups, current research indicates that categorising them simply as NGOs is insufficient. Many display characteristics that sharply diverge from conventional NGO frameworks.

Terms like government-organised NGOs (GONGOs), quasi-autonomous NGOs (QUANGOs), or faith-based organisations (FBOs) inadequately capture the distinctive nature of these religious extremist actors. These categories describe specific relations with state or religious bodies but miss the unique dynamics of organisations whose structure and agenda are deeply embedded in ecclesiastical authority. Building on the GONGO framework, the term **Church-organised NGO (ChONGO)** better encapsulates this subset.

ChONGOs operate under the veneer of independent civil society organisations but are in reality tightly aligned with, and often directly controlled by, religious institutions. This alignment fundamentally shapes their goals, strategies, and activities, setting them apart from both traditional NGOs and other hybrids. This refined concept clarifies how religious actors embed themselves within civil society to wield influence over public discourse and policymaking.

4.4 THE EMERGENCE OF CHONGOS

The term ‘NGO’ is widely used but lacks a universal legal definition. The United Nations defines NGOs as independent, non-profit entities with humanitarian or development objectives, though legal recognition varies by jurisdiction.² While NGOs are expected to operate independently of governments, their relationships with external authorities differ, leading to various subcategories:

- **GONGOs** are funded or controlled by states while appearing independent. They often serve as tools of soft power, even in democratic contexts.³
- **QUANGOs** are legally separate but state-funded entities performing public services, such as the BBC or the UK’s Forestry Commission.⁴
- **FBOs** are non-profits affiliated with religious groups that provide humanitarian services, particularly in the Global South.⁵

Research into anti-gender funding flows has identified a new category of organisations that, while legally registered as NGOs, lack independence due to their close ties to religious institutions. Unlike GONGOs or QUANGOs, they are not state-controlled,

¹ Kuhar, R., & Paternotte, D. (2018). *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*.

² United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Non-governmental Organization (NGO). <https://popp.undp.org/taxonomy/term/6216>.

³ Hasmath, R., T. Hildebrandt, & J.Y.J. Hsu. (2019). Conceptualizing Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations. *Journal of Civil Society*, https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100174/1/Conceptualizing_GONGO.pdf.

⁴ Cambridge University Press (2025). Quango. *Cambridge Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/quango>.

⁵ Bielefeld, W., & Cleveland, W.S. (2013). Defining Faith-Based Organizations and Understanding Them Through Research. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(3), 442–467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764013484090>.

nor do they resemble FBOs, as their primary focus is advocacy rather than humanitarian outreach. Instead, they prioritise lobbying to influence public policy in ways that align with the interests of specific religious institutions. ChONGOs do engage in some niche service delivery, most typically associated with crisis pregnancy centres, natural family planning and other anti-gender services (See Chapter 5a on anti-gender services).

ChONGOs often obscure their religious affiliations to appear as independent civil society actors. This allows them to influence public policy while avoiding being labelled as religiously biased. Their advocacy typically opposes gender equality, LGBTQI rights and reproductive rights, and in some cases their concealed ties have even enabled them to secure public funding. Like GONGOs, ChONGOs operate under an external authority — except here, the influence stems from religious institutions rather than governments. An organisation qualifies as a ChONGO based on five key criteria: establishment, funding, personnel, governance and activities.

- **Establishment:** Analysing founders and membership reveals whether a religious institution or its affiliates initiated the organisation.
- **Funding:** Examining financial sources determines whether Church-affiliated entities or individuals primarily fund the organisation, often with limited transparency.
- **Governance:** Assessing the composition of the Board and statutes highlights control by religious figures, ensuring adherence to ecclesiastical objectives.
- **Personnel:** Identifying strong religious affiliations among employees, volunteers and beneficiaries signals alignment with religious institutions.
- **Activities:** Unlike FBOs, which focus on humanitarian service delivery, ChONGOs engage in lobbying and advocacy to advance the positions of the religious hierarchy to which they are linked, while simultaneously obscuring their religious ties to appear independent.

A ChONGO can be defined as: An organisation created by a religious entity (Church), resembling an NGO, established to promote issues that the Church seeks to highlight. ChONGOs are, to varying degrees, funded, staffed and governed by representatives of the Church.

Following this analysis, seven major anti-gender organisations clearly emerge as ChONGOs: the World Youth Alliance (WYA); the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE); the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN); Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (FJL); Teen STAR; the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) and its related political foundation and youth movement; and the World Russian People's Congress (WRPC).

THE WYA: OPUS DEI FOR KIDS!

*"The Pope has told my generation to build a culture of life. Those are our orders. We're just following them."*⁶
(Anna Halpine, World Youth Alliance founder)

The World Youth Alliance (WYA) portrays itself as a secular youth group championing reproductive health and human dignity, but it aggressively pushes a covert anti-SRHR agenda rooted in ultra-conservative Catholic doctrine. Since 1999, the WYA has strategically opposed the ICPD Programme of Action, using a polished secular facade to secure funding and legitimacy.⁸ Rather than a grassroots youth movement, it operates as a Vatican front, backed by the Holy See's UN Mission and extremist groups like the Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam).⁹

Its funding reveals deep ties to Catholic elites — from the Knights of Columbus-linked Chiaroscuro Foundation to Opus Dei-affiliated private donors. Recruitment zeroes in on Catholic universities connected to Opus Dei,¹⁰ while many European recruits come from aristocratic families.¹¹ The WYA Board mirrors this elite network, dominated by Opus Dei, the Knights of Malta, Catholic aristocracy, and the Vatican Bank, with youth barely represented.¹²

⁶ Weigel, G. (2005). *God's Choice: Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church*. Harper, p. 39.

⁸ The WYA's total European funding between 2019 and 2023, which includes local chapters from the EU, Croatia and Spain, was US\$5 million, of which around US\$1 million came from EU public funds. European Commission. (n.d.). Financial Transparency System data from 2014 to 2023. <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/analysis.html>.

⁹ Indeed, C-Fam can be considered the parent of the WYA, as C-Fam employee Diana Kilarijan co-founded the WYA before moving there full-time. See: Catholics for a Free Choice. (2014). *Conservative Catholic Influence in Europe*. Washington, DC, and Versailles: Catholics for a Free Choice. <https://www.catholicsforchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2005worldyouthalliancefactsheet.pdf>, and LittleSis. (2023). *World Youth Alliance: Anti-Abortion Organization*. https://littlesis.org/org/346942-World_Youth_Alliance.

¹⁰ Inside Philanthropy. (2019). Sean Fieler. <https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/find-a-grant/major-donors/sean-fieler-html>.

¹¹ Examples include young people from the Habsburg, Alting von Geusau and Gudenus families. See WYA Annual reports.

¹² Examples of WYA Board Members include: Jean-Hugues J Monier of the Knights of Malta, see mention of his induction in 2011 at: <https://www.cny.org/stories/knights-dames-of-malta-invested-at-cathedral-mass,6506>; Deb O'Hara-Rusckowski who worked at the Permanent Representation

WYA spreads a secularized Catholic social doctrine through its Human Dignity Curriculum and the FEMM app, which markets natural family planning as a “scientific” alternative to contraception (See Chapter 5a ‘Anti-gender services’). By hijacking reproductive rights language, it infiltrates secular policy spaces, winning funding while pushing Vatican-backed campaigns against contraception, abortion, and gender equality.¹³

“The third and last impressive thing I’d like to note about the World Youth Alliance tonight is how helpful it is in the work of the Holy See at the United Nations. Since its founding, the World Youth Alliance has had warm relations with my predecessors as Permanent Observer of the Holy See and with so many of our diplomats, delegates and interns. WYA leaders have similarly had strong relations with then the Pontifical Council for the Laity, assisting with World Youth Days. Their important work has earned them, at the strong recommendation of the Secretariat of State, a prestigious grant from the Papal Foundation. And we have had so many fruitful collaborations, including for the last three Commissions on the Status of Women, in co-sponsoring conferences together. They are one of the most pleasant, and most effective, of our collaborators in such Conferences.”¹⁴
(Archbishop Bernadito C. Auza’s 2018 speech at a WYA dinner)

Effectively, the WYA is the Vatican’s youth-focused diplomatic weapon, advancing Holy See priorities at the UN and beyond. Archbishop Bernadito C. Auza’s 2018 praise highlights its key role and close ties to Vatican diplomacy, including Papal Foundation funding and leadership at major UN conferences.¹⁵

Crucially, the WYA grooms young activists for lifelong ultra-conservative careers — many alumni move into religious extremist lobbying firms or top roles at the Holy See’s UN Mission, shaping global human rights policy in the Vatican’s image.¹⁶ (See Shadowy Power Brokers)

FAFCE: THE LONG ARM OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS

FAFCE operates as an advocacy arm for the Catholic Church within European political and policy spaces, presenting itself as a grass-roots network of Catholic family associations while being subordinated to diocesan structures and Vatican-affiliated entities. Most of its national members¹⁷ are closely aligned with or directly integrated into Catholic diocesan outreach efforts, such as marriage counselling services; in some cases, these members are officially recognised Catholic lay movements.¹⁸

FAFCE’s declared receipt of funding from the Papal Foundation and its shared office space with the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)¹⁹ illustrate its operational and strategic alignment with the Catholic Church’s policy priorities. Its by-laws explicitly mandate coordination with COMECE and other formal representations of the Vatican.²⁰ FAFCE’s activities go beyond representation of Catholic family associations: its involvement in initiatives such as the Agenda Europe network, known for opposing SRHR and advancing anti-gender agendas, and its attempt in 2024 to create a ‘Family 7’ grouping within the G7,²¹ reveal its intent to exert significant influence on international and regional policy discussions.

of the Sovereign Order of Malta, see: <https://www.un.int/orderofmalta/staff/mrs-deborah-ohara-rusckowski>; Caroline Maingi from the Opus Dei Strathmore University, see: <https://shss.strathmore.edu/caroline-shisubili-maingi/>; Federico Eichberg: see role at Opus Dei Italy event, <https://opusdei.org/it/article/due-convegna-per-universitari-in-italia/>; and Jean-Baptiste de Franssu: President of the Istituto per le Opere di Religione (IOR), ie. the Vatican Bank, see: <https://www.ior.va/content/ior/en/governance/jean-baptiste-bouville-de-franssu.html>.

¹³ The WYA promotes its in-house policy white papers on principal SRHR issues such as family planning, sexual education and maternal health, among others, see: <https://wya.net/white-papers/>.

¹⁴ See World Youth Alliance. (2018). 2018 Annual Report. New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2018-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>. ¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. (2021). Newsletter, 12 February. <https://holyseemission.org/contents/newsletters/6026f3895168a.php>.

¹⁷ Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2025). Our Members. <https://www.fafce.org/our-members/>.

¹⁸ For example, FAFCE’s member in Germany, Familienbund der Katholiken (<https://www.familienbund.org/>), is the family outreach of the German Catholic Church organised according to diocese; in Poland, the FAFCE member Stowarzyszenie Przymierze Rodzin (<https://przymierze.org.pl/topr-y/>) organises children’s and youth peer groups, parents’ groups and family groups centred on local Catholic parishes; in Lithuania, FAFCE’s member Lithuanian Family Centre (https://lvk.lcn.lt/en/p_strukturos/lsc/) declares on its website that is “since 1997 subordinate to the Conference of Lithuanian Bishops”; and FAFCE’s member in Malta, the Cana Movement (<https://canamovement.org>), is an organisation within the Catholic Church of Malta established in 1956.

¹⁹ FAFCE shares the same address as COMECE. See Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2025). Contact. <https://www.fafce.org/contact/>.

²⁰ The by-laws state that FAFCE “prends l’avis dans la conduite de son action des instances européennes constituées par l’Eglise, notamment de la COMECE à Bruxelles, de la Nonciature Apostolique auprès de l’Union Européenne à Bruxelles, et de la Mission Permanente du Saint Siège au Conseil de l’Europe à Strasbourg”. Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2004). Modification des Statuts de la Fédération des Associations Familiales Catholiques en Europe en date du 23 octobre 2003. Vienna: FAFCE. https://www.fafce.org/wp-content/uploads/Statuts_FAFCE.pdf.

²¹ Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2024). Press Release: FAFCE co-founds F7; Meets with Minister Roccella. FAFCE, 24 September. <https://www.fafce.org/press-release-fafce-co-founds-f7-meets-with-minister-roccella/>.



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▲ **Vincenzo Bassi, president of Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE).**

By aligning its positions with COMECE²² and advocating for policies reflecting Catholic social doctrine, FAFCE serves as a civil society façade, leveraging the language of grass-roots activism to further the Catholic Church's ideological and political outreach in European and international forums such as the Council of Europe, where it maintains Participatory Status,²³ and the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, where it participates in the Fundamental Rights Platform.²⁴ This positioning allows FAFCE to embed itself within civil society discussions while systematically advancing a Catholic doctrinal agenda, effectively masking ecclesiastical influence under the guise of secular advocacy.

FONDATION JÉRÔME LEJEUNE: ADVANCING CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINE AS SCIENCE

The **Fondation Jérôme Lejeune** (FJL), one of France's largest private foundations, merges scientific appearance with ideological activism. Founded in the 1990s to honour geneticist

Jérôme Lejeune — who discovered the chromosomal cause of Down Syndrome and was closely linked to Opus Dei²⁵ — FJL presents itself as a leader in genetic research and family support. Yet its operations reveal a dual mission: advancing Catholic doctrine under the guise of science.

While highlighting its medical work, FJL allocates roughly 14% of its revenue to 'defence of life' initiatives, funding anti-abortion and anti-gender activism.²⁶ Its core strategy is lawfare, with over 60 legal actions filed since 2008 targeting sexual and reproductive health — despite a success rate below 10%²⁷. FJL promotes religious beliefs, such as that life begins at conception, as scientific facts to influence public discourse.

FJL maintains strong ties to institutions like Opus Dei's University of Navarra and the Legionaries of Christ's Francisco de Vitoria University. FJL's leadership includes individuals with significant roles in anti-gender activism,²⁸ and plays a key role in transnational ultra-conservative networks including Agenda Europe, One of Us and La Manif Pour Tous, with international branches amplifying its reach.

FJL exemplifies the rise of 'faith-based science': religious ideology repackaged as research to shape secular policy. Positioned at the crossroads of science, religion and politics, it uses institutional legitimacy to pursue a deeply conservative agenda—making it a powerful actor in global debates on bioethics, gender, and human rights.

TEEN STAR: A CLOAKED CHASTITY AGENDA

Teen STAR is a global Church-organised NGO (ChONGO) and abstinence education programme rooted in the Billings natural family planning method and shaped by Humanae Vitae²⁹ and

²² Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2024). Press Release: FAFCE and the Council of European Bishop's Conferences renew Memorandum of Understanding, reaffirming commitment to family associations at the service of the Church and the Common Good. FAFCE, 7 October. <https://www.fafce.org/press-release-fafce-and-ccee-renew-memorandum-of-understanding/>.

²³ Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe. (2025). Council of Europe. <https://www.fafce.org/european-and-international-institutions/council-of-europe/>.

²⁴ European Union. (2024). Organisations Part of the Fundamental Rights Platform (status: 30 September 2024). https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Ffra.europa.eu%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Ffra_uploads%2Ffrp_list_of_participating_organisations_30-09-2024.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK.

²⁵ Normand, F. (1995). La troublante ascension de l'Opus Dei. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September. <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1995/09/NORMAND/6667>.

²⁶ See FJL's annual reports available at : <https://www.fondationlejeune.org/la-fondation/qui-sommes-nous/rapport-activer/>.

²⁷ Jacquin, J.B. (2024). Comment la Fondation Jérôme Lejeune entrave la recherche française. *Le Monde*, 16 September. https://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2024/09/16/comment-la-fondation-jerome-lejeune-entrave-la-recherche-francaise_6320472_1650684.html.

²⁸ These include Jean-Marie Le Méné (see Dryef, Z. (2019). Jean-Marie Le Méné, le magistrat qui finance la croisade « pro-vie » des parents de Vincent Lambert. *Le Monde*, 31 May. https://www.lemonde.fr/m-le-mag/article/2019/05/31/jean-marie-le-mene-le-magistrat-qui-finance-la-croisade-pro-vie-des-parents-de-vincent-lambert_5469630_4500055.html); Ludovine de la Rochère, who founded La Manif Pour Tous; and David Lejeune (see 'Shadowy power brokers').

²⁹ Wills, S.E. (2014). Why Teen STAR Is Uniquely Successful In Motivating Abstinence Among Teens. Teen STAR. <https://missionsupport.archden.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Teen-STARsSuccess.pdf>.

Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body.³⁰ Founded in 1980 by nun and physician Hanna Klaus, it now operates in 38 countries across five continents³¹, often through franchise-like schemes embedded in school systems and international aid programmes.³² National chapters — frequently supported by dioceses or run directly by Church entities, as in the UK³³ — train facilitators who then introduce the curriculum in schools. The international arm, Teen STAR International, is led by Pilar Vigil, a Chilean doctor closely linked to Opus Dei.

Though it claims to offer neutral education, Teen STAR promotes Catholic doctrine in opposition to the evidence-based Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) framework endorsed by the World Health Organization. Its operations are marked by opacity: national programmes often function under anonymous shell entities, obscuring sources of funding and governance structures.

This lack of transparency raises serious concerns about accountability and intent. Teen STAR's seemingly neutral front enables it to enter policymaking and education spaces while displacing effective, rights-based CSE initiatives. It exemplifies how faith-based social doctrine is strategically embedded in education systems to undermine global public health and human rights norms.

THE ICLN: THE VATICAN'S POLITICAL OUTREACH MECHANISM

The **ICLN** functions as a global strategic influence network reaching 1000 Catholic parliamentarians around the world rather than catering to the spiritual needs of Catholic legislators. Co-founded in 2010 by Cardinal Schönborn and Christiaan Alting von Geusau,³⁴ both deeply rooted in institutional Catholicism, align with the Church's long-standing mission to shape policy and societal norms based on its doctrinal views. This agenda is underscored by the ICLN's focus on initiatives such as its Annual Summit in Rome, which includes a private audience with the Pope, and programmes such as the Youth Leaders Academy, designed to groom a new generation of aligned political leaders.³⁵

The ICLN's emphasis on a 'culture of life' and its promotion of national and regional chapters mirrors broader anti-gender and anti-choice campaigns often tied to conservative interpretations of Catholic social teaching. Its track record of hosting political figures with controversial stances on gender equality and human rights, such as Viktor Orbán,³⁶ highlights its role as a hub for consolidating anti-gender ideologies within the global political sphere.

Combined with its apparent alignment with the Vatican's socio-political priorities, the ICLN can be interpreted as a ChONGO that leverages religious authority to impact secular policymaking, particularly in areas related to sexuality, reproduction and gender. This characterisation positions the ICLN not as a neutral or purely spiritual entity but as a calculated effort to mobilise political power in service of specific ideological goals, often at the expense of universal human rights frameworks.

THE ECPM: CHRISTIAN TRADITIONALIST NGO PARADING AS A POLITICAL PARTY

The **ECPM**³⁷, now the European Christian Political Party (ECP), is "the only European party committed to promoting Christian values in the political sphere."³⁸ The ECPM was established by individuals linked to the Dutch political parties Christian Union (CU) and Reformed Political Party (SGP), both rooted in the Dutch Reformed Church. The party has received funding from entities close to the Dutch Reformed Church, such as the Talenting Foundation, as well as numerous anti-gender organisations (see Public funding). The ECPM has actively participated in anti-gender networks, including Agenda Europe, and co-sponsored summits organised by the Political Network for Values (PNfV) (See Chapter 6 on political engagement).

Despite being funded by the European Parliament, it is unique in that its MEPs do not belong to its own political grouping but instead align with broader political groupings (see Politics chapter). This highlights the ECPM's role as a vehicle for traditionalist Christian politicians to access European Parliament funding while advancing their socially

³⁰ Religión en Libertad. (2018). Teen STAR: educación sexual para jóvenes a la luz de «Humanae Vitae» creada por una monja visionaria. Religión en Libertad, 12 July. https://www.religionenlibertad.com/vida_familia/186278058/Miles-de-jovenes-de-decenas-de-paises-han-realizado-sus-cursos.html.

³¹ Teen STAR. (2020). Teen STAR Worldwide. <https://www.Teen-STAR.org/teen-star-worldwide.html>.

³² Wills, S.E. (2014). Why Teen STAR Is Uniquely Successful In Motivating Abstinence Among Teens. Teen STAR. <https://missionsupport.archden.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Teen-STARsSuccess.pdf>.

³³ Teen STAR UK. (2020). Teen STAR... an asset for young people. Teen STAR UK. https://rseauthentic.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Laaflet-Teen-STAR_UK.pdf.

³⁴ Catholic News Agency, (2017). Let Church teaching pervade your work, Pope Francis tells Catholic politicians. Catholic News Agency, 27 August. <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/36691/let-church-teaching-pervade-your-work-pope-francis-tells-catholic-politicians>.

³⁵ See: <https://icln.world/#what>.

³⁶ Doody, C. (2019). Orbán, Trump chief of staff in secret far-right meet in Fátima. Novena News, 26 August. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210127232245/https://novenanews.com/orban-trump-chief-mulvaney-far-right-meeting-fatima/>.

³⁷ Along with its affiliated political foundation, Sallux, and youth movement, the European Christian Political Youth Movement (ECPYM).

³⁸ See: <https://ecpp.eu/>.

conservative agenda. The ECPM's function goes beyond that of a conventional political party, instead serving as a mechanism to funnel public resources into initiatives that align with the ideology of traditionalist Christian politicians and networks.³⁹

THE WRPC: CHEERLEADERS FOR ORTHODOX FASCISM

The **WRPC** serves as a consultative body for the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), ostensibly providing strategic advice on its future directions. Presided over by Patriarch Kirill, the WRPC reflects the close alignment between the ROC and the Kremlin's political agenda. Its activities were reportedly funded by Konstantin Malofeev, an ultra-conservative oligarch and prominent anti-gender advocate, who was the WRPC's deputy chairman from 2019 to 2024.⁴⁰

Rather than operating as an independent consultative body, the WRPC functions as a vehicle to consolidate and legitimise the interests of the ROC, far-right oligarchs and Kremlin hawks. It thus embodies the convergence of religious conservatism, oligarchic influence and Kremlin authoritarianism, advancing an agenda that supports both the domestic and geopolitical ambitions of Russia's leadership while amplifying ultra-conservative values.

In April 2024, the WRPC adopted a 'mandate' that outlined future directions for both the ROC and Russia's political leadership. This mandate effectively rubber-stamped prior initiatives and reinforced the ROC's and Kremlin's hard-line positions, particularly on social conservatism and nationalism (See Chapter 5: 'Religious dimensions').

TABLE 13

OVERVIEW OF KEY CHONGOS

	 ECPM	 FAFCE	 WRPC	 WYA/FEMM Foundation
Establishment (membership and founders)	CU and SGP representatives	Outreach of Catholic dioceses for marital counselling and Catholic religious movements	• Episcopate of ROC	• Youth people accredited to the United Nations via the Holy See and C-Fam
Governance (board and statutes)	Anti-gender organisations are on Executive Committee	Mention in statutes need to coordinate with COMECE	• Patriarch Kirill • Konstantin Malofeev (2019–2024) • ROC clergy and political elite	• Individuals close to Opus Dei • Knights of Malta • Holy See representatives and aristocracy
People involved (employees, volunteers, participants, beneficiaries)	Socially conservative Christian politicians	FAFCE members are entities attached to Catholic dioceses across Europe	• Vladimir Putin • Aleksandr Dugin • Levan Vasadze • Members of the Duma	• Young people from elite Catholic families and students from Catholic universities • Aristocracy
Funding	Talenting Foundation; Anti-gender organisations; European Parliament	Papal Foundation	• Konstantin Malofeev	• Papal Foundation • Private ultra-Catholic foundations (e.g. Stiftung Ja zum Leben) • Chiaroscuro Foundation
Activities	Anti-gender advocacy and Christian political party	Anti-gender advocacy aimed at the EU, Council of Europe, PACE and G7	• Congress to provide advice to ROC and policymakers • Rubber-stamping	• Certified training programme – Human Dignity Curriculum • Events • FEMM • Advocacy • All based on social doctrine of Catholic Church
Whose interests are being represented?	Dutch Reformed Church and Christian traditionalists	COMECE	• Russian Orthodox Church • Kremlin hawks and aligned far-right oligarchs	• Holy See Mission to the United Nation and Catholic elites, including Opus Dei – youth face to Vatican diplomacy

³⁹ Van der Burgh, R., Rotman, M., & van der Woude, A. (2024). Hoe de europartij van de ChristenUnie een pinautomaat voor radicaalrechts werd. De Groene Amsterdammer, 27 March. <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/pinautomaat-voor-extremisme>.

⁴⁰ Stepanov, A.D. (2024). Why did Malofeev leave? Russian Folk Line, 26 March. https://ruskline.ru/news_rl/2024/03/26/pochemu_ushel_malofeev.

TABLE 14

US\$ EQUIVALENT OF TOTAL FUNDING OF 127 EUROPEAN ANTI-GENDER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS BETWEEN 2019 AND 2023

Organization	Country	Funding received (US\$)
Jogállam és Igazság Nonprofit Kft - Alapjogokért Központ (Rule of Law and Justice Nonprofit - Centre for Fundamental Rights)	Hungary	26,778,580.00
Mouvement Catholique Des Familles	France	26,049,172.00
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association UK	UK	20,661,131.00
Christian Institute	UK	20,443,146.00
Evangelical Alliance	UK	16,528,207.00
Alliance Vita (Life alliance)	France	14,861,846.00
Fédération Pro Europa Christiana (FPEC) (TFP)	EU	13,609,019.00
Christian, Action, Research and Education (CARE UK)	UK	13,188,675.00
Stichting Civita Christiana (Civita Christiana Foundation) (TFP)	Netherlands	11,012,985.00
Hazte Oír (Make yourself heard)	Spain	9,790,267.00
Asociatia Pro Vita Ptr Nascuti Si Nenascuti (Pro-Life For The Born And Unborn)	Romania	9,550,743.00
Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej Im. Ks. Piotra Skargi (Rev. Piotr Skarga Christian Culture Association)	Poland	8,996,531.00
VBOK (Association for the Protection of the Unborn Child)	Netherlands	6,779,617.00
Tradition, Famille et Propriété France (TFP France)	France	6,638,369.00
COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union)	EU	6,585,388.00
Nagycsaládok Országos Egyesülete (National Organization of Large Families)	Hungary	6,349,335.00
Avenir de la Culture (Future of Culture) (TFP)	France	5,707,048.00
Pro Vita e Famiglia (For Life and family)	Italy	5,690,931.00
Human Life International-Ireland	Ireland	5,101,471.00
Schreeuw om Leven (Cry for life)	Netherlands	4,967,623.00
Right to Life Charitable Trust	UK	4,906,135.00
SOS Education	France	4,497,261.00
Droit de Naître (Right to be born) (TFP)	France	4,401,147.00
Slovakia Christiana (TFP)	Slovakia	4,182,824.00
Zavod Iskreni (Institute Sincere - for the Culture of Life)	Slovenia	3,973,174.00
Zaklada Vigilare (TFP)	Croatia	3,906,299.00
Polskie Stowarzyszenie Obrońców Życia Człowieka (Polish Association of Human Life Defenders)	Poland	3,723,102.00
Movimento per la Vita Italiano (Movement for life)	Italy	3,396,210.00
SA Perekonna ja Traditsiooni Kaitseks (SAPTK) (Foundation for Protection of Family and Tradition) (TFP)	Estonia	3,388,587.00
Fundacja Pro – Prawo do życia (Pro Foundation – Right to Life)	Poland	3,372,760.00
Others		60,545,997.85
Total		339,583,580.85

5

CIVIL SOCIETY DYNAMICS: REORGANISATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM

“We tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and what a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization.”

(Charlton Ogburn, writer)

Advocacy and lobbying make up the largest share of the anti-rights and religious extremist effort in Europe, accounting for US\$339.5 million between 2019 and 2023 — or around 28.8% of total anti-gender funding identified — emanating from 128 organisations present in nearly every country. This funding for advocacy and lobbying grew by 13.8% over five years from an average of US\$63.7 million in 2019 to \$72.5 million in 2023. Most of these organisations had a broad anti-gender profile, with notable specialisations including 45 organisations focused on anti-abortion advocacy, and two smaller clusters lobbying against LGBTQI rights (10) and comprehensive sexuality education (7).

This chapter looks at the evolution of anti-gender civil society networks in Europe and the trends that the funding patterns reveal. It concludes with an analysis of the evolving strategies and target areas.

5.1 NEW TERRITORIES

The anti-gender movement in Europe has expanded dramatically over the past decade. When Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte mapped the field in *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe* (2017), they covered 12 countries. By 2023, Gionathan Lo Mascolo had to expand the scope to 18, reflecting the accelerating rise of the Christian Right. Notably, this included countries such as the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the UK — previously marginal in this landscape. The present report covers 27 European countries, as well as European Union institutions and

the influence of the US Christian Right in Europe. Three major trends emerge: the proliferation of anti-gender organisations, their geographic diffusion, and growing financial resources.

Even in long-established contexts, new organisations are emerging. Nine countries now host ten or more anti-gender groups. The UK leads with 40 entities, followed by Poland (27), Hungary and Spain (21 each), the USA (with 19 operating in Europe), Russia (18) and France (14). Funding has surged. Over the past five years, five countries have recorded sharp increases: Estonia (+117%), Russia (+102%), Spain (+90%), Czechia (+83%) and the Netherlands (+45%). More moderate growth (~10%) occurred in Croatia, Poland, Austria, Hungary and the UK. The apparent 27% drop in US Christian Right spending reflects a shift towards sourcing European funds, reducing direct transfers from the USA.

Three areas exemplify the movement’s expansion: deeper engagement in the Western Balkans, increased activity in the Nordic region, and the growing influence of the Tradition, Family, Property (TFP) network.

WESTERN BALKANS: FAST TRACK FOR ANTI-GENDER INTEGRATION WITH EUROPE

While the anti-gender movement has been well documented in countries such as Croatia and Slovenia (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017),¹ as well as Bulgaria (in opposition to the Istanbul Convention)² and Romania (during the 2018 marriage referendum),³ recent developments indicate its expansion

¹ Kuhar, R., & D. Paternotte (eds). (2017). *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*. Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield.

² Berthet, V. (2022). Norm under fire: support for and opposition to the European Union’s ratification of the Istanbul Convention in the European Parliament. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 24(5), 675–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2022.2034510>.

³ Norocel, O. C., & Băluță, I. (2021). Retrogressive Mobilization in the 2018 “Referendum for Family” in Romania. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 70(2), 153–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2021.1987270>.

into new territories, including North Macedonia.⁴ A particularly significant case is Albania, where the anti-gender movement first gained traction in 2021 and has since become fully embedded within the broader European anti-gender ecosystem.

Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen (Albanian Coalition for Life and Family — ACL&F) exemplifies this transnational diffusion. Founded in 2021 and led by Protestant pastor Akil Pano, its origins can be traced to visits by two US anti-abortion organisations in 2010.⁵ These early engagements catalysed the emergence of a domestic movement that now actively campaigns against abortion and gender equality policies. The ACL&F has cultivated strong ties with international networks, counting among its Board advisers the Secretary General of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE) and a representative of the US-based Family Research Council.

Since its establishment, the ACL&F has become an active player in the international anti-gender sphere. It participated in the 2023 German Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast alongside Hungarian President Katalin Novák and Agenda Europe founder Gudrun Kugler,⁶ attended the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Budapest in both 2022 and 2023,⁷ and hosted Archduke Michael Habsburg-Lothringen and Duchess Christiana von Habsburg in Tirana in 2023.⁸ In June 2024, it organised the country's first March for Life.⁹

NORDICS: TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Long regarded as global leaders in gender equality, the Nordic countries had, until recently, largely avoided significant anti-gender mobilisation. However, Sweden, Norway and Finland have seen a notable increase in the number of anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQI+ campaigns, positioning the region as an emerging focal point within the broader European anti-gender



🕒 Anti-gender TFP manifestation in Estonia.

movement. Although financial transparency remains limited — particularly regarding funding for non-governmental organisations — there is growing evidence of intensified activity by anti-gender pressure groups. This trend was first documented in Sweden by Ulrike Westerlund in 2021.¹⁰

In Sweden, far-right political parties have emerged as key actors in anti-rights mobilisation. Westerlund highlights the Sweden Democrats' efforts to restrict access to abortion, oppose Pride events and eliminate gender perspectives from policy frameworks.^{11,12} With outright abortion bans lacking popular support, a core strategy since the 2010s has involved promoting conscientious objection — a campaign consistently led by religious groups such as the Clapham Institute and the Swedish Evangelical Alliance, though without legal success.¹³ Institutionally, anti-abortion advocacy in Sweden became more professional following the 2017 merger of Provita and Ja till livet into the unified organisation Människovärde (Human Dignity), which consolidated content production and lobbying capacity.¹⁴

⁴ Cvetkovikj, I. (2024). Anti-gender mobilizations in North Macedonia: A transnational tool-kit for domestic actors against gender equality and LGBTQI+ rights. Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 19 April. <https://ba.boell.org/en/2024/04/19/anti-gender-mobilizations-north-macedonia-transnational-tool-kit-domestic-actors-against>; Gagovska, E. (2022). Family First: The Rise of the Anti-Gender Movement in North Macedonia. Unbias the News, 31 October. <https://unbias.thenews.org/family-first-the-rise-of-the-anti-gender-movement-in-north-macedonia/>; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. (2023, 15 December). Policy paper on the effects of the shrinking policy space for civil society – Negative effects of anti-feminist policies and anti-gender movements. <https://mhc.org.mk/en/publications-en/policy-paper-on-the-effects-of-the-shrinking-policy-space-for-civil-society-negative-effects-of-anti-feminist-policies-and-anti-gender-movements/>.

⁵ Van Maren, J. (2024). The rise of Albania's pro-life movement. The Bridgehead, 28 June. <https://thebridgehead.ca/2024/06/28/the-rise-of-albanias-pro-life-movement/>.

⁶ Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen. (2022, 4 June). Visit in the German Parliament. <https://www.profamiljes.al/visit-in-the-german-parliament/>.

⁷ Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen. (2023, 5 May). CPAC Hungary 2023. <https://www.profamiljes.al/cpac-hungary-2023/>; and Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen. (2022, 20 May). CPAC 2022 Hungary – “God, Family, Nation”. <https://www.profamiljes.al/cpac-2022-hungary-god-family-nation/>.

⁸ Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen. (2023, 21 June). Meeting with the Archduke Michael Habsburg-Lothringen and Duchess Christiana von Habsburg. <https://www.profamiljes.al/meeting-with-the-archduke-michael-habsburg-lothringen-and-duchess-christiana-von-habsburg/>.

⁹ Koalicioni Shqiptar për Jetën dhe Familjen. (2024, 18 June). The March for Life. <https://www.profamiljes.al/the-march-for-life/>.

¹⁰ Westerlund, U. (2021). Swedish anti-gender movements.¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Local Sweden. (2023, 3 August). Sweden Democrat MP under fire after claiming Pride is linked to pedophilia. <https://www.thelocal.se/20230803/sweden-democrat-mp-under-fire-after-claiming-pride-is-linked-to-pedophilia>.

¹³ European Court of Human Rights. (2017). Ellinor Grimmack against Sweden. Application no. 43726/17. <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%22itemid%22:%5B22001-201915%22%5D>.

¹⁴ Westerlund, U. (2021). Swedish anti-gender movements.

While most Nordic countries have resisted homophobic policy reforms, Finland is an exception. The association Aito Avioliitto (True Marriage), inspired by France's La Manif Pour Tous,¹⁵ led a 2017 parliamentary petition to repeal Finland's 2016 gender-neutral marriage law. Though the effort failed, it mobilised support from far-right groups, particularly the True Finns party.¹⁶ A newer area of anti-gender mobilisation centres on contesting the Nordic model of child protection services — especially in Norway, and to a lesser degree in Sweden — portrayed by critics as violating parental and religious rights.¹⁷

Governments in the region have acknowledged the growing threat. In 2022, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and LGBTI adopted the *Nordic Roadmap*, which outlined coordinated action to safeguard inclusive policies in response to what it described as “growing resistance, regression and push-back” globally and regionally, particularly targeting gender equality and LGBTQI rights.¹⁸

RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST EXPANSION: TRADITION, FAMILY, PROPERTY

The pseudo-Catholic **TFP** network¹⁹ has expanded significantly, with funding of over US\$73.8 million over the five years analysed.²⁰ In several countries, TFP-affiliated organisations have become the wealthiest anti-gender actors and, in some cases, among the most influential of all anti-rights and religious extremist organisations. Examples include the **Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture** in Poland, **Civitas Christiana** in the Netherlands, **Slovakia Christiana** in Slovakia and **SA Perekonna ja Traditsiooni Kaitseks (SAPTK)** in Estonia.

On a national level, **Civitas Christiana** gained national attention in the Netherlands in 2022 through homophobic social media campaigns.²¹ In 2024, it made its début in Belgium by sending an anti-abortion and xenophobic ‘welcome package’ to newly elected Belgian MPs.²² In 2025, a Dutch judge ordered Civitas Christiana to stop its disinformation, lies and online hate in a lawsuit brought by Rutgers.²³ In Estonia, **SAPTK** is the leading anti-gender voice and one of the better-funded independent advocacy organisations in general, reporting income of over US\$3.1 million over five years. Its founder, Vaaro Vooglaid, entered parliament in 2023 as an independent candidate for the far-right EKRE party.²⁴ Despite failing to gain a foothold in Brussels,²⁵ **Ordo Iuris** has extended its reach internationally by establishing a legal entity in Luxembourg, as well as chapters in Croatia and Spain.²⁶

5.2 PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE ANTI-RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST ECO-SYSTEM

Another aspect of the recent development of anti-gender organisations has been their increased professionalisation. This is evident in three areas: the internationalisation of their areas of focus, suggesting increasing sophistication to engage complex multilateral policymaking spaces; their dedicated focus on capacity-building; and their development of litigation and lawfare skills.

¹⁵ De Lauzun. (2023). La Manif Pour Tous: A European Model. The European Conservative, 2 December. <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/commentary/la-manif-pour-tous/>.

¹⁶ Mattila, M. (2025). Iisalmien perussuomalaiset ehdottaa “aidolle avioliitolle” liputuspäivää kaupunkiin. [The Finns in Iisalmi propose a flag day for “real marriage” in the city]. Yle Uutiset, 16 April. <https://yle.fi/a/74-20156200>.

¹⁷ Datta, N. (2025, forthcoming). Think of the Children! Children's Rights as the New Frontier in Anti-gender Contestation. Bergen: University of Bergen.

¹⁸ Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality and LGBTI. (2022). Pushing back the push-back: Nordic Roadmap on advancing gender equality, women's and girls' rights, and equal rights of LGBTI-persons, 2022-2024. Copenhagen: Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. <https://www.norden.org/en/declaration/pushing-back-push-back-nordic-roadmap-advancing-gender-equality-womens-and-girls-rights>.

¹⁹ See Datta, N. (2020). Modern-day Crusaders in Europe. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/610>.

²⁰ This is lower than the actual figure, as it does not include data for the Polish Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej Im. Ks. Piotra Skargi (Rev. Piotr Skarga Christian Culture Association) after 2019, which is when it last published financial data. In 2019, the association declared income of an equivalent of US\$9 million.

²¹ Rutgers. (2025, 13 March). Civitas Christiana voert al jaren een leugen- en lastercampagne tegen Rutgers. <https://rutgers.nl/nieuws/civitas-christiana-voert-al-jaren-een-leugen-en-laster-campagne-tegen-rutgers/>.

²² Buisson, M. (2024). Des kits de propagande anti-IVG et islamophobes envoyés aux députés de la Chambre. Le Soir, 6 September. <https://www.lesoir.be/621063/article/2024-09-06/des-kits-de-propagande-anti-ivg-et-islamophobes-envoyes-aux-deputes-de-la>.

²³ Rutgers. (2025, 17 April). Rutgers wint kort geding tegen Civitas Christiana. <https://rutgers.nl/nieuws/rutgers-wint-kort-geding-tegen-civitas-christiana/>.

²⁴ See Riigikogu. (n.d.). Varro Vooglaid. <https://www.riigikogu.ee/riigikogu/koosseis/riigikogu-liikmed/saadik/b5e0d7fe-b784-4057-bf7e-cc3f1873887d/Varro-Vooglaid/>.

²⁵ Onet. (2021, 7 May). Działalnością Ordo Iuris interesuje się belgijskie centrum informacyjne na temat sekt. <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/belgijski-dziennik-pisze-o-ordo-iuris-instytut-chce-wplywac-na-unijne-instytucje/hwcmkmv>.

²⁶ Zaklada Za Pravnu Kulturu Ordo Iuris, established in 2022, and Instituto para la Cultura Jurídica Ordo Iuris. See Asturias Laica. (2022, 28 June). Ordo Iuris, organización religiosa ultraconservadora polaca, desembarca en España. <https://asturiaslaica.com/2022/06/28/ordo-iuris-organizacion-religiosa-ultraconservadora-polaca-desembarca-en-espana/>.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS: GROWING INTERNATIONALISATION

Another area of professionalisation has been the international focus of an increasing number of European anti-rights and religious extremist civil society organisations (CSOs). While the vast majority of the organisations analysed operated at the national level, 78 organisations (29%) engaged in international activities. Of these, 35 organisations (13%) had dedicated European-level or European Union-focused activities, while 43 organisations (16%) operated on a global scale, often targeting multilateral spaces such as the United Nations or specific regions such as sub-Saharan Africa.

The global actors include Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, headquartered in France, with branches in Argentina, Spain and the USA. The Lajos Batthyány Foundation primarily targets English-speaking audiences in the USA, the UK and beyond through the Danube Institute, while ADF International engages in transnational lawfare across many national courts in Europe and around the world. An important global actor is the World Youth Alliance (WYA), which manages a transnational web of youth anti-SRHR movements, abstinence education and natural family planning outlets by working alongside the infrastructure of the Catholic Church and particularly the Opus Dei-affiliated network of universities. CitizenGO is another key actor, operating a worldwide petitions-based website in 12 languages. Others with an international focus include the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN), Christian Council International (CCI) and Core Issues Trust (CIT) (See Chapter 8a: 'The new scramble for Africa').

At the European level, Hungarian government-controlled foundations, such as the Mathias Corvinus Collegium in Brussels (MCC Brussels) and Bethlen Gabor Fund Management, which officially works with Hungarian communities abroad, are among the most significant actors in attempting to shape the European Union's discourse on human rights. Political parties such as the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity and Democracy (ID) engage in anti-gender mobilisation as a crucial part of their political campaigning. Also at the European level, Fédération Pro-Europa Christiana (FPEC) serves as the European umbrella organisation for TFP (See Chapter 6: 'Political engagement'). Other organisations at least partially dedicated to European Union outreach include the Center for Human Dignity, the European Center

for Law and Justice (ECLJ), FAFCE, Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, Ordo Iuris and the WYA. In total, ten notable anti-gender organisations signed up with the European Parliament's transparency register.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Anti-rights and religious extremist actors have invested substantially in **capacity-building initiatives**, particularly targeting young professionals. Of the 275 organisations analysed, 121 offer some form of training. These range from academic collaborations — such as the Jérôme Lejeune International Chair in Bioethics, which provides Master's-level degrees²⁷ — to leadership development programmes such as the ICLN's Fellowship of Young Christian Global Leaders, which aims to train 500 emerging Catholic political leaders by 2033 through its Political Leadership Academy.²⁸ Similarly, Alliance Vita's Université de la vie (University for Life) has operated for 15 years, claiming to have trained over 80,000 individuals with the involvement of 300 international experts.²⁹

The WYA has established a structured pathway for youth leadership in extremist movements: membership provides access to a certified training programme, which can lead to participation in the WYA Advocacy Academy and subsequently to internships at anti-rights organisations.³⁰ Additional practical training is offered in various anti-gender services, including the WYA's FEMM programme, which provides certification and a medical management masterclass,³¹ as well as other initiatives such as Teen STAR³² and a range of natural family planning courses.³³

LITIGATION ORGANISATIONS

Anti-gender litigation and lawfare in Europe received an equivalent of US\$47 million, or around 4% of total five-year anti-gender funding. The largest anti-gender litigation organisations in Europe are predominantly of US origin. ADF International, including its European satellite offices, accounted for 67% of all anti-gender litigation spending in Europe (US\$32.8 million).

Long the preserve of US anti-gender actors such as ADF and the American Center for Law and Justice, litigation now also appears as a core speciality of an increasing number of European organisations. These include Poland's Ordo Iuris, which ranked second in terms of funding, with around US\$8 million, followed by the UK's Lawyers Christian Fellowship, and Abogados

²⁷ Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (2024). Formations à l'international. <https://chairebioethiquelejeune.org/formations-a-linternational/>.

²⁸ International Catholic Legislators Network. (2025). Programs and Activities. <https://icln.world/programs/#meetings>.

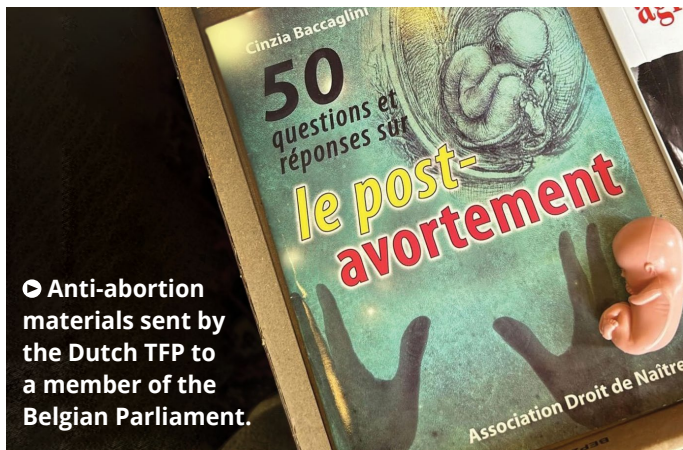
²⁹ Alliance VITA. (2025). L'Université de la vie. <https://www.alliancevita.org/universite-de-la-vie-accueil/>.

³⁰ World Youth Alliance. (2022). Get involved with WYA. <https://wya.net/programs/>.

³¹ FEMM Health. (2025). Course List. <https://femmhealth.org/courses/>.

³² Teen STAR. (2020). Course Offerings. <https://www.teenstar.org/course-offerings.html>.

³³ For natural family planning training offered by FAFCE member the Cana Religious Movement of Malta, see Cana Movement. (n.d.). Fertility Awareness Courses. <https://canamovement.org/fertility-awareness-courses/>.



► Anti-abortion materials sent by the Dutch TFP to a member of the Belgian Parliament.

ANTI-ABORTION STRATEGY: FROM LEGAL CONFRONTATION TO SUBTLE RESTRICTION

The previous wave of anti-abortion mobilisation was typified by open legal confrontation, most notably the 'One of Us' European Citizens' Initiative.³⁷ Over the past five years, however, two major developments have prompted a strategic recalibration: Poland's 2021 Constitutional Tribunal ruling instituting a near-total abortion ban, and the US Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In response, anti-abortion advocacy has shifted from direct legal challenges to a more layered three-part strategy — prevent, restrict, prohibit — as articulated during the 2017 Political Network for Values (PNfV) meeting in Brussels.

- **Prevention** does not refer to reducing unplanned pregnancies through increased access to contraception. Instead, it aims to limit access to abortion via crisis pregnancy centres and administrative hurdles. These centres operate by dissuading and misinforming women about their health and legal rights, thereby discouraging abortions without requiring legislative change (See Chapter 5a: 'Anti-gender services').
- **Restriction** involves embedding legal and bureaucratic barriers within otherwise permissive abortion frameworks. Tactics include normalising conscientious objection, enforcing mandatory waiting periods, obligatory counselling, and reducing gestational limits. Though legal access remains on paper, these restrictions produce de facto inaccessibility — evident in countries such as Croatia, where unregulated conscientious objection has hollowed out abortion provision.³⁸
- **Prohibition**, while successful in Poland, has faced stronger resistance elsewhere. A 2020 attempt to ban or severely curtail abortion in Slovakia narrowly failed.³⁹ These developments point to a broader strategic pivot: recognising the limits of direct legal bans, anti-abortion actors increasingly seek to erode access through indirect, systemic pressures.

The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* emboldened European anti-abortion movements. Groups such as the ECLJ, supported by allied MEPs, have convened events in the European Parliament to explore transplanting US-style tactics to the European context.⁴⁰

Cristianos, a new entry in Spain which was formally created in 2020 with the explicit goal of "promoting the culture of life and family". Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, while not classified as a litigator in this study, is an affluent multifaceted actor, which is also notorious for mounting legal challenges, especially in the field of embryo research in France.³⁴

Another emerging area of lawfare comes from France with the €150 million Plan PERICLES of billionaire Pierre-Edouard Stérin, which identified as a priority objective to "organize and professionalize strategic litigation by using legal/judicial and media tools against Islamism, immigration, attacks on freedom of expression, and gender theory" as part of a four-year plan to secure a victory by the far-right in the 2027 presidential elections.³⁵

5.3 NEW STRATEGIES

The *Tip of the Iceberg* report previously documented that funding of US\$700 million between 2009 and 2018 supported five key anti-gender initiatives (anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQI, a pseudo-Catholic network, a Christian political party and an online petition platform).³⁶ These approaches reflected the priorities of the day, and now the movement has shifted gears. The result is a new set of strategies: a more nuanced legal approach to limiting abortion rights; an indirect attack on LGBTQI rights through pseudo-science; and a new focus area of surrogacy.

³⁴ Alldoctors.fr. (2017). La Fondation Jérôme-Lejeune dans le collimateur de 146 médecins et chercheurs. Franceinfo, 30 March. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/decouverte-scientifique/la-fondation-jerome-lejeune-dans-le-collimateur-de-146-medecins-et-chercheurs_2121741.html.

³⁵ Lemahieu, T. (2024). Pierre-Édouard Stérin, saint patron de l'extrême droite française #5. Projet Péricle : le document qui dit tout du plan de Pierre-Édouard Stérin pour installer le RN au pouvoir. L'Humanité, 19 July. <https://www.humanite.fr/politique/bien-commun/projet-pericles-le-document-qui-dit-tout-du-plan-de-pierre-edouard-sterin-pour-installer-le-rn-au-pouvoir>.

³⁶ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). *Tip of the Iceberg*. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>. ³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Håkansson, D., Ouis, P., & Ragnar, M. (2021). Navigating the Minefield: Women's Experiences of Abortion in a Country with a Conscience Clause—The Case of Croatia. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(1), 166–180.

³⁹ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2020). Recent attempt to tighten the Slovak Law on Abortion. EPF Briefing Paper. Brussels: EPF. https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Parliamentary%20Attempt%20to%20Restrict%20Abortion%20Access_Technical%20Brief.pdf.

⁴⁰ See European Center for Law and Justice. (2022, 22 February). Preventing abortion in Europe - Conference at the European Parliament. <https://eclj.org/abortion/eu/prevenir-lavortement-en-europe-conference-au-parlement-europeen-16-fevrier-2022?lng=en>.

STRATEGIC EVOLUTION OF ANTI-LGBTQI MOBILISATION IN EUROPE

Earlier anti-LGBTQI strategies centred on mass protest movements, most prominently La Manif Pour Tous in France (2013), which provided a template for similar mobilisations across Europe. Since 2019, however, explicitly homophobic initiatives have become less overt, with anti-gender actors adopting subtler approaches to erode LGBTQI rights.

For instance, Poland's 'LGBT-free zones' were initially framed not as anti-LGBTQI policies but as municipal charters opposing so-called 'gender ideology'. Similarly, Hungary's 2022 legislation targeting 'gender and LGBT ideology' was passed under the guise of child protection — a framing designed to deflect criticism and normalise discriminatory policy within mainstream discourse. In 2023, even La Manif pour Tous rebranded as Le Syndicat pour la famille (the Union for the Family).⁴¹

A notable development is the rise of pseudo-medical networks resisting bans on conversion therapy. The International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC), registered in the UK in 2017, exemplifies this shift. The IFTCC advances religiously motivated views under the veneer of medical science, arguing that outlawing conversion practices infringes on human rights and freedoms. Its *International Declaration on Therapeutic and Pastoral Choice* claims such bans contribute to 'cancel culture', suppress dissent and curtail free speech.⁴²

The IFTCC has become a central platform for transnational anti-gender coordination. At its 2022 Budapest conference, speakers included Sharon Slater (Family Watch International), Joseph Nicolosi Jr. (creator of Reintegrative Therapy) and Andrea Williams (Christian Legal Centre, Christian Concern) — all prominent figures in global anti-LGBTQI advocacy. This convergence of religious, legal and pseudo-scientific actors highlights the strategic repositioning of anti-LGBTQI efforts: less confrontational, but increasingly institutionalised and internationally networked.

NEW TARGET AREA: SURROGACY

Surrogacy has emerged with force as a new policy area targeted by anti-gender actors. It was officially put on the agenda in late 2022, when several anti-gender actors met in Casablanca, Morocco, and adopted the *Casablanca Declaration* against surrogacy.⁴³ At a broader spiritual level, Pope Francis decided to take a formal position on the issue by calling for a global ban in 2024,⁴⁴ sending a clear signal to CSOs and politicians on this subject. Giorgia Meloni's government followed up the same year with a blanket, extraterritorial surrogacy ban in Italy, which was touted as a major victory at the ECR's 2024 European Family Congress.⁴⁵

An international anti-surrogacy campaign is taking shape around the work of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, Reem Alsalem, who in

2025 called for input on the thematic report on surrogacy and violence against women and girls.⁴⁶ This attracted anti-gender CSOs such as the WYA, which called the Special Rapporteur's call "an exciting advocacy opportunity" and submitted its input filled with religious arguments on 'human dignity' that are normally used to oppose abortion and other reproductive rights.⁴⁷ The group behind the *Casablanca Declaration* also dedicated two statements to Alsalem, thanking her for attending the international conference for the universal abolition of surrogacy in 2024.⁴⁸

5.4 LEGAL STATUS AND GOVERNANCE

Legal status and governance models provide critical insight into the operational infrastructure of anti-rights and religious extremist movements in Europe. While the initial sample included 441 organisations, comprehensive financial data was retrievable for only 275. Opaque reporting practices — particularly in Austria, Germany, the Nordic states, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal — limit transparency, as these jurisdictions impose minimal requirements for public financial disclosure for non-profit organisations. On the other hand, data on a substantial number of organisations from otherwise transparent France, the UK and Ireland was also unavailable where small companies are exempt from full financial disclosure. Lastly, some organisations simply did not file their annual reports for unknown reasons after 2019, among them six organisations from Poland, including one of the biggest TFP organisations, the Institute of Social and Religious Education of Rev. Piotr Skarga. Therefore, varying national legislation and enforcement prevents researchers from obtaining a full picture of CSO financing across Europe.

Among the 275 organisations analysed, 90 (32.6%) held charitable status in 16 countries, thus benefiting from tax-deductible donations. Prominent examples include Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (France), the Christian Broadcasting Network (USA/UK), Aktion Leben (Austria) and Siriz (Netherlands). In addition, 86 organisations (31%) received public funding across 19 countries. These include the Russian Orthodox Television Fund (Телеканал «Спас»), Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, several Hungarian state-aligned foundations, political parties such as the ECR and the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), Fundacja Lux Veritatis (Poland) and Aktion Leben (Austria). For detailed analysis, see Chapter 3a: 'European public funding'.

Despite advocating patriarchal norms, women occupy notable governance roles within anti-gender and religious extremist organisations. Among the 275 organisations mapped, 84 (30%) were led by women. Female leadership is particularly prominent in some of the most influential entities, including Fundación Jérôme Lejeune (Spain), ADF International, Life 2009 Ltd. and the WYA. Several women stand out for their long-term and visible leadership of anti-rights agendas, including:

KEY ANTI-RIGHTS FEMALE LEADERS



• **Anna Halpine:** Founder and president of the WYA, founder and president of the Fertility Education and Awareness Management Foundation (FEMM Foundation)⁴⁹ and co-founder and president of the Reproductive Health Research Institute (RHRI), which in turn provides the scientific basis for the FEMM app⁵⁰



• **Gudrun Kugler:** A graduate and faculty member of the International Theological Institute, one of the original co-founders of the WYA, co-founder and owner with her Opus Dei alumnus husband of Kairos PR, with which she created the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (OIDAC),⁵¹ then a co-convenor and organiser of the Agenda Europe network. Elected to the Austrian National Council in 2017 for the Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP) and since appointed the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Rapporteur on Demography.⁵² Kugler is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship.⁵³



• **Katalin Novák:** Ex-President of Hungary, former Family Minister for Hungary, former president of the PNŰ⁵⁴ and co-founder of XY Worldwide, which focuses on demography with the reported backing of Elon Musk⁵⁵



• **Pilar Vigil:** Dr. Pilar Vigil is a former Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life with a PhD in Biological Sciences from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. She is a proponent of both the Billings and FEMM NFP methods, a member of World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings (WOOMB)-Chile and the international director of Teen STAR. Along with Anna Halpine, she founded the RHRI in 2012 and is currently the medical director.⁵⁶



• **Sophia Kuby:** Currently director of Strategic Relations & Training for ADF International,⁵⁷ co-convenor of the Agenda Europe (Vision Network)⁵⁸, former Vice-President of the German Christian Democrats for Life and main representative of the now defunct European Dignity Watch.⁵⁹



• **Željka Markić:** A co-founder of the anti-gender organisation U Ime Obitelji (In the name of the parents) in Croatia, she is a co-convenor of the Agenda Europe / Vision Network reportedly close to the Opus Dei prelature.^{60 61}

⁴¹ See <https://www.lesyndicatdelafamille.fr/>.

⁴² International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice. (2022, 16 February). An International Declaration on Therapeutic and Pastoral Choice. <https://iftcc.org/the-declaration/>.

⁴³ See <https://declaration-surrogacy-casablanca.org/>.

⁴⁴ John, T., Nicholls, C. & Lamb, C. (2024). Pope calls for ban on surrogacy, calling it 'based on exploitation'. CNN, 8 January. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/08/world/pope-ban-surrogacy/index.html>.

⁴⁵ Davies, M. (2024). Italy surrogacy ban: Couples banned from travelling abroad to seek surrogate. BBC, 16 October. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62rmv63069o>.

⁴⁶ Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls. (2025). Call for input to the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls to the General Assembly 80th session on surrogacy and violence against women and girls. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2025/call-input-thematic-report-special-rapporteur-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

⁴⁷ World Youth Alliance. (2025, 20 May). WYA Submits Report on Surrogacy to UN Special Rapporteur. <https://wya.net/blog/wya-submits-report-on-surrogacy-to-un-special-rapporteur/>.

⁴⁸ Juristes Pour l'Enfance. (2025, 31 January). The Casablanca Declaration sends two reports to Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls. <https://declaration-surrogacy-casablanca.org/the-casablanca-declaration-sends-two-reports-to-reem-alsalem-un-special-rapporteur-on-violence-against-women-and-girls/>.

⁴⁹ Catholic Answers. (2025). Profile: Anna Halpine. <https://www.catholic.com/profile/anna-halpine>.

⁵⁰ FEMM Health. (2020). Organization Fact Sheet. New York: FEMM Health. <https://femmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FEMM-Organization-Fact-Sheet-2020-F.pdf>.

⁵¹ ITI Catholic University. (2025). Providing a Mouthpiece for the Church. <https://iti.ac.at/alumni/meet-our-alumni-impacting-the-church-and-the-world/providing-a-mouthpiece-for-the-church>.

⁵² Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly. (n.d.). Special Representative on Demographic Change and Security: Gudrun Kugler (Austria). <https://www.oscepa.org/en/activities/special-representatives/demographic-change-and-security/special-representative-on-demographic-change-and-security>.

⁵³ Alliance for Responsible Citizenship. (n.d.). ARC's Advisory Board. <https://www.arcforum.com/advisory-board>.

⁵⁴ Reactionary International. (n.d.). Katalin Novák. <https://reactionary.international/database/katalin-Novák/en/>.

⁵⁵ Hungary Today. (2025, 10 February). Former President Katalin Novák to Give Speech at London Conference. <https://hungarytoday.hu/katalin-Novák-president-speech-london-conference/>.

⁵⁶ Reproductive Health Research Institute (2025). About Us. <https://rhrinstitute.org/about/>.

⁵⁷ ADF International. (2025). Sophia Kuby, Director of Strategic Relations & Training. <https://adfinternational.org/our-team/sophia-kuby>.

⁵⁸ Vision Network. (n.d.). Coordinators. <https://visionnetwork.online/#committee>.

⁵⁹ Un de Nous. (2016). Sophia Kuby, Director for EU Advocacy at ADF International Brussels. https://www.undenous.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SOPHIA-KUBY_EN.pdf.

⁶⁰ Portal Novosti. (2017, 19 March). Željka i Opus Dei. <https://www.portalnovosti.com/zeljka-i-opus-dei/>.

⁶¹ Vision Network. (n.d.). Coordinators. <https://visionnetwork.online/#committee>.

TABLE 15

US\$ EQUIVALENT OF FUNDING OF 80 ANTI-GENDER SERVICE PROVIDERS BETWEEN 2019 AND 2023

Organization	Country	Funding received (US\$)
Life 2009 Ltd	UK	20,299,622.00
Siriz	Netherlands	17,927,854.00
Aktion Leben (combined)	Austria	11,177,503.00
Aide suisse pour la mère et l'enfant (ASME)	Switzerland	9,110,292.00
Fundacja Małych Stópek (Little Feet Foundation)	Poland	8,528,058.00
Vita Nova Foundation	Italy	5,693,260.00
Various publicly funded Spanish CPCs	Spain	5,363,488.00
Fertilitas Servicios de Naprotecnologia	Spain	4,732,075.00
Cler Amour et Famille	France	2,735,578.00
Fundació Pro Vida de Catalunya (Prolife Foundation of Catalonia)	Spain	2,627,269.00
The Good Counsel Network	UK	2,589,629.00
Napromedica Wasilewski I Wspólnicy Spółka Jawna (Napromedica Wasilewski And Partners Partnership)	Poland	2,583,821.00
Fundación Madrina	Spain	2,400,420.00
Red Madre (Mother Network)	Spain	2,392,599.00
Дом для мамы (Mothers' House)	Russia	2,176,769.00
Aktion Lebensrecht für Alle e.V. (Right to Life for All)	Germany	2,160,479.00
Acceuillir la vie	France	2,126,938.00
ONŽ - pomoc a poradenství pro ženy a dívky (Help and counselling for women and girls)	Czechia	2,062,398.00
Vida Norte	Portugal	1,767,664.00
Ano Pre Zivot (Yes to Life)	Slovakia	1,595,699.00
Благотворительный Фонд "Женщины За Жизнь" (Pro-life Women Charitable Fund)	Russia	1,495,471.00
Choices Islington	UK	1,459,620.00
АНО "За жизнь" (Pro-Life nonprofit)	Russia	1,207,143.00
Centrum naděje a pomoci z.s. (Center of Hope and Help, Inc.)	Czechia	1,081,267.00
Core Issues Trust	UK	1,048,511.00
Others combined		15,031,085.80
Total		131,374,512.80

5a

BEYOND THE CONTESTATION, OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE: ANTI-GENDER SERVICES

“They’re so thirsty for it they’ll crawl through the desert toward a mirage, and when they discover there’s no water, they’ll drink the sand.”

(Michael J. Fox in The American President, Universal Pictures, 1995)

Religious extremists have moved beyond opposing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and are now building alternatives. These programmable, pseudo-scientific services, rooted in religious dogma, target young people, pregnant women and LGBTIQ communities to subtly undermine access to contraception, abortion, comprehensive sexual education and same-sex relationships. Modern in appearance but regressive at their core, such services are typically promoted by Church-organised non-governmental organisations (ChONGOs), cloaked in credible branding and backed by distorted evidence. The result is a strategic effort to displace rights- and evidence-based health care with theology masquerading as science.

Between 2019 and 2023, this alternative framework received over US\$131.7 million in funding across 80 distinct organisations operating across nearly all European countries. These services fall into five main categories:

- **natural family planning** (NFP) as a substitute for contraception;
- **Natural Procreative Technology** (NaPro Technology) as an alternative to fertility treatments;
- **abstinence-only programmes** replacing comprehensive sexuality education;
- **crisis pregnancy centres** (CPCs) to prevent abortion; and
- **reintegrative therapy** (a form of gay conversion therapy) in place of LGBTIQ inclusion.

These initiatives serve multiple functions. They simulate legitimacy as alternatives to evidence-based SRHR services, while avoiding the overt polarisation associated with many SRHR services — a polarisation usually manufactured by the proponents of anti-gender services.

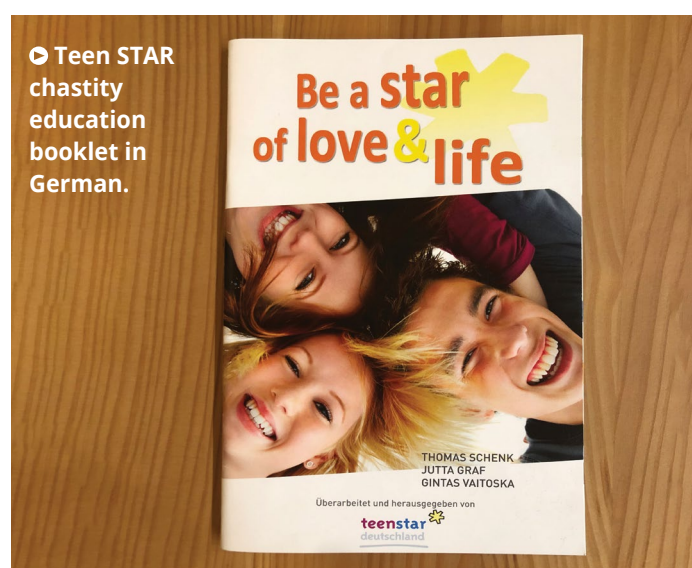


The development of anti-gender services follows a distinct and strategic five-phase process designed to secure both ideological legitimacy and operational expansion. Each phase contributes to the growing influence and institutional integration of these services, with a clear emphasis on distancing their religious origins while creating appealing products for target audiences:

- **Phase 1:** Secularising religious doctrine and developing technical implementation mechanisms
- **Phase 2:** Ideological legitimisation through aligned actors and ‘evidence-based’ support
- **Phase 3:** Pilot projects through ChONGOs and seed funding
- **Phase 4:** Local political endorsement and institutional integration
- **Phase 5:** Political and institutional scaling

PHASE 1: ORIGINS – SQUARING THE RELIGIOUS CIRCLE IN HUMAN SEXUALITY AND REPRODUCTION – WHEN RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE IS OFFERED AS SCIENCE

“The [Catholic] Church condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception”, yet it deems it acceptable for married couples to “take advantage of the infertile period”.¹ Similarly, the Church rejects in vitro fertilisation (IVF) on the grounds that it bypasses conjugal union.² This doctrinal stance presents a dilemma for millions of practising Catholics seeking to align family planning with religious teachings. Anti-gender services thus originated as faith-compatible alternatives, allowing adherents to navigate their reproductive and sexual lives without violating Church doctrine — an origin still evident today. The development of anti-gender services typically begins with the secularisation of religious teachings. This process involves translating theological principles into ostensibly neutral or scientific language and developing technical tools for broader, non-religious application.



Key Catholic figures have played a central role in this endeavour. John and Evelyn Billings pioneered the Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning (NFP), which was later systematised by Thomas W. Hilgers through the Creighton Model FertilityCare System under the auspices of the Pope Paul VI Institute.³ Together, these models laid the groundwork for the two principal anti-gender approaches to fertility management: NFP and NaPro Technologies.^{4,5} In Europe, three major religious NFP networks are the World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings (WOOMB), FertilityCare Centers International and the Fertility Education and Medical Management (FEMM) Foundation, promoted by its parent body, the World Youth Alliance (WYA).

NaPro is also framed as an alternative to artificial insemination, which its founder, Dr. Thomas Hilgers, reportedly condemned as “a technique where the physician usurps the role of the husband”.⁶ In Spain, the Fertilitas clinic refuses to treat unmarried couples, citing ‘scientific protocol’, and suggests patients collect sperm using a special device during intercourse rather than masturbation.⁷

Parallel efforts have been made in youth sexual education with the development of three abstinence-based models: Teen STAR, Alive to the World and the Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC). Catholic nun Hanna Klaus, acknowledging adolescent sexual activity, developed Teen STAR — a fertility-awareness-based curriculum promoting abstinence which adheres to Catholic sexual ethics espousing chastity as the only acceptable behaviour before marriage,⁸ rooted in Pope John Paul II’s ‘Theology of the Body’.⁹ A further motivation for Teen STAR is to counter “LGBT propaganda and gender ideology and other anti-Christian attitudes and programs [which] are aimed at young people”.¹⁰

¹ Paul VI (1968). Recourse to Infertile Periods. In *Humanae Vitae*.

² As outlined in the 1987 Donum Vitae Instruction from the Vatican doctrinal office.

³ Saint Paul VI Institute. (2025). Creighton Model FertilityCare System: Allied Health Education Programs. Omaha, NE: Saint Paul VI Institute. https://saintpaulvi.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/EP_Booklet_2025-2026.pdf.

⁴ Sung, S., Mikes, B.A., & Abramovitz, A. (2025). Natural Family Planning. In StatPearls. StatPearls Publishing. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK546661/>.

⁵ Mirkes, S.R. (2020). NaProTechnology: A Medical Embodiment of the Catholic Perspective on an Infertile Couple’s Right to Family Planning.

⁶ Butler, K. (2017). Inside the strange, heartbreaking, relentless quest for a Christian fertility treatment. Mother Jones. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/07/inside-the-strange-heartbreaking-relentless-quest-for-a-natural-fertility-treatment/>.

⁷ Aguilar, A.R. (2024). Una clínica de fertilidad con vínculos religiosos veta a parejas que no estén casadas: ‘Es un protocolo científico’. ElDiario, 19 March. https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/clinica-fertilidad-vinculos-religiosos-veta-parejas-no-est-en-casadas-protocolo-cientifico_1_10959040.html.

⁸ Pontifical Council for the Family. (1995). The truth and meaning of human sexuality. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html.

⁹ Theology of the body states that every manifestation of sexuality is aimed at procreation; therefore, contraception, abortion, masturbation and homosexuality are distortions of human nature.

¹⁰ Teen STAR. (2024). Program cjelovitog spolnog odgoja mladih Teen STAR. https://teenstar.hr/download/informacije_listopad_2024.pdf.

Christine de Marcellus Vollmer,¹¹ a Venezuelan national, President of the Alliance for the Family, founding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life and a member of the Pontifical Council for the Family,¹² created Alive to the World, which offers a “comprehensive programme of values education which supports relationships, sexual, and health education in a child-centred way”.¹³ The WYA developed the HDC, a “K-12 curriculum that teaches personal identity and human excellence”,¹⁴ in 2008, with the aim of inculcating values aligned with Catholic sexual ethics.

In the sphere of abortion, activism has shifted from legal prohibition to a three-pronged strategy: prevention, restriction and prohibition (See Chapter 5 on Civil society). Notably, this approach prioritises indirect tactics such as CPCs,¹⁵ which target women considering abortion by offering free consultations and limited medical services (e.g. ultrasounds) with the intention to dissuade termination.

The origins of CPCs are attributed to Robert Pearson, who opened the first CPC in Honolulu in the USA in 1967.¹⁶ Pearson authored a 93-page manual titled *How to Start and Operate Your Own Pro-Life Outreach Crisis Pregnancy Center*, which provides practical guidance on how to disinform women about the anti-abortion objectives of the CPC, and specifically about their health status.¹⁷ Since then, CPCs have proliferated in the USA and expanded globally, at times with local European organisations forming partnerships with US CPC promoters, such as Heartbeat International.¹⁸

Reintegrative therapy is an attempt to reframe ‘gay conversion therapy’ within a trauma-informed, clinical framework, in response to legal restrictions and social condemnation of gay conversion.¹⁹ Gay conversion therapy was originally invented by an American Catholic doctor, Joseph Nicolosi.²⁰ After the controversy and eventual banning of gay conversion therapy

TABLE 16

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR ANTI-GENDER SERVICES

Service	Technical guidelines
NFP	Billings Ovulation Method
NaPro Technologies	Creighton Model FertilityCare System
Abstinence-based education	Alive to the World Curriculum and training manual Human Dignity Curriculum Teen STAR curriculum and training manual
Crisis pregnancy counselling	How to Start and Operate Your Own Pro-Life Outreach Crisis Pregnancy Center
Reintegrative counselling	International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice Declaration

¹¹ Quinn Knight, E. (2020). An interview with Christine de Marcellus Vollmer. Profiles in Catholicism, 5 May. <https://www.catholicprofiles.org/post/an-interview-with-christine-de-marcellus-vollmer>.

¹² Catholic Online. (2006). Christine Vollmer on Building a Family Culture. Catholic Online, 11 March. <https://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=3075>.

¹³ Alive to the World. (2025). Our Story. <https://alivetotheworld.co.uk/our-philosophy/our-story/>.

¹⁴ See <https://humandignitycurriculum.org/>.

¹⁵ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2022). Issue Brief: Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Washington, DC: ACOG. <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/abortion-is-essential/trending-issues/issue-brief-crisis-pregnancy-centers>.

¹⁶ Stacey, D. (n.d.). History of Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Crisis Pregnancy Center Watch. <https://motherjones.com/wp-content/uploads/cpchistory2.pdf>.

¹⁷ Malcolm, H.E. (2019). Pregnancy Centers and the Limits of Mandated Disclosure. Columbia Law Review, 119(4). <https://www.columbiaalawreview.org/content/pregnancy-centers-and-the-limits-of-mandated-disclosure/>.

¹⁸ Fitzgerald, M. (2020). Europe Must Act Against US-Backed “Crisis Pregnancy Centers”. Project Syndicate, 11 February. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/europe-must-act-against-crisis-pregnancy-centers-by-mary-fitzgerald-2020-02>.

¹⁹ De Groot, D. (2024). Bans on conversion ‘therapies’: The situation in selected EU Member States. Briefing. Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733521](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)733521).

²⁰ Nicolosi, J. (n.d.). Joseph Nicolosi Curriculum Vitae. <https://www.josephnicolosi.com/resume/>.

in many jurisdictions, his son, Joseph Nicolosi Jr., invented reintegrative therapy.²¹ Despite the rebranding, it remains widely viewed as a continuation of discredited practices aimed at altering sexual orientation.²²

PHASE 2: A RELIGIOUS HALL OF MIRRORS TO SIMULATE A SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE BASE

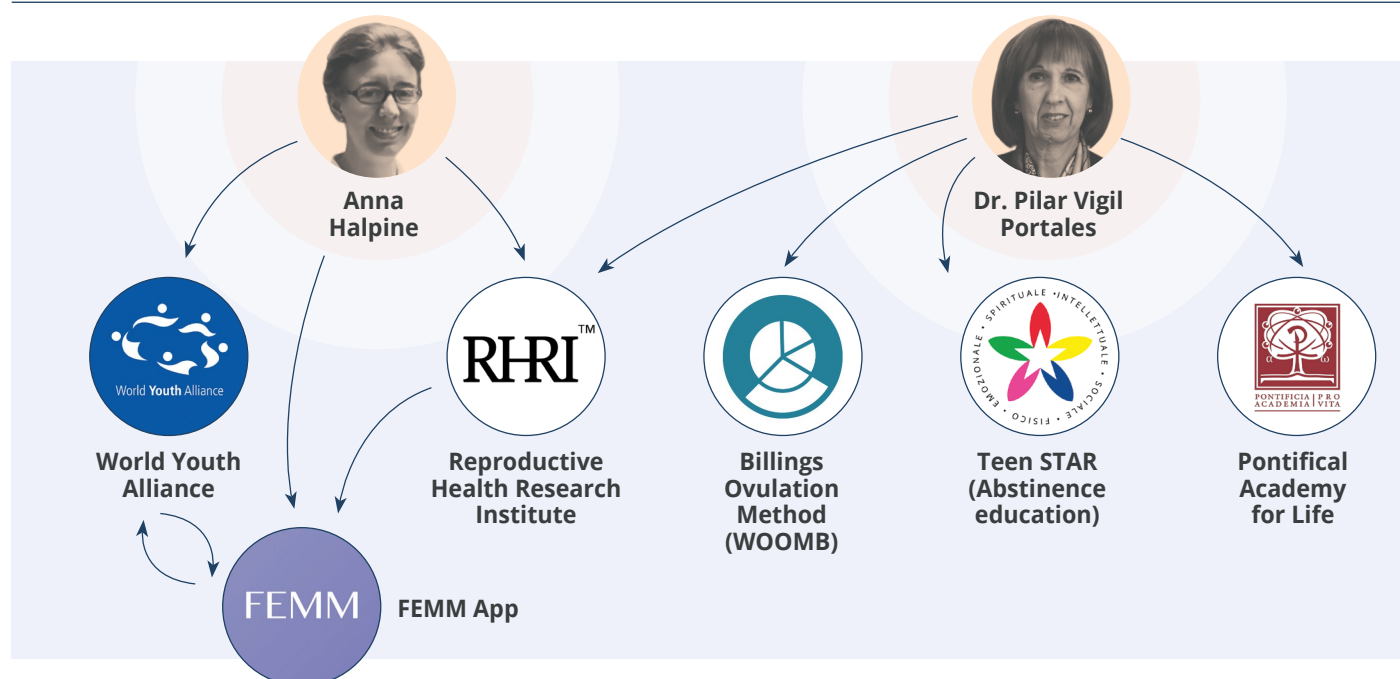
Once the secularised service model is developed, the next phase involves the construction of an ‘evidence base’ to support the technical guidelines and curriculum. This is achieved by collaborating with ideologically aligned actors, often from academic or medical backgrounds, who provide the necessary academic or scientific veneer. This collaboration helps establish the appearance of scientific and medical credibility, even when the research or evidence is often limited or selective.

A key feature of this landscape is the concentration of influence among a small number of individuals and organisations responsible for generating much of the purported ‘scientific’ support for anti-gender services. Central among these are the main proponents of NFP, NaPro Technologies and abstinence-based sex education, all of which are linked to a handful of prominent figures.

There are two key figures, Anna Halpine and Dr. Pilar Vigil, who sit at the nexus of anti-gender services covering NaPro Technologies, NFP and abstinence-based education. Halpine is founder and president of the WYA, while Vigil, a Chilean physician, is reportedly affiliated with Opus Dei.²³ Halpine created the FeMM Foundation in 2011 as a spin-off from the WYA, where she remains an *ex officio* Board Member.²⁴ Vigil is a proponent of both the Billings and Creighton models of fertility control,²⁵ a member of WOOMB Chile²⁶ and serves as the International Director of Teen STAR.²⁷

FIGURE 7

KEY FIGURES IN CATHOLIC-INSPIRED ANTI-GENDER SERVICES: ANNA HALPINE AND DR. PILAR VIGIL PORTALES



²¹ Reintegrative Therapy Association. (2024). About Us. <https://www.reintegrativetherapy.com/about-us/>.

²² Kuruvilla, C. (2109). Amazon Pulls Books By Catholic Writer Who Promoted Conversion Therapy. Huffington Post, 5 July. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/amazon-nicolosi-books-conversion-therapy_n_5d1f64a8e4b01b8347356c7a.

²³ La Mala Fe. (2024). Argentina: Gobierno de Milei convocó a ONG antiderechos para capacitar sobre educación sexual integral. La Mala Fe, 25 October. <https://lamalafe.lat/2024/10/25/argentina-gobierno-de-milei-convoco-a-ong-antiderechos-para-capacitar-sobre-educacion-sexual-integral/>.

²⁴ FEMM Health. (2023). Annual Report 2023. New York: FEMM Health. <https://femmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/FEMM-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>.

²⁵ See Dr. Pilar Vigil's CV at Billings Ovulation Method Association (n.d.). Pilar Vigil, MD. <https://boma-usa.org/pilar-vigil-md/>.

²⁶ World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings. (2013). The John J. Billings Memorial Lecture: The Billings' Journey - A Pilgrimage of life, love and forgiveness. <https://woombinternational.org/billings-memorial-lecture/a-pilgrimage-of-life-love-and-forgiveness/>; and World Organisation Ovulation Method Billings. (2003). Fertility Disorders and the Billings Ovulation Method®. Paper delivered at the International Jubilee Conference of the OMR&RCA in Melbourne, March-April 2003. <https://woombinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Fertility-Disorders-Pilar-Vigil.pdf>.

²⁷ Teen STAR. (2020). Our History. <https://www.teenstar.org/history.html>.

Together, Halpine and Vigil co-founded the Reproductive Health Research Institute (RHRI),²⁸ which “conducts new research for women’s health, with a focus on reproductive endocrinology”.²⁹ RHRI research, most of which is produced by Vigil herself,³⁰ is then offered as an externally validated scientific basis for Vigil’s and Halpine’s initiatives in NaPro Technologies, NFP and abstinence-based education. Indeed, the FEMM app website boasts that “FEMM and RHRI protocols provide a sound diagnostic testing and treatment for a range of hormonal disorders.”³¹ The WYA affirms that the HDC “meets the criteria by the UN and WHO for personal identity curriculum”.³² The WYA’s founder, Anna Halpine, clarifies that “The HDC offers an alternative approach to the sexual education guidelines developed by the World Health Organization.”³³

In the realm of ‘reintegrative therapy’, a notable actor is the International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC),³⁴ founded in 2017. Chaired by Mike Davidson, who also founded the Core Issues Trust (CIT),³⁵ a religious extremist organisation based in Northern Ireland,³⁶ IFTCC co-directs X-Out Loud,³⁷ an ‘ex-gay’ movement encouraging individuals to leave the LGBTQI community. These organisations promote themselves as therapeutic rather than ideological, despite their religious origins and widespread condemnation from professional health bodies.³⁸

In the area of abortion, CPCs have proliferated globally based on models developed by the US-based Heartbeat International.³⁹ An investigation by Open Democracy demonstrated how Heartbeat International’s template has been replicated worldwide.⁴⁰

PHASE 3: PILOT PROJECTS THROUGH CHONGOS AND SEED FUNDING

With the ‘evidence base’ established, the next step is the implementation of pilot projects, often carried out through ChONGOs (See Chapter 4a: ‘Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: The worrying emergence of Church-organised non-governmental organisations’). These pilot projects are crucial for testing the viability of the anti-gender services in real-world settings, often in cooperation with local partners or communities. Funding for these initiatives typically comes from private donors.

Regarding NFP, the WYA established the FEMM app through a dedicated foundation in 2017.⁴¹ The app developers claim that “FEMM provides a complete solution for women’s reproductive health.” By offering a digital mechanism to help women track their menstrual cycles, FEMM can help them equally avoid or achieve pregnancy.⁴² FEMM started as a modest project targeting users in a handful of countries in the Americas, Africa and Europe. Over the years, it has translated the app into ten languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Hungarian and Croatian, and now offers access to local trained counsellors⁴³ in 27 countries, including 11 in Europe, and, as of 2022, boasting over 500,000 downloads.⁴⁴

Abstinence education has long been promoted by religious groups, such as the US-based Silver Ring Thing in the 2000s, which aimed to evangelise ‘unchurched’ youth through sexual purity pledges.⁴⁵ While these early imports from the USA did not make much headway, in Europe today, Teen STAR

²⁸ Reproductive Health Research Institute. (2025). About Us. <https://rh rinstitute.org/about/>.

²⁹ Reproductive Health Research Institute. (2025). What is RHRI? <https://rh rinstitute.org/what-is-rhri/>.

³⁰ For a list of publications, see <https://rh rinstitute.org/publications/>.

³¹ FEMM Health. (2025). The Science Behind FEMM. <https://femmhealth.org/the-science/>.

³² See <https://wya.net/timeline/for-2014>.

³³ Archdiocese of Malta. (2015). The Human Dignity: lectures by Anna Halpine. <https://church.mt/the-human-dignity-lectures-by-anna-halpine/>.

³⁴ See <https://iftcc.org/>.

³⁵ See <https://core-issues.org/>.

³⁶ Kenny, O. (2020). Charity status of Northern Irish group Core Issues Trust challenged over alleged promotion of ‘conversion therapy’. GCN, 13 May. <https://gcn.ie/charity-status-core-issues-trust-conversion-therapy/>.

³⁷ See <https://xoutloud.com/>.

³⁸ Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. (2025). Conversion Therapy Online: The Players. <https://globalextr emism.org/reports/conversion-therapy-online-the-players/#cor>.

³⁹ Heartbeat International. (2025). What is a Pregnancy Center? <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/our-work/what-is-a-pregnancy-center>; and Reimeryte, E., & Ferreira, L. (2021). Explainer: What is ‘crisis pregnancy’? Open Democracy, 8 December. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/explainer-crisis-pregnancy/>.

⁴⁰ Provost, C., & Naira Archer, N. (2020). Exclusive: Trump-linked religious ‘extremists’ target women with disinformation worldwide. Open Democracy, 10 February. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/trump-linked-religious-extremists-global-disinformation-pregnant-women/>.

⁴¹ See <https://femmhealth.org/>.

⁴² FEMM Health. (2025). The Science Behind FEMM. <https://femmhealth.org/the-science/>.

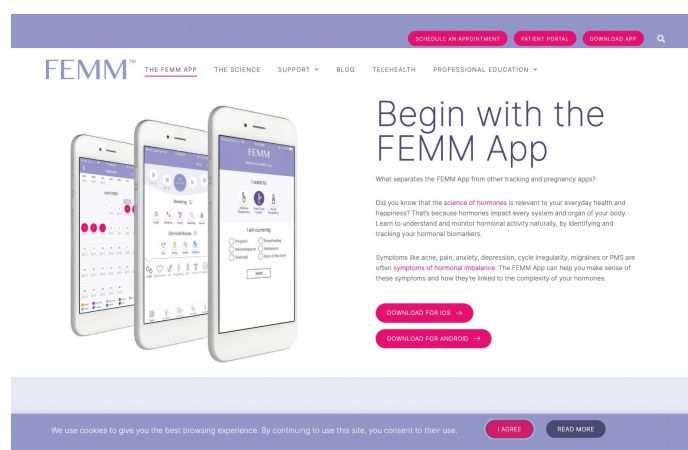
⁴³ FEMM Health. (2025). Medical Providers. <https://femmhealth.org/medical-providers/>.

⁴⁴ FEMM Health. (2021). Annual Report 2021. New York: FEMM Health. <https://femmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FEMM-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Hart, R. (2006). The Silver Ring Thing. American Civil Liberties Union, 23 February. <https://www.aclu.org/news/reproductive-freedom/silver-ring-thing>.

operates in 15 countries,⁴⁶ alongside similar curricula such as Alive to the World, in Albania, Germany, Romania, Slovakia⁴⁷ and the UK.⁴⁸ Globally, Teen STAR is both an abstinence-based sexuality education programme and a global Catholic NGO network operating in 56 countries.^{49,50} For the HDC, the WYA reports that the Government of Saint Lucia was the first to take it up in 2011, and it was being piloted in Mexico (2013), Croatia (2016), the Philippines (2018), Ethiopia (2020), Paraguay (2021), Poland (2022) and Cameroon, Kenya and Lebanon (2023).⁵¹ A primary source of seed funding for the development and expansion of the WYA's HDC, Teen STAR and FEMM in several European countries appears to be the German Stiftung Ja zum Leben (See Chapter 3: 'Sources of European private funding for anti-rights and religious extremist activism').⁵²

In many countries, major anti-abortion organisations also serve as the principal providers of CPCs. Present in many European countries, prominent CPC organisations include Aktion Leben,⁵³ supported by the Austrian Conference of Bishops,⁵⁴ as well as Life 2009 Ltd. (UK),⁵⁵ Red Madre (Spain)⁵⁶ and Vida Norte (Portugal).⁵⁷ In Slovakia, the Alexis CPC reports benefiting from an annual grant of US\$18,000 from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.⁵⁸ In Italy, over 300 CPCs have been established by the Movimento per la Vita, an organisation closely aligned with the Catholic Church,⁵⁹ as 'centres for aid to life' (*centri di aiuto a la vita*).⁶⁰ Over five years, 39 identified CPCs across Europe generated \$77.7 million, often attracting public funding and business sponsorships by presenting abortion dissuasion alongside material support for pregnant women.



📍 Homepage of the FEMM NFP app website.

A more extreme anti-abortion initiative, pioneered by Heartbeat International, is the Abortion Pill Rescue Network, which promotes 'abortion reversal'⁶¹ — a treatment deemed unproven and unethical by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.⁶² In 2021, investigations highlighted how this unethical and dangerous practice was spreading across Europe, aided by religious extremist activists and local anti-abortion doctors and nurses.⁶³

The principal strategic focus regarding reintegrative therapy has been the preservation of legal status for such practices. The ITCC strongly opposes legislative bans on conversion therapy.

⁴⁶ Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. See Teen STAR. (2020). Teen STAR Worldwide. <https://www.teenstar.org/teen-star-worldwide.html>.

⁴⁷ See <https://alivetotheworld.org/>.

⁴⁸ See <https://alivetotheworld.co.uk/>.

⁴⁹ Valsecchi, M.C. (2025). Una storia incredibile di diseducazione sessuale in classe. Marie Claire, 18 January. <https://www.marieclaire.it/attualita/news-appuntamenti/a62840665/teen-star-diseducazione-sessuale/>.

⁵⁰ Stoppa, A. (2018). Pilar Vigil. «Para que el hombre descubra quién es el hombre». Comunió y Liberación, 27 September. <https://www.clonline.org/es/actualidad/articulos/2018-09-27-pilar-vigil-para-que-el-hombre-descubra-quien-es-el-hombre>.

⁵¹ See <https://wya.net/timeline/>.

⁵² Stiftung Ja zum Leben. (n.d.). Projekte. <https://ja-zum-leben.de/projekte-2/>.

⁵³ See <https://www.aktionleben.at/>.

⁵⁴ See the annual reports of Aktion Leben and its regional branches.

⁵⁵ See <https://lifecharity.org.uk/>.

⁵⁶ See <https://www.redmadre.es/>.

⁵⁷ See <https://www.vidanorte.org/home/>.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. (2025). Advice ALEXIS, n.o. <https://www.registeruz.sk/cruz-public/domain/financialreport/show/8977712/0>.

⁵⁹ Gehrig, R. (2025). Fifty Years of Italy's Pro-Life Movement. EWTN Vatican, 17 March. <https://www.ewtnvatican.com/articles/fifty-years-of-italys-pro-life-movement-4719>.

⁶⁰ Movimento Per la Vita Italiano. (2023). I Centri di Aiuto alla Vita. <https://www.mpv.org/centri-aiuto-vita/>.

⁶¹ See <https://abortionpillreversal.com/>.

⁶² American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2025). Facts Are Important: Medication Abortion "Reversal" Is Not Supported by Science. <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science>.

⁶³ Provost, C., Hovhannisyan, T., & Snip, I. (2021). 'Abortion pill reversal' spreading in Europe, backed by US Christian Right. Open Democracy, 25 March. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/abortion-pill-reversal-spreading-in-europe-backed-by-us-christian-right/>.

Its *International Declaration on Therapeutic and Pastoral Choice* claims that banning conversion therapy “infringes human rights and freedoms”, and asserts that such bans contribute to ‘cancel culture’, suppress dissent and restrict free speech. The IFTCC organises major conferences, in Budapest in 2022 and in Warsaw in 2024, featuring prominent religious extremist figures.⁶⁴ The movement has attracted support from other organisations, including the Evangelical Alliance in the UK, which opposes legislative efforts to criminalise pastoral care or prayer-based approaches to issues of sexuality and gender.⁶⁵

PHASE 4: LOCAL POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

At this stage, anti-gender services seek to secure local political support as a means of ensuring institutionalisation. This phase involves endorsement by local political allies who advocate for the integration of such services into core state functions, including education and health-care systems. Political support at this level is essential for legitimising these services, as it provides official recognition and signals broader societal acceptance. Once such endorsement is obtained, anti-gender services can begin to scale up, with increasing opportunities for monetisation. Curricula, training materials and related tools can be sold to schools, health-care providers and other institutions, creating revenue streams that support further expansion.

Teen STAR provides a revealing case study of this expansion process. Initially registered in the USA in the mid-1990s, it quickly spread internationally, beginning in Europe. It first

appeared in Austria, where it was recognised as a good practice in a European Union Erasmus project as early as 1992.⁶⁶ Croatia reports the programme’s introduction via Austria in the mid-1990s,⁶⁷ and Teen STAR was also present in Switzerland by 1996.⁶⁸ From these early locations, the programme spread to neighbouring countries through various mechanisms, including annual congresses that convened Teen STAR practitioners from across Europe.⁶⁹ It was later recognised in 2017 as a good practice in another Erasmus-funded project and is now active across all regions of Italy.⁷⁰

An initiative funded by the European Union (EU) in 2018, for example, supported youth camps that trained 50 participants from Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Germany and Austria in the Teen STAR methodology.⁷¹ Additional points of origin emerged: Teen STAR programmes in the UK and French-speaking Belgium were both established via France in 2023⁷² and have since collaborated with Catholic dioceses⁷³ to organise training workshops.⁷⁴

In Hungary, Teen STAR began to receive official support in 2018, at a conference attended by then-President Katalin Novák, where the programme was presented by two representatives from Teen STAR Germany.⁷⁵ The Hungarian NGO ERGO — Európai Regionális Szervezet (European Regional Organisation), which facilitates EU funding streams into Hungary, organised the event.⁷⁶ The Hungarian implementation project was directed by former FIDESZ Member of Parliament Ilona Ékes and received 50 million forints in EU funding between 2018 and 2020.⁷⁷

⁶⁴ These include Sharon Slater of Family Watch International, Joseph Nicolosi, Jr. of Reintegrative Therapy and a representative of ADF International, among others. See <https://iftcc.org/event/conference-2024/> and the hard copy version of the 2022 IFTCC Budapest conference.

⁶⁵ Webster, D. (2021). The challenges around conversion therapy. Evangelical Alliance, 16 March. <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/the-challenges-around-conversion-therapy>.

⁶⁶ Akademie Klausenhof. (2019). STOP! Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse: New Methods, Contents and Approaches in a European Context. Hamminkeln, Germany: Akademie Klausenhof. <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/7124619e-aafc-465d-bea9-039a93e68ac2/IO3-Toolbox-EN.pdf>.

⁶⁷ See <https://teenstar.hr/hrvatska>.

⁶⁸ See <https://teenstar.ch/#offres>.

⁶⁹ Cross-press. (2006). 5. International Teenstar Congress. https://www.cross-press.net/Docu/GLAUBE/World/2006.06.26-27_TeenStar/index.htm.

⁷⁰ KA2 Strategic Partnership. (2017). Handbook of Good Practices & Proposals: Salud Juvenil: Un Enfoque +Tic! https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/c89e06cd-e2d0-4832-8bf5-2b4e134157ee/LIBRO_SaludJuvenil_un_enfoque_TIC.pdf.

⁷¹ Teen STAR Österreich. (2018). Ausbildungsseminar in Ungarn (Teil 1) – 24. bis 26. März 2018 (Teil eines EU-Projekts). <https://www.teenstar.at/2018/05/09/5254/>.

⁷² See <https://www.teenstar.be/fr/contacts-et-liens>; and North Data. (n.d.). Teenstar Belgique VZW, Marche-En-Famenne, Belgique. <https://www.northdata.fr/Teenstar%20Belgique%20VZW,%20Marche-En-Famenne/KBO%201005.993.235>.

⁷³ Diocèse de Namur. (2020, 15 May). Vivre la foi - et le confinement - en famille. <http://namur.diocese.be/default.asp?X=5558DCD4D2667B7A61617060620B0C0106106B78760B091379710E05156572670B020E0700B5>.

⁷⁴ Teen STAR Belgique. (2023). Parcours et Inscriptions. <https://www.teenstar.be/fr/parcours>.

⁷⁵ ERGO. (2018). Invitation: The ERGO – European Regional Organization invites you to an opening conference in the framework of the Transnational Cooperation tender. <https://ergo-net.hu/hu/hirek/meghivo>.

⁷⁶ See <https://ergo-net.hu/>.

⁷⁷ Around US\$177,400 in 2018.

The claims to scientific merit formulated by the RHRI paved the way for the WYA to secure a €400,000 EU grant in 2022 for the international development of the FEMM app through the 'Women's Health Goes Digital' project.⁷⁸ Partners in the project include a range of related anti-gender actors and ChONGOs, such as the Opus Dei University of Navarra, Teen STAR Italy and the WYA-related public relations firm Excellence Incubator (See Chapter 6a: 'Shadowy power brokers: Anti-rights public affairs consultancies').

The WYA was also successful in securing public authorities' buy-in for the HDC, starting in 2016 when the HDC "gained government approval in Croatia from the Ministry of Science and Education" for adoption in public schools. In 2018, the WYA was working with the Philippines' Department of Education to roll out the HDC in all public schools, and by 2024, the province of Antique in the Philippines was implementing the HDC in public schools. In Europe, the WYA branch in Poland boasted securing an EU grant to roll out the HDC in the country in 2022.⁷⁹

The expansion of CPCs also illustrates the scaling strategy, including in politically progressive contexts. A notable example is SIRIZ⁸⁰ in the Netherlands, a CPC created in 2010⁸¹ with co-funding from the Dutch anti-abortion organisation Vereniging ter Bescherming van het Ongeboren Kind (VBOK, Union for the Protection of Unborn Children). At the time, the Dutch government was led by a coalition that included the Christian Union Party (also affiliated with the European Christian Political Movement, ECPM), which successfully negotiated public funding for SIRIZ as an alternative to services provided by pro-SRHR organisations.⁸² This public support enabled SIRIZ to develop a network of nine CPCs across the country.⁸³ However, in 2018, SIRIZ came under intense media and political scrutiny.⁸⁴

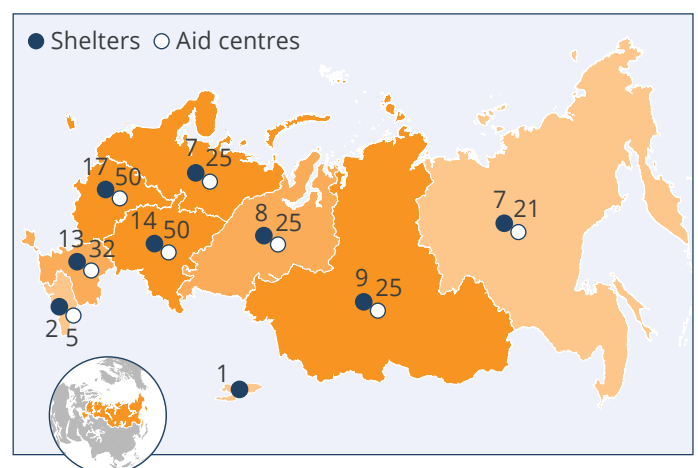
In the Russian Federation, the CPCs *Дом для мамы* (Dom Dlya Mamy — Mothers' Homes) have expanded to encompass 78 shelters and 234 'humanitarian centres' across the country.⁸⁵

The head of Dom dlya Mamy sought formal endorsement from key figures and met with Patriarch Kiril in 2016, and with the Russian Federal Health Minister and President Putin in 2019.⁸⁶ It is now under sanctions by Ukraine, as it "participates in the organized mechanism of mass abduction, illegal deportation, and forced relocation of Ukrainian citizens, including children, from temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine"⁸⁷ (See Chapter 2: 'Russian funding: The house of sanctions — Russian funding turns inwards').

Regarding gay conversion therapy, the situation varies greatly across countries and is undertaken by a multitude of separate actors. For example, in the Netherlands, a 2020 parliamentary study identified around 15 providers of conversion therapy operating in the country.⁸⁸ In Germany, approximately 1,000 people were subjected to conversion therapy each year until the passing of a ban for minors in 2020.⁸⁹ A key actor, the

FIGURE 8

NETWORK OF CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES IN RUSSIA



⁷⁸ Institute for Culture and Society. (n.d.). Women's Health Goes Digital. University of Navarra. <https://en.unav.edu/web/institute-for-culture-and-society/projects/women-s-health-goes-digital>.

⁷⁹ World Youth Alliance. (2022). The History of the World Youth Alliance. <https://wya.net/timeline/>.

⁸⁰ See <https://siriz.nl/>.

⁸¹ Stichting Siriz. (n.d.). Over Siriz. <https://siriz.nl/category/over-siriz/>.

⁸² Widdershoven, I. (2018). De kwestie Siriz is nog steeds niet opgelost. De Groene Amsterdammer, 13 December. <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-kwestie-siriz-is-nog-steeds-niet-opgelost>.

⁸³ Siriz help centres are located in The Hague, Dordrecht, Veenendaal, Gouda, Groningen, Haarlem, Wooden, Rotterdam and Zwolle. See Stichting Siriz. (n.d.). Hulpposten. <https://siriz.nl/hulpposten/>.

⁸⁴ De Jong, C., & 't Sas, S. (2018). Tweede Kamer: stop subsidie zwangerschapsadvies organisatie Siriz. Een Vandaag, 26 September. <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/tweede-kamer-stop-subsidie-zwangerschapsadvies-organisatie-siriz/>.

⁸⁵ Dom Dlya Mamy. (2021). Annual Report 2021. ⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ War & Sanctions. (2025). Autonomous Non-Profit Organization "Dom Dlya Mamy": Abduction perpetrators. <https://war-sanctions.gur.gov.ua/en/kidnappers/companies/7685>.

⁸⁸ Rijksoverheid. (2020, 10 June). Een exploratief onderzoek naar pogingen tot het veranderen van de seksuele gerichtheid en genderidentiteit in Nederland. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2020/06/10/een-exploratief-onderzoek-naar-pogingen-tot-het-veranderen-van-de-seksuele-gerichtheid-en-genderidentiteit-in-nederland>.

⁸⁹ BBC. (2020). Germany passes law banning 'gay conversion therapy' for minors. BBC, 8 May. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52585162>.

Deutsches Institut für Jugend und Gesellschaft (DIJG),⁹⁰ part of the Protestant Offensive Junger Christen (OJC) movement,⁹¹ which has shifted from 'healing' homosexuality to offering 'identity-forming pastoral care' since 2016.⁹² Another organisation in Germany, Weißes Kreuz,⁹³ aligns its practices with the 2020 law banning conversion therapy for minors.⁹⁴

The reach of gay conversion initiatives is expanding internationally. In 2023, the CIT collaborated with the Norwegian Til Helnet (a Christian multi-denominational group that works with those wishing to leave the LGBTQI lifestyle)⁹⁵ and launched an African outreach project to train conservative pastors on sexuality and gender issues.⁹⁶ In Europe, the ECPM held a seminar in Bratislava in 2019 dedicated to reintegrative therapy which featured the president of the then ECPM, MEP Branislav Skripek, and Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, Jr.⁹⁷

PHASE 5: POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SCALING

In the final phase, political allies operating at higher levels leverage earlier proof-of-concept efforts to facilitate the large-scale expansion of anti-gender services and to institutionalise them through the adoption of supportive laws and policies. This phase is marked by the entrenchment of such services within public institutions, often driven by national or regional political figures who advocate for their integration into official policy frameworks. Institutionalisation not only extends the geographic reach of these services but also confers legitimacy through endorsement by the State. Furthermore, the scaling process enables the expansion of their economic footprint, as these services become embedded within political, educational and health-care infrastructures.

The most prominent example of anti-gender services scaled to the national level is Hungary's Family Policy. Since 2010, it has implemented a wide array of grants and loans targeting parents and prospective parents, with a focus on boosting demographic growth through heterosexual family structures. Scholar Éva Fodor argues that this policy has reshaped social citizenship, now conferred primarily on those undertaking child-care responsibilities.⁹⁸

Hungary actively promotes its Family Policy as an exportable model. It has showcased the approach in international forums, including President Novák's 2020 visit to Washington, DC,⁹⁹ the Budapest Demographic Summit¹⁰⁰ and CPAC.¹⁰¹ This international outreach appears effective: in April 2025, The *Hungarian Conservative* claimed that "Trump's Draft Family Policy Framework Mirrors Hungary's Approach."¹⁰²

Other examples include Teen STAR in Argentina, NaPro Technology in Poland and CPCs in Italy — all of which have been scaled up following strategic political backing. In 2015, Poland's right-wing government defunded IVF and redirected public resources to NaPro Technologies, citing its superior moral acceptability. IVF funding was only reinstated by Poland's new administration in 2023.¹⁰³

In Italy, Teen STAR received accreditation from the Ministry for Education and Merit in 2016¹⁰⁴ for training school staff, and in France it was attributed the Qualiopi certificate for the quality of its training service in 2022,¹⁰⁵ making it "eligible for public funding".¹⁰⁶ By 2019, Teen STAR was formally

⁹⁰ See <https://www.dijg.de/>.

⁹¹ See <https://www.ojc.de/>. The OJC was part of the Agenda Europe Network. See Agenda Europe's 2016 Google List membership.

⁹² Hollenbach, M. (2019). Homosexuelle und Kirchen: Konversionstherapien sollen verboten werden. Deutschlandfunk, 22 August. <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/homosexuelle-und-kirchen-konversionstherapien-sollen-100.html>.

⁹³ See <https://www.weisses-kreuz.de/>.

⁹⁴ Stange, J. (2014). Die selbst ernannten Schwulenhüter treffen sich in Kassel. Die Zeit, 23 May. <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2014-05/homo-heiler-weisses-kreuz-kassel>.

⁹⁵ Core Issues Trust. (2024, 17 June). X-Out-Loud Broadens Its Reach In Scandinavia. <https://core-issues.org/x-out-loud-broadens-its-reach-in-scandinavia/>.

⁹⁶ Core Issues Trust. (2025). Introducing: Africa Project. <https://core-issues.org/africa-project/>.

⁹⁷ European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2021). Tip of the Iceberg. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>.

⁹⁸ Fodor, E. (n.d.). Getting paid to have children: Hungary's 'carefare' regime. [Web log post] The Loop. <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/getting-paid-to-have-children-hungarys-carefare-regime/>.

⁹⁹ About Hungary. (2020, 17 January). Novák: Hungary's family policy is thought of highly in Washington. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/novak-hungarys-family-policy-is-thought-of-highly-in-washington>.

¹⁰⁰ Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister. (2021, 23 September). Hungarian government based its family policy on five pillars. <https://2015-2022.miniszterelnok.hu/hungarian-government-based-its-family-policy-on-five-pillars/>.

¹⁰¹ Tadié, S. (2024). Hungary's Pro-Family Policies Should Prompt US Conservatives to Rethink Their Mindset, Says Gladden Pappin. National Catholic Register, 4 May. <https://www.ncregister.com/interview/gladden-pappin-hungary-us-politics-christian-roots>.

¹⁰² Scheffer, J. (2025). Donald Trump's Draft Family Policy Framework Mirrors Hungary's Approach. Hungarian Conservative, 23 April. <https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/politics/family-policy-us-trump-baby-bonus-hungary-model-orban/>.

¹⁰³ Gość Niedzielny. (2015, 3 December). Radziwiłł: Napro instead of in vitro financing. <https://www.gosc.pl/doc/2857172.Radziwill-Napro-zamiast-finansowania-in-vitro>.

¹⁰⁴ Teen STAR Italia. (2010). Cos'è Teen STAR. <https://www.teenstar.it/chi-siamo/#ts-italia>; Ministry for Instruction and Merit: Accredited for the training of school staff, decree no. AOODPIT.784 of 1/8/2016.

¹⁰⁵ See Teen STAR's Qualiopi certificate at <https://www.teenstar.fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Certificat-QUALIOPi-22-06-2022.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ Afnor Certification. (n.d.). Tout comprendre sur la certification QUALIOPi. <https://certification.afnor.org/qualiopi#:~:text=Sur%20la%20base%20d'un,aux%20fonds%20publics%20et%20mutualis%C3%A9s>.

registered as an organisation in Hungary;¹⁰⁷ in 2021, it was introduced into Hungarian schools;¹⁰⁸ and by 2023, it had begun receiving state financial support through the Bethlen Gábor Fund.¹⁰⁹ In Argentina, President Javier Milei announced its integration into the national education curriculum in 2024.¹¹⁰ In October 2024, Teen STAR France sponsored a workshop of animators in Nairobi, Kenya “to spread the Teen STAR programme to unreached African countries and to integrate African cultural values into our curriculum.”¹¹¹

An investigation by the Associació Drets Sexuals i Reproductius (ADSR), the Catalan Association for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, found that since 2007, the Red Madre network has promoted draft laws across Spain to establish a legal basis for public funding of its CPC activities. The proposed Law for the Protection of Motherhood states that “Spain, as a Social State... must contribute — through active social and economic measures — to making abortion, as a social reality, disappear or at least be reduced to a marginal phenomenon”,¹¹² aiming to protect both the unborn and women’s ‘right to motherhood’. It advocates partnerships with private actors — namely “foundations, associations, and other non-profit entities” offering comprehensive support to pregnant women — and fiscal incentives to continue pregnancies. To date, seven Spanish regions have adopted such legislation.¹¹³

In Italy, the government under Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni declared in April 2024 its intention to support anti-abortion organisations in providing counselling services within family planning centres, explicitly aiming to dissuade women from terminating pregnancies.¹¹⁴ In Hungary, while abortion remains accessible de jure, a series of measures by public authorities have sought to curtail access to abortion rights de facto.¹¹⁵ Perhaps most drastically, in November 2024, the Russian Duma unanimously adopted legislation banning the “promotion of childlessness ideology”,¹¹⁶ a policy subsequently adopted in its unrecognised satellite republic of Transnistria in 2025.¹¹⁷

Regarding gay conversion therapy, Russia offers a particularly dystopian case, where LGBTQI individuals are officially designated ‘extremists’,¹¹⁸ and conversion therapy is allowed to operate within an unregulated free market. An investigation in 2024¹¹⁹ revealed that such therapy is openly offered not only by hypnotists, religious crackpots and self-proclaimed spiritual healers but also by certified medical professionals, clinics and rehabilitation centres for substance abuse. Examples include the Orthodox-affiliated Inextinguishable Hope centre near Moscow, which charges US\$540 per month for isolation-based prayer therapy, and the Nikitinko Brothers’ Workshop, which offers hypnosis sessions via Skype.¹²⁰

¹⁰⁷ See <https://teenstar.hu/>; and Teen STAR Hungary. (2019). TeenSTAR Magyarország Egyesület: Alapszabálya. https://teenstar.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Teenstar_alapitookirat_2019.09.13.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ Bernadett, M. (2021). Ha már felvilágosítjuk a fiatalokat, ne tegyük akárhogy! Vasárnap, 23 May. <https://vasarnap.hu/2021/05/23/ha-mar-felvilagositjuk-a-fiatalokat-ne-tegyuk-akarmogy/>.

¹⁰⁹ Kultúráért és Innovációért Felelős Miniszter. (2023, 31 July). Döntési lista: Gyermek, ifjúsági és családpolitikai programok egyedi támogatása CSP-E-200904-23. Budapest: Kultúráért és Innovációért Felelős Miniszter. https://emet.gov.hu/app/uploads/2022/04/CSP-E-200904-23_2_Dontesi-lista.pdf.

¹¹⁰ La Mala Fe. (2024, 25 October). Argentina: Gobierno de Milei convocó a ONG antiderechos para capacitar sobre educación sexual integral. <https://lamalafe.lat/2024/10/25/argentina-gobierno-de-milei-convoco-a-ong-antiderechos-para-capacitar-sobre-educacion-sexual-integral/>.

¹¹¹ ACI Africa. (2024, 24 November). First-ever Teen STAR Congress in Nairobi Seeking to “modify” Curriculum to Give “it an African identity”: Facilitator. <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/13053/first-ever-teen-star-congress-in-nairobi-seeking-to-modify-curriculum-to-give-it-an-african-identity-facilitator>.

¹¹² Red Madre. (2021, 1 July). Proyecto de Ley de Protección de la Maternidad. <https://www.redmadre.es/proyecto-de-ley-de-proteccion-de-la-maternidad/>.

¹¹³ Canary Islands, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Galicia, La Rioja, Madrid and Murcia.

¹¹⁴ Robers, H. (2024). Italy moves to allow anti-abortion activists inside clinics. Politico, 18 April. <https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-giorgia-meloni-moves-allow-anti-abortion-activists-inside-clinics/>.

¹¹⁵ Berkes, D. (2022). Abortion in Hungary: Pretence of Accessibility. 4 Liberty, 7 November. <https://4liberty.eu/abortion-in-hungary-pretence-of-accessibility/>.

¹¹⁶ International Federation for Human Rights. (2024, 14 November). Russia: Ban on “propaganda” in favor of childfree lifestyles. <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/lgbtqi-rights/russia-ban-on-propaganda-in-favor-of-childfree-lifestyles>.

¹¹⁷ Moldova 1. (2015, 10 March). Tiraspol bans child-free propaganda, mirroring Russia. <https://moldova1.md/p/45365/tiraspol-bans-child-free-propaganda-mirroring-russia>.

¹¹⁸ Human Rights Watch. (2024, 15 February). Russia: First Convictions Under LGBT ‘Extremist’ Ruling. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/15/russia-first-convictions-under-lgbt-extremist-ruling>.

¹¹⁹ Osipova, S. (2020). A journalistic investigation first captured LGBTK person conversion therapy sessions in Russia. The main one from the movie of the project “System”. Current Time, 4 March. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/32846827.html>. ¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ World Health Organization. (1988). Natural Family Planning: A guide to provision of services. Geneva: WHO. <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/39322/9241542411-eng.pdf>.

¹²² World Health Organization. (1995). Natural Family Planning: What health workers need to know. Geneva: WHO. https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/63294/WHO_MCH_93.2_Rev.1.pdf.

CONTROVERSIES AND SCALABILITY

As demonstrated, anti-gender services extend beyond religious contexts, being deliberately rebranded and marketed as mainstream health alternatives. In doing so, they directly compete with evidence-based SRHR services, shaping public health outcomes, influencing funding priorities and potentially undermining the well-being of those they target.

Although doctrinally compliant, these alternatives lack robust scientific grounding. According to World Health Organization data, NFP methods have typical-use failure rates of 10–30%, in contrast to modern contraception's efficacy of over 90%.^{121,122} In the UK, the proportion of women seeking an abortion citing NFP use rose from 0.4% in 2018 to 2.5% in 2023.¹²³ NaPro Technology similarly lacks strong peer-reviewed evidence and appears no more effective than unassisted conception. Moreover, extensive research confirms that abstinence-only education fails to reduce teen pregnancy or rates of sexually transmitted infections.¹²⁴ CPCs also propagate medical disinformation, including debunked claims — such as links between abortion, infertility and death — contradicted by findings from the World Health Organization.¹²⁵

The rise of these services parallels broader public scepticism towards mainstream medicine, evident in anti-vaccination movements and the rejection of pharmaceuticals.¹²⁶ Social

media further amplifies these narratives, with wellness influencers popularising hashtags such as #naturalbirthcontrol and #Gettingoffbirthcontrol, which garnered 43.5 million and 3.8 million views, respectively, in 2022.^{127,128}

A second concern involves the extremist content embedded in education curricula covertly promoted by anti-gender services. The setbacks that Teen STAR has faced in terms of investigations and litigation are illustrative. Despite efforts to secure public support and funding, Teen STAR operates with limited transparency, enforcing confidentiality through non-disclosure agreements for tutors and restricting access to its educational materials.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, media investigations and legal actions have exposed controversial content that has undermined its credibility.

In 2007, Teen STAR Croatia was the subject of a collective complaint under the European Social Charter. By 2009, the Council of Europe found Croatia in violation of anti-discrimination obligations under both national and EU law.¹³⁰ In 2018, leaked materials from Teen STAR Österreich asserted that masturbation induces “self-centeredness, habituation, and guilt”,¹³¹ and framed homosexuality as an ‘aberration’ treatable through therapy, support groups and pastoral care.¹³² These revelations prompted Austria's Ministry of Education to recommend banning the programme, though it continues to operate in schools.¹³³ In Germany, the Bavarian Ministry of Education cancelled a 2022 Teen STAR

¹²³ Gregory, A. (2025). Reliance on fertility apps on rise in England and Wales, study shows. The Guardian, 13 January. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/13/reliance-on-fertility-apps-on-rise-in-england-and-wales-study-shows>.

¹²⁴ Chin, H.B., et al. (2012). The Effectiveness of Group-Based Comprehensive Risk-Reduction and Abstinence Education Interventions to Prevent or Reduce the Risk of Adolescent Pregnancy, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, and Sexually Transmitted Infections. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 42(3): 272–294. <https://zenodo.org/record/1258712>.

¹²⁵ World Health Organization. (2025). Abortion. https://www.who.int/health-topics/abortion#tab=tab_1.

¹²⁶ Speed, B. (2025). Something big is happening in the world of contraception. It's going backwards. The Guardian, 15 January. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/15/contraception-apps-women-birth-control>.

¹²⁷ Adams Piescik, J. (2022). Social media's reckoning with #naturalbirthcontrol. Natural Womanhood, 2 December. <https://naturalwomanhood.org/social-medias-reckoning-with-naturalbirthcontrol/>. Note: This website promotes Christian natural family planning and attacks contraception and abortion rights.

¹²⁸ Le Guen, M., Schantz, C., Régnier-Loilier, A., & de La Rochebrochard, E. (2021). Reasons for rejecting hormonal contraception in Western countries: A systematic review. Social Science & Medicine, 284, 114247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114247>.

¹²⁹ Valsecchi, M.C. (2025). L'educazione sessuale in Italia è terreno di conquista per chi ne nega l'utilità. Univadis, 5 March. <https://www.univadis.it/viewarticle/educazione-sessuale-italia-%25C3%25A8-terreno-conquista-chi-ne-2025a10005dn?uuiid=dcfa846b-3495-4674-bf5b-8f2a3878d1de>.

¹³⁰ European Committee of Social Rights. (2009). Decision on the merits: International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights (INTERIGHTS) v. Croatia, Collective Complaint No. 45/2007, 30/03/2009. Brussels: European Committee of Social Rights. <https://hudoc.esc.coe.int/eng#%7B%22sort%22:%5B%22escpublicationdate%20descending%22%5D%2C%22escdcidentifier%22:%5B%22cc-45-2007-dmerits-en%22%5D%7D>.

¹³¹ Similar rhetoric about masturbation being “a disorder, a consequence of trauma and conflicts in the family” was reported by Italian Teen STAR tutors in 2025. Valsecchi, M.C. (2025). Una storia incredibile di diseducazione sessuale in classe. Marie Claire, 18 January. <https://www.marieclaire.it/attualita/news-appuntamenti/a62840665/teen-star-diseducazione-sessuale/>.

¹³² Tóth, B. (2018). Teenstar-Leaks stellen Aufklärungsarbeit an Pflichtschulen in Frage. Falter, 20 November. <https://www.falter.at/zeitung/20181120/teenstar-leaks-stellen-aufklaerungsarbeit-an-pflichtschulen-in-frage>.

¹³³ Eberle, M. (2023). Religiöse Hardliner im Klassenzimmer: Regierung versäumt es weiterhin, TeenStar aus Schulen zu verbannen. Moment, 23 January. <https://www.moment.at/story/teenstar-noch-immer-an-schulen-2023/>.

session for fourth-grade pupils following reports of religious and homophobic content.^{134,135} Teen STAR Italia materials reviewed in 2024 likewise misrepresented contraceptive pills as abortifacients and portrayed abortion using graphic inaccuracies.¹³⁶

Concerns about NFP services also persist. In 2024, the Erasmus+-funded 'Women's Health Goes Digital' project, coordinated by WYA EU, prompted questions from MEPs regarding potential misinformation on reproductive rights. The European Commission launched an inquiry into whether the project aligned with EU values.¹³⁷

Despite such controversies, the scalability of these anti-gender alternatives is increasingly tangible. In the USA, the Heritage

Foundation's Project 2025 promotes NFP, alternatives to abortion, and abstinence-until-marriage policies domestically.¹³⁸ Internationally, the USA rejoined the Geneva Consensus Declaration (GCD) in January 2025¹³⁹ and began implementing it through initiatives such as Protego Health: Women's Optimal Health Framework (WOHF).¹⁴⁰ Developed by GCD authors at the Institute for Women's Health, the 70-page technical document advances a restrictive model of women's health, explicitly excluding abortion, contraception and comprehensive sexuality education.¹⁴¹ These omissions are framed as affirmations of 'genuine' women's health, national sovereignty and resistance to foreign ideological influence. In this context, anti-gender services are increasingly poised for scale, particularly as far-right and religious extremist actors gain executive power.

TABLE 17

OVERVIEW OF MAIN CATEGORIES OF ANTI-GENDER SERVICES

Issue	Target audience	Anti-gender solution	Service provider
Family planning	Young women and married couples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural family planning; Menstrual tracking; Rhythm method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEMM FertilityCare centres WOOMB WYA
Infertility	Married heterosexual couples only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NaPro with Creighton Model FertilityCare System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FertilityCare centres Pope Paul VI Institute
Sexuality education	School students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abstinence-only education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alive to the World Human Dignity Curriculum Teen STAR
Unwanted pregnancy	Pregnant women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-abortion counselling 'Abortion reversal' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis pregnancy centres Abortion Pill Rescue Network Heartbeat International
LGBT rights	Christians with same-sex attractions and their families; 'ex-gays'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reintegrative counselling Chastity therapy Ex-gay movement Conversion therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Issues Trust X-Out-Loud IFTCC German Institute for Youth and Society

¹³⁴ Dannecker, A. (2022). Umstrittener Verein: Sexualpädagogik-Kurs an Schule abgebrochen. BR24, 8 July. <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/bayern/nach-br-recherche-sexualpaedagogik-kurs-abgebrochen,TAvCX56>.

¹³⁵ Hüsken, I. (2024). Teenstar: Homophobe Sexualaufklärung an Bayerns Schulen? Humanistischer Pressedienst, 26 February. <https://hpd.de/artikel/teenstar-homophobe-sexualaufklaerung-an-bayerns-schulen-21987>.

¹³⁶ Valsecchi, M.C. (2025). Una storia incredibile di diseducazione sessuale in classe. Marie Claire, 18 January. <https://www.marieclaire.it/attualita/news-appuntamenti/a62840665/teen-star-diseducazione-sessuale/>.

¹³⁷ European Parliament. (2024). Parliamentary question - E-002786/2024: EU funding for World Youth Alliance, 5.12.2024. Question for written answer E-002786/2024 to the Commission. Brussels: European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002786_EN.html.

¹³⁸ Heritage Foundation. (n.d.). Project 2025. <https://www.project2025.org/>. For references to NFP, see pages 455, 484 and 491; for references to CPCs, see pages 38, 471 and 484; for references to abstinence education, see pages 476 and 477.

¹³⁹ Rubio, M. (2025). United States Renewed Membership in the Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family. Washington, DC: US Department of State, 24 January. <https://www.state.gov/united-states-renewed-membership-in-the-geneva-consensus-declaration-on-promoting-womens-health-and-strengthening-the-family/#:~:text=Strengthening%20the%20Family-,United%20States%20Renewed%20Membership%20in%20the%20Geneva%20Consensus%20Declaration%20on,Health%20and%20Strengthening%20the%20Family&text=Today%2C%20the%20United%20States%20informed,our%20intent%20to%20rejoin%20immediately>.

¹⁴⁰ Institute for Women's Health. (2025). Protego Health: The Women's Optimal Health Framework. <https://www.theiwh.org/the-womens-optimal-health-framework-2024/>.

¹⁴¹ Ipas. (2024). PROTEGO: Operationalizing the Geneva Consensus Declaration. Chapel Hill, NC: Ipas. <https://www.ipas.org/resource/protego-operationalizing-the-geneva-consensus-declaration/>.

6

THE PARTY TAKEOVER: HOW POLITICAL ACTORS BECAME THE NEW EPICENTER OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

“It is a truism that almost any sect, cult, or religion will legislate its creed into law if it acquires the political power to do so.”

(Robert A. Heinlein, science fiction author and futurist)

In the past five years, political parties have become the primary engines of anti-gender and religious extremist mobilisation across Europe. This shift marks a significant reconfiguration of the movement's structure, strategy, and sources of influence. Once spearheaded by ideologically aligned CSOs, the anti-gender agenda is now firmly embedded within formal political institutions, particularly through hard-right and far-right parties.

Three key trends define this evolution. First, there has been a **transfer of leadership**: the centre right political party, initially the allies of the anti-gender movement, have gradually shifted to the mainstream centre. Second, the **consolidation of leadership within hard-right and far-right parties**—notably those with authoritarian, nationalist, and identitarian agendas—has given the movement access to parliamentary platforms, legislative tools, and state resources. Third, we are witnessing the **institutionalisation of transnational political platforms** rooted in religious extremism and anti-gender ideology. These platforms enable coordination, narrative convergence, and resource-sharing across national boundaries.

This party-driven shift has not only normalised anti-gender rhetoric within mainstream political discourse but also embedded it in policymaking processes, threatening the resilience of rights-based governance at both national and European levels.

6.1 PASSING THE TORCH: THE CENTRE-RIGHT MOVES TO THE MAINSTREAM

The initial political allies of anti-gender actors in Europe in the early 2010s were predominantly politicians from the Christian Democratic tradition, particularly those affiliated with the European People's Party (EPP)¹ as evidenced by the leadership of anti-gender initiatives across Europe.² Up to 2014, this trend was also reflected in EPP voting patterns on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).³

While a small, core group of EPP politicians were consistent allies for anti-gender causes — often driven by a commitment to Christian social doctrine and reliable in their efforts to block progressive reforms — they often lacked the ambition to champion policy goals outside the political mainstream, such as actively rolling back human rights. Following key developments such as the liberalisation of abortion in Ireland (2018), the worsening of abortion laws in Poland (2020), and the departure of FIDESZ from the EPP Group (2021), EPP positions on SRHR have gradually shifted towards the political centre.

¹ See <https://www.eppgroup.eu/>.

² For example, Gudrun Kugler of the Austrian ÖVP and co-convenor of the Agenda Europe Network; Jaime Major Oreja of the Spanish Partido Popular, co-sponsor of the One of Us initiative, now lecturer at the ISSEP; the late Carlo Casini of the Italian UDC, co-sponsor of the One of Us ECI; Anna Zaborska of the Slovak KDH, initiator of several draft bills to restrict abortion rights; and Christin Boutin of France's Parti Chrétien Démocrate, founder of Alliance Vita.

³ See Datta and Paternotte in *The Christian Right in Europe*. Also, for example, they were instrumental in defeating the 2013 Estrela report (more). <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-6038-8/the-christian-right-in-europe/?c=310000026>.



CPAC Hungary 2024.

Indeed, as demonstrated in *The Christian Right in Europe*,⁴ EPP MEPs were instrumental in securing majorities for several pro-SRHR victories during this period: repeated resolutions condemning Poland's near-total abortion ban (from 2020)⁵, the Matic report on SRHR (2021)⁶, the ICPD+25 Resolution (2021)⁷, the European Parliament's approval of European Union (EU) accession to the Istanbul Convention (2023)⁸, the report on the backlash against SRHR (2024),⁹ and calls for the inclusion of SRHR in future EU Treaty revisions. As a result, the political base of anti-gender mobilisation has shifted further right and is now entrenched within the far-right across most EU Member States and within the European Parliament.

A particularly striking example of this evolution is the position taken by Maltese EPP MEP Roberta Metsola. Despite her personal opposition to abortion, she declared in 2022, when seeking the presidency of the European

Parliament, "The position of the parliament is unambiguous and unequivocal, and that is also my position",¹⁰ referring to the 2021 Matic report on SRHR. Looking towards the 10th legislature, opposition SRHR now largely coalesces within the far-right, alt-right and populist right groupings in the European Parliament.

6.2 THE NEW RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST LEADERS: THE HARD AND FAR RIGHT IN ANTI-GENDER CONTESTATION

The new epicentre for religious extremist and anti-rights political leadership has shifted to the hard and far-right of the political spectrum with three actors playing pivotal roles, the ECR group, the ID/PfE group and the ECPM.

DUELLING EURO-MAGAS: ECR AND ID/PFE

Starting with the ECR Group, the fourth largest in the current 10th legislature, has played a leading role in anti-gender initiatives within the European Parliament despite divergent positions among its member political parties. The ECR Group has mobilised anti-gender forces by sponsoring a series of large-scale events, such as a conference on the 'Cultural war' (2020) in Poland¹¹ and the 'Conference on the Future of Europe' (2021) in Spain, where 'gender ideology' was high on the agenda.¹² In 2023 and 2024, the ECR further solidified its anti-gender stance by organising two European Family

⁴ See Datta and Paternotte in *The Christian Right in Europe*. Also, for example, they were instrumental in defeating the 2013 Estrela report (more). <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-6038-8/the-christian-right-in-europe/?c=310000026>.

⁵ European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2020 on the de facto ban on the right to abortion in Poland (2020/2876(RSP)), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0336_EN.html.

⁶ Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women's health, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0314_EN.html.

⁷ 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) (Nairobi Summit), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0315_EN.html.

⁸ EU accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women ('Istanbul Convention'), <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention#:~:text=In%20its%20meeting%20of%2021,EU%20accession%20to%20the%20Convention>.

⁹ See Table 18 at the end of the chapter.

¹⁰ Lory, G. (2022). Roberta Metsola on abortion: 'My position is the European Parliament's position'. Euronews, 18 January. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/01/18/roberta-metsola-on-abortion-my-position-is-the-european-parliament-s-position>.

¹¹ Rutkiewicz, P. (2020). Gender, leftist ideologies and a new man's project. Patryk Jaki, Karnowski and priest. The eye will examine them at the National Stadium. Wyborcza, 7 October. <https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,26375176,konferencja-anty-lgbt-na-stadionie-narodowym-wystapia-lisicki.html>.

¹² European Conservatives and Reformists. (2021). The ECR Group's Conference on the Future of Europe tour reaches Madrid, Spain. ECR Group, 23 June. https://ecrgroup.eu/article/the_ecr_groups_conference_on_the_future_of_europe_tour_reaches_madrid_spain.

Congresses¹³ in Dubrovnik, Croatia which were attended by numerous anti-rights and religious extremist representatives.¹⁴ (see also think tanks)

Two ECR MEPs stand out for their anti-gender activism, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión¹⁵ from Spain's Vox party and MEP Stjepo Bartulica from the Croatian Home and National Gathering party. MEP de la Pisa has been active in proposing anti-gender amendments to progressive reports, earning the title of "Lone Wolf" from Politico's 2024 "MEP unAwards" for having filed more than 6000 amendments against SRHR in the 9th legislative term.¹⁶

MEP Bartulica, a US-born Opus Dei supernumerary, is a leading anti-gender voice in the European Parliament. He was an important speaker at the ECR Family Congresses and is actively involved in ECR and New Direction Foundation activities, focusing on family issues. In Croatia, Bartulica has been a prominent advocate for heteronormative marriage and has opposed the Istanbul Convention on Gender-Based Violence.¹⁷ In December 2024, he became the new president of the PNfV.¹⁸

The ID/PfE Group in the European Parliament, now the third largest in the EP's 10th legislature, has been a proactive force in anti-gender activism. Now firmly in the control of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (see public funding), the ID/PfE Group frequently align against so-called 'globalist' forces which they accuse of promoting LGBTQI and gender issues contrary to the sovereignty of individual nations¹⁹ (see Think tanks).

The victory of Donald Trump in the 2024 US presidential elections brought about greater energy among far-right and

anti-establishment political parties across the world, in Europe with both the ECR and the PfE claiming to be the European versions of Trumpism and holding their respective Euro-MAGA conferences in early 2025. The ECR held the second "Make Europe Great Again (MEGA) — True Fundamental Values and their Role in Reshaping Europe's Future" on 29 January 2025 in Brussels.²⁰ The following week, the PfE gathered in Madrid for their own Summit titled "Ultra" under the banner "Make Europe Great Again" (MEGA).²¹ The far-right rivalry continued with parallel Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) conference in May, with the Budapest edition gathering mainly PfE sympathisers²², while the Warsaw edition attracted a subset of ECR politicians.²³

Both the ECR and PfE claim to bring elements of Trumpism to Europe, including the fight against "gender ideology", the main difference between the two being their respective positioning vis-à-vis Russia, with the ECR perceiving Russia as a threat, while the pro-Orbán PfE seeing Putin as a role model and potential ally in dismantling the democratic authority of the European Union.

ECPM: A HOME FOR ORPHANED CHRISTIAN EXTREMIST POLITICIANS

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) — as of April 2025, the European Christian Political Party (ECP) — is distinct among European political parties as "the only European political party explicitly promoting Christian values in politics".²⁴ It counts members in 20 countries,²⁵ including four MEPs who are all men.²⁶ Party members are from small, minority Christian political currents, often coinciding

¹³ ECR Party. (2023). About the European Congress of Families. <https://families.ecrparty.eu/>; ECR Party. (2023). European Congress on Family II Edition. <https://booking.ecrparty.eu/events/14>.

¹⁴ These include organisations such as the PNfV, the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE), the International Organization for the Family (IOF) and the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast.

¹⁵ MEP Margarita de la Pisa Carrión was in the ECR Group in the ninth legislature and moved to the PfE Group in the tenth legislature starting in 2024 when the Vox political party joined the PfE.

¹⁶ Politico, The MEP unAwards 2024, Lone wolf, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, see: <https://www.politico.eu/list/the-mep-unawards-2024/lone-wolf/>.

¹⁷ Medjugorje, I. (2024). Croatia sends a Christian and a believer in the EP who is not ashamed of its ideology: 'I will certainly not be silent'. Dnevno, 9 June. https://www.dnevno.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/hrvatska-u-ep-salje-krscanina-i-vjernika-koji-se-ne-srami-svoje-ideologije-sigurno-necu-sutjeti-2449002/#google_vignette.

¹⁸ Hernández, D.J. (2024). Stephen Bartulica is the new president of Political Network for Values. Political Network for Values, 4 December. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/2024/12/stephen-bartulica-is-the-new-president-of-political-network-for-values/>.

¹⁹ See PfE Manifesto: <https://patriots.eu/manifesto/>.

²⁰ See <https://ecrparty.eu/2025/01/27/ecr-party-to-host-conference-on-fundamental-values-and-europes-future-29-january-2025/>.

²¹ Heller, F (2025), Can the EU Parliament's own MAGA movement bring down EPP and S&D?, Euractiv, 3 February 2025, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/can-the-eu-parliaments-own-maga-movement-bring-down-epp-and-sd/>.

²² See <https://www.cpachungary.com/en/>.

²³ See <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe-is-crisis-polish-nationalist-presidential-candidate-tells-conservative-2025-05-27/>.

²⁴ See <https://ecpm.info/>.

²⁵ The ECPM struggles to reach the level of representation required for a Europarty, relying on very obscure members such as the People's Monarchist Party with two seats in the regional council of the Portuguese Azores islands. For more, see van der Burgh, R., M. Rotman, & A. van der Woude. (2024). European party ECPM financed radical right wing lobby group. Investico, 4 April. <https://www.platform-investico.nl/onderzoeken/european-party-ecpm-financed-radical-right-wing-think-tank>.

with ethnic minorities, outside the major centres of political power.²⁷ Unlike other political entities that receive financial support from the European Parliament, the ECPM does not have its own political group but instead spreads its influence through members embedded in other parliamentary groups.²⁸

The ECPM *modus operandi* was described by the Dutch media as a lobby organisation and an “ATM for extremism” for its sponsorship of Agenda Europe meetings.²⁹ Following public scrutiny of the ECPM’s associations with religious extremists revealed by media investigations, particularly in the Netherlands, the ECPM has since adopted a more discreet approach.³⁰ Although the ECPM was previously a visible co-sponsor of PNfV meetings up until 2019, this overt support has vanished more recently and been replaced by support from the Talenting Foundation, composed of largely the same Dutch political individuals involved in the ECPM. (see private foundations)

6.3 NEW ORGANISING FORMAT – INTERNATIONAL FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL NETWORKS

The rise of political actors with proactive anti-rights and extremist agendas has paved the way for a new form of organising that reflects shifting power dynamics within the anti-gender movement: transnational politically oriented networks. These networks attract politicians and political actors around shared ideas and strategies typical for the Christian right. These networks include the Political Network for Values (PNfV), the Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC), the National Conservatism Conference

(NatCon) and the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC). Such platforms facilitate the alignment of political figures with anti-gender agendas, influencing policy discussions across borders and contributing to an alternative format of illiberal globalisation.

The PNfV³¹ began in 2014 as a transnational CSO network, co-organised by anti-gender groups from North and South America and Europe, including ADF International, CitizenGO, the ECPM and Latin American organisations.³² It organises transatlantic summits that gather parliamentarians, ministers, and politically oriented CSOs and think tanks to strategise on issues related to freedom, life and family. Hungarian Family Minister Katalin Novák also served as the PNfV’s president until early 2022.³³ In addition to the European far-right, the PNfV retains strong connections to the Latin American right-wing political landscape, supporting figures such as former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.³⁴

The PNfV has been legally registered in Massachusetts, USA, as well as Spain and Hungary since 2020.^{35,36} Since 2019, the PNfV has received financial support from 23 distinct donors. Of these, 11 were based in the European Union — including four from Spain, one from the Netherlands, and one from Poland — with five representing Hungarian state institutions or government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs). Nine donors were affiliated with the US Christian Right, while three originated from Latin America. To date, Hungary and Guatemala remain the only countries to have officially endorsed the PNfV at the governmental level.

The CPAC claims that it is “the largest and most influential gathering of conservatives in the world”³⁸ and has been holding an annual global event in Budapest since 2022. CPAC

²⁶ European Christian Political Party (n.d.). Members of European Parliament. <https://ecpp.eu/meps/>.

²⁷ See: <https://ecpp.eu/members-and-associates/>.

²⁸ For example, of the four ECPM-affiliated MEPs for the 10th legislature, two sat with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR): Cristian Terheş and Bert-Jan Ruissen; one with the European People’s Party (EPP): Niels Geuking; and one as Non-Attached: Ondřej Dostál.

²⁹ Van der Burgh, R., M. Rotman, & A. van der Woude. (2024). Pinautomaat voor extremism. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 27 March. <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/pinautomaat-voor-extremisme>.

³⁰ Van der Burgh, R., M. Rotman, & A. van der Woude. (2024). De europartij van de ChristenUnie financierde een radicaal-rechtse lobbygroep. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 25 March. <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-europartij-van-de-christenunie-financierde-een-radicaal-rechtse-lobbygroep>.

³¹ See <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/>.

³² See <https://www.ipas.org/resource/the-political-network-for-values-global-far-right-at-the-united-nations/>.

³³ See <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/2022/05/katalin-Novák-takes-office-as-president-of-hungary/>.

³⁴ See <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/2021/01/brazils-president-jair-bolsonaro-promises-that-unborn-children-will-always-be-protected-in-his-country/>.

³⁵ Political Network for Values, Inc. (Company number 001228126); Asociación Red Política por los Valores (CIF: G67936443); Politikai Hálózat az Értékekért Magyarország Egyesület (Registration number 01 02 0017430).

³⁶ See more: Ipas and Empower. (2023). The Political Network for Values: Global Far-Right at the United Nations. Ipas: Chapel Hill, NC. https://www.ipas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/PoliticalNetworkforValues_OPPNVE23c.pdf.

³⁸ CPAC Hungary. (2025). CPAC Hungary 2025: The Age of Patriots is Here! <https://www.cpachungary.com/en/cpac-highlights>.



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● José Antonio Kast during a Network of Values meeting in Madrid, 2024.

Budapest focuses on themes such as “God, Homeland, Family” (2022) and “United We Stand” (2023), opposing migration and ‘gender ideology’. The event attracts over 3,000 participants, drawing participants from Bolsonaro’s Brazil, the US MAGA movement, and various strands of Europe’s alt right, far-right and populist right.³⁹ Topics at these gatherings have ranged from opposing gender ideology to nationalist calls such as ‘make babies, not war’. CPAC Budapest is organised by Hungary’s Centre for Fundamental Rights and funded by a grant from the Hungarian Prime Minister’s Office (see public funding). In May 2025, CPAC events took place in both Budapest and Warsaw (see above).

NatCon,⁴⁰ a project of the US-based Edmund Burke Foundation, is “a movement of public figures, journalists, scholars, and students who understand that the past and

future of conservatism are inextricably tied to the idea of the nation”.⁴¹ Since its inception in 2019, NatCon has held conferences in Rome (2019, 2020), Brussels (2022, 2024), London (2023) and the USA (2021, 2022). The Brussels 2024 conference, hosted by MCC Brussels, faced resistance from local officials but proceeded nonetheless,⁴² featuring high-profile far-right politicians such as Viktor Orbán, Nigel Farage and Éric Zemmour, while previous editions featured US Vice-President JD Vance.⁴³ The Brussels conference included a panel on “Faith and Family in Crisis”, with Paul Coleman of ADF International and Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis, who discussed “Threats to Faith and Family”. The co-sponsors listed indicate that NatCon Brussels was a largely Hungarian-funded event.⁴⁴

The ARC,^{45,46} established in 2022, is a network that brings together mainly Australian and British economic elites along with right-wing thought leaders. Its philosophy is shaped by its star speakers such as Jordan Peterson, a controversial Canadian commentator known for his misogynistic views,⁴⁷ whose wife Tammy was converted by an Opus Dei priest in 2019;⁴⁸ Gudrun Kugler; and Bjørn Lomborg, a Danish climate sceptic.

The ARC blends anti-gender ideology, hyper free-market economic thinking and climate change scepticism. This coalition reflects a new intersection of conservative social and economic agendas dressed in the ideology of ‘Judeo-Christian’ revivalism.⁴⁹ It is funded primarily by Legatum Ventures, a Dubai-based investment management group, and British investor Sir Paul Marshall, a prominent backer of right-leaning media such as GB News and UnHerd. The ARC’s funding sources reflect its positioning as an ‘anti-woke’ counter to

³⁹ Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. (2023). CPAC Hungary to Host Who’s Who of Anti-LGBTQ+ and Other Far-Right Extremists. GPAHE, 1 May. <https://globalextrémism.org/post/cpac-hungary-2023/>.

⁴⁰ See <https://nationalconservatism.org/>.

⁴¹ National Conservatism. (2025). Overview. <https://nationalconservatism.org/about/>.

⁴² O’Carroll, L., & B. Quinn. (2024). NatCon conference resumes after Brussels court overturns closure order. The Guardian, 17 April. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/17/natcon-conference-resume-brussels-court-overturns-closure-order>.

⁴³ National Conservatism. (2024). A Conference in Washington, DC, July 8 - 10, 2024: Sen. JD Vance. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-4-2024/presenters/sen-jd-vance/>.

⁴⁴ Three of the six organisations listed as co-sponsors are known recipients of Hungarian funding, namely the Danube Institute, MCC and the European Conservative. The other organisations are too small from a financial perspective, according to their publicly available financial documents, to have been significant funders of the event. National Conservatism. (2024). A Conference In Brussels, Belgium, April 16 - 17, 2024. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/about/>.

⁴⁵ See <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/10519995/filing-history>.

⁴⁶ See <https://arcforum.com/>.

⁴⁷ According to Peterson, the “fundamental unit of civilised society is a commitment to long-term, stable, married, monogamous, heterosexual, child-centred marriages.” Dobson, I., & O. Hughff-Coates. (2023). From Judeo-Christian Values to Climate Skepticism: What the ARC Conference Revealed About the UK Right. Pi Media, 5 March. <https://uclpimedia.com/online/from-judeo-christian-values-to-climate-skepticism-what-the-arc-conference-revealed-about-the-uk-right>.

⁴⁸ Opus Dei. (2024). Tammy Peterson genas van kanker - en werd katholiek. Opus Dei, 21 July. <https://opusdei.org/nl/article/tammy-peterson-genas-van-kanker-en-werd-katholiek/>.

⁴⁹ Dobson, I., & O. Hughff-Coates. (2023). From Judeo-Christian Values to Climate Skepticism: What the ARC Conference Revealed About the UK Right. Pi Media, 5 March. <https://uclpimedia.com/online/from-judeo-christian-values-to-climate-skepticism-what-the-arc-conference-revealed-about-the-uk-right>.

traditional global forums such as the World Economic Forum, as underlined by US Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson at the 2025 ARC conference.⁵⁰

Finally, anti-gender political parties also engage with their like-minded allies from the USA, namely the Republicans Overseas through the Worldwide Freedom Initiative,⁵¹ which took place in Paris in November 2023.⁵² This event, co-sponsored by Hungary's Danube Institute (see 'Knowledge production'), brought together 200 attendees, mostly far-right political leaders from across Europe, with their US counterparts such as US Speaker Mike Johnson,⁵³ to discuss a range of subjects, including "Wokism under all its Facets and How to Reverse the Trend".⁵⁴

CONCLUSION: POLITICAL PARTIES AS THE NEW EPICENTRE OF ANTI-GENDER CONTESTATION

Far-right political parties and associated platforms have increasingly positioned themselves at the core of anti-gender mobilisations across Europe. Among these, Hungary has emerged

as a pivotal actor in the reconfiguration and revitalisation of the European far-right. This centrality becomes evident when tracing financial and strategic investments — from direct support to national-level far-right parties to the establishment of the *Patriots for Europe* (Pfe) alliance in 2024.

Hungary has also become a principal sponsor of nearly all major transnational far-right political initiatives, including the *Political Network for Values* (PNfV), *CPAC-Budapest*, *National Conservatism Conference* (NatCon), and even Republicans Overseas. Through these mechanisms, Hungary has cultivated a distinct illiberal and anti-gender influence apparatus, effectively supplanting the Russian Federation's former role in this domain.

TABLE 18

EPP MEPS' VOTING RESULTS ON KEY PRO-SRHR RESOLUTIONS BETWEEN 2020 AND 2024

It shows a split political group with between a quarter and a half of votes in support of SRHR. Percentage given for proportion of MEPS from the EPP group at the time of voting.⁵⁵

Year	Resolution	For	Against	Abstentions and absences
2020	Resolution on the de facto ban on the right to abortion in Poland	52%	18%	30%
2021	European Parliament resolution of 24 June 2021 on the situation of SRHR in the EU, in the frame of women's health (Matic report)	20%	64%	16%
2021	European Parliament resolution of 24 June 2021 on the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25)	47%	28%	24%
2023	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: EU accession to the Istanbul Convention	76%	6%	18%
2024	Inclusion of the right to abortion in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights	24%	40%	36%
2024	Recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (backlash report)	59%	17%	24%

⁵⁰ Holland, J. (2025). My takeaways from the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship conference. Saving Culture (from itself), 22 February. https://jennyeholland.substack.com/p/my-takeaways-from-the-alliance-for-responsible-citizenship-conference?utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web.

⁵¹ See <https://www.worldwide-freedom-initiative.com/>.

⁵² Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. (2023). French, American, and European Far-Right Leaders Gather Under the Banner "Republicans Overseas". GPAHE, 16 November. <https://globalextrremism.org/post/worldwide-freedom-initiative/>.

⁵³ Mike Johnson is an alumnus of ADF. See Macnaughton, S. (2023). Inside the Alliance Defending Freedom, the Anti-LGBTQ Org Where Mike Johnson Spent Almost a Decade. Rolling Stone, 29 October. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/mike-johnson-alliance-defending-freedom-anti-lgbtq-1234865340/>.

⁵⁴ Worldwide Freedom Initiative. (2023). An Overview of the Republicans Overseas. 2023 Worldwide Freedom Initiative. <https://www.worldwide-freedom-initiative.com/past-events>.

⁵⁵ HowTheyVote.eu. (2025). Find out how Members of the European Parliament vote. <https://howtheyvote.eu/>.

6a

SHADOWY POWER BROKERS: ANTI-RIGHTS PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANCIES

“Political power goes much deeper than one suspects; there are centres and invisible, little-known points of support; its true resistance, its true solidity is perhaps where one doesn’t expect it.”

(Michel Foucault)

The phenomenal increase in funding for religious extremist lobbying has fuelled the emergence of a new actor with its own niche: elite, anti-rights public affairs and lobbying consultancies. These firms are centred around high-level anti-gender operatives, who are active in a range of extremist religious initiatives and networks. Such affiliations provide these consultants with access to influential political actors to broker relationships and potentially influence norms and policies, and access to funding. An inter-related transnational ecosystem of anti-rights public affairs consultancies has emerged, with key players including Ambrose Advice, Sovereign Global Solutions, Opus Fidelis, Kairos and several smaller ones emanating from alumni of the World Youth Alliance (WYA).

AMBROSE ADVICE: THE ANTI-RIGHTS GEOPOLITICAL MATCHMAKER

One of the most influential consultancies in this field is Ambrose Advice,¹ headquartered in Vienna, Austria. This firm is led by Catholic theologian and jurist Christiaan Alting von Geusau, who has deep-rooted connections within the anti-gender movement.² He is also the co-founder and President



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Christiaan Alting von Geusau, President of the International Catholic Legislators Network and Managing Partner at Ambrose Advice.

of the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN). He has maintained regular contact with over 200 Catholic parliamentarians from 20 countries, as well as members of the Catholic Church hierarchy, including Cardinal Schönborn of Austria and the late Pope Francis.

¹ See <https://ambrose-advice.com/>.

² For Christiaan Alting von Geusau’s CV, see ITI Catholic University. (2017). Curriculum Vitae: Christiaan W.J.M. Alting von Geusau.

https://www.iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Academic_CV_ALTING_von_GEUSAU_02-2017.pdf

Alting von Geusau served as Rector and President of the International Theological Institute Catholic University (ITI), founded by Pope Jean-Paul II, from 2013 to 2024 and earlier founded Schola Thomas Morus (<https://www.scholathomasmorus.at/>), a private secondary school in Trumau, Austria, which adheres to traditionalist Catholic teachings. The school has ties to the WYA, and, notably, Alting von Geusau’s daughter studied there, joined the WYA as an advocacy intern in 2024 (World Youth Alliance Europe. (2024, 8 May). Meet Our Interns: Carla-Sophia Alting von Geusau. [Instagram]. https://www.instagram.com/wyaeurope/p/C6tHz6fvQt_/?locale=zh-hans) and participated in an EU-funded WYA project promoting abstinence-based family planning (World Youth Alliance Europe. (2024, 2 July). Women’s Health Goes Digital - event overview. [LinkedIn]. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/womens-health-goes-digital-event-overview-7z9pf/>).

Ambrose Advice operates as the for-profit, private-sector arm of Alting von Geusau's influence network developed initially through the International Theological Institute (ITI) and the ICLN. The firm positions itself as "a trusted partner for senior political and civil society officials who seek to grow in morally excellent and effective leadership". Through this consultancy, Alting von Geusau capitalises on his "global network of political, religious, and civil society leaders",³ with a focus on the Benelux, Central and Eastern Europe, East Africa, European Union (EU) institutions and the USA.

Although Ambrose Advice emphasises that "complete discretion is the hallmark of our work", Alting von Geusau has disclosed key details about his otherwise anonymous clients. For instance, Ambrose Advice boasts about its relationship with an EU Head of State between 2022 and 2024 to "substantially expand the depth and breadth of the country's international relations".⁴ This effort involved identifying and approaching contacts, organising private meetings, facilitating public engagements such as lectures and roundtables, and arranging media appearances. Given the frequent public engagements of Alting von Geusau and the institutions he directs — the ITI and the ICLN — President Katalin Novák of Hungary emerges as the likely client of Ambrose Advice's services.⁵

Evidence of their close interaction is plentiful. For example, Alting von Geusau received an award from the Hungarian President in 2019,⁶ spoke at the Demographic Summit in Budapest⁷ and delivered a lecture at the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in 2021.⁸ Also in 2021, the Hungarian

humanitarian and development agency Hungary Helps received an award from the Vatican for its approach to assisting persecuted Christians around the world, which was presented at the ICLN annual gathering in Rome, featuring the Hungarian Secretary of State Tristan Azbej, with Prime Minister Orbán and President Novák.⁹

President Novák also addressed the ICLN's annual meeting focusing on Hungary's family policies and demography, participated in a private audience with the Pope alongside ICLN members, and visited the ITI in 2022 at Alting von Geusau's invitation, where she spoke at the ICLN's Young Christian Global Leaders event.¹⁰ In addition, Alting von Geusau's network in East Africa via the ICLN's African chapter helped facilitate a range of bilateral contacts between Hungary and ICLN-affiliated legislators, particularly Kenyan and Ugandan parliamentarians.¹¹

For another set of clients, Ambrose Advice worked to "re-establish a political working relationship between the senior leadership of two NATO countries who had, until then, been unable to cooperate constructively" from 2017 to 2019.¹² This diplomatic intervention resulted in the launch of joint international projects and significantly improved communications between the two countries, which appear to be Poland under the PiS government and the USA under the first Trump administration. The ICLN has a regional chapter covering the Western hemisphere,¹³ with several high-level actors in US politics involved. One was Sam Brownback, former Governor of Kansas and ICLN member,¹⁴ who was appointed

³ Ambrose Advice. (2025). Ambrose Advice offers bespoke services in: <https://ambrose-advice.com/service/>.

⁴ Ambrose Advice. (2025). Case Studies. <https://ambrose-advice.com/case-studies/>.

⁵ For a picture of Christiaan Alting von Geusau with President Katalin Novák, see Ambrose Advice. (2025). Case Studies. <https://ambrose-advice.com/case-studies/>.

⁶ ITI Catholic University. (2019). Rektor der Hochschule Trumau erhält hohen ungarischen Orden. ITI Catholic University, 6 May. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=148>.

⁷ ITI Catholic University. (2021). ITI Rector Speaks On the Role of the Family in Europe. ITI Catholic University, 4 October. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=212>.

⁸ ITI Catholic University. (2021). Politics and Legislation: ITI Rector Answers Questions About their Relationship. ITI Catholic University, 8 November. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=219>.

⁹ Hungary Helps. (2021). Orthodox Patriarch to Praise Hungary Helps Program in Presence of Pope Francis. Hungary Helps, 9 January. <https://hungary-helps-frontend.kifli.tech/en/news/orthodox-patriarch-to-praise-hungary-helps-program-in-presence-of-pope-francis>.

¹⁰ ITI Catholic University. (2022). Her Excellency Katalin Novák, President of Hungary, Visited the ITI. ITI Catholic University, 2 November. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=248>.

¹¹ The Catholic MPs Spiritual Support Initiative (CAMPSSI) met Hungarian political leaders in 2018 (CAMPSSI. (2018). CAMPSSI Annual Programme – 2018. <https://www.campssi.org/programmes/>) and Kenyan and Ugandan MPs at the ICLN's Young Christian Global Leaders programme – featuring President Kovak – in 2023 (CAMPSSI. (2023). Kenya and Uganda participants in the 2023 YGCL Fellowship in Fatima. CAMPSSI, 19 July. <https://www.campssi.org/2023/07/19/kenya-and-uganda-participants-in-the-2023-ygcl-fellowship-in-fatima/>). CAMPSSI also lists the Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister as a partner. CAMPSSI. (2025). Partners. <https://www.campssi.org/partners/>.

¹² Ambrose Advice. (2025). Case Studies. <https://ambrose-advice.com/case-studies/>.

¹³ ICLN. (2025). Regional Offices. <https://icln.world/regional/>.

¹⁴ For a reference to Sam Brownback as an ICLN member, see Lewis, J. (2018, 23 August). Pope to Legislators: "The Christian Politician Called to Witness" – Catholic Politician after Meeting with Pope Francis: I Am Salt and Light. [Web log post] Joan's Rome blog. <https://joansrome.wordpress.com/category/icln/>.

in 2017 as US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom under President Trump.¹⁵ The focus of this rapprochement likely centred on the Geneva Consensus Declaration¹⁶ launched in 2020 and the Trump administration-initiated Ministerial on Religious Freedom, which resulted in the 2020 edition taking place in Warsaw.¹⁷

In short, Alting von Geusau served as a conduit for the anti-gender soft diplomacy of top political leaders such as Hungary, Poland, the Vatican and the USA. It allowed the Hungarian President to engage directly with the Vatican, thereby guaranteeing religious legitimisation for a range of policy directions which had come under increased contestation by the EU and other human rights bodies, as well as with Catholic leaders in other countries — for example, Kenya and Uganda — as potential allies via the ICLN. Ambrose Advice also brokered a cooperation pathway between the ultra-conservative governments of PiS-controlled Poland and the US Trump/Pence administration on religious freedom and anti-abortion diplomacy.

SOVEREIGN GLOBAL SOLUTIONS: WASHINGTON BELTWAY INSIDERS

Sovereign Global Solutions (SGS),¹⁸ based in Washington, DC, is the US-focused version of Ambrose Advice and is similarly associated with the ICLN. Jacqueline Halbig von Schleppenbach, the founder and CEO of SGS,¹⁹ is also the founder and Executive Director of the ICLN's Western Hemisphere Chapter.²⁰ Previously, Halbig von Schleppenbach served as Associate Director of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the White House during the first Trump administration. She is a founding member of the Board of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast (in the USA)²¹ and serves on the Committee of Experts of the Political Network for Values (PNfV).²² She was recognised as one of the leading US Catholic leaders in the field of finance in 2024.²³

SGS offers “customized lobbying and public affairs campaigns that are designed to advance your public policy agenda” and advertises “thirty years of principled public affairs serving the common good”.²⁴ It offers its clients expertise in four areas: (1) government relations (both national and international); (2) strategic communications; (3) meeting and event planning; and (4) executive strategic planning and project management.

SGS's clients feature a ‘who's who’ of the anti-gender world,²⁵ including, from the USA, the Becket Fund, the Susan B Antony List, Americans United for Life, 40 Days for Life, the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast and the Family Research Council. Her international clients have included the Anglosphere Society (which also benefits from financial support from Hungary),²⁶ the Embassy of Hungary in Washington, DC, Family Friendly Hungary (the Hungarian ministry in charge of family policies) and the State of Qatar.



¹⁵ US Department of State. (2019). Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback on the 2018 Report on International Religious Freedom. US Department of State, 21 June. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/ambassador-at-large-for-international-religious-freedom-sam-brownback/>.

¹⁶ The Geneva Consensus Declaration is an anti-gender text arguing against abortion rights which was signed by representatives of United Nations Member States. See Institute for Women's Health. (2025). The Geneva Consensus Declaration. <https://www.theiwh.org/the-gcd/>.

¹⁷ US Embassy & Consulate in Poland. (2020). U.S-Poland Joint Statement on Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. US Embassy & Consulate in Poland, 6 February. https://pl.usembassy.gov/ministerial_religious/.

¹⁸ See <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com>.

¹⁹ Sovereign Global Solutions. (2024). Jacqueline Halbig von Schleppenbach. <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com/jacqueline-halbig-von-schleppenbach/>.

²⁰ ICLN. (2025). Regional Offices. <https://icln.world/regional/>.

²¹ Sovereign Global Solutions. (2024). Jacqueline Halbig von Schleppenbach. <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com/jacqueline-halbig-von-schleppenbach/>.

²² Political Network for Values (2025). Committee of Experts. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/who-we-are/council-of-experts/>.

²³ MacGuire, J., & Cash, W. (2024). US Catholic Leaders Survey 2024: Finance. Catholic Herald, 8 February. <https://catholicherald.co.uk/us-catholic-leaders-survey-2024-finance/>.

²⁴ Sovereign Global Solutions. (2024). About Us. <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com/overview/>.

²⁵ Sovereign Global Solutions. (2024). Our Clients. <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com/valued-clients/>.

²⁶ About Hungary. (2018). Hungary is not only respected for its work in protecting Christians, but for also declaring zero tolerance for anti-Semitism, says official. About Hungary, 24 October. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-is-not-only-respected-for-its-work-in-protecting-christians-but-for-also-declaring-zero-tolerance-for-anti-semitism-says-official>.

An example of SGS's work is the event organised by the Religious Freedom Institute in 2018 titled 'The Global Crisis in Religious Freedom: State of Play and Recommendations'.²⁷ The speakers at this event included Halbig von Schleppenbach, three ICLN members — Ambassador Sam Brownback, then US Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom, Jeff Fortenberry of the US House of Representatives, and Ján Figel, then EU Special Envoy for the Promotion of Religion or Belief Outside the EU — as well as two speakers from the hate group ADF.

Just like Ambrose Advice, SGS supported Hungarian President Katalin Novák during her visit to Washington, DC, in 2020 to meet with US lawmakers and officials to discuss Hungary's family policy, concluding: "Washington was working on putting together a global coalition focused on family values and safeguarding life. She said Thursday's conference was attended by the ambassadors of over 35 countries representing some 1.7 billion people", referring to what eventually became the Geneva Consensus Declaration.²⁸ In 2021, Halbig von Schleppenbach also advocated in favour of the Geneva Consensus Declaration after the Biden administration had withdrawn its support.²⁹

OPUS FIDELIS: A RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

Another high-level religious extremist private-sector actor is Opus Fidelis,³⁰ a communications and marketing company specialised in religious extremist campaigning and fundraising. The founder and CEO of Opus Fidelis is David Lejeune, the grandson of Jérôme Lejeune, the namesake of the French Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, who was known for his associations with Opus Dei.³¹ David Lejeune also presided over the Jérôme

Lejeune Foundation in the USA.³² With seven offices around the world, including in Washington, DC, Sydney, Brussels and Paris, Opus Fidelis offers "nonprofit multi-channel fundraising practice with a singular focus: help nonprofits accelerate growth and increase overall fundraising through innovative solutions and leading-edge new-media techniques."³³

Opus Fidelis clients have included the One of Us Federation (a European-level anti-abortion NGO coalition), ADF International, LiveAction³⁴ (a US-based anti-abortion disinformation outfit), Aletheia (a Catholic news and information website founded via the Foundation for Evangelization), the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation and C-Fam (a US hate group active around the United Nations).³⁵ David Lejeune also served as strategic advisor to the Foundation for Evangelization through the Media, which works under the auspices of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications.³⁶

KAIROS PR: AN AUSTRIAN ANTI-GENDER FAMILY COTTAGE INDUSTRY

A small but prolific family-run anti-gender public relations consultancy firm is Kairos PR,³⁷ also based in Vienna. Headed by a husband and wife team, Martin and Gudrun Kugler, Kairos PR offers to help design, plan and evaluate projects and organise events; provides communications and media support, advice on establishing a presence in Austria and Brussels, and support to start-ups, to further develop activities at home and abroad, and to set up internship programmes; lobbying, fundraising and press work; as well as an in-house publishing house for publications related to projects supervised by the firm.

Martin Kugler, a former spokesperson for Opus Dei for Central Europe, serves as faculty at the ITI, was the spokesperson for the Habsburg family (see 'Aristocrats')³⁸ and assisted

²⁷ Religious Freedom Institute. (2018). Speaker Biographies. <https://religiousfreedominstitute.org/speakers-may-8-briefing/>.

²⁸ About Hungary. (2020). Novák: Hungary's family policy is thought of highly in Washington. About Hungary, 17 January. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/Novak-hungarys-family-policy-is-thought-of-highly-in-washington>.

²⁹ Sovereign Global Solutions. (2024). Interview with Jacqueline Halbig von Schleppenbach. <https://sovereignglobalsolutions.com/interview-with-jacqueline-halbig-von-schleppenbach/>.

³⁰ See <https://opusfidelis.com/>.

³¹ Normand, F. (1995). La troublante ascension de l'Opus Dei. Le Monde Diplomatique, September. <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1995/09/NORMAND/6667>.

³² Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. (2025). Announcing: David Lejeune retiring as President. <https://www.lejeunefoundation.org/announcing-david-lejeune-retiring-as-president>.

³³ Opus Fidelis. (2014). Our Comprehensive Multi-Media Fundraising Plan. Opus Fidelis, 28 July. <https://opusfidelis.com/insights/opusfidelis-develops-one-stop-shop-nonprofit-multi-channel-fundraising-prac/>.

³⁴ See <https://www.liveaction.org/>; and Rasmussen, L. (2015). Planned Parenthood takes on Live Action: An analysis of media interplay and image restoration strategies in strategic conflict management. Public Relations Review, 41(3), 354–356. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.01.004>.

³⁵ See <https://opusfidelis.com/>.

³⁶ See <http://www.fem-roma.org/>.

³⁷ See <http://www.kairos-pr.com/>.

³⁸ Der Standard. (2004). Habsburg-Sprecher: "Kleinkarierte Wortmeldungen aus Wien". Der Standard, 2 October. <https://www.derstandard.at/story/1804753/habsburg-sprecher-kleinkarierte-wortmeldungen-aus-wien>.

the Conference of German Catholic Bishops when it was confronted with a child sex abuse scandal.^{39,40} His wife, Gudrun Kugler, is a conservative parliamentarian for the Austrian People's Party,⁴¹ and was co-convenor of the anti-gender network Agenda Europe, now Vision Network, as well as one of the co-founders of the WYA.⁴²

Kairos PR clients and projects⁴³ have included the ITI; Cardinal Schönborn (who is the co-founder of the ITI and the ICLN); KathTreff (a Catholic dating site in Austria, Croatia and Hungary); Europe for Christ; LebensKonferenz (an anti-abortion rights conference); Vatican Magazine; and a bioethics conference of the Salzburg branch of the Austrian Doctors for Life Forum.

Kairos PR's most successful project appears to be the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians (OIDAC), which has produced an annual report on 'Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe' since 2011.⁴⁴ This report is offered as an evidence base of discrimination against Christians by cataloguing actual incidents of discrimination and confounding these with cases where Christians are legally prosecuted for violating human rights legal requirements — for example, using hate speech. This approach is reinforced by hate groups such as ADF which publish reports such as 'Censored: How European "Hate Speech" Laws Are Threatening Freedom of Speech' under the OIDAC brand.⁴⁵

ANTI-GENDER YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: WYA ALUMNI CONSULTANCY INITIATIVES

The WYA prepares the young people who go through its indoctrination programme for a bright future in the world of religious extremist activism. Indeed, several 'certified' WYA

alumni have taken their religious extremist skillset to found or join public relations firms which then take up a role in anti-gender campaigning.

For example, the Croatian Hrvoje Vargić, former Regional Director for WYA Europe, has since created two firms: (1) Inkubator Izvrnosti (Excellence Incubator),⁴⁶ which partners⁴⁷ with the WYA in the EU-funded 'Women's health goes digital' programme along with the Opus Dei-affiliated University of Navarra; and (2) Theoria,⁴⁸ a "knowledge centre for individuals and organizations with a vision", which include the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE), the FEMM App, Fundacion Fortius and WYA as clients.

Another WYA Europe alumnus, François Jacob, former President of the WYA, is now working for French public affairs firm Obole,⁴⁹ which is "creating the reference ecosystem for the Common Good". Obole specialises in Catholic resource mobilisation and organisational capacity development. Its clients feature a who's who of French Catholic civil society, including Pierre-Édouard Stérin's La nuit du Bien Commun.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

Anti-rights public affairs consultancies represent a growing niche within the broader anti-gender and religious extremist movement, as well as an example of their increased professionalisation. Influential individuals who are deeply embedded in religious networks, particularly those associated with traditionalist Catholic views, such as those of Opus Dei, tend to lead these public affairs companies. Many are connected to high-ranking figures in the Catholic Church, as well as ultra-conservative legislators worldwide. By leveraging these relationships, they position themselves as

³⁹ For Dr. Martin Kugler's CV, see ITI Catholic University. (2022). Curriculum Vitae: Dr. Martin G. Kugler. https://iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/user_upload/Academic-Life/Academic_CV_KUGLER_2020.pdf.

⁴⁰ The sex abuse scandal which erupted in 2010 refers to the 547 boys who suffered sexual and physical abuse over decades at the Regensburger Domspatzen ('Cathedral Sparrows'), a cathedral choir in Regensburg. See France 24. (2017). Report alleges 'hellish abuse' at German Catholic choir school. France 24, 18 July. <https://www.france24.com/en/20170718-germany-catholic-church-choir-school-hundreds-boys-abuse>.

⁴¹ Parlament Österreich. (n.d.). Dr. Gudrun Kugler (aktiv). <https://www.parlament.gv.at/person/1986>.

⁴² See Datta, N. (2018). Restoring the Natural Order. Brussels: European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development; and World Youth Alliance. (2022). The History of the World Youth Alliance. <https://wya.net/timeline/>.

⁴³ Kairos Consulting. (2025). Projekte. <http://www.kairos-pr.com/projekte.html>.

⁴⁴ Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe. (2025). Our Publications. <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/publications>.

⁴⁵ Coleman, P. (2016). Censored 2. How European „Hate Speech“ Laws Are Threatening Freedom of Speech, 2nd ed. Vienna: Kairos Publications. <https://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/index.php?id=33>.

⁴⁶ See <https://izvrnost.hr/>.

⁴⁷ Stowarzyszenie Pontes. (n.d.). Women's health goes digital. <https://pontes.org.pl/en/news>.

⁴⁸ Theoria Consulting International. (2025). Knowledge center for innovative and mission driven organizations. <https://theoria.cc/#reference>.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.obole.eu/>.

⁵⁰ Obole. (2025). Découvrez nos clients. <https://www.obole.eu/clients>.

intermediaries between governments and influential religious or ideological actors, often working behind the scenes to shape public policy and international relations in ways that advance extreme religious agendas.

These firms operate under a veil of discretion, often emphasising their ability to maintain confidentiality while facilitating private meetings and organising public engagements

with senior political figures. Their influence extends across borders where ultra-conservative, religious movements are increasingly aligning with political forces to counter gender equality, reproductive rights and LGBTQI advancements. These consultancies reflect the merging of religious conservatism with strategic political influence, aiming to embed anti-rights perspectives within policymaking at both national and international levels.

TABLE 19

OVERVIEW OF ANTI-RIGHTS PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANCIES

Consultancy	Key actor	Anti-gender connections	Clients
Ambrose Consulting	Christiaan Alting von Geusau	Cardinal Schönborn ICLN ITI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katalin Novák, President of Hungary • The Vatican • USA under the first Trump administration • Poland under the PiS government
Sovereign Global Solutions	Jacqueline Halbig von Schleppenbach	ICLN- Western Hemisphere National Catholic Prayer Breakfast PNfV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans United for Life • Anglosphere Society • Becket Fund • Embassy of Hungary in the USA • Family Friendly Hungary • Family Research Council • National Catholic Prayer Breakfast • Susan B Antony List • Qatar • 40 Days for Life
Opus Fidelis	David Lejeune	Fondation Jérôme Lejeune Opus Dei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADF International • Aletea • C-Fam • LiveAction • Jérôme Lejeune Foundation • One of Us
Kairos PR	Gudrun and Martin Kugler	Agenda Europe Cardinal Schönborn Opus Dei-Central Europe WYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardinal Schönborn • Europe for Christ • ITI • KathTreff • LebensKonferenz • OIDAC • Salzburg Doctors for Life Forum • Vatican Magazine
Inkubator Izvrsnosti (Excellence Incubator) THEORIA	Hrvoje Vargić	WYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAFCE • FEMM app • Fundacion Fortius • WYA Europe • WYA Southeast Europe
Obole	François Jacob	WYA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La nuit du Bien Commun

7

RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM'S KNOWLEDGE MACHINE

“Information, knowledge, is power. If you can control information, you can control people.”

(Tom Clancy)

The anti-rights and religious extremist movement in Europe has entered a new phase marked by the consolidation of its own infrastructures for knowledge production and elite formation, including think tanks, political foundations and institutions of higher education. These entities perform three core functions. First, they produce and disseminate new forms of knowledge designed to be operationalised by political actors. Second, they offer platforms for anti-gender perspectives, not merely as safe spaces but as affirmatively supportive environments aimed at shifting the Overton window towards far-right ideologies. Third, they cultivate a growing cadre of far-right, anti-human rights political and intellectual elites, with the long-term objective of ensuring that ideologically aligned individuals are prepared to assume positions of influence when access to political power is achieved.¹

7.1 HATCHERIES OF EXTREMISM: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN IDEOLOGICAL FORMATION

Institutes of higher learning, particularly universities, play a critical role in shaping intellectual capacities, offering both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. These institutions vary greatly, from well-established academic pillars to superficial degree factories that lend legitimacy to their graduates and ideas.

One of the first dedicated anti-gender institutes of higher learning established in Europe is the **International Theological Institute (ITI)**² in Trumau, Austria, which offers a Master's degree in Marriage and the Family.³ Founded in 1996 by the late Pope John Paul II, the ITI's mission is to offer “the study of Catholic theology as a unified whole within which particular attention is devoted to the theme of marriage and the family”.⁴ The long-time Rector of the ITI is the Dutch aristocrat Christiaan Alting von Geusau⁵ (see ‘Shadowy power brokers’). Notable ITI

¹ See Project 2025 and Plan Pericles.

² See <https://iti.ac.at/>.

³ ITI Catholic University. (2025). Master of Studies on Marriage and the Family (MMF). <https://iti.ac.at/academics/program-of-studies/master-of-studies-on-marriage-and-the-family>.

⁴ ITI Catholic University. (2025). Mission. <https://iti.ac.at/about/mission>.

⁵ ITI Catholic University. (2023). Thank You for Allowing Me to Serve: ITI Rector to Retire from His Duties. ITI Catholic University, 22 June. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=270>; and ITI Catholic University. (2017). Curriculum Vitae: Christiaan W.J.M. Alting von Geusau. https://www.iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Academic_CV_ALTING_von_GEUSAU_02-2017.pdf.

alumni include Gudrun Kugler,⁶ the co-convenor of Agenda Europe, while her husband, Martin Kugler, former spokesperson for Opus Dei for Central Europe, is a current professor at the ITI.⁷

However, the universities with the greatest influence on anti-gender mobilisation — and the most intellectual and financial capital — are those linked to the Opus Dei prelature. Founder Josemaría Escrivá dedicated significant energy to establishing higher education institutions and their associated infrastructures, such as university residences.⁸ Founded in 1952 and currently with over 13,500 students,⁹ the **University of Navarra (UNAV)** in Spain is one of the leading Opus Dei universities in anti-gender activism. UNAV professors often lead anti-abortion activist training and contribute to campaigns promoting natural family planning over contraception. UNAV faculty have engaged in professional relationships with a range of anti-gender and religious extremist actors, including ADF International,¹⁰ FEMM,¹¹ Fondation Jérôme Lejeune,¹² ISSEP,¹³ natural family planning initiatives,¹⁴ the Political Network for Values (PNV),¹⁵ the World Congress of Families¹⁶ and the World Youth Alliance (WYA).¹⁷ (see Religious actors)

A parallel and subtly rival private catholic academic structure exists: the Anahuac University Network of the Legionaries of Christ (LoC), which operates institutions such as the **University Francisco de Vitoria (UFV)** in Madrid.¹⁸ UFV has become a key site for anti-abortion activism through collaboration with the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation.¹⁹ In 2020, UFV hosted the First International Congress of Naprotechnology,²⁰ and in 2022 a delegation from Ordo Iuris discussed the Collegium Intermarium initiative with UFV's Vice-Rectorate for Internationalisation.²¹ Both UNAV and the European University of Rome, another LoC institution, serve as hubs for recruitment into the WYA.^{22,23}

Less of a university and more of a far-right training centre is the **Institut de sciences sociales, économiques et politiques (ISSEP)**,²⁴ founded in 2018 by Marion Maréchal Le Pen of the French far-right Le Pen political dynasty. Based in Lyon, France, ISSEP offers unrecognised degrees in political science, economics and philosophy, hosts academic conferences and provides professional development courses. ISSEP has established partnerships with Russia's

⁶ ITI Catholic University. (2025). Providing a Mouthpiece for the Church. <https://iti.ac.at/alumni/meet-our-alumni-impacting-the-church-and-the-world/providing-a-mouthpiece-for-the-church>.

⁷ ITI Catholic University. (2022). Curriculum Vitae: Dr. Martin G. Kugler. https://iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/user_upload/Academic-Life/Academic_CV_KUGLER_2020.pdf.

⁸ Evans, J. (2012). The educational vision of St. Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 4(2), 164–178. DOI:10.1080/19422539.2012.708172. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271927177_The_educational_vision_of_St_Josemaria_Esciva_founder_of_Opus_Dei.

⁹ See <https://www.unav.edu/conoce-la-universidad>.

¹⁰ ADF International. (2025). Guillermo A. Morales Sancho, Legal Counsel, Europe. <https://adfinternational.org/es/nuestro-equipo/guillermo-a-morales-sancho>.

¹¹ University of Navarra. (n.d.). Women's Health Goes Digital. <https://en.unav.edu/web/institute-for-culture-and-society/projects/women-s-health-goes-digital>.

¹² Fundación Jérôme Lejeune. (2025). La Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Navarra y la Fundación Jérôme Lejeune suscriben un acuerdo para impulsar la formación en bioética y ética médica. <https://fundacionlejeune.es/la-facultad-de-medicina-de-la-universidad-de-navarra-y-la-fundacion-jerome-lejeune-suscriben-un-acuerdo-para-impulsar-la-formacion-en-bioetica-y-etica-medica/>.

¹³ Instituto Superior de Sociología, Economía y Política (2023). Programa de Liderazgo y Gobierno 2025/2026. Madrid: ISSEP. <https://web.archive.org/web/20250128123955/https://www.issep.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Dosier-VI-Programa-de-Liderazgo-y-Gobierno.pdf>.

¹⁴ RENAfer. (n.d.). Curso preparación de Expertos de Planificación Familiar Natural (PFN) online. https://www.renafer.org/images/50conf/contenido_del_curso_online_expertos.pdf.

¹⁵ Political Network for Values. (2024). Committee of Experts. <https://politicsnetworkforvalues.com/en/who-we-are/council-of-experts/>.

¹⁶ Congreso Internacional de las Familias. (2025). Speakers MID 2025. <https://wcfmexico.org/speakers-cifam-merida/>.

¹⁷ World Youth Alliance. (2022). WYA launches World Youth Alliance's chapter in Pamplona. <https://wya.net/blog/wya-launches-world-youth-alliances-chapter-in-pamplona/>.

¹⁸ An account of rivalry between Opus Dei and the Legionaries of Christ is described by Gore, G. in Opus (2024).

¹⁹ Fundación Jérôme Lejeune. (2023). Inicio del Máster Universitario en Bioética Universidad Francisco de Vitoria y Fundación Jérôme Lejeune. <https://fundacionlejeune.es/inicio-del-master-universitario-en-bioetica-universidad-francisco-de-vitoria-y-fundacion-jerome-lejeune/>.

²⁰ Fertilitas. (n.d.). Dr. Hilgers: "España innova la fertilidad con la Naprotecnología". <https://fertilitas.es/dr-hilgers-en-el-i-congreso-internacional-espana-innova-la-fertilidad-con-la-naprotecnologia/>.

²¹ University Francisco de Vitoria. (2022). El 'think tank' ORDO IURIS de Polonia se reúne con profesores de la UFV. UFV, 2 November. <https://www.ufv.es/el-think-tank-ordo-iuris-de-polonia-se-reune-con-profesores-de-la-ufv/>.

²² Università Europea di Roma. (n.d.). Internationalisation at home. <https://www.uer.it/world-youth-alliance/>.

²³ World Youth Alliance. (2022). WYA launches World Youth Alliance's chapter in Pamplona. <https://wya.net/blog/wya-launches-world-youth-alliances-chapter-in-pamplona/>.

²⁴ See <https://www.issep.fr>.

Saint-Petersburg University,²⁵ the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) and Poland's Collegium Intermarium (see below). ISSEP opened a branch in Madrid in 2020 which offers programmes on leadership and governance and features veteran anti-gender personalities on its teaching staff,²⁶ as well as several politicians from the Vox party.²⁷

The **Collegium Intermarium**²⁸ is a failed degree factory. Founded in 2021 by the Ordo Iuris Institute in Poland, it attempted to offer a Master's degree in law, aiming to shape a new generation of ultra-conservative elites in Central and Eastern Europe.²⁹ The teaching staff comprised key actors from the anti-gender field, including repeat speakers at the World Congress of Families and from the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ).³⁰ Despite initial promise and financial backing from Polish Catholic millionaire Paweł Witaszek,³¹ student enrolments declined sharply, with zero enrolments in 2024.³²



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➤ Mathias Corvinus Collegium.

7.2 THINK TANKS AND THE PIPELINE OF EXTREMIST KNOWLEDGE TO POWER

Long the preserve of the United States, a galaxy of far-right think tanks with a distinct anti-gender focus has emerged in Europe. The two most prominent anti-gender think tanks are the Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture³³ from Poland

and the **Center for Fundamental Rights (Alapjogokért Központ)**³⁴ from Hungary. Ordo Iuris, which styles itself as a legal think tank, was behind the plethora of anti-gender initiatives in Poland between 2015 and 2023,³⁵ while the Center for Fundamental Rights also served as the local host for the Conservative Political Action Committee (CPAC) meeting in Budapest and describes its mission as “to galvanize the cooperation of conservatives worldwide”. Ordo Iuris entered a partnership with the Center for Fundamental Rights in 2020 to “join hands in opposing the globalist network of an open society and gender ideology”.^{36,37}

²⁵ See <https://english.spbu.ru/>.

²⁶ Instituto Superior de Sociología, Economía y Política. (n.d.). Profesionales y expertos forman ISSEP. <https://www.issep.es/profesores/>. For example, see Jorge Major Oreja, a former European People's Party (EPP) MEP and president of the One of Us Federation, which advocates against abortion rights and Jorge Soley Climent who is involved in Fundación Pro-Vida de Cataluña and is a former Board member of the now defunct European Dignity Watch.

²⁷ Such as Vox MEP Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Vox MP Manuel Mariscal Zabala and José Antonio Fúster, president of Vox Madrid.

²⁸ See <https://collegiumintermarium.org/en/home-english>.

²⁹ Notes from Poland. (2021). Conservative group launches university in Poland to “forge elites for the entire region”. Notes from Poland, 11 May. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/05/11/conservative-group-launches-university-in-poland-to-forge-elites-for-the-entire-region/>.

³⁰ Mierzyńska, A. (2021). Ultrakatolickie Ordo Iuris uruchamia uczelnię. Marzy o kształceniu elit Międzymorza. Oko Press, 11 May. <https://oko.press/ultrakatolickie-ordo-iuris-uruchamia-uczelnie-marzy-o-ksztalceniu-elit-miedzymorza>.

³¹ Cieśla, W. (2017). Prezes, woda i aborcja. Newsweek Polska, 2 July. <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/pawel-witaszek-kim-jest-goracy-przeciwnik-aborcji/nwjw2z3>.

³² Notes from Poland. (2024). No students enrol at conservative Polish university established under PiS government to “forge elites”. Notes from Poland, 31 October. <https://notesfrompoland.com/2024/10/31/no-students-enroll-at-conservative-polish-university-established-under-pis-government-to-forge-elites/>.

³³ See <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/>.

³⁴ See <https://alapjogokert.hu/en/>.

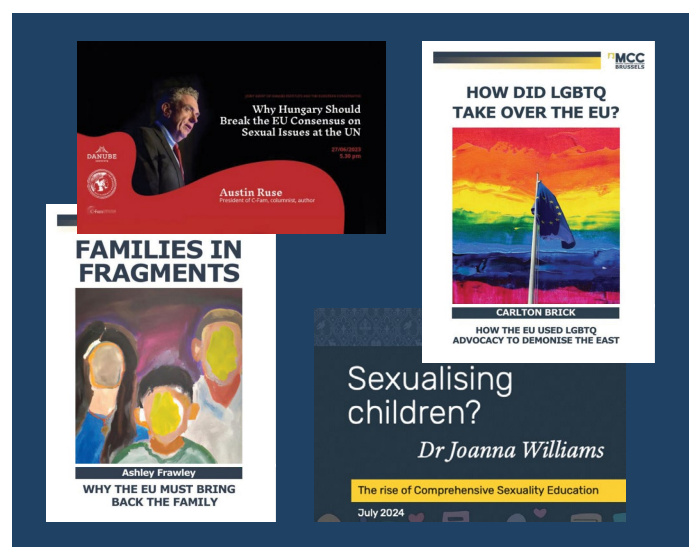
³⁵ See RTNO, MDC and TOTI.

³⁶ Curanović, A. (2021). The International Activity of Ordo Iuris. The Central European Actor and the Global Christian Right. Religions, 12(12), article 12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12121038>.

³⁷ Center for Fundamental Rights. (2020). Press release. Center for Fundamental Rights, 26 February. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200603110629/https://alapjogokert.hu/en/2020/02/26/press-release/>.

To this end, Ordo Iuris and the Center for Fundamental Rights further combined forces in October 2021 to establish the **Alliance for the Common Good**,³⁸ which strives “to make Europe a space of freedom and security guided by our true European values: God, the Nation and the Family”. The Slovak Human Rights and Family Policy Institute,³⁹ the Czech Alliance pro rodinu (Alliance for the Family)⁴⁰ and the Italian Nazione Futura⁴¹ all joined the Alliance for Common Good.⁴² These are part of a wider grouping of think tanks and civil society organisations (CSOs) which orbit the central figure of the *European Conservative*,⁴³ an online magazine which is in turn funded by the Orbán government through the Batthyány Lajos Foundation.⁴⁴

Hungary has become a centre for far-right think tanks which espouse anti-gender thinking as part of wider ultra-conservative political discourse. For example, the MCC,⁴⁵ which serves as a right-leaning university in Hungary, has opened a Brussels office⁴⁶ which organises think tank-like activities around European Union (EU) policies. Among the issues **MCC Brussels** has dealt with include a public event on the EU’s ‘gender obsession’,⁴⁷ as well as ‘how did the LGBTQ lobby take over the EU’⁴⁸ against the interests of Central and Eastern European Member States. In April 2024, the MCC hosted the controversial National Conservatism Conference (NatCon),⁴⁹ which featured Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as a speaker, as well as several anti-gender speakers.⁵⁰ Another example of MCC collaboration among anti-gender actors is the publication *Inhuman Rights*, authored by the ECLJ’s Grégor Puppink and published jointly by the MCC and



📌 Hungarian-sponsored events and reports.

the Centre for Fundamental Rights. In 2025, the MCC launched an offensive against human rights civil society with its report *Mission creeps: How EU funding and activist NGOs captured the gender agenda*.⁵² (see Public funding)

Another Hungarian think tank is the **Danube Institute**.⁵³ Headed by the former special adviser to Margaret Thatcher, John O'Sullivan, the leadership and staff of the Danube Institute are the same individuals associated with other

³⁸ See <https://theafcg.com/en/>.

³⁹ See <https://www.hfi.sk/>.

⁴⁰ See <https://alipro.cz/>.

⁴¹ See <https://www.nazionefutura.it/>.

⁴² Note that based on analysis of the activities of the Czech Alliance pro rodinu and the Slovak Human Rights and Family Policy Institute, these have been categorised as CSOs rather than think tanks for the purposes of this report.

⁴³ Nazione Futura. (2023). Nazione Futura nel network europeo di European Conservative. Nazione Futura, 8 September. <https://www.nazionefutura.it/esteri/nazione-futura-nel-network-europeo-di-european-conservative/>.

⁴⁴ Rutai, L. (2023). Hungary's government is funding European publications. But have they had much success? Euronews, 16 September. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/09/16/hungarys-government-is-funding-european-publications-to-little-success>.

⁴⁵ See <https://mcc.hu/en/>.

⁴⁶ MCC Brussels. (2025). About MCC Brussels. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/about-mcc-brussels>.

⁴⁷ MCC Brussels. (2023). The EU's gender obsession: undermining education and families? MCC Brussels, 7 June. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/event/the-eus-gender-obsession-undermining-education-and-families>.

⁴⁸ MCC Brussels. (2023). How did the LGBTQ lobby take over the EU? MCC Brussels, 16 November. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/event/how-did-lgbtq-take-over-the-eu>.

⁴⁹ National Conservatism. (2024). A Conference In Brussels, Belgium, April 16 - 17, 2024. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/>; and MCC Brussels. (2024). Brussels Wants to Cancel NatCon. But Free Speech Will Win. MCC Brussels, 13 April. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/news/brussels-wants-to-cancel-natcon-but-free-speech-will-win>.

⁵⁰ National Conservatism. (2024). A Conference In Brussels, Belgium, April 16 - 17, 2024: Confirmed Speakers. <https://nationalconservatism.org/natcon-brussels-2/confirmed-speakers/>.

⁵² MCC Brussels. (2025). Mission creeps: How EU funding and activist NGOs captured the gender agenda. MCC Brussels, 1 April. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/publication/mission-creeps-how-eu-funding-and-activist-ngos-captured-the-gender-agenda-2>.

⁵³ See <https://danubeinstitute.hu/>.

far-right outfits such as the MCC, the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC) and the organisations sponsoring NatCon.⁵⁴ The Danube Institute is not a legal entity, but rather a project of the Batthyány Lajos Foundation.⁵⁵ It hosts a prolific number of events on a range of political, literary and geopolitical themes, including many dedicated to anti-gender issues. Examples since 2023 include events on 'A Darwinist Journey into Gender',⁵⁶ 'Parental Rights in Education',⁵⁷ 'The Demographic Cliff and Family Policy'⁵⁸ and 'Why Hungary Should Break the EU Consensus on Sexual Issues at the UN',⁵⁹ featuring C-Fam's Austin Ruse. The Hungarian media outlet *Átlátszó* reported in 2023 how the Danube Institute was active in its outreach in the USA to portray "that Hungary is a kind of right-wing utopia and that the policies of the Orbán government can serve as a model for the foreign, especially American, right".^{60,61} To achieve this, the Danube Institute partners closely with the US Heritage Foundation, with which it has a formal agreement.⁶²

In their most ambitious initiative to date, MCC and Ordo Iuris collaborated in 2025 to publish a report entitled *The Great Reset: Restoring Member State Sovereignty in the European Union — A Two Scenario Proposal through Institutional Reform for a New EU*.⁶³ Echoing the terminology popularized by Klaus Schwab's 2020 vision for a post-COVID-19 global economic order, as presented in Davos,⁶⁴ the report advances a proposal for the radical restructuring of the European Union.

The envisioned reforms would significantly curtail existing democratic and human rights safeguards embedded within the EU's institutional framework.⁶⁵

There is a similar galaxy of far-right think tanks in Poland which have benefited from direct and indirect public financial support during the period of PiS rule up to late 2023.⁶⁶ These far-right think tanks then serve as a government echo chamber for illiberal, anti-gender policies and provide protection and legitimation to the government when facing criticism — for example, from the EU on questions of rule of law. Similar far-right and libertarian networks of think tanks exist in France⁶⁷ and the UK.⁶⁸

7.3 POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS AS GATEWAYS: NORMALISING EXTREMIST IDEAS IN MAINSTREAM POLITICS

Political foundations, functioning similarly to think tanks, are becoming increasingly influential in the contestation of gender-related policies. At the EU level, three primary political foundations — Sallux, New Direction, and the Identity and Democracy (ID) Foundation (now the Patriots for Europe -PfE-Foundation) — play pivotal roles in the dissemination of

⁵⁴ These include Ofir Haivry of the Herzl Institute, Douglas Murray associated with ARC, and Michael O'Shea of the MCC. Danube Institute. (2025). Staff. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/content/staff>.

⁵⁵ Zubor, Z. (2024). Hungarian government proxy is spending a fortune to influence public opinion in the US. *Atlatzo*, 23 October. <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2024/10/23/hungarian-government-proxy-is-spending-a-fortune-to-influence-public-opinion-in-the-us/>.

⁵⁶ Danube Institute. (2024). A Darwinist Journey into Gender. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/a-darwinist-journey-into-gender>.

⁵⁷ Danube Institute. (2023). Parental Rights in Education: More Honoured in the Breach than the Observance. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/parental-rights-in-education-more-honoured-in-the-breach-than-the-observance>.

⁵⁸ Danube Institute. (2023). The Demographic Cliff and Family Policy - a Conservative Perspective. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/the-demographic-cliff-and-family-policy-a-conservative-perspective>.

⁵⁹ Danube Institute. (2023). Why Hungary Should Break the EU Consensus on Sexual Issues at the UN. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/why-hungary-should-break-the-eu-consensus-on-sexual-issues-at-the-un>.

⁶⁰ Zubor, Z. (2023). Orbánism exported to America through a public interest foundation. *Atlatzo*, 14 December. <https://english.atlatzo.hu/2023/12/14/Orbanism-exported-to-america-through-a-public-interest-foundation/>.

⁶¹ Albuquerque, A.L. (2023). Hungary's Plan to Build an Army of American Intellectuals. *Foreign Policy*, 19 May. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/19/hungary-american-conservative-right-wing-intellectuals-orban/>.

⁶² Danube Institute. (2024). The Fourth Danube Institute – The Heritage Foundation Geopolitical Summit - Day 2. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/the-fourth-danube-institute-the-heritage-foundation-geopolitical-summit-day-2>.

⁶³ MCC and Ordo Iuris, *The Great Reset: Restoring Member State Sovereignty in the European Union a Two Scenario Proposal through Institutional Reform for a New EU*, 2025, <https://europeanstudies.mcc.hu/uploads/default/0001/01/02770730fbc5fcb58ff0392f1269828e5dcac60.pdf>.

⁶⁴ World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab's vision of a post-COVID world, and how the economy can work with nature - The Great Reset podcast, 17 July 2020, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2020/07/klaus-schwab-nature-jobs-great-reset-podcast/>.

⁶⁵ Dall, G. (2025) The Great Reset Goes Transatlantic, *Visegrad/Insight*, 1 May. <https://visegradinsight.eu/the-great-reset-goes-transatlantic/>.

⁶⁶ Kajta, J. (2021). In Poland, public funding is given to those threatening liberal democracy. *Open Democracy*, 22 July. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/countering-radical-right/poland-public-funding-given-those-threatening-liberal-democracy/>.

⁶⁷ Simpère, A.-S. (2024). Le réseau Atlas, la France, et l'extrême-droitisation des esprits : La machine de guerre idéologique d'une nouvelle extrême-droite, libertarienne et ultraconservatrice. *Observatoire des multinationales*, 22 May. https://multinationales.org/IMG/pdf/atlasfr_v3.pdf.

⁶⁸ Shone, E. (2024). A Labour win won't stop shadowy right-wing think tanks influencing policy. *Open Democracy*, 20 June. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/labour-right-wing-think-tanks-shape-policy-influence-keir-starmer-rachel-reeves-policy-exchange/>.

anti-rights and religious extremist thinking. These foundations are further bolstered by an expanding network of national-level political foundations linked to far-right parties, for whom anti-gender rhetoric is integral to their core political agenda. (See also Public funding for how these political foundations have been infiltrated by anti-rights and religious extremist actors).

Sallux,⁶⁹ the political foundation of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), offers a platform for anti-gender organisations to infiltrate political spaces under a different guise — for example, through joint a ECPM publication with FAFCE⁷⁰ and having an ECLJ staff member on the ECPM Board.⁷¹ Sallux has individual member think tanks in eight European countries which serve as a conduit for anti-rights ideas at national level.⁷² In addition, the national members generate their own material. For example, its Lithuanian member, the Institute of Free Society,⁷³ has made formal proposals to the parliament to restrict access to abortion;⁷⁴ and its Swedish member, the Clapham Institute,⁷⁵ has produced a “A legal and historical analysis of why abortion should not be granted constitutional status”.⁷⁶

With the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) taking such a strong role in anti-gender contestation, its foundation, New Direction,⁷⁷ is playing an equal role by having convened the 2023 European Family Congress.⁷⁸ At the 2023 New Direction Summer University, anti-gender leaders such as MEP Stephen Bartulica and Hungary's Center for Fundamental Rights featured as keynote speakers.⁷⁹ In 2022, New Direction

established a working group on European conservatism charged with elaborating common thinking for all conservative-minded individuals across Europe. The working group identified the family as a specific area and stated that “the standard public model of education, and general policies regarding family, marriage, and sexuality should remain traditional ones. Moreover, governments should adopt policies intended to fortify and reward traditional families in order to pursue a beneficial demographic future.”⁸⁰

The ID Foundation⁸¹ published reports on the “Legal aspect of civil partnership regarding the ‘woke agenda’ in Slovakia and the EU”,⁸² promising to “highlight the current factual state of rights for LGBTI minority communities”; on the freedom of women in France and Europe,⁸³ casting foreign migrants as threats to women's emancipation; as well as on the influence of ‘woke’ ideology and the role of NGOs and environmentalist lobbies on the EU.⁸⁴ Now known as the Patriots for Europe Foundation, it published a report on “Women's safety and the excesses of neo-feminism” in March 2025, in which it complains that, “The white man is presented as the universal culprit, the enemy to be destroyed.”⁸⁵ The ID/Patriots for Europe Foundation also collaborates with national think tanks such as the Centro Studi Machiavelli, Fundacion Disenso and the Foundation for a Civic Hungary (see below).⁸⁶

At national level, new political foundations have emerged because of the electoral success of their associated political parties. Fundacion Disenso,⁸⁷ associated with Spain's Vox

⁶⁹ See <https://sallux.eu/>.

⁷⁰ Sallux. (n.d.). Stronger Families for a Flourishing Society. Amersfoort: Sallux Publications. <https://sallux.eu/bookstore/stronger-families-for-a-flourishing-society.html>.

⁷¹ Christophe Foltzenlogel, Secretary of Sallux, has been an ECLJ staff member since 2012. Sallux. (n.d.). Sallux Board. <https://sallux.eu/our-board.html>.

⁷² See <https://sallux.eu/our-members.html>.

⁷³ See <https://laisvavisuomene.lt/>.

⁷⁴ Laisvos Visuomenės Institutas. (2022). LVI proposal for a system for assistance in the crisis situation and the improvement of legislation. LVI, 14 December. <https://laisvavisuomene.lt/lvi-pasiulymas-del-pagalbos-krizinio-nestumo-situacijoje-sistemas-ir-teises-aktu-tobulinimo/>.

⁷⁵ See <https://claphaminstitutet.se/>.

⁷⁶ Westerhäll, L.V., P. Arvidsson, R. Lyckander, & A.S. Karlgren. (2024). Abort i grundlagen? En juridisk och historisk analys av varför. Forserum: Claphaminstitutet. <https://claphaminstitutet.se/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Clap-rap9-digital.pdf>.

⁷⁷ See <https://newdirection.online/>.

⁷⁸ See <https://families.ecrparty.eu/>.

⁷⁹ New Direction. (2023). 11th - 14th July 2023, Summer University, Zagreb, Croatia. https://newdirection.online/event/summer_university_2023.

⁸⁰ New Direction. (n.d.). Working Group on European Conservatism. https://newdirection.online/working_group_on_european_conservatism.

⁸¹ See <https://id-foundation.eu/>.

⁸² Patriots for Europe Foundation. (2023). Legal aspect of civil partnership regarding to “woke agenda” in Slovakia and the EU. <https://id-fohttps://pfe-foundation.eu/en/legal-aspect-of-civil-partnership-regarding-to-woke-agenda-in-slovakia-and-the-eu-2/>.

⁸³ Patriots for Europe Foundation. (2021). Libertés des Femmes en France et en Europe. <https://pfe-foundation.eu/libertes-des-femmes-en-france-et-en-europe/>.

⁸⁴ Patriots for Europe Foundation. (2025). Publications. <https://pfe-foundation.eu/en/publications-en/>.

⁸⁵ Patriots for Europe Foundation. (2025). Women's safety and the excesses of neo-feminism. <https://pfe-foundation.eu/en/womens-safety-and-the-excesses-of-neo-feminism/>.

⁸⁶ Patriots for Europe Foundation. (2025). Partners. <https://pfe-foundation.eu/en/partners/>.

⁸⁷ See <https://fundaciondisenso.org/>.

political party, was created in 2020 and since then has been offering scholarships to attend the ISSEP school in Madrid. It has published reports on the EU's approach to family policies⁸⁸ and transsexuality and the trans law in Spain.⁸⁹ It has also partnered with the New Direction Foundation to offer a Young Leaders' Academy since 2022.⁹⁰ Likewise, in Germany, the electoral success of the far-right AfD allows it to request public funding to establish Desiderius Erasmus Stiftung,⁹¹ with plans to establish a political academy as well.⁹² The Foundation for a Civic Hungary (Polgári Magyarországért Alapítvány),⁹³ the political foundation of Hungary's FIDESZ party, has co-sponsored several PNfV events and partners with anti-gender think tanks such as the MCC (see 'Politics').

In Austria, the Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) also has an associated political foundation, the Freiheitliches Bildungsinstitut,⁹⁴ which operates a series of academies aimed at building political leadership among young people, women, media practitioners and political leaders. In March 2025, the foundation featured Birgit Kelle,⁹⁵ a German anti-feminist activist, as its main International Women's Day speaker.⁹⁶ In the Netherlands, there is the Forum for Democracy International,⁹⁷ the political foundation associated with Thierry Baudet's right-wing populist party Forum for Democracy,

founded in 2017, which joined the fray against Comprehensive Sexuality Education⁹⁸ in 2023 and platforms far-right, religious extremists such as John Laughland,⁹⁹ who wrote the article 'LGBT — a weapon for American Hegemony',¹⁰⁰ and David Engels.¹⁰¹ In Italy, the Centro Studi Machiavelli¹⁰² founded in 2017 has published reports on the dangers of 'wokism',¹⁰³ collaborates with the Hungarian Center for Fundamental Rights in organising a "woke-busters' bootcamp"¹⁰⁴ and signed a cooperation agreement with the Heritage Foundation.¹⁰⁵

7.4 WEAPONISING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

The emergence of inter-connected think tanks, institutes of higher learning and political foundations signals the creation of an ecosystem of far-right, anti-rights knowledge production capacity in Europe mirroring the US Christian Right think tanks which emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁰⁶ A crucial difference between the two sides of the Atlantic is that while the US Christian Right think tanks are privately funded by US billionaires (see 'USA') and their associated private foundations, in Europe the extremist knowledge production ecosystem will

⁸⁸ Fundacion Disenso. (2024). Análisis de políticas de familia en la Unión Europea. Fundacion Disenso, 24 May. <https://fundaciondisenso.org/analisis-de-politicas-de-familia-en-la-union-europea/>.

⁸⁹ Pueyo-Toquero, T. (2023). Transexualidad y la ley trans en España. Fundacion Disenso, 23 May. <https://fundaciondisenso.org/transexualidad-y-la-ley-trans-en-espana/>.

⁹⁰ New Direction. (n.d.). New Direction & Fundación Disenso: Young Leaders Academy. <https://newdirection.online/young-leaders-academy>.

⁹¹ See <https://erasmus-stiftung.de/>.

⁹² Erasmus Stiftung. (2024). Tätigkeitsbereiche. <https://erasmus-stiftung.de/taetigkeitsbereiche/>.

⁹³ See <https://szpma.hu/en>.

⁹⁴ See <https://www.fbi-politikschule.at>.

⁹⁵ Diskurs Atlas. (2021). Birgit Kelle. https://www.diskursatlas.de/index.php?title=Birgit_Kelle.

⁹⁶ Freiheitliche Bildungsinstitut. (2025). Frau. Echt. Stark. <https://www.fbi-politikschule.at/news-detail/artikel/frau-echt-stark/>.

⁹⁷ See <https://fvdinternational.com/>.

⁹⁸ Scholtz, C. (2024). A closer look at "The week of Spring Fever". Forum for Democracy International, 29 February. <https://fvdinternational.com/article/a-closer-look-at-the-week-of-spring-fever>.

⁹⁹ John Laughland is a British Conservative and Eurosceptic academic, having worked in the European Parliament for Rassemblement National MEPs and taking pro-Russian positions, also collaborating with MCC Brussels. Forum for Democracy International. (2024). John Laughland: Biography. <https://fvdinternational.com/author/john-laughland>; and Follow The Money. (n.d.). John Laughland. <https://www.ftm.nl/tag/john-laughland>.

¹⁰⁰ Laughland, J. (2023). LGBT - A weapon for American Hegemony. Forum for Democracy International, 30 May. <https://fvdinternational.com/article/lgbt-a-weapon-for-american-hegemony>.

¹⁰¹ Prof. David Engels is a Belgian academic, formerly associated with the Université Libre de Bruxelles. He was a faculty member at the Collegium Intermarium and collaborates with Ordo Iuris and MCC Brussels. Forum for Democracy International. (2024). David Engels: Biography. <https://fvdinternational.com/author/david-engels>; and Engels, D. (n.d.). David Engels: CV. <https://www.davidengels.be/cv>.

¹⁰² See <https://www.centromachiavelli.com/>.

¹⁰³ Centro Studi Politici e Strategici Machiavelli. (2024). Wokeismo, cancel culture, oicofobia. Tre minacce alla nostra civiltà. <https://www.centromachiavelli.com/2024/03/22/wokeismo-cancel-culture-oicofobia/>.

¹⁰⁴ Centro Studi Politici e Strategici Machiavelli. (2024). Wokebusters Bootcamp '24. <https://www.centromachiavelli.com/evento/wokebusters-bootcamp-24/>.

¹⁰⁵ Centro Studi Politici e Strategici Machiavelli. (2024). Partnership: Accordi e collaborazioni. <https://www.centromachiavelli.com/partnership-centrostudimachiavelli/>.

¹⁰⁶ Stahl, J. Right Moves: The Conservative Think Tank in American Political Culture since 1945 (2016), University of North Carolina Press, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469627878_stahl.

¹⁰⁷ Paternotte, D., & M. Verloo. (2021). De-democratization and the Politics of Knowledge: Unpacking the Cultural Marxism Narrative. Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society, 28(3), 556–578. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxab025>.

¹⁰⁸ Koch Docs. (2019). 1996 "Structure of Social Change" by Koch Industries Executive VP Richard Fink. Koch Docs, 19 August. <https://kochdocs.org/2019/08/19/1996-structure-of-social-change-by-koch-industries-executive-vp-richard-fink/>.

TABLE 20

INSTITUTES OF HIGHER LEARNING, THINK TANKS AND POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

Institution	Year founded	Headquarters	Role in anti-gender contestation
Institutes of higher learning			
Collegium Intermarium	2021, <i>defunct</i>	Poland	Ordo Iuris initiative to create new anti-gender elites
International Theological Institute (ITI)	1996	Austria	Creates new anti-gender elites; created by Pope John Paul II and funded by Sir Michael Hintze
Institut de sciences sociales, économiques et politiques (ISSEP)	2018 2020	France Spain	Creates new anti-gender elites
Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Mathias Corvinus Collegium Foundation	1996 2020	Hungary	Creates pro-Orbán anti-gender elites; generates and disseminates anti-gender publications at the European level
University Francisco de Vitoria (UFV)	1993	Spain	Creates elite anti-gender academics; provides intellectual base for anti-gender services
University of Navarra (UNAV)	1952	Spain	Creates elite anti-gender academics; provides intellectual base for anti-gender services
Think tanks			
Alapjogokért Központ (Center for Fundamental Rights)	2013	Hungary	Hosts CPAC; engages in anti-gender campaigns; PNfV 2023; partnership with Heritage Foundation and Alliance for the Common Good
Clapham Institute	2008	Sweden	Sallux; anti-abortion report
Danube Institute	2013	Hungary	Partnership with Heritage Foundation; anti-gender events and webinars; project of Batthyány Lajos
Fondazione Magna Carta	2006	Italy	Sallux
Human Rights and Family Policy Institute	2012	Slovakia	Anti-gender activism; Alliance for the Common Good
Institute of Free Society	2014	Lithuania	Sallux; anti-abortion legislative proposals
Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Brussels	2022	Hungary	Anti-gender events targeting EU public
Nazione Futura	2017	Italy	Alliance for the Common Good
Ordo Iuris	2013	Poland	Anti-gender normative and legal initiatives; Alliance for the Common Good
Political foundations			
ID/Patriots for Europe Foundation	2015	EU	Anti-rights publications
New Direction	2010	EU	Co-sponsored European Family Congress in 2023
Sallux	2010	EU	Partners with anti-gender organisations to advance their ideas in political setting
Centro Studi Machiavelli	2017	Italy	Anti-gender publications; partnership with Heritage Foundation
Desiderius Erasmus Stiftung (AfD)	2017	Germany	Plans to create training academy
Foundation for a Civic Hungary (FIDESZ)	2003	Hungary	Co-sponsored PNfV 2022
Forum for Democracy International (FvD)	2014	Netherlands	Platform for thinkers opposed to Comprehensive Sexuality Education and gender rights
Fundacion Disenso (Vox)	2020	Spain	Anti-gender publications and events

be largely publicly funded (see 'Public funding'). This emerging ecosystem in Europe is also laying the groundwork to create a new cadre of educated, anti-rights elites to fill positions in political parties and, eventually, public administrations, should they secure election victories that bring them to political power.

Scholars David Paternotte and Mieke Verloo argue how the far-right's investment in knowledge production mirrors a perceived left-wing attempt at Gramscian cultural hegemony by attempting to discredit progressive areas of study and their institutions. Further, the far-right parties then "focus on

cultural hegemony, established and maintained by a dense network of institutions, allowing them to shape values, beliefs, mores, and identities".¹⁰⁷

This model mirrors the strategic theory of change developed by the US far-right Koch network, particularly as articulated in the *Structure of Social Change*,¹⁰⁸ which underpinned a decades-long campaign to reshape US political institutions and public discourse. The European anti-gender movement appears to be replicating this blueprint to achieve similar long-term ideological transformation across the continent.

7a

DISSEMINATION: AN ANTI-RIGHTS HALL OF MIRRORS

“We can and must write in a language which sows among the masses hate, revulsion, and scorn toward those who disagree with us.”

(Vladimir Lenin)

A defining feature of the anti-rights and religious extremist landscape over the past five years has been its effective infiltration of the media space. This is evidenced by substantial investments in media and communications, with just six organisations — Lux Veritatis (Poland), the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN, USA/UK) and the Orthodox Television Fund (Russia), among others — accounting for over US\$273 million in spending between 2019 and 2023. While this figure illustrates the priority anti-rights actors assign to communications, it does not capture the full extent of their activities. Their media strategy spans traditional and social media, proprietary platforms developed by civil society and religious institutions, and the calculated use of disinformation tactics.



▲ Photo taken during the march in defense of TV Trwam and Catholic media in Kraków.

7.5 THE BIG THREE: EXTREMIST RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS

Three major religious broadcasters play a central role in disseminating anti-rights narratives across Europe, targeting Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Evangelical Protestant audiences. These media entities — Lux Veritatis (Poland), Spas TV (Телеканал «Спас») (Russia) and CBN (USA/UK) — are among the best-funded and most internationally active anti-gender media platforms.

Lux Veritatis, a powerful actor in Polish Catholic media, funds **Trwam TV** and is closely linked to Radio Maryja, a flagship far-right voice founded in 1991 by Lux Veritatis co-founder Fr. Tadeusz Rydzyk¹ of the Redemptorists congregation. Known for its ultra-conservative political stance, **Radio Maryja** is a vocal opponent of LGBTQI rights.^{2,3} Lux Veritatis maintains strong ties with Poland's far-right Law and Justice Party (PiS) and has acted as an advertising contractor for the European Parliament's European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group (see Public funding).⁴

¹ In the documents submitted to the National Broadcasting Council, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk was defined as “a one-person supervisory body, a one-person management body and a one-person control body of Radio Maryja”. For more, see Wojtas, T. (2020). Lux Veritatis Foundation: 10 percent less donations, 2 percent more from TV Trwam. Wirtualnemedi, 20 October. https://www.wirtualnemedi.pl/artykul/fundacja-lux-veritatis-10-proc-mniej-z-darowizn-2-proc-wiecej-z-tv-trwam_1.

² Syal, R. (2011). Priest known for extreme views invited to European parliament by MEPs. The Guardian, 21 June. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/21/priest-european-parliament-extremist-polish>.

³ Ádám, A. (2006). A Radio Maryja-jelenség [The Radio Maria phenomenon].

⁴ European Parliament. (2025). Contracts awarded. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/public-procurement/contracts-awarded>. Note: data for previous years is no longer publicly available.

In Russia, **Spas TV** functions as the official media arm of the Russian Orthodox Church. Its programming — broadcast domestically and via satellite across Eastern Europe and Central Asia — blends Orthodox fundamentalism, imperial nostalgia and anti-Western disinformation, and calls for spiritual warfare in defence of ‘traditional values’.⁵ In December 2023, the European Union (EU) sanctioned Spas TV for its central role in a “systematic, international campaign of disinformation” targeting neighbouring countries and EU Member States.⁶

A private alternative, **Tsargrad TV**, founded by oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, which promoted monarchism and Christian nationalism, also received EU sanctions.⁷ One of its most infamous broadcasts offered to buy one-way tickets out of Russia for individuals “diagnosed with sodomy”.⁸ Tsargrad ceased broadcasting in 2017 and later moved online,⁹ after which it was removed from YouTube in July 2020. A Russian

court subsequently ordered Google to pay Tsargrad 1 billion rubles in damages.¹⁰

For Evangelicals, CBN serves as a global vehicle for anti-gender messaging. Headquartered in the USA and with a strong UK presence, CBN broadcasts in 168 countries.¹¹ It promotes the agendas of key Christian right actors, notably the ADF, framing reproductive and LGBTQI rights as existential threats to Christian civilisation. CBN’s content blends charismatic televangelism with culture war rhetoric.¹²

Another example of religious anti-gender media is **Aleteia**, a Vatican-backed digital Catholic news platform run by the Foundation for Media Evangelization.¹⁷ Aleteia frequently criticises ‘gender ideology’ and reproductive rights.¹⁸ Its founding CEO, David Lejeune, previously led the Jerome Lejeune Foundation in the USA^{19,20} (see ‘Shadowy power brokers’).

TABLE 21

THE BIG THREE ANTI-GENDER BROADCASTERS

	Target audience	Total budget (2019 – 2023)	Political alignment	Main values	Attitude to reproductive rights
Lux Veritatis/ TV Trwam (PL)	Roman Catholic	US\$44.2 million ^{13,14}	PiS and ECR Party	Nationalism, fundamentalism	Seen as moral decay
TV Spas (RU)	Russian Orthodox	US\$113.15 million ¹⁵	The Kremlin	Anti-liberalism, militarism	Seen as malign Western influence
CBN (USA/UK)	Evangelical Protestant	US\$67.5 million ¹⁶	Christian Right, MAGA	Culture wars, charismatic Christianity	Seen as an assault on Christianity

⁵ For example, a documentary called ‘Christian people: Holy war for faith’ was reportedly shown to Serbian MPs in 2024. Телеканал СПАС. (2024). «ЛЮДИ ХРИСТОВЫ». СВЯЩЕННАЯ ВОЙНА ЗА ВЕРУ / ВЕЧЕР НА СПАСЕ. <https://rutube.ru/video/803506e30ec0027b2165aa27c11da149/>.

⁶ Council of the European Union. (2023). Press release: 12th package of sanctions on Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine: additional 61 individuals and 86 entities included in the EU’s sanctions list. Council of the EU, 18 December. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/12/18/12th-package-of-sanctions-on-russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-additional-61-individuals-and-86-entities-included-in-the-eu-s-sanctions-list/>.

⁷ See <https://m-by.tsargrad.tv/news>.

⁸ Афиша. (2017). «Царьград» выпустил сюжет о первом «содомите», который был бесплатно отправлен телеканалом в Европу. <https://daily.afisha.ru/news/10307-cargrad-vypustil-syuzhet-o-pervom-sodomite-kotoryy-byl-besplatno-otpravlen-telekanalom-v-evropu/>.

⁹ Настоящее время. (2017). “Царьград” закрывается: о чем вещал канал “православного большинства”. <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/28888625.html>.

¹⁰ Meduza. (2022). «Царьград» заявил, что получил от Google неустойку в один миллиард рублей. Телеканал направит деньги «на поддержку специальной военной операции». <https://meduza.io/news/2022/04/01/tsargrad-zayavil-cto-poluchil-ot-google-neustoyku-v-odin-milliard-rubley-telekanal-napravit-dengi-na-podderzhku-spetsialnoy-voennoy-operatsii>.

¹¹ Christian Broadcasting Network. (2024). A Global Nonprofit Ministry Providing Media Evangelism and Humanitarian Aid To 168 Countries and Territories. <https://cbn.com/ministries>.

¹² Gogarty, K. (2020). Media Matters did an analysis of social interactions on CBN outlets’ content. Media Matters, 15 May. <https://www.mediamatters.org/christian-broadcasting-network/media-matters-did-analysis-social-interactions-cbn-outlets-content>.

7.6 OWN PLATFORMS FOR ANTI-GENDER: MANUFACTURING INDIGNATION

A core strategy of anti-gender actors has been the creation of their own media platforms, designed to openly disseminate extreme views under the guise of credible journalism. These outlets often mimic the aesthetic of mainstream digital newspapers but operate through selective reporting, agenda-driven editorials and emotionally charged opinion pieces tailored to provoke indignation.

National affiliates of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) have been at the forefront of creating their own alternative media platforms. One of the earliest examples is Polonia Christiana,²¹ founded in 2012 by the Piotr Skarga Christian Culture Association, a Polish affiliate of the TFP movement. The outlet presents itself as a modern digital media platform with a proudly ultra-conservative Catholic identity, declaring its mission “to fight [...] for adherence to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”.²² In 2015, Estonia’s Foundation for the Protection of Family and Tradition (SAPTK) — also affiliated with TFP — established Objektiiv,²³ which it describes as “a news and opinion portal of SAPTK”.²⁴ With 25,000 followers on

Facebook, Objektiiv routinely reports on far-right issues and conspiracy theories, further contributing to the normalisation of radical narratives.

Also in 2015, Spain’s HazteOír launched Actual, ^{25,26} a digital platform promoting a self-described “liberal-conservative perspective” and focused on “laws and decisions of governments that affect our way of life and its fundamental institutions, such as the right to life, family and liberty”.²⁷ With 325,000 Facebook followers,²⁸ Actual serves as a pipeline through which extremist perspectives originating from anti-rights organisations enter broader, right-leaning media ecosystems.

In France, the Fond de dotation GT Editions is the financial backer of an interconnected virtual network of websites, blogs and news curation outlets which cater to French-speaking traditionalist Catholics and those on the far-right of the political spectrum. These outlets include Le Salon Beige, Riposte Catholique and the *Observatoire de la Christianophobie*, among others.²⁹ The Fond de dotation GT Editions is also a funder of the ECR political group (see ‘Public funding’).

A more recent addition is *Christian News Europe*,³⁰ launched in 2021 by Dutch Reformed Church actors linked to the Christian Union (CU) and Reformed Political Party (SGP). The platform identifies as “a Christian news site for continental Europe. Our focus is on Christian values.”³¹ One of its inaugural articles, titled ‘Five Reasons Why Russian Christians

¹³ Polish Ministry of Justice (2025). https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/rdf/pd/search_df.

¹⁴ Lux Veritatis is also involved in the construction of churches and various business ventures, which makes it difficult to estimate the amount spent on media engagement.

¹⁵ Does not include 2023 data. Tbank. (2025). Проверка Фонд Православного Телевидения Москва ИНН 7725070375 в ЕГРЮЛ и ЕГРИП. <https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/legal/1037739773026/>.

¹⁶ UK Charity Commission. (2025). Register of charities. <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1101659&subid=0>.

¹⁷ La Croix. (2012). « Aletea » veut être le leader des réseaux sociaux catholiques. La Croix, 20 September. <https://www.la-croix.com/Urbi-et-Orbi/Actualite/Rome/Aleteia-veut-etre-le-leader-des-reseaux-sociaux-catholiques-2012-09-20-855540>.

¹⁸ See <https://aletea.org/search>.

¹⁹ Jérôme Lejeune Foundation. (2025). Announcing: David Lejeune retiring as President. <https://www.lejeunefoundation.org/announcing-david-lejeune-retiring-as-president>.

²⁰ Cath.ch. (2012). Rome: Lancement de Aleteia, le premier média social chrétien. Cath.ch, 21 September. <https://www.cath.ch/news/plus-de-1-000-medias-et-institutions-catholiques-mis-en-reseau/>.

²¹ See <https://pch24.pl/>.

²² PCh24.pl. (n.d.). Istniejemy, by walczyć. <https://pch24.pl/o-nas/>.

²³ See <https://objektiiv.ee/>.

²⁴ It was established as a distinct entity in 2023 after the head of SAPTK was elected to the Estonian Parliament. Some of its authors also include members of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Objektiiv. (n.d.). Portaalist. <https://objektiiv.ee/portaalist/>.

²⁵ See <https://www.actuall.com/>.

²⁶ Europa Press. (2015). HazteOír.org lanza mañana ‘Actual’, diario online enfocado a la defensa de la vida y la familia. Europa Press, 30 September. <https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/noticia-hazteoirorg-lanza-manana-actual-diario-online-enfocado-defensa-vida-familia-20150930195359.html>.

²⁷ Actual. (2019). Acerca de Actual. <https://www.actuall.com/acerca-de/>.

²⁸ See <https://www.facebook.com/actualcom?fref=ts>.

²⁹ See <https://don.gteditions.fr/>.

³⁰ See <https://cne.news/>.

³¹ CNE News. (n.d.). What we do. <https://cne.news/about-us>.

Love Putin',³² praised the Russian president for his ostensible piety and his government's ban on "gay propaganda".

The expansion of religious extremist actors into modern communication strategies has fostered a niche market for private-sector consultants supporting anti-rights organisations. In France, a prominent example is Progressif Media,³³ led by long-time anti-abortion activist Emile Duport. With a slick, 'hipster-inspired' branding and occasional use of '*franglais*', the agency offers services such as strategic consulting, web marketing, fundraising and content development. Since its founding in 2011, it has employed 30 staff and served over 500 clients, including the Fonds du Bien Commun (see 'Private foundations').³⁴ Duport and Progressif Media have played key roles in anti-abortion and anti-contraception campaigns, collaborating with actors such as Fondation Jérôme Lejeune and the far-right group Génération Identitaire.³⁵

These examples illustrate a broader trend: anti-gender and religious extremist actors are not merely reacting to media bias; they are building parallel media infrastructures. These platforms do not seek balance or debate but rather reinforce ideological silos, manufacture outrage, and legitimise authoritarian and anti-rights worldviews within their intended audiences.

7.7 SOCIAL MEDIA: AMPLIFYING THE ANTI-GENDER ECOSYSTEM

Social media has significantly accelerated the spread of anti-gender narratives. Platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) have become central battlegrounds for anti-rights rhetoric, with algorithms that privilege emotionally charged, polarising content.³⁶ Anti-rights and religious extremist actors have made social media a strategic priority, developing sophisticated digital competencies to exploit the medium effectively. Initially, this focus stemmed from necessity, since many of these actors were excluded from mainstream media. However, this early investment has since evolved into a competitive advantage, with many now outperforming progressive and mainstream actors across key platforms (See Table 20).

This dominance extends to both anti-rights organisations and far-right political figures and parties. Notably, European far-right think tanks such as MCC Brussels or Disenso — virtually all of which have emerged within the past five years — consistently outperform their progressive and centrist

TABLE 20

SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE OF SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE ANTI-GENDER ORGANISATIONS

Anti-rights actor (as of April 2025)	YouTube subscribers	Number of YouTube videos	X subscribers
HazteOír	43,600	1,700	94,610
CitizenGO	26,700	1,000	36,785
ProVita et Famiglia	26,100	783	25,570
MCC Brussels	25,300	352	5,755
ISSEP France	24,800	205	11,850
Danube Institute	17,100	500	3,000
Fundación Disenso	16,300	157	26,725
Center for Fundamental Rights (HU)	12,900	689	5,587
FvD International	12,400	272	10,970
ADF International	9,680	270	28,370
Ordo Iuris	8,580	752	30,900
ECLJ	7,730	344	5,180

³² Immink, W. (2021). Five reasons why Russian Christians love Putin. CNE News, 16 September. <https://cne.news/article/149-five-reasons-why-russian-christians-love-putin>.

³³ See <https://progressifmedia.com/>.

³⁴ Progressif Web. (n.d.). Fonds du Bien Commun. https://web.progressifmedia.com/case_studies/fonds-du-bien-commun/.

³⁵ L'Extracteur. (2022). Casasnovas, Pfizer, McDonald's et Bolloré : ce qui se cache derrière le magazine RGNR. L'Extracteur, 27 January. <https://www.lextracteur.fr/casasnovas-pfizer-mcdonalds-et-bollore-ce-qui-se-cache-derriere-le-magazine-rgnr/>.

³⁶ Iyer, P. (2024). New Research Points to Possible Algorithmic Bias on X. Tech Policy Press, 15 November. <https://techpolicy.press/new-research-points-to-possible-algorithmic-bias-on-x>.

counterparts. YouTube, as a proxy for reach, illustrates this disparity: the top 12 anti-rights actors significantly outpace progressive actors, of whom only three (RFSU, IPPF and Heinrich Böll Stiftung) have surpassed 10,000 subscribers.

This pattern is even more pronounced in the political sphere. A 2024 Politico investigation into social media usage, particularly TikTok, by European political parties and MEPs revealed that MEPs affiliated with the far-right Identity and Democracy (ID, now Patriots for Europe) group held the strongest position on TikTok, with over 1.38 million followers combined — followed closely by the Left group, which had 1.29 million.³⁷ The study also found that ID MEPs posted more video content and received the highest number of likes across all party groups. One emblematic figure of this success is France's Jordan Bardella, a leading figure in the Rassemblement National, whose political ascent has been closely linked to his TikTok strategy.³⁸ According to the Politico investigation, all large centrist parties perform markedly worse.

7.8 STRATEGIC USE OF DISINFORMATION

A hallmark of the anti-rights ecosystem is its strategic deployment of disinformation. This tactic is employed across the spectrum — from authoritarian states such as the Russian Federation³⁹ to civil society organisations such as CitizenGO, which was found to have manipulated reproductive health information in Kenya.⁴⁰ Similarly, the European External Action Service (EEAS) found that sources linked to Russia were involved in 55% of all documented disinformation attacks against LGBTQI rights within the EU.⁴¹

Russian state propaganda has weaponised gender narratives as a geopolitical tool. In line with the Orthodox channel Spas TV, state media outlets RT and Sputnik frequently frame Western societies as morally corrupt due to their embrace of LGBTQI rights and gender equality. These narratives juxtapose a 'promiscuous, decadent West' or 'Gayurope' against Russia's supposed moral clarity and defence of 'traditional Christian family values'.⁴² Recognising the threat, the EU banned RT and Sputnik in 2022 for their central role in spreading disinformation within the EU.⁴³

In France, a study mapping online attacks on reproductive rights revealed that anti-abortion mobilisation relied heavily on misinformation, including fabricated materials mimicking official communications and organisations. These were often paired with graphic imagery and scandalous narratives that allowed such content to spread beyond traditional anti-abortion circles — finding traction among mainstream Christian, royalist and even disability advocacy groups.⁴⁴



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Journalists of the Orthodox television channel "Spas" at work.

³⁷ Goujard, C., Braun, E., & Scott, M. (2024). Europe's far-right uses TikTok to win youth vote. Politico, 17 March. <https://www.politico.eu/article/tiktok-far-right-european-parliament-politics-europe/>.

³⁸ Olivier, C. (2024). Comment expliquer le succès de Jordan Bardella sur TikTok ? Le Monde, 5 July. https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2024/07/05/comment-expliquer-le-succes-de-jordan-bardella-sur-tiktok_6246964_4408996.html.

³⁹ Schafer, B., Benzoni, P., Koronska, K., Rogers, R., & Reyes, K.D. (2024). The Russian Propaganda Nesting Doll: How RT is Layered Into the Digital Information Environment. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/the-russian-propaganda-nesting-doll-how-rt-is-layered-into-the-digital-information-environment/>.

⁴⁰ Mozilla Foundation. (2022). Investigation: European Group Likely Manipulated Twitter Conversations in Kenya About Reproductive Rights, Health. Mozilla Foundation, 22 February. <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/investigation-european-group-likely-manipulated-twitter-conversations-in-kenya-about-reproductive-rights-health/>.

⁴¹ EEAS Stratcom Division. (2023). FIMI targeting LGBTQI+ people: Well-informed analysis to protect human rights and diversity. Brussels: European Union. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EEAS-LGBTQ-Report.pdf>.

⁴² Hellman, M. (2024). The News Media Organizations RT and Sputnik and Their Audiences. In M. Hellman (Ed.), Security, Disinformation and Harmful Narratives: RT and Sputnik News Coverage about Sweden (pp. 29–57). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58747-4_2.

⁴³ Council of the European Union. (2022). EU imposes sanctions on state-owned outlets RT/Russia Today and Sputnik's broadcasting in the EU. Council of the EU, 2 March. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/02/eu-imposes-sanctions-on-state-owned-outlets-russia-today-and-sputnik-s-broadcasting-in-the-eu/>.

⁴⁴ Simmons, C., & Martiny, C. (2024). Networks of Dissuasion: Mapping Online Attacks on Reproductive Rights in France. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. <https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/networks-of-dissuasion-mapping-online-attacks-on-reproductive-rights-in-france/>.

Messaging apps such as WhatsApp also play a growing role in disseminating far-right, anti-gender content. In the lead-up to Spain's 2019 general elections, a study revealed that roughly 9.6 million potential voters were targeted with disinformation via WhatsApp, including false claims aimed at LGBTQI communities and feminist initiatives. Fabricated messages, such as a hoax about Madrid's mayor planning 'open sex zones' for gay people, were shared widely in private groups. The study found that 10% of this disinformation was explicitly anti-LGBTQI or anti-feminist, often spreading organically and eluding oversight due to the encrypted and closed nature of the platform.⁴⁵

7.9 TRADITIONAL MEDIA – CAPTURE BY FAR-RIGHT OLIGARCHS

A central element of the anti-rights media strategy involves the capture of traditional media, which have been in decline since the societal shift towards digital platforms and social media. This transformation has led to plummeting viewership and readership, diminished advertising revenues and, ultimately, the consolidation of traditional outlets into the hands of a few ultra-wealthy individuals.⁴⁶

This consolidation has often favoured right-wing billionaires⁴⁷ such as Rupert Murdoch, whose media empire spans much of the English-speaking world.⁴⁸ In France, similar patterns are

evident in the concentration of media ownership by Vincent Bolloré, whose outlets increasingly reflect a far-right editorial line, often supporting far-right political parties and figures.⁴⁹

In some contexts, state capture has replaced private acquisition. In Russia and Hungary, authoritarian governments have taken direct control of traditional media.^{50,51} For instance, the *European Conservative* and *Hungarian Conservative* — both English-language publications — have been described as propaganda instruments for Viktor Orbán's government.⁵² Funded by the Batthyány Lajos Foundation, itself financed by the Hungarian Prime Minister's Cabinet Office,⁵³ these outlets routinely promote anti-gender narratives framed as efforts to safeguard national heritage and Christian values.⁵⁴ The *European Conservative* has also reportedly employed contributors affiliated with the banned Russian propaganda outlet Voice of Europe.⁵⁵

Authoritarian state-owned media, including Russia's RT and Sputnik, as well as several Hungarian channels and Polish channels under the PiS government, intermittently deploy anti-gender content.^{56,57,58} These platforms, with extensive reach and state backing, are instrumental in shaping public opinion. They frame progressive gender policies as existential threats to national identity and societal stability, targeting audiences already inclined towards scepticism against liberal and globalist agendas. Their narratives are meticulously tailored to reinforce anti-rights worldviews within ideologically aligned communities.⁵⁹

⁴⁵ Avaaz. (2019). WhatsApp: Social Media's Dark Web. How the Messaging Service is Being Flooded with Lies and Hate Ahead of the Spanish Elections. https://avaazimages.avaaz.org/Avaaz_SpanishWhatsApp_FINAL.pdf.

⁴⁶ Lipka, M., & Shearer, E. (2023). Audiences are declining for traditional news media in the US – with some exceptions. Pew Research Center, 28 November. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/28/audiences-are-declining-for-traditional-news-media-in-the-us-with-some-exceptions/>.

⁴⁷ Neate, R. (2022). 'Extra level of power': billionaires who have bought up the media. The Guardian, 3 May. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/may/03/billionaires-extra-power-media-ownership-elon-musk>.

⁴⁸ CNN. (2011). Rupert Murdoch: Snapshot of an empire. <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2011/07/world/interactive.rupert.murdoch/index.html>.

⁴⁹ Dodman, B. (2024). Comment Bolloré et son empire médiatique ont porté l'extrême droite aux portes du pouvoir. France 24, 2 July. <https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20240702-comment-bollor%C3%A9-et-son-empire-m%C3%A9diatique-ont-port%C3%A9-l-extr%C3%Aame-droite-aux-portes-du-pouvoir>.

⁵⁰ Vinokour, M. (2022). Russia's Media Is Now Totally in Putin's Hands. Foreign Policy, 5 April. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/05/russia-media-independence-putin/>.

⁵¹ Spike, J. (2024). How Hungary's Orbán uses control of the media to escape scrutiny and keep the public in the dark. Associated Press, 31 July. <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2024/how-hungarys-orban-uses-control-of-the-media-to-escape-scrutiny-and-keep-the-public-in-the-dark/>.

⁵² Rutai, L. (2023). Hungary's government is funding European publications. But have they had much success? Euro News, 16 September. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/09/16/hungarys-government-is-funding-european-publications-to-little-success>.⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ European Conservative. Tag: gender ideology. <https://europeanconservative.com/articles/tag/gender-ideology/>.

⁵⁵ Mueller-Töwe, J. (2025). Neue Details im 'Voice of Europe'-Skandal: Ungarns Rolle in Putins Medienmanipulation. t-online, 9 February. https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/innenpolitik/id_100566742/russische-einflussoperation-voice-of-europe-spuren-fuehren-nach-ungarn.html.

⁵⁶ Council of the European Union. (2022). EU imposes sanctions on state-owned outlets RT/Russia Today and Sputnik's broadcasting in the EU. Council of the EU, 2 March. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/02/eu-imposes-sanctions-on-state-owned-outlets-russia-today-and-sputnik-s-broadcasting-in-the-eu/>.

⁵⁷ Fodor, E. (2022). Orbánistan and the Anti-gender Rhetoric in Hungary. In *The Gender Regime of Anti-Liberal Hungary* (pp. 1–27). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85312-9_1.

⁵⁸ "All those who defend women's rights are constantly put under pressure, attacked by politicians and by state-owned media." Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination. (2022). Access to abortion in Europe: Stopping anti-choice harassment. Brussels: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29764/html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

7.10 FREE SPEECH DETERIORATING WITHIN HANDS OF AUTHORITARIANISM

Anti-rights and religious extremist actors have invested heavily — both intellectually and financially — in all forms of media, including traditional and social platforms, as well as in creating their own outlets. This media mastery constitutes a core component of their strategy to ascend to political power. Nina Horaczek of the Austrian media outlet *Falter* outlines seven steps by which the far-right captures the media landscape to achieve political dominance:⁶⁰ (1) build a proprietary media empire; (2) stoke fear through disinformation; (3) defame critics; (4) amplify content via Facebook; (5) pressure press freedom; (6) gain control over public broadcasting; and (7) financially ruin opponents.

This evolution raises two critical concerns. First, right-wing libertarians increasingly advocate for absolute and unregulated freedom of speech. Such advocacy tends to be selective, defending hate speech while simultaneously suppressing democratic criticism of authoritarian leaders and anti-rights agendas. A case in point is the Trump/Vance administration's approach to free speech. On the one hand, US Vice President JD Vance denounced Scotland's implementation of buffer zones around abortion clinics as violations of both free speech and religious freedom — a narrative aligned with ADF International — at his address at the 2025 Munich Security Conference.⁶¹ Similarly, he criticised the cancellation of Romania's 2024 presidential election following a massive Russian disinformation campaign promoting a pro-Russian, far-right candidate.^{62,63} On the other hand, the Trump/Pence administration issued a list of 'banned words' which include "gender, transgender, pregnant person, pregnant people, LGBT, transsexual, non-binary, nonbinary, assigned male at birth, assigned female at birth, biologically male, and biologically female", precipitating a calamitous effect on public health research.⁶⁴

Second, many progressive actors have focused primarily on narrative development and reframing as a counterstrategy to far-right media dominance. However, this approach appears



▲ JD Vance at the Munich Security Conference, 2024.

increasingly outdated. The contemporary media environment has undergone a profound reconfiguration: traditional outlets now often lean rightwards, while anti-rights and religious extremists have not only built alternative platforms but also leapfrogged progressive actors in social media sophistication. The media sphere is no longer a neutral marketplace of ideas where superior narratives naturally prevail. Instead, it is deeply skewed in favour of anti-rights actors, fragmented into algorithm-driven echo chambers that reinforce existing biases and amplify polarisation.

To remain effective, progressive actors must adapt to this transformed media ecosystem. This requires a deeper understanding of digital media dynamics, proactive engagement in debates over freedom of expression in online spaces, and a radical modernisation of strategic communications infrastructure.

⁵⁹ Prisecaru, D.M. (2024). Media control is key to Orbán's anti-gender discourse success. *The Loop*. <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/media-control-is-key-to-orbans-anti-gender-discourse-success/>.

⁶⁰ Horaczek, N. (2019). Propaganda War in Europe: The Far-Right Media. *European Press Prize*. <https://www.europeanpressprize.com/article/propaganda-war-europe-far-right-media/>.

⁶¹ Steffen, S., & Sanchez Vera, A. (2025). Fact check: JD Vance's free speech claims debunked. *Deutsche Welle*, 17 February. <https://www.dw.com/en/jd-vance-free-speech-claims-debunked/a-71642886>.

⁶² Marica, I. (2025). US vice president says Romania canceled presidential election over "flimsy intelligence suspicions" and "continental pressure". *Romania Insider*, 17 February. <https://www.romania-insider.com/jd-vance-romania-elections-annulment-feb-2025>.

⁶³ Kleczkowska, A. (2025). The Russian Disinformation Campaign During the Romanian Presidential Elections: The Perfect Example of a Violation of International Law? *Opinio Juris*, 27 January. <https://opiniojuris.org/2025/01/27/the-russian-disinformation-campaign-during-the-romanian-presidential-elections-the-perfect-example-of-a-violation-of-international-law/>.

⁶⁴ Amon, J.J. (2025). Trump's Banned Words and Disastrous Health Policies. *Health and Human Rights*, 3 February. https://www.hhrjournal.org/2025/02/04/trumps-banned-words-and-disastrous-health-policies/#_edn1.

8

ANTI-GENDER ACTIVISM GOES GEOPOLITICAL

“Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations.”

(Pope Francis)

Anti-gender activism has entered the geopolitical arena. In the past five years, anti-rights and religious extremist organisations have rapidly scaled up their operations: around 20 now operate transnationally, targeting global governance systems. European actors have caught up with their US Christian Right counterparts and are now key players in global campaigns against gender and sexual and reproductive rights.

Their main targets are the international norms and institutional frameworks that underpin human rights in sexuality, reproduction and gender equality. Chief among these are the Programme of Action from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), although other normative frameworks have also come under sustained attack.

This geopolitical shift takes two main forms. First is **norm-spoiling**: efforts to block, discredit or dismantle specific international norms, processes or institutions. Second is **alternative norm creation**: constructing rival frameworks based on religious fundamentalist ideologies.

Both non-state and state actors drive this agenda. Among the non-state actors are civil society organisations, think tanks and faith-based groups, including a number of Church-organised non-governmental organisations (ChONGOs). Recurring names include ADF International, CitizenGO, C-Fam, the Christian Council International (CCI), Ordo Iuris and the World Youth Alliance (WYA). State actors have also entered

the fray: within Europe, Hungary and the Russian Federation are leading players; globally, the USA has played a pivotal role, particularly under Republican administrations.

8.1 RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST NORM-SPOILING

As with much of their anti-gender activism, religious extremists are best known for obstructing progress on specific issues, particularly in the areas of abortion rights and LGBTQI equality. This obstruction is equally evident at the international level, where their primary targets are progressive international legal instruments that seek to advance human rights.

European anti-gender actors such as CitizenGO, Ordo Iuris and the WYA have acquired consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC),¹ allowing them to influence key bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), in charge of ensuring follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), monitoring implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

The WYA engages in both the CSW and the CPD, organising side events, delivering formal statements, and hosting its International Solidarity Forum at its New York headquarters in parallel to official proceedings.² Ordo Iuris has focused its

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2025). Consultative Status with ECOSOC and other accreditations. <https://esango.un.org/civilsociety/displayConsultativeStatusSearch.do>.

² World Youth Alliance. (2025). Attendee Spotlight: An Inside Look at the ISF. WYA, 24 March. <https://wya.net/blog/attendee-spotlight-an-inside-look-at-the-isf/>.

efforts on the CPD, arguing alongside partners such as the WYA and C-FAM in 2025 that abortion is not a human right³ and, in 2022, opposing comprehensive sexuality education.⁴ Additionally, groups such as the CCI and the WYA use United Nations forums to promote their ideology among youth. In 2024, the CCI awarded 12 'United Nations Fellowships' to students from the conservative Hillsdale College to attend the CSW, citing "increasing progressive dominance at #CSW68".⁵ During the CSW, CitizenGO has employed provocative tactics such as chartering buses with anti-human rights slogans to circulate around the United Nations headquarters in Manhattan.⁶ In 2019, CitizenGO also organised a coordinated harassment campaign, including mass messaging to the private phone of the Kenyan diplomat leading CSW negotiations.⁷

A recent anti-rights ally from within the UN system itself is Reem Alsalem, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls.⁸ In 2024m Alsalem partnered with anti-rights organisations which have worked against core issues of her UN mandate⁹ bringing about severe criticism from organisations which defend women's right.¹⁰

Beyond United Nations processes, European anti-rights actors attempted to derail the ratification process of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, commonly known as the Istanbul Convention.¹¹ As early as 2016, members of the Agenda Europe network developed strategies to oppose ratification in Bulgaria — tactics that were subsequently replicated in other countries.¹² When the European Parliament



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▲ CitizenGo at the World Congress of Families XI, Budapest Congress Centre.

debated European Union (EU) accession to the Convention, a broad coalition of anti-gender actors, centred around Agenda Europe, mobilised to block the initiative. This campaign has been described as "an unprecedented politicisation of gender", merging discourses of national sovereignty with alarmist rhetoric about so-called 'gender ideology'.¹³

Another significant case is the campaign against the Partnership Agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States. European anti-rights organisations such as the CCI, CitizenGO, Ordo Iuris and the Political Network for Values (PNfV) opposed the agreement on the grounds that its references to gender equality would purportedly "undermine the sovereignty"

³ Ordo Iuris. (2025). Ordo Iuris Experts Again at the UN – Defending the Right to Life and Supporting Mothers. Ordo Iuris, 11 April. <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/international-activity/ordo-iuris-experts-again-un-defending-right-life-and-supporting-mothers>.

⁴ Ordo Iuris. (2022). Ordo Iuris against the ideological agenda at the UN - position paper for the session of the Committee on Population and Development. Ordo Iuris, 24 November. <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/education/ordo-iuris-against-ideological-agenda-un-position-paper-session-committee-population-and>.

⁵ Christian Council International. (2024). United Nations Fellowship New York great success. CCI, 16 March. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/news/opinion/2024/united-nations-fellowship-new-york-great-success>.

⁶ Equity Forward. (2025). CitizenGo. <https://equityfwd.org/global-spotlight/trump/citizengo>.

⁷ Kent, M. (2019). US investigates spam barrage on UN diplomat at women's rights conference. CBC News, 5 May. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/un-kenya-abuse-women-diplomacy-us-abortion-1.5122382>; and <https://www.passblue.com/2019/05/14/the-case-of-harassing-a-un-diplomat-via-1000s-of-text-messages/>.

⁸ See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-violence-against-women/reem-alsalem>.

⁹ For example, Alsalem has partnered with the ECLJ: <https://eclj.org/human-dignity/pace/apce-la-resolution-controversee-sur-la-prostitution-repart-en-commission-?lng=fr> and ADF International, see: <https://nypost.com/2024/10/18/world-news/un-holds-panel-on-fighting-violence-against-women-girls-in-sports/>.

¹⁰ IPPF and Women Deliver, Joint Statement Concerning the Call for Input by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girl, <https://womendeliver.org/press/joint-statement-concerning-the-call-for-input-by-the-special-rapporteur-on-violence-against-women-and-girls/>.

¹¹ Council of Europe. (2011). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210). Strasbourg: Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>.

¹² See European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2018). Restoring the Natural Order. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/175>.

¹³ Debusscher, P. (2023). Gender Equality Under Attack: Unmasking Opposition to the Istanbul Convention in the European Parliament. Ghent: Ghent Institute for International and European Studies. https://www.ugent.be/ps/politiekwetenschappen/gies/en/research/publications/honours_paper/academic-year-2022-2023/gender-equality-under-attack-unmasking-opposition-to-the-istanbul-convention-in-the-european-parliament.

of ACP States and “open the door for the EU to push an LGBT agenda”.^{14,15} Specifically, Ordo Iuris launched the ‘Stop Ideological Neocolonialism’ campaign, garnering support from numerous anti-gender groups across Europe.^{16,17} In parallel, the CCI initiated a 2023–2024 programme “to support countries under the new EU-ACP agreement to uphold their national sovereignty and Christian values regarding life, family and freedom of religion & education”,¹⁸ with a proposed budget of US\$265,000, which was complemented by the CCI’s Director visiting several ACP countries to warn of the supposed risks posed by the agreement.¹⁹ Gillian Kane and Jaimie Vernaelde of Ipas have documented this campaign as a “new and concerning focus”, suggesting that it signals a broader ambition to dismantle rights protections in areas historically unrelated to their activism.²⁰

8.2 ALTERNATIVE NORM CREATION

European anti-right and religious extremist actors have gone beyond contesting and attempting to spoil the ‘globalist’ norms they reject; they have now moved onto forging alternative global norms based on their ideology. There are two main types of these alternative anti-rights norms: (1) those arising from anti-rights civil society, where the aim is to have States eventually adopt them; and (2) those emanating from States themselves as part of their anti-gender soft diplomacy designed to meet a range of geopolitical objectives.

A first example of such alternative norms is the Convention on the Rights of the Family,²¹ drafted by Ordo Iuris in 2019 and supported by allied anti-rights organisations, particularly from within the Tradition, Family, Property (TFP) network in

Central and Eastern Europe.²² Even though it was the product of the imagination of a few individuals in Ordo Iuris and related organisations without any state support, the backers presented it as an alternative to the Istanbul Convention and would ban both abortion and same-sex marriage. Journalist Claudia Ciobanu revealed that Ordo Iuris has convinced the then Polish government to make official diplomatic approaches to some Eastern and Central European States, suggesting a joint exit from the Istanbul Convention and a concomitant announcement to sign the Ordo Iuris Convention on the Rights of the Family.²³ However, no other country expressed any appetite for such an endeavour.

A more successful example of alternative norm creation is the Geneva Consensus Declaration (GCD) launched in 2020.²⁴ The GCD was developed by the Institute for Women’s Health, created by Valerie Huber, a former high-ranking civil servant under the Trump administration. The GCD has several purposes. At one level, it is open to signature by United Nations Member States, which must “Reaffirm that there is no international right to abortion”.²⁵ As such, it serves as a diplomatic organising tool to muster a coalition against sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in diplomatic spaces, such as CSW and CPD meetings. To date, the GCD has gathered the support of 36 state signatories, including the USA during the Trump–Pence administration. However, President Biden withdrew the USA from the GCD, and for the four years until Trump’s re-election, Hungary acted as the GCD’s Secretariat. Under the second Trump administration, the USA is back at the forefront of manufacturing alternative anti-gender norms based on the GCD,²⁶ as evidenced by the US Mission to the United Nations hosting a round-table discussion on the GCD at the margins of the 2025 CPD.²⁷

¹⁴ Ordo Iuris. (2022). The EU uses the economic dependence of poorer countries to impose ideological demands. Ordo Iuris, 20 June. <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/family-and-marriage/eu-uses-economic-dependence-poorer-countries-impose-ideological-demands>.

¹⁵ Ordo Iuris. (2022). The latest steps towards the spread of the abortion and LGBTIQ agenda in more than half of the UN member states: The European Union’s attempt to use the post-Cotonou Agreement to interfere in the policies of Southern countries. Ordo Iuris, 1 August. <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/family-and-marriage/latest-steps-towards-spread-abortion-and-lgbtqi-agenda-more-half-un-member>.

¹⁶ See <https://stopideologicalneocolonialism.org/en/>.

¹⁷ Including Hungary’s Centre for Fundamental Rights, One of Us Netherlands, In the name of the Family from Croatia, the PNfV and numerous anti-abortion organisations.

¹⁸ Christian Council International. (2023). CCI’s impact on the EU-ACP agreement. CCI, 4 April. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/news/news/2023/ccis-impact-eu-ACP-agreement>.

¹⁹ Kane, G., & Vernaelde, J. (2022). Anti-Rights Groups Take Aim at Transnational Trade Agreement. Chapel Hill, NC: Ipas. <https://www.ipas.org/resource/anti-rights-groups-take-aim-at-transnational-agreement/>. ²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ordo Iuris. (2019). Convention on the Rights of the Family. Warsaw: Ordo Iuris. https://ordoiuris.pl/sites/default/files/inline-files/Convention_on_the_rights_of_the_family.pdf.

²² Ordo Iuris. (2019). International Declaration of support for Convention on the Rights of the Family. Ordo Iuris, 11 March. <https://en.ordoiuris.pl/family-and-marriage/international-declaration-support-convention-rights-family>.

²³ Ciobanu, C. (2021). Poland’s Replacement for Istanbul Convention Would Ban Abortion and Gay Marriage. Balkan Insight, 15 March. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/03/15/polands-replacement-for-istanbul-convention-would-ban-abortion-and-gay-marriage/>.

²⁴ Institute for Women’s Health. (2025). The Geneva Consensus Declaration. <https://www.theiwh.org/the-gcd/>. ²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See European Parliamentary Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (2025). Beyond the Chaos, a New World is Emerging: Making Sense of the Trump Administration’s Impact on Reproductive Rights and Gender Equality. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/1124>.

To accompany the GCD, Valerie Huber has developed Protego: Women's Optimal Health Framework as a way of operationalising the GCD through anti-gender services (see 'Anti-gender services'). To date, Huber has presented the GCD and Protego to numerous countries, and some, such as Guatemala, Uganda and Burkina Faso, are reported to be operationalising Protego.^{28,29}

Another area of anti-gender actors' activism to generate alternative norms is in the area of religious freedom. This also started under the Trump–Pence administration, with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo holding the first Ministerial of Religious Freedom in Washington, DC, in 2018.³⁰ The strategic objective was to assert that religious freedom was more important than other human rights, such as the right to health, equality or non-discrimination.³¹ Ambrose Advice helped broker Poland joining this initiative, resulting in Poland under the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS, Law and Justice) government convening the Ministerial in Warsaw in 2020³² (see 'Shadowy power brokers').

In 2022, the next edition was hosted by the Conservative UK government.³³ In the final statement agreed in 2022 under the UK leadership, agreed language on SRHR in the context of religious freedom suddenly disappeared, leading to a formal diplomatic protest by some Member States.³⁴ A civil society community has long existed which monitors work by the United Nations and Member States on religious freedom, known as the NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief, whose Vice-President is from ADF International.³⁵

8.3 ANTI-GENDER STATE DIPLOMACY

States are now active participants in anti-gender diplomacy. Two European countries stand out: Hungary and the Russian Federation because they have reoriented towards anti-rights diplomacy. A third country, Turkey, is initiating forays into this area.

HUNGARY: EXTERNAL VALIDATION FOR DOMESTIC ILLIBERALISM

Hungary proactively engages in anti-gender diplomacy as a matter of national interest and sovereignty. To this end, Hungary has consistently opposed references to SRHR and gender in EU and United Nations forums.³⁶ Its anti-gender diplomacy extends further, with high-ranking state officials actively promoting opposition to SRHR. President Katalin Novák, in particular, has played a key role as a representative of the country's anti-gender, ostensibly pro-natalist strategy. At the Women Deliver Conference in 2023, she participated in the opening panel, using the platform to advocate for conservative views on gender and family that contrast starkly with the conference's broader focus on gender equality and reproductive rights.³⁷

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has also strategically used international events to propagate Hungary's anti-gender ideology. In 2017, he hosted the World Congress of Families

²⁷ Institute for Women's Health. (2025). Statement by Valerie Huber, President & CEO of the Institute for Women's Health, on the Geneva Consensus Declaration Roundtable Held in New York City at the US Mission to the United Nations. IWH, 11 April. <https://www.theiwh.org/statement-by-valerie-huber-president-ceo-of-the-institute-for-womens-health-on-the-geneva-consensus-declaration-roundtable-held-in-new-york-city-at-the-u-s-mission-to-the-united-nati/>.

²⁸ Ipas. (2024). PROTEGO: Operationalizing the Geneva Consensus Declaration. Chapel Hill, NC: Ipas. <https://www.ipas.org/resource/protego-operationalizing-the-geneva-consensus-declaration/>.

²⁹ Dabo, N. (2023). Audience à l'Ambassade: La Présidente de "Institute of Women's Health" en quête de partenariat avec le Burkina Faso. Washington, DC: Embassy of Burkina Faso to Washington, DC. <https://burkina-usa.org/audience-a-lambassade-la-presidente-de-institute-of-womens-health-en-quete-de-partenariat-avec-le-burkina-faso/>.

³⁰ US Department of State. (2018). 2018 Ministerial To Advance Religious Freedom. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/2018-ministerial-to-advance-religious-freedom/>.

³¹ Ipas. (2020). Freedom of religion cannot be used to deny other human rights. Ipas, 4 May. <https://www.ipas.org/news/freedom-of-religion-cannot-be-used-to-deny-other-human-rights/#:~:text=In%20a%20letter%20submitted%20to,%2C%20girls%2C%20and%20LGBTQ%20people.>

³² Republic of Poland. (2020). Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief 2020. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland. <https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/FORB2020>.

³³ UK Government. (2022). International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief: London 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/international-ministerial-conference-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-london-2022>.

³⁴ Davies, L. (2022). UK in diplomatic standoff over deletion of abortion rights from gender statement. The Guardian, 28 July. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jul/28/uk-in-diplomatic-standoff-over-deletion-of-abortion-rights-from-gender-statement>.

³⁵ See <https://ngo4bny.org/about-2/>.

³⁶ Vida, B. (2019). New waves of anti-sexual and reproductive health and rights strategies in the European Union: the anti-gender discourse in Hungary. Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters, 27(2), 1610281. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7887896/>.

³⁷ Feminists in Action. (2023). Women deliver 2023: A mixed bag of results. <https://feminaction.fr/en/women-deliver-results/>.

(WCF) in Budapest, an event known for bringing together conservative and religious leaders to promote anti-gender values.³⁸ This gathering followed an earlier engagement in 2014 when Katalin Novák, then Minister for Families, attended a rebranded version of the WCF in Moscow, an event supported financially by Russian religious extremists (See Chapter 2: 'Russian funding: The house of sanctions — Russian funding turns inward'). On the other hand, the pro-Orbán Danube Institute organised events with US anti-gender actors such as C-Fam on the importance of Hungary standing up against the EU's consensus in favour of SRHR.³⁹

Demography has become one of the top entry points for anti-gender discourses in Hungary, which has seen several editions of the International Demographic Summit in Budapest since 2015.⁴⁰ These Demographic Summits take place on average every two years and attract high-level political representatives such as Giorgia Meloni of Italy, as well as anti-gender actors such as Family Watch International, TFP, ADF International and the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN).⁴¹ The aim is to use the genuine concern of declining birth rates as a pretext to legitimise anti-gender ideas and actors as solutions to Europe's demographic challenges.⁴² This approach has been successful, as a study released in 2022 found that the majority of discussions on demographic issues in the EU institutions were led by far-right political actors with common anti-gender positions.⁴³

Beyond state diplomacy and events, Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has directly supported international anti-gender actors. For example, it has recognised and rewarded individuals, such as Henk van Schothorst from the Netherlands, head of the CCI, for their contributions to promoting conservative values abroad.⁴⁴ Additionally, Hungary's international development

and humanitarian arm, Hungary Helps, prioritises funding for conservative and religious organisations globally, which earned special praise from the Vatican in 2017.⁴⁵

RUSSIA: FAMILY VALUES AS AN ENTRY POINT INTO THE KREMLIN'S SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The Russian Federation plays a central role as a global ambassador for authoritarian anti-gender ideology, using what Marlène Laruelle describes as illiberal internationalism to forge transnational alliances rooted in opposition to liberal democratic norms.⁴⁶ This strategy frames gender equality and LGBTQI rights not as issues of human rights, but as symbols of Western moral decline and perceived cultural imperialism. Russia's anti-gender diplomacy is far from reactive; it is a premeditated geopolitical tool that positions the Kremlin as the defender of 'traditional values', 'sovereignty' and 'multipolarity' against a supposedly decadent and imperialist West.⁴⁷

In recent years, the Russian regime has organised a series of conferences that are prime examples of anti-gender diplomacy. For example, the Eurasian Women's Forum (EWF) is an international platform offering a conservative perspective on women's place in society, attracting over 500 participants mostly from neighbouring countries, presided by Valentina Matvienko, the Speaker of Russia's Upper House. The inaugural event in 2015 featured economic, political and social elites from Russia and beyond, including speakers such as Russian anti-abortion champion Natalya Yakunina, Béatrice Bourges of France's La Manif Pour Tous movement, as well as then parliamentarian Giorgia Meloni.⁴⁸ The EWF met again in 2018 and 2024, and is scheduled to reconvene in 2027.

³⁸ International Organization for the Family. (2017). World Congress of Families XI, Hungary, May 25-28, 2017. <https://profam.org/wcfxi/wcf-xi-description/>.

³⁹ Danube Institute. (2023). Why Hungary Should Break the EU Consensus on Sexual Issues at the UN. <https://danubeinstitute.hu/en/events/why-hungary-should-break-the-eu-consensus-on-sexual-issues-at-the-un>.

⁴⁰ Budapest Demographic Summit. (2023). V. Budapest Demographic Summit in 2023. <https://budapestidemografiacsucs2023.hu/en>.

⁴¹ In 2023, speakers included Sharon Slater of FWI, Valerie Huber of the Institute for Women's Health, Paul Coleman of ADF International, Christiaan Alting von Geusau of the ICLN, Vincenzo Bassi of the FAFCE, and Varro Vooglaid of the Estonian TFP. See: Budapest Demographic Summit. (2023). Speakers. <https://budapestidemografiacsucs2023.hu/en#speakers>.

⁴² Datta, N. (2020). Démographie. La Revue Nouvelle, 5. <https://revuenouvelle.be/Demographie-3887>.

⁴³ Goetz, J., Höft, S., Oláh, L.S., & Pető, A. (2022). Discourses on demography in the EU institutions. Brussels: Heinrich Böll Stiftung. <https://eu.boell.org/en/discourses-demography>.

⁴⁴ Christian Council International. (2022). The Gold Cross of Merit from Hungary for CCI director Henk Jan van Schothorst. CCI, 6 September. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/news/video/2022/gold-cross-merit-hungary-cci-director-henk-jan-van-schothorst>.

⁴⁵ About Hungary. (2017). Hungary Helps program receives praise from the Vatican. About Hungary, 28 August. <https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-helps-program-receives-praise-from-the-vatican>.

⁴⁶ Laruelle, M. (2020). Making Sense of Russia's Illiberalism. Journal of Democracy, 31(3), 115–129.

⁴⁷ Stepanova, E.A. (2023). "Everything good against everything bad": traditional values in the search for new Russian national idea. Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik, 7, 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-022-00123-2>.

⁴⁸ EAWF. (2015). Первый Евразийский женский форум. <https://eawf.ru/en/about/pervyy-evraziyskiy-zhenskiy-forum/>.



▲ CitizenGO anti-abortion campaign truck in New York (2022).

Moscow also hosted two far-right conferences bringing together international extremists and ultra-conservative figures. The events focused on promoting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, denouncing LGBTQI rights, opposing 'Western hegemony' and attacking 'Russophobes' and 'globalists'. Guests and speakers featured Konstantin Malofeev and Kremlin supporters from Africa, Europe and Latin America.⁴⁹ Anti-gender diplomacy and propagating illiberal values in general thus remain important ways for Russia to maintain a degree of international relevance, attracting Eurosceptic and non-aligned Global South politicians into the Russian sphere of influence.

Russian foreign policy uses anti-gender rhetoric as an instrument for geopolitical re-engineering, by which countries that accept regressive social policies are pulled into the orbit of Russian influence. Prohibition of reproductive and LGBTQI rights is just one part of what can be described as a 'Russian policy package', which also notably includes a crackdown on civil society through the so-called 'foreign agent' law. Georgia

is a clear example of an EU candidate country which reversed its political aspirations in just a few years by adopting Russian-style 'anti-LGBTQI propaganda' and 'foreign agent' laws, making its discriminatory legislation incompatible with EU values.^{50,51} In 2025, Hungary set on a strikingly similar trajectory by legally banning LGBTQI Pride celebrations and proposing its own version of the Russian 'foreign agent' law.^{52,53}

There is further evidence of covert Russian state support for the promotion of anti-LGBTQI laws in African countries, which are at the same time being targeted by a host of European and American anti-gender actors.⁵⁴ It appears that these religious actors are engaged in a sort of a diplomatic power struggle to define 'traditional African values' in countries such as Kenya and Uganda either in ultra-Catholic or Russian Orthodox terms — ironically, invariably under the guise of 'anti-colonialism' (See Chapter 8a: 'The New Scramble for Africa').

Finally, a new entrant in anti-rights diplomacy appears to be Turkey. In May 2025, Turkey's Ministry for Family and Social Services hosted the *International Family Forum: Safeguarding and Strengthening Family in the Face of Global Challenges*⁵⁵ which included ministerial level representation from over 20 countries, including Hungary and the Russian Federation, alongside anti-rights and religious extremist actors such as Sharon Slater of Family Watch International as well as C-FAM and the IFFD.⁵⁶ The gathering concluded with a keynote speech from President Erdoğan whereby he stated "*we observe that global imperialism has particularly targeted the family... We are closely following how severe the situation has become in countries that have opened the door to the perversion known as LGBT for various reasons...The struggle against LGBT perversion is also a struggle for freedom, dignity, and saving the future of humanity.*"⁵⁷

⁴⁹ Global Project Against Hate & Extremism. (2024). Russia Hosts Large Far-Right Conference Attacking LGBTQ+ Rights, "Russophobes," and "Globalists". GPAHE, 5 March. <https://globalextrémism.org/post/russia-hosts-large-far-right-conference-attacking-lgbtq-rights-russophobes-and-globalists/>.

⁵⁰ Starsevic, S. (2024). Georgia signs sweeping anti-LGBTQ+ bill into law. Politico, 3 October. <https://www.politico.eu/article/georgia-signs-sweeping-anti-lgbtq-bill-into-law/>.

⁵¹ Demytrie, R., & Atkinson, E. (2024). Georgia approves controversial 'foreign agent' law, sparking more protests. BBC News, 14 May. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-69007465>.

⁵² Spike, J. (2025). Hungary's new anti-LGBTQ+ law bans Pride events and sparks protests. Associated Press, 19 March. <https://apnews.com/article/hungary-pride-ban-orban-lgbtq-rights-e7a0318b09b902abfc306e3e975b52df>.

⁵³ Vohra, A. (2025). EU eyes action over Hungary's planned Russian-style law. Deutsche Welle, 21 May. <https://www.dw.com/en/hungary-eu-russia-foreign-agent-law-press-freedom-transparency-ngo/a-72623228>.

⁵⁴ Titeca, K. (2024). Did Russia play a role in Uganda's anti-homosexuality legislation? Democracy in Africa. <https://democracyinfrica.org/did-russia-play-a-role-in-ugandas-anti-homosexuality-legislation/>.

⁵⁵ International Family Forum: Safeguarding and Strengthening Family in the Face of Global Challenges, see: <https://iff.aile.gov.tr/>

⁵⁶ See speaker bios at: <https://iff.aile.gov.tr/#katilimcilar>.

⁵⁷ Haberler, (2025) President Erdoğan: Turkey's fertility rate has dropped to 1.48 for the first time in history, this is a disaster, 13 May, <https://en.haberler.com/president-erdogan-turkey-s-fertility-rate-has-18663181/>.

8a

THE NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA – ENTER EUROPE

“These campaigns are not about protecting African traditions. They’re about exporting foreign ideologies wrapped in kitenge and sprinkled with Swahili phrases. And ironically, they’re preaching “authentic African values” using talking points copied from Western alt-right manifestos.”

(Nick Smith, Kenyan activist)

The influence of the US Christian Right’s activism in Africa over the past 15 years is well-documented, notably in its contribution to Uganda’s 2014 ‘Kill the Gays’ bill,¹ and, more recently, through substantial financial investments across the continent. Investigative reporting, such as that by the Institute for Journalism and Social Change (IJSC), has identified significant financial investment by the US Christian Right in African countries.² However, what has largely escaped scrutiny is the concurrent emergence of a distinct and complementary European anti-gender presence on the African continent.

Over the past decade, European anti-gender actors have expanded their reach and influence across Africa. In several instances, they have established outposts in key African regions, staffed by local nationals yet directed by the European parent organisations. These efforts aim to shape African societies and influence policies, particularly in opposition to human rights in sexuality and reproductive health. The presence of European actors in Africa is difficult to quantify due to issues of financial transparency in both Europe and Africa — unlike the more traceable involvement of the US Christian Right — but their impact is nonetheless visible through a range of policy initiatives and activities across the continent.

To understand the European anti-gender presence in Africa, three primary avenues merit exploration: (1) European anti-gender non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Church-organised non-governmental organisations (ChONGOs) operating in Africa; (2) transnational anti-gender networks involving African participants; and (3) European state actors that, both actively and passively, finance anti-gender initiatives and engage in anti-gender diplomacy.

8.4 EUROPEAN NGOS AND CHONGOS IN AFRICA

There are at least five European NGOs and ChONGOs active in Africa to varying degrees: Christian Council International (CCI), CitizenGO, the Core Issues Trust (CIT), Ordo Iuris, Teen STAR and the World Youth Alliance (WYA).

WYA AFRICAN CHAPTER: LOBBYING, ANTI-GENDER SERVICES AND YOUTH INDOCTRINATION

The **WYA** established its African chapter in Nairobi as early as 2002, the same year it registered its European chapter in Brussels. As a transnational ChONGO headquartered in New

¹ Ambrosino, B. (2014). The story behind how American Evangelicals exported homophobia to Uganda. Vox, 19 May. <https://www.vox.com/2014/5/19/5724166/the-story-behind-how-american-evangelicals-imported-homophobia-to>; and Cunningham, J. (2014). Pride and Prejudice: Life under Uganda’s ‘Kill the Gays’ bill. The Seattle Globalist, 27 June. <https://seattleglobalist.com/2014/06/27/uganda-anti-homosexuality-bill-pride/27155>.
² Institute for Journalism and Social Change. (2024). Following the money – Inside the US Christian Right’s spending boom in Africa. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/67b73a68e16b30181e91bfb9/t/67bc4dbe09b20d50d7c78f16/1740393927962/Inside+The+U.S.+Christian+Right%27s+Spending+Boom+in+Africa+-+IJSC.pdf>.

York, the WYA has leveraged European Union (EU) funding through the Erasmus programme to support its anti-rights initiatives, including in Africa. The WYA African chapter focuses on two areas: (1) lobbying against human rights and evidence-based policy progress; and (2) promoting the range of anti-gender services it has developed as alternatives to reproductive health care.

An example of the WYA's lobbying efforts occurred in November 2019, when it co-organised a counter-conference in Nairobi against the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).³ At the national level, the WYA African chapter actively campaigned against the Kenyan Reproductive Health Bill in both 2014 and 2022, specifically opposing provisions that would have permitted abortion under limited circumstances, provided contraceptives to young people, and introduced comprehensive sexuality education. The WYA argued that "The Kenya Constitution must not allow the provision of contraceptives to adolescents and compromised comprehensive sexual education."⁴

Beyond contesting evidence-based health policies, the WYA offers religious-inspired anti-gender services as alternatives, such as the Human Dignity Curriculum (HDC) instead of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), and the FEMM menstrual tracking application instead of modern and effective contraception.⁵ The WYA has expanded its reach across the continent, reporting a 300% increase in demand for online certification in its HDC in 2020.⁶ It claims that the HDC is being implemented in Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Libya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and that the Ethiopian Association of Catholic Schools has also introduced it in Ethiopia in Amharic.⁷ The FEMM application

was translated into Swahili in 2022,⁸ and the WYA African chapter is currently promoting it in Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania.

The WYA has long a long history in Africa, with several key African figures involved since the organisation's inception. One example is Nigerian national Kathryn HoomKwap, who served on the WYA Board in 2007⁹ and after whom the WYA later named an award.¹⁰ HoomKwap was also the chief representative for the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations during the 1990s and, as such, the Holy See's negotiator during the ICPD and Beijing Programme of Action negotiations, arguing against human rights in sexuality and reproduction.¹¹ Her daughter, Kekuut HoomKwap, now serves on the board of the FEMM app as its Chief Technical Officer.¹² Another prominent African national on the WYA Board is Caroline Maingi¹³ from Opus Dei affiliated Strathmore University in Nairobi. Indeed, it is Catholic universities, and particularly those affiliated with Opus Dei, which serve as a recruiting ground encouraging young Africans to participate in WYA regional and global events, such as the International Solidarity Forum and the Young Leaders Conference.¹⁴

TEEN STAR: PROMOTING OPUS DEI ABSTINENCE EDUCATION TO AFRICAN CHILDREN

Teen STAR is a Catholic-inspired sexuality education curriculum focusing on abstinence (see 'Anti-gender services'). Versions of Teen STAR are reportedly present in eleven African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.¹⁵ The Teen STAR programme in Africa often has its origin in and financial support from the Global North.

³ World Youth Alliance. (2019). 2019 Annual Report. New York: WYA, p. 15. <https://wya.net/wp-content/uploads/2019-WYA-Annual-Report.pdf>.

⁴ Ogwel, M. (2021). The Kenya Constitution and Reproductive Health: How does the Kenya Constitution Define "Freedom"? New York: WYA. <https://wya.net/blog/kenya-constitution-and-reproductive-health/>. ⁵ Ibid.

⁶ World Youth Alliance. (n.d.). The History of the World Youth Alliance. <https://wya.net/timeline/>. ⁷ Ibid.

⁸ FEMM Health. (n.d.). FEMM: Fertility Education & Medical Management 2022. New York: FEMM Health, p. 2. https://femmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FEMM-Annual-Report-2022_final.pdf.

⁹ See the WYA Foundation's IRS 990 form for 2007 at ProPublica. (2025). Wya Foundation Inc. <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/134196230>.

¹⁰ World Youth Alliance. (n.d.). WYA 2018 Kathryn Hoomkwap Awardee, Caroline de Dorlodot: "WYA awakened in me a thirst for truth". <https://wya.net/blog/wya-2018-kathryn-hoomkwap-awardee-caroline-de-dorlodot-wya-awakened-in-me-a-thirst-for-truth/>.

¹¹ Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. (2000). Statement by Mrs. Kathryn Hauwa HoomKwap on Behalf of the Holy See Delegation to the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly Entitled "Women 2000: Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century". New York: Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5stat/statments/vatican9.pdf>.

¹² FEMM Health. (2020). Organization Fact Sheet. New York: FEMM Health. <https://femmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FEMM-Organization-Fact-Sheet-2020-F.pdf>.

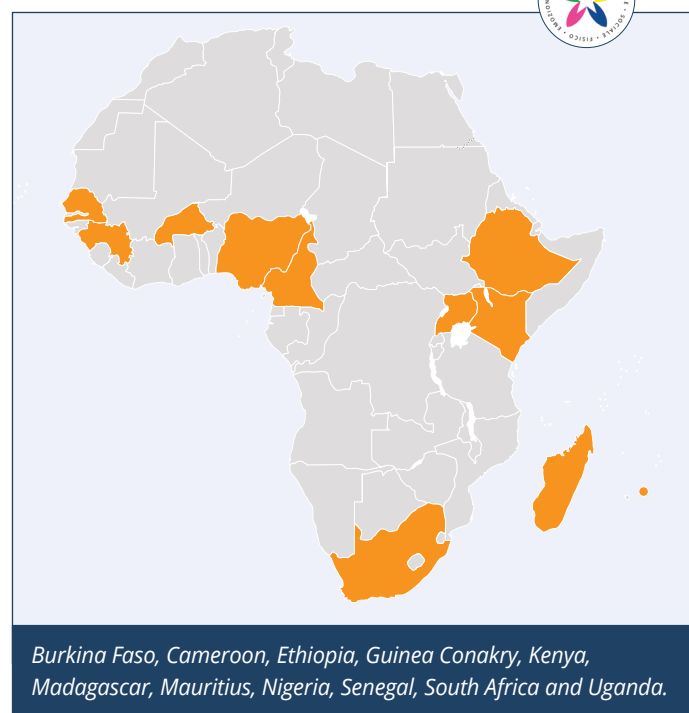
¹³ ProPublica. (2025). Wya Foundation Inc. <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/134196230>.

¹⁴ World Youth Alliance. (2024). Here's What Sexual and Real Reproductive Health Looks Like. <https://wya.net/blog/what-real-reproductive-health-looks-like/>.

¹⁵ Teen STAR. (2020). Teen STAR Worldwide. <https://www.Teen-STAR.org/teen-star-worldwide.html>.

FIGURE 9

TEEN STAR AFRICA



For example, Teen STAR Austria and the Austrian NGO Brücke nach Uganda (Bridge to Uganda) have been supporting Teen STAR in Uganda since 2016,¹⁶ while Teen STAR France has supported the expansion of Teen STAR in Senegal, Guinea-Conakry and Madagascar.¹⁷ Teen STAR France funded a regional workshop in Nairobi in October 2024 “to adapt Teen STAR to African culture”.¹⁸

In some countries, the relationships are more complex. For example, Teen STAR South Africa, which is operated by the Lufuno Institute, an Opus Dei-affiliated organisation,¹⁹ benefits from the financial support of similar Opus Dei-linked organisations in Spain, namely Zabalteka (a Basque Country development cooperation NGO),²⁰ and the USA, namely the American Initiatives for Social Development.²¹ In Kenya, Teen STAR is operating thanks to the support of a Chilean-Kenyan organisation, Fundacion Maisha, with the financial support of the Chilean embassy in Nairobi.²²

While Teen STAR claims that most of the programmes started due to local volunteer activism, it acknowledges that for “Ethiopia and Uganda initial expansions were supported by USAID”.²³

CITIZENGO KENYA: EXTREMIST ASTROTURFING AND DISINFORMATION

The Madrid-based **CitizenGO** established a presence in Nairobi in 2017 with anti-rights activist Ann Kioko as its local spokesperson. By 2018, CitizenGO Africa had launched petitions targeting reproductive health organisations such as Marie Stopes International (MSI) with misinformation and strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs),²⁴ resulting in temporary closures of the family planning clinics. Through petitions and digital campaigns, CitizenGO has campaigned against local sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) initiatives in Kenya, Nigeria and other African countries, as well as rallying African support for global anti-rights efforts.²⁵ These have included protesting against the 2019 Nairobi ICPD Summit and the development aid for SRHR from international donors.²⁶ In 2024, CitizenGO called for the ousting of senior Ugandan and British policymakers

¹⁶ Brücke nach Uganda. (n.d.) Zusammenarbeit mit Teen STAR Uganda. <https://xn--brckenachuganda-0vb.at/schule-bildung/#:~:text=Im%20Rahmen%20der%20Schul%2D%20und,Zusammenhang%20mit%20Reife%20und%20Verantwortung.>

¹⁷ Teen STAR. (2020). Nous aider / Faire un don. <https://www.Teen STAR.fr/nous-aider-faire-un-don/>.

¹⁸ ACI Africa. (2024). First-ever Teen STAR Congress in Nairobi Seeking to “modify” Curriculum to Give “it an African identity”: Facilitator. ACI Africa, 24 November. <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/13053/first-ever-teen-star-congress-in-nairobi-seeking-to-modify-curriculum-to-give-it-an-african-identity-facilitator.>

¹⁹ See <https://www.Teen STAR.co.za/> and <https://www.lufunoinstitute.org>.

²⁰ See <https://zabalketa.org/>. For links to Opus Dei, see <https://opusdei.org/nl/article/gezondheidszorg-voor-nigeriaans-dorp/> and <https://opusdei.org/eu-es/article/gobernuz-kanpoko-erakunde-honek-enpresa-heziketa-programa-bat-diseinatzen-du-berrehun-familien-errenta-handitzeko/>.

²¹ See <https://www.american-initiatives.org/>. Regarding the associations of its leadership, namely Nina Lagdameo (on the Board of Directors of American Initiatives), with Opus Dei, see <https://opusdei.org/en/article/once-i-put-god-first-all-the-rest-falls-into-place/>. On its partnership with the Yuma Centre, which claims, “The programs sponsored by Yuma are inspired by the thought and work of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, founder of Opus Dei”, see <https://www.yumadc.org/vision.>

²² See <https://www.fundacionmaisha.com/en/programas-educacion-sexual.>

²³ While details are not provided, this would seem to indicate USAID support under the first Trump administration from 2017 to 2021. Teen STAR. (2020). Our History. <https://www.Teen STAR.org/history.html>.

²⁴ Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board. (2018). Public Complaints Against Marie Stopes Clinics. Nairobi: Republic of Kenya. https://kelinkkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Public-Complaints-Against-Marie-Stopes-Clinics_14112018.pdf.

²⁵ CitizenGO. (2024). I support the Family Protection bill of 2023 by Honorable Peter Kaluma. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/fm/1686-i-support-the-family-protection-bill-of-----by-honorable-peter-kaluma.>

²⁶ CitizenGO. (2024). Trudeau Stop Funding Abortions in Africa. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/lf/14153-trudeau-stop-funding-abortions-in-africa.>

and diplomats from Nigeria for their support for human rights,²⁷ and for the expulsion of SRHR organisations Planned Parenthood and IPAS for their support for reproductive autonomy.²⁸ Like the CCI and Ordo Iuris (see below), CitizenGO Africa has also campaigned to have African countries reject the Samoa Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), falsely claiming that the trade agreement “advocates for the promotion of LGBT rights, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), contraception for teenagers, and abortion”.²⁹

Going beyond SRHR, CitizenGO also promotes conspiracy theories and has campaigned against the World Health Organization’s proposed pandemic readiness treaty.³⁰ In 2022, the Mozilla Foundation found that CitizenGo Africa was behind a range of social media disinformation and misinformation campaigns on Twitter in Kenya.³¹ CitizenGO activities and campaigns are regularly covered by the Association for Catholic Information in Africa (Acia Africa) press agency.³²

CCI: NEO-COLONIAL CHAMPIONS OF PSEUDO-DECOLONISATION

The Dutch-American **CCI** also plays a significant role in the anti-gender movement across Africa. It maintains a presence through permanent staff based in Africa³³ which aims to “develop a network of representatives all over Africa who function as the permanent eye on the African continent... To actively engage with like-minded Pan-African CSOs and

religious organizations to protect African cultural and social values Life, Family, and Freedom.”³⁴ Henk Jan van Schothorst, the main face of CCI, travels to Africa extensively and has participated in events such as the ‘1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on African Sovereignty, Culture and family Values’ in Kampala in April 2023,³⁵ joining forces with conservative US advocate Sharon Slater of Family Watch International (FWI). A key CCI talking point is that the EU-ACP Samoa Agreement focusing on trade³⁶ is in fact a form of “neo-colonial” Trojan horse that will impose “Western values on gender and sexuality” on traditional African societies.³⁷

The Polish legal institute **Ordo Iuris**, while not being physically present in Africa, has also strengthened its position in the region, launching petitions against what is referred to as the “neo-colonial” influence of the EU-ACP Samoa Agreement, accusing the agreement of pushing liberal values on sexuality and reproductive rights, as it contains references to gender equality.³⁸

Another organisation stepping up its presence in Africa is the **CIT**, a Northern Irish religious extremist organisation which targets the rights of the LGBTIQ community by challenging bans on gay conversion therapy and promoting its alternative, Reintegrative Therapy. In 2023, the CIT launched an “Africa project”³⁹ aimed at bringing gay conversion therapy to Africa. The goal of the project is to provide anti-rights education to orthodox Anglican pastors and pastoral care workers, with plans to minister multiple times annually.

²⁷ CitizenGO. (2024). Expel UK Ambassador Neil Wigan from Kenya for Cultural Imperialism and LGBT activism. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/fm/13219-expel-uk-ambassador-neil-wigan-from-kenya-for-cultural-imperialism-and-lgbt-activism>; and CitizenGO. (2024). Charles Olaro: Resign from the Ministry of Health immediately and apologize to Ugandan parents! <https://citizengo.org/en-af/lf/12658-charles-olaro--resign-from-the-ministry-of-health-immediately-and-apologize-to-ugandan-parents->.

²⁸ CitizenGO. (2024). Uphold Life: Kick out Planned Parenthood from Nigeria Now. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/lf/869-uphold-life--kick-out-planned-parenthood-from-nigeria-now>; and CitizenGO. (2024). Nigeria’s Health Minister: Enforce Laws, Expel IPAS Now! <https://citizengo.org/en-af/lf/12948-nigeria-s-health-minister--enforce-laws--expel-ipas-now->.

²⁹ CitizenGO. (2024). Withdraw Nigeria from pro-LGBT and pro-abortion Samoa Agreement. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/fm/13503-withdraw-nigeria-from-pro-lgbt-and-pro-abortion-samoa-agreement>; and CitizenGO. (2023). Hon. Moses Wetangula : Do not ratify the pro-LGBT Samoa Agreement. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/fm/1095-hon--moses-wetangula---do-not-ratify-the-pro-lgbt-samoa-agreement>.

³⁰ CitizenGO. (2024). Stop the WHO’s Accelerated Push to Finalize the Pandemic Treaty. <https://citizengo.org/en-af/fr/13948-stop-the-who-s-accelerated-push-to-finalize-the-pandemic-treaty>.

³¹ Madung, O. (2022). Exporting Disinformation: How Foreign Groups Peddle Influence in Kenya through Twitter. Mountain View, CA: Mozilla Foundation. <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/campaigns/exporting-disinformation-how-foreign-groups-peddle-influence-in-kenya-through-twitter/>; and Elliott, V. (2022). A Spanish far-right group paid just \$10 to push a Twitter disinformation campaign in Kenya. Rest of World, 22 February. <https://restofworld.org/2022/spanish-far-right-twitter-disinformation-kenya/>.

³² ACI Africa. (2025). Ann Kioko. <https://www.aciafrica.org/tag/ann-kioko>.

³³ Christian Council International. (n.d.). Our Team. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/about-us/our-team>.

³⁴ Christian Council International. (n.d.). Network Africa. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/about-us/our-team/network-africa>.

³⁵ African Bar Association. (2023). President of the AFBA in Uganda for the 1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference. <https://afribar.org/president-of-the-afba-in-uganda-for-the-1st-african-inter-parliamentary-conference/>.

³⁶ European Parliament. (2023). International Agreements in Progress - The Samoa Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific States. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)757563](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2023)757563).

³⁷ Christian Council International. (2024). Africa News Q1, 2024. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/news/news/2024/africa-news-q1-2024>.

³⁸ See <https://stopideologicalneocolonialism.org/en/>.

³⁹ See <https://core-issues.org/africa-project/>.

TRANSNATIONAL ANTI-GENDER NETWORKS IN AFRICA

Several transnational anti-gender networks have recently expanded their involvement with African nationals, establishing a religious extremist advocacy infrastructure on the continent. These networks fall into two distinct categories: (1) visible networks, such as the Political Network for Values (PNfV) and the World Congress of Families (WCF); and (2) covert networks,⁴⁰ which include the International Catholic Legislators Network (ICLN).

Among the open networks, the **WCF** held a regional conference in Accra, Ghana, in November 2019 under the theme 'The African Family and Sustainable Development: Strong Families, Strong Nations'.⁴¹ The WCF was originally founded in the late 1990s as a joint venture between US and Russian religious extremists opposed to rights-based policies and is registered in the USA.⁴² Its recent gatherings have primarily taken place in Europe, bringing together prominent figures from the US Christian Right, European far-right actors, and Russian allies affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church.

At the Accra conference, leading US Christian Right activists, including Brian Brown and Sharon Slater, met with Ghanaian parliamentarians to advocate against CSE and LGBTQI rights.⁴³ Their efforts contributed to the introduction of the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill of 2021,⁴⁴ which was adopted in February 2024.⁴⁵ The primary Ghanaian organisation advocating for the anti-LGBTQI bill was

the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, whose chair was prominently involved in the WCF conference in Accra in 2019.⁴⁶

Another prominent network is the **PNfV**, which convenes politicians and political operatives primarily from Europe, North and South America, and occasionally from Africa and Asia, in annual transatlantic summits. The PNfV's governance structures include several African nationals, such as Kenyan MP Chrisantus Wamalwa, who serves as the sole African representative on its Advisory Board,⁴⁷ and Alice Muchiri, a Kenyan national, who serves on the PNfV's Committee of Experts.⁴⁸ Both Wamalwa and Muchiri are involved in the covert anti-gender network known as the ICLN (see below). Another notable African figure on the PNfV Committee of Experts is Dr. Theresa Okafor, director of the Nigeria-based Foundation for African Cultural Heritage (FACH).⁴⁹ Dr. Okafor has previously represented the Holy See at the United Nations and served as Africa's representative to the WCF (see above). She now holds a position on the PNfV's Committee of Experts.⁵⁰

The **ICLN**, headquartered in Vienna, is one of the most influential transnational anti-gender networks. Its African chapter, headed by former Kenyan MP Thomas Mwadeghu and coordinated by Alice Muchiri (who is also the secretary of the Catholic MP caucus in Kenya — see below), is located in the Kenyan Parliament and focuses primarily on East and Southern Africa.⁵¹ It collaborates closely with Catholic legislators in Ghana (see below), Kenya,⁵² Malawi,⁵³ Uganda⁵⁴ and Zimbabwe.⁵⁵

⁴⁰ Perhaps the most covert of all the networks is the Vision Network Africa, born out of its sister network, the Vision Network in Europe, formerly Agenda Europe. The Vision Network Africa was revealed to the world in September 2024 by UK investigative journalist Sian Norris, who published her findings from analysing a cache of emails from Agenda Europe between 2012 and 2019 which made several references to a sister network in Africa. Norris, S., & Khatondi Wepukhulu, S. (2024). Leaked emails reveal how Africa became 'primary target' of anti-LGBTIQ actors. Open Democracy, 24 September. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/agenda-europe-in-africa/>.

⁴¹ Humanists International. (2019). Roslyn Mould: "America's Christian Far-right should not be exporting their hate to Ghana". Humanists International, 1 November. <https://humanists.international/2019/11/roslyn-mould-americas-christian-far-right-should-not-be-exporting-their-hate-to-ghana/?lang=es>.

⁴² Stoeckl, K. (2020). The rise of the Russian Christian Right: the case of the World Congress of Families. *Religion, State and Society*, 48(4), 223–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2020.1796172>.

⁴³ Open Democracy. (2019). American-led 'pro-family' summit in Ghana condemned for 'shocking' white supremacist, Islamophobic links. Open Democracy, 31 October. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/american-led-pro-family-summit-in-ghana-condemned-for-shocking-white-supremacist-islamophobic-links/>.

⁴⁴ Parliament of Ghana. (2021). Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill, 2021. Accra: Parliament of Ghana. <https://ir.parliament.gh/bitstream/handle/123456789/3045/Promotion%20of%20Proper%20Human%20Sexual%20Rights%20and%20Ghanaian%20Family%20Values%20Bill%2C%202021.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Al Jazeera. (2024). Ghana's parliament passes anti-LGBTQ bill. Al Jazeera, 28 February. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/28/ghanas-parliament-passes-anti-lgbtq-bill>.

⁴⁶ Nabaneh, S., Andam, K., Odada, K., Eriksson, Å., & Stevens, M. (2022). Contesting gender and coloniality: A lens on conservative mobilisations in South Africa, Kenya and Ghana. *Politique africaine*, 168(4), 25–51. <https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.168.0025>.

⁴⁷ Political Network for Values. (2025). Who we are. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/who-we-are/>.

⁴⁸ Political Network for Values. (2025). Council of Experts. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/who-we-are/council-of-experts/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ See <https://icjurist.org/theresa-okafor/>.

⁵¹ See <https://icln.world/regional/>.

Through local parliamentary allies, the ICLN supports Catholic MPs in these regions to strategise on “several topics including developing a global pro-life strategy to end the culture of abortion.”⁵⁶ Globally, the ICLN solidifies its efforts through an annual summit in Rome, attended by over 200 parliamentarians from around the world, including key African representatives.⁵⁷ These summits, centred on topics such as ‘Life’ and the ‘Common Good’, have recently featured prominent Hungarian figures such as former President Katalin Novák⁵⁸ and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán,⁵⁹ who emphasise conservative perspectives on family, demography and Christian values.

These valuable political contacts across Africa are then commodified by the President and founder of the ICLN, Christiaan Alting von Gesau, who markets them to potential clients via his PR firm, Ambrose Advice, which specialises in “discrete relationship building” (see the chapter on ‘Shadowy power brokers’).⁶⁰

Two Kenyans active in the PNfV (see above) are also members of the ICLN. For example, Chrisantus Wamalwa is also involved in the ICLN and received an ICLN award for his leadership in opposing the Nairobi ICPD Summit within the Kenyan Parliament.⁶¹ The other is Alice Muchiri, who serves as coordinator of the ICLN’s African chapter and founded the Kenyan Catholic MPs Spiritual Support Initiative (CAMPSSI).⁶²

The ICLN has cultivated an in-country presence on the African continent. Its African chapter, based in the Kenyan Parliament, also works alongside the CAMPSSI,⁶³ which supports the

Catholic Kenyan parliamentary caucus. CAMPSSI conducts a range of activities for its members and benefits from the partnership between the Kenyan Christian Professional Forum (KCPF) and the Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister.⁶⁴

In Ghana, the Speaker of Parliament announced the creation of an ICLN Ghanaian chapter in August 2023.⁶⁵ Closely aligned with the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Ghana, the ICLN’s Ghanaian chapter received praise from the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference for its “ongoing work on the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2022” (the anti-LGBTQI bill).⁶⁶ In Uganda,



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◆ Ann Kioko, CitizenGO Campaigner for Africa and Monsignor Tomasz Geysa.

⁵² Hon. Moses Wetang'ula, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, led the Kenyan delegation to the 2024 ICLN summit in Rome. Cisa News Africa. (2024). Rome: Pope Francis calls for peace and hope at International Catholic Legislators Network meeting. <https://cisanewsafrika.com/2024/08/rome-pope-francis-calls-for-peace-and-hope-at-international-catholic-legislators-network-meeting/>.

⁵³ Malawi Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2015). Malawi Catholic Legislators Attends ICLN Conference in Rome. <https://ecmmw.org/malawi-catholic-legislators-attends-icln-conference-in-rome/>.

⁵⁴ Musaasizi, B. (2021). Deputy Speaker Anita Among Delivers Pope's Message on Justice, Responsible Use of technology and Pandemic. Red Pepper, 31 August. <https://redpepper.co.ug/deputy-speaker-anita-among-delivers-popes-message-on-justice-responsible-use-of-technology-and-pandemic/110840/>.

⁵⁵ Vatican Radio. (2015). Catholic Legislators of Zimbabwe meet for Holy Mass. Vatican Radio, 10 November. https://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2015/11/10/catholic_legislators_of_zimbabwe_meet_for_holy_mass/en-1185763.

⁵⁶ Malawi Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2015). Malawi Catholic Legislators Attends ICLN Conference in Rome. <https://ecmmw.org/malawi-catholic-legislators-attends-icln-conference-in-rome/>.

⁵⁷ La Stampa. (2017). Pope encourages Catholic politicians. La Stampa, 27 August. <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/en/2017/08/27/news/pope-encourages-catholic-politicians-1.34442339/>.

⁵⁸ International Catholic Legislators Network. (2024). YCGL 2022. [YouTube]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5Cull1yCbc>.

⁵⁹ Hungary Helps. (2021). Orthodox Patriarch to Praise Hungary Helps Program in Presence of Pope Francis. <https://hungary-helps-frontend.kifli.tech/en/news/orthodox-patriarch-to-praise-hungary-helps-program-in-presence-of-pope-francis>.

⁶⁰ See <https://ambrose-advice.com/>.

⁶¹ Kahiu, M. (2021). Kenyan Lawmaker Awarded for Promoting Human Life, Says He's “motivated to go further”. ACI Africa, 1 September. <https://www.aciafrica.org/index.php/news/4193/kenyan-lawmaker-awarded-for-promoting-human-life-says-hes-motivated-to-go-further>.

⁶² LSNTV. (2023). Globalists Seek to Destroy The West - Catholics Must Act To Protect It | Alice Muchiri. [YouTube]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGEZfsW8iUg>.

⁶³ Catholic MPs Spiritual Support Initiative. (2025). Founders / Trustees. <https://www.campssi.org/founders-trustees/>.

⁶⁴ Catholic MPs Spiritual Support Initiative. (2025). Partners. <https://www.campssi.org/partners/>.

⁶⁵ Ghanaian Times. (2023). Catholic Legislators Network inaugurated. Ghanaian Times, 3 August. <https://ghanaiantimes.com.gh/catholic-legislators-network-inaugurated/>. ⁶⁶ Ibid.

ICLN founder Christiaan Alting von Gesau spoke at the 2022 Ugandan National Prayer Breakfast, which was attended by legislators from Uganda and seven other African countries.⁶⁷

The ICLN further cultivates its network of national anti-gender champions by celebrating African parliamentary activists who support its mission. For instance, in addition to Kenyan MP Chrystantus Wamalwa (mentioned above), the ICLN recognised Ugandan MP Lucy Akello in 2018 with the 'Saint Thomas More Religious Freedom Advocacy Award' for her advocacy against reproductive rights.⁶⁸

8.5 STATE ACTORS

Foreign states have increasingly become influential actors in anti-rights campaigns across the African continent. Their involvement in fuelling anti-gender activism occurs through two main pathways: (1) inadvertent support due to carelessness; and (2) deliberate engagement as part of a broader strategy of anti-gender diplomacy.

In the first case, bilateral donors contributing to Africa's development have, at times, inadvertently funded African organisations that actively promote anti-human rights agendas. This unintended support has been documented by Claire Provost, who highlights how some European and North American bilateral donors have unknowingly funded organisations in Ghana⁶⁹ and Uganda⁷⁰ that are prominent advocates for anti-LGBTQI legislation in their respective countries.

Other examples come from the EU, specifically its Erasmus programme. In this respect, the WYA has benefited from EU Erasmus grants from 2010 which have included activities in Africa to promote its HDC and the FEMM app.⁷¹ Another example of EU funding inadvertently being directed to anti-gender actors is the case of Project GROW,⁷² which aims to "deliver informal learning projects for young women in our communities across Africa", funded by the Erasmus programme. Project GROW has funded the website of a South Africa-based Opus Dei residence for women,⁷³ which is associated with Teen STAR South Africa⁷⁴ and partners with an Italian Opus Dei foundation.⁷⁵

The second, more deliberate, approach involves direct engagement in anti-gender diplomacy by certain states. Two European examples are Hungary and the Russian Federation, both of which have supported anti-gender movements in Africa.

HUNGARY HELPS?

Hungary has positioned itself as a prominent backer of African anti-gender initiatives through its Hungary Helps programme, which funds organisations such as the Africa Family Life Federation (AFLF)⁷⁶ for the 'Alive to the World' project designed by actors close to the Opus Dei-affiliated University of Navarra⁷⁷ to reach 200,000 children and adolescents in Africa. Hungarian officials, including Hungarian ex-President Katalin Novák, have engaged directly with African counterparts; for example, Novák attended the Women Deliver 2023 event, strengthening ties and promoting conservative values on the continent.⁷⁸

⁶⁷ The other countries were Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Nigeria and the Republic of the Congo. ITI Catholic University. (2022). ITI Rector Spoke at the Ugandan National Prayer Breakfast. ITI Catholic University, 4 November. <https://iti.ac.at/news-events/news/news-detail-page?news=249>.

⁶⁸ Kugler, G. (2018). Kugler erhält Ehrung des International Catholic Legislators Network. Gudrun Kugler, 6 September. <https://gudrunkugler.at/kugler-erhaelt-ehrung-des-international-catholic-legislators-network/>.

⁶⁹ Provost, C., & N. Darkoa Sekyiamah. (2022). Exclusive: Millions in Western aid flowed to churches in Ghana despite years of campaigning against LGBTQI+ rights. CNN, 13 December. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/13/africa/us-europe-aid-lgbtqi-ghana-churches-investigation-as-equals-intl-cmd-dg/index.html>.

⁷⁰ Provost, C. (2023). Progressive cash for the anti-LGBTQI backlash? Institute for Journalism and Social Change. https://centrefor feministforeignpolicy.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Progressive-cash-for-the-anti-LGBTQI-backlash_.pdf.

⁷¹ See <https://www.facebook.com/WorldYouthAlliance.Africa/>.

⁷² Project GROW. (n.d.). Partner Information. <https://growskills.africa/partner-information/>.

⁷³ The Arbor Centre, which states: "Spiritual activities at Arbor are entrusted to Opus Dei." See <https://www.arborstudycentre.com/>.

⁷⁴ Through their common partnership with Etsoseng and the Komati foundations.

⁷⁵ Fondazione RUI (Residenze Universitarie Universale) states: "At the end of the 1950s, a group of professors, parents, and professionals, encouraged by Opus Dei founder Saint Josemaría Escrivá, started an initiative to benefit university students, especially those away from home and from other countries. They decided to establish a civic entity, the RUI Foundation, dedicated to establishing and promoting university residences." Fondazione RUI. (2025). Identity. <https://www.fondazionerui.it/en/rui-foundation-university-halls-italy/developing-soft-skills-talents-erasmus-students/>.

⁷⁶ De Marcellus Vollmer, C. (2024). Enriching Africa's Future. Aprendiendo a Querer, 11 January. <https://alivetotheworld.org/why-states-must-define-sex-preciselyenriching-africas-futurewhy-states-must-define-sex-precisely/>.

⁷⁷ See the authors and co-authors at <https://alivetotheworld.org/our-team/>.

⁷⁸ Strzyżńska, W., & R. Kumar. (2023). 'Gut-churning': anger as Hungarian president addresses major women's rights conference. The Guardian, 19 July. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jul/19/gut-churning-anger-as-hungarian-president-addresses-major-womens-rights-conference>.



RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation plays a substantial role in Africa's anti-gender movement in three ways: financial support, disseminating disinformation and soft diplomacy. While it is challenging to find evidence of Russian funding for anti-gender causes in Africa, there are some traces. For example, in September 2024 the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the Russian Embassy in Uganda had financed high-profile gatherings such as the '1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on African Sovereignty, Culture and family Values' in Kampala in April 2023⁸⁴ with a grant of US\$300,000 to the Ugandan Parliament.⁸⁵

Russian disinformation efforts related to gender issues operate on several fronts: questioning the sexuality of Western leaders to undermine their credibility, portraying LGBTQI rights and gender equality as foreign intrusions on traditional societies, and emphasising the concept of sovereignty against perceived harmful foreign interventions — whether ideological or physical. In some cases, Russia is alleged to have created or financially supported African-appearing front organisations to disseminate its disinformation, as exemplified by Afrique Média.⁸⁶ This influence is particularly evident in West African countries experiencing political shifts, where Russia's engagement and disinformation campaigns have intensified.⁸⁷

Finally, having discredited its Western rivals, along with the pro-human rights and democracy agenda associated with them, Russia lays out its charm through soft diplomacy. For

⁷⁹ Institute for Women's Health. (2025). The Geneva Consensus Declaration. <https://www.theiwh.org/the-gcd/>; and United Nations. (2020). Letter dated 2 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. New York: United Nations General Assembly. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n20/344/30/pdf/n2034430.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Morgan, L. (2023). Anti-abortion strategizing and the afterlife of the Geneva Consensus Declaration. *Developing World Bioethics*, Jun; 23(2), 185–195. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36201681/>.

⁸¹ Hungary Matters. (2022). Hungary to Take over Secretariat of Geneva Consensus Declaration. Hungary Matters, 18 November. <https://hungarymatters.hu/2022/11/18/hungary-to-take-over-secretariat-of-geneva-consensus-declaration/#>.

⁸² Correnti, L. (2024). Burundi and Chad Join the Geneva Consensus Declaration. Center for Family and Human Rights, 13 September. https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/burundi-and-chad-join-the-geneva-consensus-declaration/.

⁸³ EWTN. (2024). 2024 Commemoration of the Geneva Consensus Declaration. [YouTube]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuxqPa1pMKg>; and Aceng Otero, J.R. (2024). Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Otero, 12 September. [X]. https://x.com/JaneRuth_Aceng/status/1834310599058358514.

⁸⁴ African Bar Association. (2023). President of the AFBA in Uganda for the 1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference. <https://afribar.org/president-of-the-afba-in-uganda-for-the-1st-african-inter-parliamentary-conference/>.

⁸⁵ Bariyo, N., & G. Steinhauser. (2024). Russia and US Religious Conservatives See Common Foe in Africa: Gay Rights Unlikely coalition provides moral support for local activists pushing laws criminalizing homosexuality; death penalty in Uganda. *Wall Street Journal*, 22 September. <https://www.wsj.com/world/africa/russia-and-u-s-religious-conservatives-see-common-foe-in-africa-gay-rights-53edee87>.

⁸⁶ Medium. (2023). Afrique Média TV: Kremlin's new African mouthpiece? Medium, 20 September. <https://disinfo.afrique-m%C3%A9dia-tv-wagners-new-african-mouthpiece-7fc7e0a4b9f8>; and Kahn, G. (2023). A Kremlin mouthpiece at the heart of Africa: how Afrique Média helps Putin court audiences in their own language. Reuters Institute, 19 September. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/kremlin-mouthpiece-heart-africa-how-afrique-media-helps-putin-court-audiences-their-own>.

⁸⁷ EEAS Stratcom Division. (2023). FIMI targeting LGBTIQ+ people: Well-informed analysis to protect human rights and dignity. Brussels: European Union. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EEAS-LGBTQ-Report.pdf>.

example, the Beninese activist Kemi Seba,⁸⁸ known for his critique of French colonialism, was among the attendees at a far-right conference held in Moscow in March 2024, where participants decried what they described as Western imposition of an “LGBT agenda”.⁸⁹ Notably, Russia–Africa summits, held regularly since 2019, have gathered 20–30 African heads of state and government alongside Russian leadership to discuss various areas of cooperation.⁹⁰ Recent summits have included workshops focused on sovereignty, featuring discussions led by leading Russian anti-gender oligarchs such as Konstantin Malofeev.

8.6 HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER – THE NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

With a plethora of newly arrived European anti-gender actors in the African region, questions remain about how they interact with each other, with local anti-gender supporters in African countries, and with the well-established US Christian Right actors active in Africa. There are a few examples which shed light on these interactions.

OPPORTUNISTIC ANTI-COLONIAL CHAMPIONS

One area of convergence among all the anti-gender actors in Africa is their use of the neo-colonial discourse, whether they are African, European, American or Russian. Pioneered by the Vatican,⁹¹ all anti-gender actors have now picked up on characterising the upholding of universal human rights and global health standards, specifically in the areas of gender equality and SRHR, as a form of nefarious neo-colonialism. Despite their divergent motivations for engaging in anti-gender activism in Africa, ranging from religious to normative reasons and geopolitical ambitions, a common thread among all these foreign actors is their feigned concern for the supposed new ideological neo-colonialism that human rights for sexual minorities, gender equality and women’s health represent.

In this respect, they echo Pope Francis, who denounced the neo-colonial threat posed by upholding human rights that conflict with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church.



Combating this neo-colonialism would require reinforcing or upholding colonial legal statutes which codified legalised bigotry towards already marginalised populations as a defence of national sovereignty and traditional values. Foreign anti-gender actors have seemingly convinced themselves with their crocodile tears that upholding the Belgian, British, French and Portuguese colonial legal frameworks criminalising same-sex relations and/or abortion rights is the real path to African sovereignty.

GROOMING AFRICAN ANTI-GENDER ELITES

Another aspect to consider is how international actors engage with their African counterparts to cultivate loyalty and encourage desired behaviour. This is done by honouring African anti-gender elites. For example, in 2024, the Hungarian Ambassador to the USA awarded Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Otero, Ugandan Minister of Health, with a prize for her country’s adherence to the GCD.⁹² For the WYA, the system for promoting African anti-gender leadership is more all-encompassing, starting with recruiting from organisations in Africa affiliated with the Catholic Church and Opus Dei and then subjecting these candidates to a secretive indoctrination programme through the HDC to then finish by offering professional internships. The WYA recognises this African anti-gender leadership by including African nationals on their Boards and naming an award after an Africa national who contributed to their religious extremist cause. The ICLN

⁸⁸ Le Monde. (2024). Le « panafricaniste » Kemi Seba soupçonné de liens avec le groupe paramilitaire russe Wagner. Le Monde, 18 October. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/10/18/le-panafricaniste-kemi-seba-soupconne-de-liens-avec-le-groupe-paramilitaire-russe-wagner_6355265_3212.html.

⁸⁹ Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. (2024). Russia Hosts Large Far-Right Conference Attacking LGBTQ+ Rights, “Russophobes,” and “Globalists”. GPAHE, 5 March. <https://globalextrémism.org/post/russia-hosts-large-far-right-conference-attacking-lgbtq-rights-russophobes-and-globalists/>.

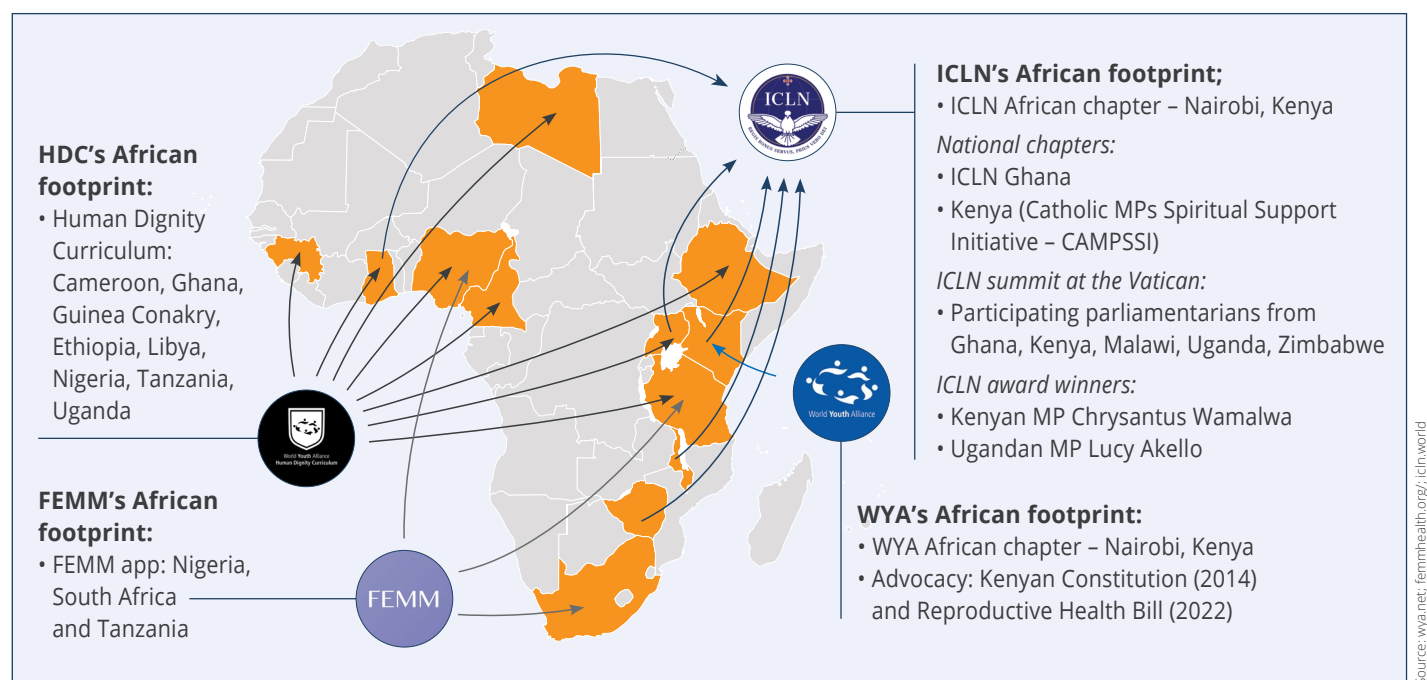
⁹⁰ Roscongress Foundation. (2023). About the Summit. <https://summitafrica.ru/en/about-summit/>.

⁹¹ Schulson, M. (2016). Pope’s Comments on “Ideological Colonization” of Gender Signal Rupture With Scientific Community. Religion Dispatches, 10 August. <https://religiondispatches.org/popes-comments-on-ideological-colonization-of-gender-signal-rupture-with-scientific-community/>.

⁹² See EWTN. (2024). Commemoration of the Geneva Consensus Declaration. [YouTube]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuxqPa1pMKg>.

FIGURE 10

WESTERN CHONGOS SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA



regularly lavishes praise on African parliamentarians who proactively obstruct the advance of human rights by awarding them prizes, while Russia platforms and amplifies anti-Western thinking in Africa and engages in charm offensives with high-level African political leaders.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS: TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF FOREIGN ANTI-GENDER ACTORS IN AFRICA

While the different anti-gender actors operate separately and may occasionally collaborate, the cumulative effect can be impactful. An example is the '1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on African Sovereignty, Culture and family Values' in Kampala in April 2023, which brought together parliamentarians from 20 African countries. Sharon Slater of FWI attended the event, with pictures of her with the Ugandan First Lady, Janet Museveni, circulating on social media.⁹³ In

the same picture is Jenk van Schothorst of the CCI. Among the parliamentarians attending the conference was Spanish MEP Margarita Pisa Carrion of Vox. The Wall Street Journal reported in September 2024 that the event was financed by the Russian Embassy in Kampala.⁹⁴ This meeting serves as an example of how African, European, US and Russian anti-gender actors all contributed to a common objective of rolling back human rights in Africa.

At the meeting, policymakers gave a final push to pass the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda. They also strategised ways of introducing similar laws penalising sexual minorities, and of rolling back access to women's health care across sub-Saharan Africa. Within a few months, Catholic Kenyan lawmakers associated with the ICLN had introduced a bill to limit LGBTQI rights,⁹⁵ and the Zambian Ministry of Health had sent instructions to subordinate officials barring the use of the expression 'sexual and reproductive health and rights'.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ipas and Empower. (2023). Pulling Back the Cover: The Roots, Relationships and Rise of Family Watch International. Chapel Hill, NC: Ipas. <https://www.ipas.org/resource/pulling-back-the-cover-the-roots-relationships-and-rise-of-family-watch-international/>.

⁹⁴ Bariyo, N., & G. Steinhauser. (2024). Russia and U.S. Religious Conservatives See Common Foe in Africa: Gay Rights Unlikely coalition provides moral support for local activists pushing laws criminalizing homosexuality; death penalty in Uganda. Wall Street Journal, 22 September. <https://www.wsj.com/world/africa/russia-and-u-s-religious-conservatives-see-common-foe-in-africa-gay-rights-53edee87>.

⁹⁵ Etyang, P. (2023). Details of Kaluma's bill on criminalising LGBTQ. The Star, 8 April. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2023-04-08-details-of-kalumas-bill-on-criminalising-lgbtq/>.

⁹⁶ Fallon, A. (2023). Zambia deletes 'sexual' from SRHR in blow to LGBTQ+ and rights groups. Devex, 26 October. <https://www.devex.com/news/zambia-deletes-sexual-from-srhr-in-blow-to-lgbtq-and-rights-groups-106434>.

Also, a coalition of African parliamentarians and other leaders had started to actively lobby US Members of Congress in Washington, DC, against the millions of dollars in aid for Africa to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic under the PEPFAR programme due to false allegations that it supported abortion advocacy.⁹⁷

Looking at Uganda from another perspective, the contributions of each anti-gender actor helped contribute to a geopolitical re-engineering of the country. For example, Ugandan parliamentarians, some aligned with the ICLN and others in contact with US Christian Right actors or with the Russian Embassy in Kampala, provided the fertile ground for the launch of an anti-gender initiative. Sharon Slater of FWI is credited with being the pen behind the 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which was discussed at the '1st African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on African Sovereignty, Culture and family Values' in Kampala in April 2023, which the Wall Street Journal reports was financed by the Russian Federation⁹⁸. Earlier, the Ugandan government had already signed the GCD and welcomed Valerie Huber to begin implementation of Protego⁹⁹ (the GCD's implementation programme — see 'Anti-gender services'). This effort was rewarded in October 2024 by the Hungarian Ambassador to the USA, who had taken over the GCD secretariat, awarding a prize to the Ugandan Minister of Health. In the meantime, Jenk van Schothorst of the CCI, also a participant at the April 2023 meeting in Kampala, convinced Ugandan policymakers to question the EU-ACP Samoa Agreement. The result is that Uganda has now oriented itself towards an anti-rights coalition championed by authoritarian actors and exacerbated tensions with its long-time development partners.¹⁰⁰

In May 2025, the same cast of characters converged on Nairobi for the 'Pan-African Conference on Family Values — Promoting and Protecting Family Values in Challenging Times'.¹⁰¹ In addition to the US Christian Right groups which have attracted most of the media attention, the European groups announced include Jenk van Schothorst of the CCI,

PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON FAMILY VALUES
Promoting and Protecting Family Values in Challenging Times

PROVISIONAL POSTER

Speakers

Austine Ruse
President, Centre for Family at Human Rights
New York Washington DC

Henk Jan van Schothorst
President of the board of directors of the Dutch and the US entity Christian Council International

Travis Weber
Vice President for Policy and Government Affairs at Family Research Council, USA

Rev. Ricky Chelette, MRE
Executive Director of Living Hope Ministries Inc. & President of the Institute of Biblical Sexuality

Jerzy Kwasniewski
President of the Board and co-founder Ordo Iuris Institute, Chairman of the Ordo Iuris Foundation Council, Ambassador of the Center for European Intervention of the Institute

Thomas W. Jacobson MA
Author of this as the founding, First director and co-author of the Pro-life Strategy Report (PSR), Executive Director of the Global Life Campaign, President, GLC Publications, USA

Rafal Borensinski
Lecturer, Member of the Bar Association in Warsaw, Director of the Legal Analysis Center of the Catholic Institute, Poland

12th MAY
17th MAY
2025
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The BOMA Hotel
Nairobi, Kenya

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For more information:
WhatsApp +254 748 133 653
Email: info@acpf.africa

Logos: CCI, NCCK, C-Fam, and other partner organizations.

European anti-gender presence in Africa “promoting and protecting family values in challenging times”.

Jerzy Kwasniewsky of Ordo Iuris, Ludovine de la Rochère of the French La Manif Pour Tous and Spanish Vox MEP Margarita Pisa Carrion. The organisers announced plans to convene further family values in Sierra Leone in 2025¹⁰² and South Africa in 2027.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ The Star. (2023). 10 Kenyan MPs bungling HIV fight, 50 rights groups claim. The Star, 24 August. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2023-08-24-10-kenyan-mps-bungling-hiv-fight-50-rights-groups-claim/>.

⁹⁸ Steinhäuser, N. B. and G. (2024). Russia and U.S. Religious Conservatives See Common Foe in Africa: Gay Rights. WSJ. <https://www.wsj.com/world/africa/russia-and-u-s-religious-conservatives-see-common-foe-in-africa-gay-rights-53edee87>.

⁹⁹ Ipas. (2024). PROTEGO: Operationalizing the Geneva Consensus Declaration. Chapel Hill, NC: Ipas. <https://www.ipas.org/resource/protego-operationalizing-the-geneva-consensus-declaration/>.

¹⁰⁰ For voting patterns at the United Nations on the Russia–Ukraine war, see Mutambo, A. (2023). Kenya, Uganda uphold opposite voting stances on Russia war. The East African, 24 February. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ukraine-war-kenya-uganda-uphold-opposite-stances-4136846>.

¹⁰¹ Cullinan, K. (2025). Women's Groups Sound Alarm Over 'African Family' Conferences Headlined by US Conservatives. Health Policy Watch, 8 May. <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/womens-groups-sound-alarm-as-prominent-us-conservatives-headline-african-family-conferences/>.

¹⁰² The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (2024). Church of Jesus Christ Announces that Sierra Leone will Host the 2025 Strengthening Families Conference. News-Africa.Churchofjesuschrist.Org. <https://news-africa.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/church-of-jesus-christ-announces-that-sierra-leone-will-host-the-2025-strengthening-families-conference>.

¹⁰³ Barros, L. D. (2025). Report: LGBTQ+ Hate 'Family Values' Conference Coming to South Africa. <https://www.mambaonline.com/2025/05/17/report-lgbtq-hate-family-values-conference-coming-to-south-africa/>.

PART 3

CONCLUSION

The Next Wave is already here.



CONCLUSION:

WHO'S BANKROLLING THE PUSHBACK?

"I believe in the resistance as I believe there can be no light without shadow; or rather, no shadow unless there is also light."

(Margaret Atwood, The Handmaids Tale)

The anti-right and religious extremist movement isn't just ideologically loud — it's financially armed. From Moscow to Washington, Brussels to Budapest, money is doing the heavy lifting in reshaping laws, policies, and public norms around gender, sexuality, and reproductive rights. And it's coming from all directions.

In Russia, state-backed campaigns have pivoted inward. Sanctions and war fractured the old cross-border influence networks, but the Kremlin didn't stop — it doubled down on homegrown campaigns to promote 'traditional family' values and anti-abortion narratives. These aren't fringe messages; they're tightly woven into President Putin's demographic and political agenda. Russia may have lost some international leverage, but domestically, its anti-gender playbook is thriving — and it still echoes across Europe.

Across the Atlantic, the US Christian Right gone beyond influencing policy — it's writing it. Trump's second presidency, with Christian Right loyalists installed across government, has turned American power into a global megaphone for religious extremism. Their alliances with European political parties, think tanks, and lobbyists are reshaping transatlantic strategy. This is a coordinated offensive, and Europe is in the line of fire.

Then there's the private money. Catholic aristocrats, conservative tech elites, and philanthropic families are quietly pushing doctrine through wealth management firms, foundations, and radical plans to influence mainstream politics. Their money funds everything from anti-abortion campaigns to elite training programmes for the next generation of illiberal leaders. Its religious ideology dressed up as finance — and it's erecting a world built on inequality.

Most striking? Public money is footing the bill too. From Poland to Hungary, and through EU mechanisms, taxpayer funding is being funnelled — directly and indirectly — into anti-rights agendas. Whether through subsidized schools, state media, or political party financing, governments are actively bankrolling their own contestation. It's not just about who's funding the movement — it's about how deeply it's already embedded in the political mainstream (Political Parties, Public Funding).

The anti-gender movement today is a well-oiled, multi-layered political force reshaping societies across Europe and beyond. This transformation plays out clearly across five key dimensions.

First, religious activism has moved from lofty ideals to the corridors of power. Church-organized NGOs, or ChONGOs, cleverly cloak dogmatic agendas in civil society language, inserting conservative views on gender, sexuality, and reproductive rights directly into policy debates. Their growing access to public funding raises serious questions about the separation of church and state and undermines secular, rights-based governance (Dimension 1).

Second, the civil society landscape has been radically reorganized. Anti-gender groups, backed by hundreds of millions of dollars, have institutionalized extremist "anti-gender services" that infiltrate education and healthcare. These services spread misinformation under a veneer of scientific legitimacy and gain political backing from local to national levels, threatening public health and gender equality on a systemic scale (Dimension 2).

Third, far-right populist political parties, with Hungary at the forefront, have become the power centres of this movement. Hungary's deep financial and strategic involvement in

pan-European far-right networks demonstrates how anti-gender activism is now tightly woven into illiberal political projects. Behind the scenes, public affairs firms linked to conservative religious elites use their connections to quietly steer policies that erode LGBTQI rights, reproductive freedoms, and gender equality (Dimension 3).

Fourth, the movement's intellectual and media machinery is growing rapidly. Unlike the US Christian Right, which relies heavily on private billionaires, Europe's anti-gender knowledge ecosystem benefits from significant public funding. Think tanks, academic programs, and media outlets pump out content that normalizes extremist views, builds ideological cadres, and spreads disinformation widely across traditional and social media platforms (Dimension 4).

Finally, the movement has become a geopolitical weapon. States like Hungary and Russia aggressively export anti-gender agendas through diplomatic channels and funding, working to dismantle international agreements on gender and reproductive rights. Uganda's recent anti-homosexuality law and pivot away from longstanding development partners exemplify how these networks remake local politics in their image. This global dimension reveals the movement's ambition and reach, turning gender rights into a battleground of geopolitical contestation (Dimension 5).

In short, this is a sophisticated, multi-dimensional movement that combines religious fervour, political strategy, institutional power, knowledge production, and international influence to roll back decades of progress on gender and sexual rights. Combating it means exposing the full scope of its networks, from grassroots NGOs to shadowy lobbying firms and state actors, and reinforcing the commitment to human rights and gender equality at every level.

**THIS ISN'T BACKLASH OR
A CULTURE WAR. IT'S A STRATEGY.
AND IT'S WELL-FUNDED.**

AFTERWORD:

THE HUNGARIAN INFLUENCE FACTORY AND THE BATTLE FOR THE EU'S MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Actors linked to three far-right European political parties have strategically sought not only public funding for their operations but also to influence the orientation of the European Union's (EU) Seventh Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034. The MFF, the EU's principal long-term budgetary instrument, governs expenditures exceeding €1 trillion — roughly 1% of the EU's Gross National Income. Negotiations began in 2025, with anti-rights and religiously conservative actors, allied with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) and the Hungarian-controlled Patriots for Europe (PfE), positioning themselves to shape these critical decisions.

The Hungarian government-funded Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Brussels initiated this campaign in February 2025 by publishing *The EU's Propaganda Machine: How the EU Funds NGOs to Promote Itself*,¹ a report attacking EU-funded human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. The report accused these NGOs of “cultural imperialism”, “undermining democracy” and “promoting censorship”, arguing that the EU effectively subsidises its own ideological agenda, alienating more conservative Central and Eastern European voters.

In April 2025, MCC Brussels released *Mission Creeps: How EU Funding and Activist NGOs Captured the Gender Agenda*,² claiming that over €220 million in EU funds supported a “radical gender identity agenda” harmful to women's rights, child protection and national sovereignty. It specifically targeted LGBTQI organisations as undermining national governance and women's interests. Despite lacking academic rigour, these reports serve a strategic purpose: to delegitimise EU support for human rights and the rule of law, and sow doubt about the legitimacy of such funding.

Separately, in May 2025, Dr. Bernadett Petri, Executive Director of the Hungarian Development Promotion Office,³ told the Hungarian-backed magazine *The European Conservative* that “Brussels funds Progressive NGOs but closes the door to Churches”, urging changes in the MFF to allow Churches “to participate on equal footing”.⁴ Petri cited allies in the European Parliament — including PfE and ECR MEPs infiltrated by anti-gender forces — ready to advance this cause.

Responding to the cue, beginning in February 2025, a coalition of PfE, ECR and ECPM MEPs groups launched a coordinated wave of parliamentary questions directed at the European Commission.⁵ Their focus: EU funding allocated to environmental, human rights,

sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) and LGBTQI civil society organisations. The MEPs alleged a deliberate and conspiratorial cover-up by the Commission, accusing it of obscuring the extent and nature of its support for progressive NGOs.

Together, these interventions reveal a coordinated strategy by anti-rights actors targeting the EU's flagship financial framework. First, by disseminating ideologically charged and methodologically weak reports, they aim to delegitimise democratic civil society organisations, increasing the political cost of their defence and pressuring the European Commission to limit funding. Second, they single out specific NGOs — such as ILGA-Europe — and thematic sectors such as LGBTQI rights and gender equality for financial marginalisation or defunding. Third, and most strategically, they seek to redirect MFF resources to their own allies, particularly Church-affiliated organisations. Failing that, they will continue exploiting the EU's ‘kryptonite’, namely long-standing criticisms of the EU's transparency and alleged ideological bias — narratives that resonate strongly within their constituencies.

This coordinated assault on democratic civil society is an attempt to impose a political patronage model onto the EU's long-term budget, marking the apex of far-right and religious extremist efforts fuelled by pro-Hungarian and Christian Right funding streams and enacted through aligned political actors, chiefly the ECR, PfE and the ECPM.

¹ B MCC Brussels. (2025, 12 February). The EU's Propaganda Machine: How the EU funds NGOs to promote itself. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/publication/the-eus-propaganda-machine-how-the-eu-funds-ngos-to-promote-itself>. ² Ibid.

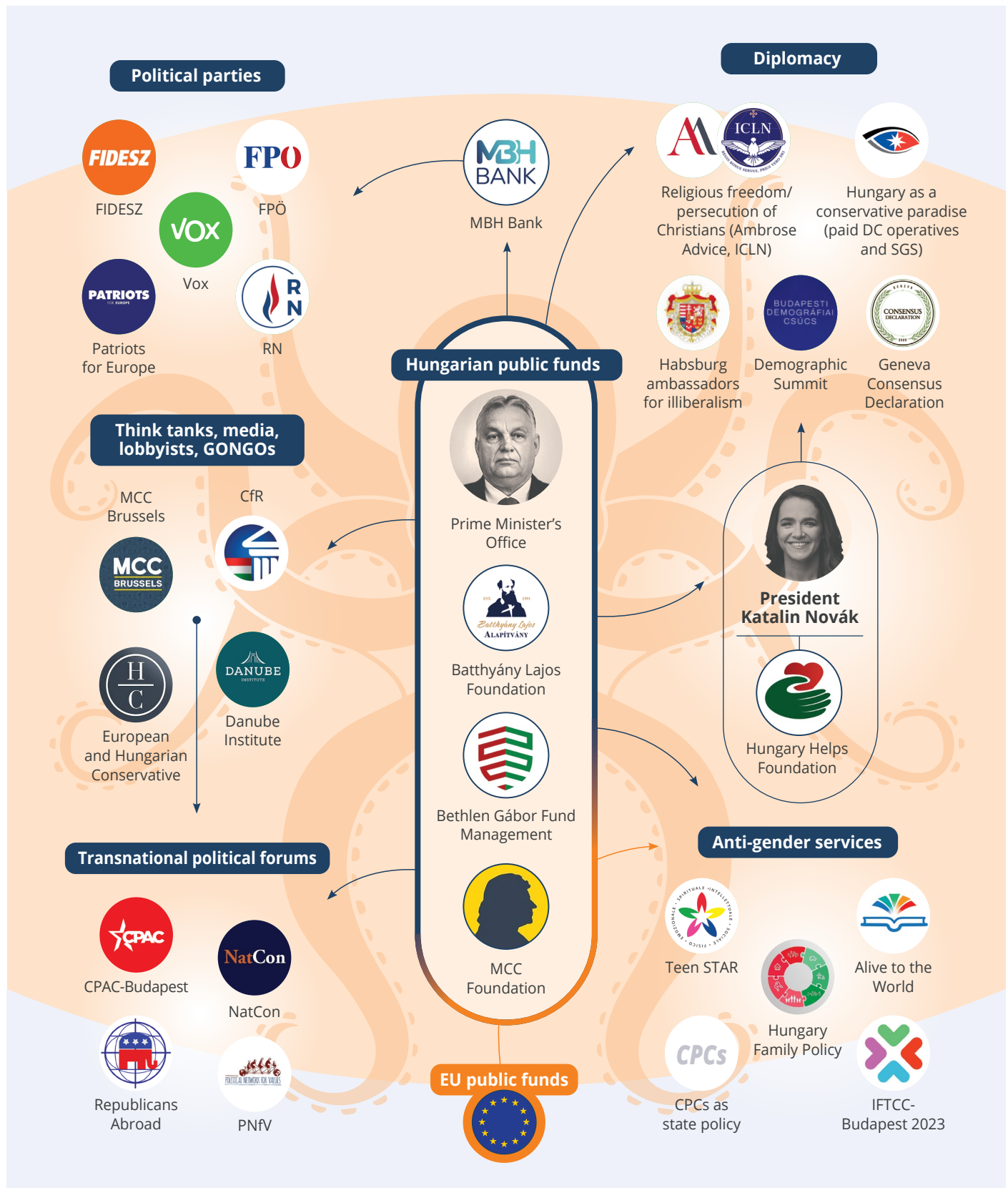
³ MCC Brussels. (2025, 1 April). Mission creeps: How EU funding and activist NGOs captured the gender agenda. <https://brussels.mcc.hu/publication/mission-creeps-how-eu-funding-and-activist-ngos-captured-the-gender-agenda-2>.

⁴ Portfolio. (2025). Speaker: Bernadett Petri. <https://www.portfolio.hu/en/events/speaker/petri-bernadett/12302>.

⁵ See European Parliament. (2025, 27 January). Parliamentary question - E-000357/2025: Commission funding to environmental NGOs to condition the views of Members of the European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000357_EN.html; European Parliament. (2025, 3 February). Parliamentary question - E-000443/2025: European citizens' initiative 'My voice, my choice'. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000443_EN.html; European Parliament. (2025, 11 February). Parliamentary question - E-000620/2025: Involvement of the Commission in a new lobbying scandal. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000620_EN.html; European Parliament. (2025, 11 February). Parliamentary question - E-000629/2025: EU financing for the International Planned Parenthood Federation. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000629_EN.html#def1; European Parliament. (2025, 25 February). Parliamentary question - E-000838/2025: EU funds to environmental lobbying groups to promote the European Green Deal. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000838_EN.html; European Parliament. (2025, 7 March). Parliamentary question - P-001007/2025: Disclosure of the list of non-governmental organisation contracts. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-001007_EN.html.

FIGURE 11

THE ANTI-GENDER INFLUENCE NETWORK AROUND HUNGARIAN PUBLIC FUNDING



STRATEGIC BLUEPRINTS OF THE TRANSNATIONAL FAR-RIGHT AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISTS

Across Europe, the Russian Federation and the USA, far-right and ultra-conservative actors have begun to coordinate their activities with increasing clarity and ambition. From calls to dismantle liberal democratic institutions to the promotion of theocratic and nationalist alternatives, these actors are producing strategic documents designed not just to resist progressive change, but to systematically reshape the State. This section examines a series of such documents — manifestos, funding plans, legislative playbooks and ideological programmes — circulated between 2012 and 2025. Together, they offer a rare window into the machinery of contemporary reaction: a transnational effort to institutionalise authoritarian governance and religious nationalism, and roll back human rights under the guise of sovereignty, tradition and freedom.

1 THE GREAT RESET: RESTORING MEMBER STATE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

This 45-page document was produced by the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) and the Ordo Iuris Institute and presented in June 2025. It presents two scenarios for European Union (EU) institutional reform focusing on: national sovereignty over EU primacy; national constitutions over judicial activism; representative democracy over technocratic governance; subsidiarity and respect for national competences over centralization; national interests over self-proclaimed EU values; and free speech over ideological control. It was prepared as a contribution to anticipated EU reforms and is widely criticised as an EU version of the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025.¹

2 IN HOC SIGNES VINCES (IHVS) – LIST OF PROJECTS

This four-page document is believed to have been authored by Aleksey Komov, the right-hand man of far-right Russian oligarchs, in 2012. The document outlines eight 'projects' for cooperation between Russian actors, principally

Russian oligarchs such as Konstantin Malofeev and Vladimir Yakunin, and Europe's then-emergent Christian rights movement. These projects aimed to affirm Europe's Christian identity, combat gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and cement a Russian-Vatican axis as the leaders of a Christian Europe. European and Western actors identified as potential allies and partners include Larry Jacobs of the World Congress of Families (WCF), Ignacio Arsuaga of HazteOír/CitizenGO, the Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) network and the European Christian Political Movement.²

3 MANDATE OF THE WORLD RUSSIAN PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

A declaration arising from the 2024 meeting of the World Russian People's Congress was intended to provide advice to both the Russian Orthodox Church and secular authorities in the Kremlin regarding the future direction of Russian society. The Mandate provides for a radical theocratic vision for the development of Russian society.³

4 PERICLES

Project PERICLES is a slide deck revealed by the French publication *L'Humanité* in 2024 which is credited as the €150 million plan for the religious extremist French billionaire Pierre-Edouard Stérin to financially support the French far-right party to win the presidential and legislative elections in 2027. It aims to combat the ills of French society (socialism, wokism, Islam and migration) through a dedicated plan involving strategic litigation, media partnerships, lobbying, and training a cadre of political and administrative elites. PERICLES is an acronym for Patriotes, Enracinés, Résistants, Identitaires, Chrétiens, Libéraux, Européens, Souverainistes (*Patriots, Entrenched, Resistant, Identitarian, Christian, Liberal, European, Sovereignist*).⁴

5 PROJECT 2025

This 900-page document from 2024 led by the Heritage Foundation, with the support of numerous far-right and Christian Right organisations, is meant to offer a political project for any incoming Republican administration following the 2024 Presidential and Congressional elections in the USA.⁵

6 RESTORING THE NATURAL ORDER

While the author of this 140-page document drafted in 2013 remains anonymous, it is believed to be Jacob Cornides, an official at the European Commission. It underlines the urgency of organising a movement to counter the advance of sexual and reproductive rights by providing a detailed strategy to roll back human rights. It was presented at an Agenda Europe meeting in 2014 and was adopted by several members of the Agenda Europe network as their blueprint for action.⁶

7 THE STRUCTURE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

This plan developed in the 1970s in the USA and credited to the Koch brothers was designed to build an infrastructure of organisations to ensure the ascendancy of far-right thinking in US politics. It starts with key investments in knowledge production capacities in universities, accompanied by investments in astro-turf non-governmental organisations to create a demand for far-right policies, and finally support to think tanks to take the knowledge produced and operationalise it into policy recommendations for politicians.⁷

8 TENEO NETWORK

The TENEO Network is a secretive initiative spearheaded by Leonard Leo to build the media capacity and infrastructure of far-right and extremist public figures from the world of politics and society aiming to “[r]ecruit, Connect, and Deploy talented conservatives who lead opinion and shape the industries that shape society”.⁸

9 ZIKLAG

This plan arising from a group of Christian nationalists in the USA aims to advance Christian dominionism by taking over the ‘seven mountains’: arts and media, business, Church, education, family, government, and science and technology. In addition to strategic funding to ensure a Biden defeat in the 2024 US elections, ADF had already secured a grant from Ziklag to advance parental rights to counter children’s right to public education through strategic litigation and presented this strategy at the Vision Network in Zagreb in 2024. Ziklag is a legally registered non-profit organisation under the name USA Law Transform.⁸

⁵ Ballester, R., & Devenyi, D. (2025). The Great Reset: Restoring Member State Sovereignty in the European Union. Mathias Corvinus Collegium, 11 March. <https://europeanstudies.mcc.hu/publication/the-great-reset-restoring-member-state-sovereignty-in-the-european-union>.

⁶ Dossier Centre. (2022, 24 March). Nazi – Part Two: the far-right international. <https://dossier-center.appspot.com/ultraright/>.

⁷ Russian Orthodox Church. (2024, 27 March). Order of the XXV World Russian People’s Cathedral « The present and future of the Russian world ». <https://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/6116189.html>.

⁸ Lemahieu, T. (2024). Pierre-Édouard Stérin, saint patron de l’extrême droite française #5. Projet Périclès : le document qui dit tout du plan de Pierre-Édouard Stérin pour installer le RN au pouvoir. L’Humanité, 19 July. <https://www.humanite.fr/politique/bien-commun/projet-pericles-le-document-qui-dit-tout-du-plan-de-pierre-edouard-sterin-pour-installer-le-rn-au-pouvoir>.

⁵ See Chretien, S. (2025). Project 2025. The Heritage Foundation, 31 January. <https://www.heritage.org/conservatism/commentary/project-2025>; and American Civil Liberties Union. (2025). Project 2025, Explained. <https://www.aclu.org/project-2025-explained>.

⁶ See the analysis in European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. (2018). Restoring the Natural Order. Brussels: EPF. <https://www.epfweb.org/node/175>.

⁷ Koch Docs. (n.d.). 1996 “Structure of Social Change” by Koch Industries Executive VP Richard Fink. <https://kochdocs.org/2019/08/19/1996-structure-of-social-change-by-koch-industries-executive-vp-richard-fink/>.

⁸ See <https://www.teneonetwork.com/>.

⁹ Kroll, A., & Surgey, N. (2024). Inside Ziklag, the Secret Organization of Wealthy Christians Trying to Sway the Election and Change the Country. ProPublica, 13 July. <https://www.propublica.org/article/inside-ziklag-secret-christian-charity-2024-election>; and Documented. (2022, 17 October). ADF Education Litigation Funding Proposal to Ziklag, May 2021. <https://documented.net/media/adf-litigation-funding-proposal-to-ziklag-may-2021>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Datta is the founder and Executive Director of the European Parliamentary Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF), a leading network of parliamentarians committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health, rights, and gender equality. Since creating the Forum in 2004 alongside a group of dedicated European lawmakers, he has guided its growth into a 30-country alliance that has helped shape dozens of national laws, policies, and budgets in support of reproductive rights — both in Europe and in low- and middle-income countries.

An internationally recognized expert on the rise of anti-gender and anti-rights movements, Neil has authored several influential reports that have informed the work of civil society groups, journalists, international organizations, and elected officials. He regularly speaks in parliaments and global forums, and has provided expert testimony before institutions such as the European Parliament, the French and UK legislatures, as well as UN agencies.

Neil's work has been acknowledged with awards including the 2022 Don and Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award and the 2023 French Senate Women's Delegation prize for his role in supporting the constitutional protection of abortion in France.

He holds a Master's in European Public Administration from the College of Europe in Bruges and a Bachelor's in History and Languages from the State University of New York at Binghamton. Fluent in English and French, and a citizen of five countries, Neil also founded the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights and Development, which connects over 200 lawmakers across continents to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

(PART 1)

PRINCIPAL ANTI-GENDER ORGANISATIONS



Alliance Defending Freedom International
(USA)

Christian right legal advocacy organization, SPLC-designated anti-LGBTQI hate group. The most prolific and best-funded strategic litigator both in the US and Europe. It has branches in the UK, Belgium, and Austria.



American Center for Law and Justice - European Center for Law and Justice - Slavic Center for Law and Justice
(USA)

Christian right legal advocacy organization with branches in the USA, Europe and Russia. It is active in the Council of Europe.



European Christian Political Party (former European Christian Political Movement)
(Netherlands / EU)

Very small European political party that specializes on advocating for Christian right values. It does not form its own group in the European Parliament, with its 4 MEPs sitting with the ECR, the EPP, and the non-attached.



FEMM Foundation
(USA)

Provider of a digitalized method of natural family planning, a “sister organization” of the World Youth Alliance.



Fondation Jérôme-Lejeune
(France)

Foundation created by members of the Lejeune family with the goal of continuing the work of late geneticist Jérôme Lejeune. It is one of the biggest anti-abortion lobbies in Europe with a specialization in genetic research. The Foundation has offices in France, Spain, the USA, and Argentina.



Fonds du Bien Commun
(France)

Fundraising platform founded by Pierre-Édouard Stérin to support ultra-Catholic initiatives.



HazteOír / CitizenGo
(Spain / Global)

International anti-gender lobby that operates a global online petition platform in 14 languages.



International Catholic Legislators Network
(Austria)

Association of anti-gender ultra-Catholic legislators, with an emphasis on opposing abortion. It is active in Africa, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere.



International Organization for the Family
(USA)

The organizing body behind the World Congress of Families.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

(PART 2)

PRINCIPAL ANTI-GENDER ORGANISATIONS



Opus Dei (Spain / Italy / Global)

Institution of the Catholic Church formed by lay Catholics and ordained clergy around the world. Opus Dei is known for private universities affiliated with it, as well as for its controversial, secretive practices.



Political Network for Values (USA / Hungary / Spain)

Transatlantic network of ultra-reactionary, anti-gender politicians and civil society actors, with strong connections to the USA, Latin America, Hungary and Spain.



Stiftung Ja zum Leben (Germany)

Private anti-abortion foundation connected to wealthy aristocrats from German-speaking countries.



Teen STAR (USA / Chile / Global)

Abstinence education curriculum for teens promoted by a global ChONGO under the same name.



Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) (Brazil / Global)

Loose network of civil society organisations united by a pseudo-medieval aesthetic and a common reactionary, pseudo-Catholic worldview of "restoring the natural order".



University of Navarra / IESE Business School (Spain)

Private Roman Catholic university, an apostolic work of Opus Dei.



Vision Network / Agenda Europe

Global, secretive network that unites radical religious fundamentalists, anti-gender activists and politicians.



World Organization Ovulation Method Billings (WOOMB) (Australia / Global)

Federation of organizations promoting the Billings method of natural family planning.



World Russian People's Council (Russia)

Orthodox ChONGO presided by Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. Its main objectives include promoting theocratic 'traditional values' and anti-abortion advocacy.



World Youth Alliance (USA / Belgium / Spain / Croatia / Global)

Global Catholic youth movement against abortion. It is notable for its proximity to Opus Dei and European aristocracy, as well as for receiving EU public funding.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 2

(PART 1)

ANTI-GENDER PERSONALITIES



Alexey Komov
(Russia)

Political fixer working with Konstantin Malofeev, the Russian Orthodox Church and World Congress of Families. Indicted by the US Department of Justice in 2024 for violating US sanctions in a scheme to Employ an American Citizen for a Russian Television Network.¹



Gudrun Kugler
(Austria)

Parliamentarian for the Austrian People's Party. Co-founder of Agenda Europe.⁵ Director of World Youth Alliance Europe between 2001 - 2004.⁶ Since August 2024, the Special Representative on Demographic Change and Security at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.⁷



Anna Halpine
(Canada / USA)

Co-founder of World Youth Alliance and its 'sister' FEMM Foundation.² Infamously compared abortion to the Holocaust and the Rwanda genocide.³



Katalin Novák
(Hungary)

Former President of Hungary. High-ranking supporter of the World Congress of Families, Hungarian demographic summits and Political Network for Values events.⁸ Co-founder and CEO of the XY Worldwide natalist initiative reportedly funded by Elon Musk.⁹



Brian S. Brown
(USA)

President of the World Congress of Families. Board member of CitizenGo and Political Network for Values.



Ignacio Arsuaga
(Spain)

President and founder of HazteOír and the global social mobilisation platform CitizenGO. He is also a board member of the WCF.



Christiaan Alting von Geusau
(Netherlands)

Catholic theologian and jurist, President of the International Catholic Legislators Network, Managing Partner at Ambrose Advice, Rector of the Catholic University ITI 2014 – 2023.



David Lejeune
(France / USA)

Founder and CEO of Opus Fidelis consultancy, grandson of Jérôme Lejeune and former President of the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation-US.⁵



Grégor Puppink
(France)

Director of the European Centre for Law and Justice.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/russian-national-indicted-assisting-sanctioned-oligarch-schemes-employ-american-citizen>

² World Youth alliance. (2013). Happy Birthday World Youth Alliance: The Founder's Story - World Youth Alliance. <https://wya.net/blog/happy-birthday-world-youth-alliance-the-founders-story/>

³ Inestimable Worth. (2019). Anna Halpine. <https://www.faithandculture.com/home/2019/04/17-inestimable-worth>

⁴ <https://www.lejeunefoundation.org/announcing-david-lejeune-retiring-as-president>

⁵ EPF (2018). Restoring the Natural Order.

⁶ Katholische Hochschule ITI: Providing a Mouthpiece for the Church. (n.d.). Retrieved 12 May 2025, from <https://iti.ac.at/alumni/meet-our-alumni-impacting-the-church-and-the-world/providing-a-mouthpiece-for-the-church>

⁷ OSCE PA (2025). Special Representative on Demographic Change and Security. <https://www.oscepa.org/en/activities/special-representatives/demographic-change-and-security/special-representative-on-demographic-change-and-security>

⁸ IOF. (2017). About the Congress. <https://profam.org/wcfxi/wcf-xi-description/>

⁹ Scheffer, J. (2024). Elon Musk Potential Sponsor Behind Former President Novák's New Organization. Hungarian Conservative. <https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/current/elon-musk-katalin-novak-xy-worldwide-giorgia-meloni-demographic-challenges-birthrate/>

ANNEXES

ANNEX 2

(PART 2)

ANTI-GENDER PERSONALITIES



Konstantin Malofeev
(Russia)

“Orthodox oligarch” with a history of funding anti-gender movements in Europe.¹⁰ Owner of St. Basil the Great Foundation and the Tsargrad Group. Currently under international sanctions for supporting war crimes in Ukraine.¹¹



Vladimir Yakunin
(Russia)

Powerful oligarch reportedly close to Vladimir Putin, Vladimir Yakunin directs one of the biggest endowments in Russia, the Istoki, which funds Orthodox events and anti-abortion campaigning.



Maria Lvova-Belova
(Russia)

Maria Lvova-Belova is Malofeev’s wife who is charged by the International Criminal Court with deportation of Ukrainian children, which is reportedly done in cooperation with Malofeev’s St. Basil foundation.¹²



Natalya Yakunina
(Russia)

Natalia Yakunina, Vladimir Yakunin’s wife, oversees Yakunin’s flagship anti-abortion programme “Sanctity of Motherhood”.



Dr. Pilar Vigil Portales
(Chile)

Professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, she is a key proponent of abstinence education and natural family planning. President of Teen STAR International organization and a member of WOOMB International.¹³ Regular speaker at World Youth Alliance events.¹⁴



Željka Markić
(Croatia)

Founder and leader of the anti-abortion movement “U Ime Obitelji” (In the name of the family), one of the key members of the Vision Network (Agenda Europe).¹⁸ Reportedly close to Opus Dei.¹⁹



Sophia Kuby
(Germany)

Director of Strategic Relations & Training for ADF International. One of the key coordinators of the Agenda Europe network.¹⁵



Stephen Bartulica
(Croatia)

US-born Croatian politician, Member of the European Parliament with the ECR group since 2024. President of the Political Network for Values.¹⁶ An open supernumerary member of Opus Dei.¹⁷

¹⁰ EPF (2021). Tip of the Iceberg

¹¹ OpenSanctions.Org. (2025). Konstantin Valerevich Malofeev. <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/Q4278463/>

¹² International Criminal Court. (2024). Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/defendant/maria-alekseyevna-lvova-belova>

¹³ BOMA-USA. (n.d.). Pilar Vigil, MD. Retrieved 12 May 2025, from <https://boma-usa.org/es/pilar-vigil-md/>

¹⁴ WYA. (2025). Detransitioners, Medical Professionals, and Human Rights Advocates Challenge Gender Ideology. World Youth Alliance. <https://wya25.evecloud.com/blog/detransitioners-tackle-gender-ideology-at-the-22nd-isf/>

¹⁵ EPF (2018). Restoring the Natural Order

¹⁶ Political Network for Values. (2024). Stephen Bartulica is the new president of Political Network for Values. <https://politicalnetworkforvalues.org/en/2024/12/stephen-bartulica-is-the-new-president-of-political-network-for-values/>

¹⁷ Međugorac, I. (2024, June 9). Hrvatska u EP šalje kršćanina i vjernika koji se ne srami svoje ideologije: ‘Sigurno neću šutjeti’. Dnevno.hr. <https://www.dnevno.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/hrvatska-u-ep-salje-krscanina-i-vjernika-koji-se-ne-srami-svoje-ideologije-sigurno-necu-sutjeti-2449002/>

¹⁸ Šimičević, H. (2024). Istina o Agendi. Portal Novosti. <https://www.portalnovosti.com/istina-o-agendi>

¹⁹ Piše, A. B. (2017). Željka i Opus Dei. Portal Novosti. Retrieved 12 May 2025, from <https://www.portalnovosti.com/zeljka-i-opus-dei>

ANNEXES

ANNEX 3

(PART 1)

ANTI-GENDER FUNDING – ABRIDGED FINDINGS

Organization name. Funding (US\$ equivalent)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
EU	122,483,463	139,315,592	163,259,573	137,067,951	135,680,725	703,170,792
Abstinence education / Anti-CSE Lobbies	2,307,692	1,873,706	1,495,496	1,364,256	710,463	7,751,613
ADF International	282,200	281,275	692,991	677,885	1,248,393	3,182,744
Anti-gender family organizations	5,369,103	6,760,869	8,547,460	7,417,724	8,104,570	36,199,726
Barankovics István Foundation	525,249	479,416	506,333	433,075	439,775	2,383,848
Batthyány Lajos Foundation (Danube Institute)	12,332,463	11,990,633	311,309	617,982	1,749,829	27,002,216
Bethlen Gabor Alapkezelő Zrt (Bethlen Gabor Fund Management)	6,877,848	19,619,489	24,274,034	16,192,581	13,155,685	80,119,637
Center for Fundamental Rights	2,387,845	3,812,867	4,339,376	6,852,070	9,386,422	26,778,580
Christian Council International (CCI/TCI)	170,344	135,923	288,974	208,188	289,504	1,092,933
CitizenGo and HazteOír	4,641,014	5,536,693	5,029,149	5,884,225	6,770,517	27,861,598
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)	1,228,487	1,156,954	1,312,568	1,374,009	1,513,370	6,585,388
ECPP (ECPM) and Sallux	1,794,297	737,772	1,424,873	1,202,881	1,300,934	6,460,757
EU CPCs Combined	13,489,323	14,585,808	15,272,026	13,567,512	16,544,318	78,822,475
European Conservative and Reformist Party and Foundation (ECR)	6,876,750	4,695,012	5,165,304	5,198,493	7,016,826	28,952,385
Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (Jérôme Lejeune Foundation)	15,440,598	20,013,718	22,688,514	16,687,743	14,822,897	89,653,470
Fondazione Magna Carta	250,905	260,933	252,953	316,229	389,269	1,470,289
Fonds de dotation Stella Domini	181,828	231,630	357,276	368,666	-	1,139,400
Fonds du bien commun (The Common good fund)	-	-	1,702,835	150,363	243,933	2,097,131
Fundação AJB – A Junção do Bem (AJB Foundation – The Junction of Good)	154,676	167,671	175,720	500,157	1,139,781	2,138,005
Fundación Disenso (Foundation Dissent)	-	416,287	3,055,019	2,740,172	3,145,368	9,356,846
Fundacja Edukacja do Wartości z siedzibą w Warszawie (Education for Values foundation) (Collegium Intermarium)	-	-	1,005,704	185,509	303,666	1,494,879
Fundacja Lux Veritatis (Lux Veritas Foundation)	785,273	5,580,729	14,792,339	11,175,922	11,887,968	44,222,231
GT Fond de dotation	401,546	439,921	727,263	-	-	1,568,730
Human Life International	1,016,015	856,007	1,029,324	948,577	1,251,548	5,101,471
Identity and Democracy Party and Foundation	1,458,048	1,492,902	2,040,318	1,780,678	2,486,575	9,258,521
Institut des Sciences Sociales, Economiques et Politiques (ISSEP) (Institute of Social, Economic and Political Sciences)	863,698	745,255	1,325,622	1,240,114	-	4,174,689
Knights of Columbanus	551,655	890,567	960,927	877,295	-	3,280,444
NFP / NaPro Oranizations	869,426	1,219,173	2,183,043	2,194,361	2,842,084	9,308,087
Ordo Iuris	1,690,052	1,717,451	2,068,520	1,737,884	506,140	7,720,047
Other anti-abortion lobbies	6,060,826	5,652,210	7,254,701	6,271,291	6,008,107	31,247,135
Other small and microentities	3,221,019	4,220,205	5,087,555	4,338,211	2,139,071	19,006,063
Polish anti-gender organizations	3,445,868	4,027,935	5,230,426	4,648,367	1,761,470	19,114,066
Politikai Hálózat az Értékekért Magyarország Egyesület (Political Network for Values Hungary Association)	-	6,221	146,520	926,593	12,827	1,092,161
Pro Vita e Famiglia (For Life and family)	1,396,852	744,703	1,039,562	1,022,979	1,486,835	5,690,931
Szövetség a Polgári Magyarorszáért Alapítvány (Foundation for a Civic Hungary)	5,134,618	5,015,114	4,996,267	4,315,506	5,363,594	24,825,099
Talenting Foundation	620,840	562,550	592,300	556,648	600,105	2,932,443
TFP Organizations	18,546,000	11,405,956	13,639,826	11,101,110	10,166,013	64,858,905
U ime Obitelji (In the name of the family)	200,549	141,145	153,326	212,166	245,024	952,210
Vita Nova Foundation	1,626,302	1,472,265	1,412,044	1,182,649	-	5,693,260
World Youth Alliance	284,253	368,627	681,775	597,880	647,844	2,580,379

Note: US\$ equivalent obtained by using historical exchange rates as of July 1 for the corresponding year. Financial data not adjusted for inflation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 3

(PART 2)

ANTI-GENDER FUNDING – ABRIDGED FINDINGS

Organization name. Funding (US\$ equivalent)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
UK and other Europe	30,583,401	37,291,833	33,132,285	30,117,136	34,216,055	165,340,711
ADF International	734,256	651,128	871,692	669,849	1,355,245	4,282,170
Aide suisse pour la mère et l'enfant (ASME)	3,028,320	2,710,699	3,371,273	No data	No data	9,110,292
Anscombe Bioethics Centre	294,322	415,087	154,417	204,716	152,853	1,221,395
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association UK	674,480	5,923,370	3,001,673	3,946,445	7,115,163	20,661,131
Christian Broadcasting Network UK	1,410,080	1,524,314	1,504,851	1,711,339	2,270,381	8,420,965
Christian Institute	3,712,092	3,997,653	4,413,904	3,827,220	4,492,277	20,443,146
Christian Medical Fellowship	1,855,944	1,790,194	1,612,357	1,579,327	1,889,767	8,727,589
Christian, Action, Research and Education (CARE UK)	2,592,248	2,878,129	2,334,335	2,686,968	2,696,995	13,188,675
Evangelicals Now	245,856	175,241	211,208	225,386	252,831	1,110,522
Heritage Foundation	655,011	1,184,714	1,033,294	517,179	244,364	3,634,562
Hintze Charitable Foundation	4,290,771	3,580,136	1,798,978	1,357,266	1,300,009	12,327,160
Lawyers Christian Fellowship	399,718	216,436	322,337	324,838	324,085	1,587,414
LGB Alliance	-	149,787	142,997	549,930	312,586	1,155,300
Life 2009 Ltd	4,312,821	4,409,909	4,121,133	4,373,790	3,081,969	20,299,622
NFP/NaPro Organisations UK	56,708	47,971	92,058	168,416	115,334	480,487
Reintegrative therapy lobbies	3,664,524	3,668,045	3,418,849	3,649,806	4,124,997	18,526,221
Right to Life Charitable Trust	712,015	792,098	1,314,428	956,744	1,130,850	4,906,135
Other UK CPCs	1,437,740	2,440,607	2,670,215	2,428,275	2,115,287	11,092,124
Various small and microentities combined (Other Europe)	506,495	736,315	742,286	939,642	1,241,062	4,165,801
Russia	42,886,425	30,773,315	35,049,796	86,674,880	16,556,371	211,940,787
Anti-abortion lobbies	366,615	395,889	543,226	682,089	445,898	2,433,717
Malofeev-affiliated organizations	4,210,564	2,094,074	5,292,074	40,901,515	7,616,981	60,115,208
Presidential Grants Fund (anti-abortion projects)	251,578	21,161	62,300	35,214	116,335	486,588
Russian CPCs	127,264	394,418	642,247	1,599,473	908,838	3,672,240
Various small and microentities combined (RU)	18,084	295,341	168,940	95,272	235,617	813,254
Yakunin-affiliated organizations	9,875,542	2,793,587	2,041,423	3,174,591	4,251,987	22,137,130
АОГ "НМЦППИПД" (National Monitoring Centre for Assistance to Missing Children)	301,211	404,266	550,664	4,115,176	2,616,425	7,987,742
Всемирный Русский Народный Собор (World's Russian People's Council)	350,280	169,079	93,392	165,411	364,290	1,142,452
Фонд православного телевидения (Orthodox television fund) - TV Spas	27,385,287	24,205,500	25,655,530	35,906,139	No data	113,152,456
US European spending*	24,035,896	22,652,896	23,207,479	17,619,452	16,826,198	104,341,921
40 Days for Life	98,924	91,540	112,029	199,969	408,028	910,490
ADF International	6,215,974	5,997,108	5,226,494	5,757,931	4,638,157	27,835,664
American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)	1,364,055	1,012,936	966,982	965,749	1,203,840	5,513,562
Christian Broadcasting Network	13,354,333	14,189,345	14,137,351	8,650,022	8,794,456	59,125,507
Other US Thinktanks	1,789,398	494,072	1,130,468	1,368,958	1,346,591	6,129,487
TFP Organizations	24,930	44,965	404,985	354,995	146,307	976,182
Various small and microspenders combined	275,199	250,977	476,302	321,828	150,875	1,475,181
World Youth Alliance	913,083	571,953	752,868	-	137,944	2,375,848
Grand Total	219,989,185	230,033,636	254,649,132	271,479,419	203,279,350	1,184,794,210

* Some US spending in Europe might also be double-counted above as income of Europe-based organizations

ANNEXES

ANNEX 4

(PART 1)

FINANCIAL DATA SOURCES

Organization / Group	Region / Country	Source of information
EU		
CPCs	Austria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain	Aktion Leben: Donation tracker, https://www.spendeninfo.at/aktion-leben+2400+1120652 ; Aktion Leben Kärnten: Homepage, http://www.aktionleben-kaernten.at/spendenbilanzen/ ; Aktion Leben Salzburg: Homepage, https://www.aktionleben-salzburg.at/wir-ueber-uns/taetigkeitsberichte/ ; Aktion Leben St Polten: Homepage, https://aktionleben-tirol.org/ ; Aktion Leben Vorarlberg: Homepage, http://www.aktionleben-vorarlberg.at/index.php?section=search&term=bericht ; Österreichischen Lebensbewegung: Homepage https://www.lebensbewegung.at/%C3%BCber-uns/spendeng%C3%BCtesie-gel-informationen-an-spende/ ; Accueilir la Vie (Welcoming Life) (393739594): French National business registry https://annuaire-entreprises.data.gouv.fr/ ; Bethlehem Karlovac and Bethlehem Zagreb (93222976379 and 27373068566): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; Udruga Hrvatska za Život (The Croatia for Life Association) (43502680110 / 04323645): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; ONŽ - pomoc a poradenství pro ženy a dívky (Help and counselling for women and girls): Homepage https://www.poradnaprozeny.eu/ ; Aktion Lebensrecht für Alle e. V. (ALfA): Homepage https://www.alfa-ev.de/ueber-uns/ ; Várva Várt Foundation (Long Awaited Foundation) (18139039-1-42): Register of NGOs https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzek/ ; Siriz: Homepage https://siriz.nl/over-siriz/ ; Krizes Grüniecbas Centrs Biedriba (Crisis Pregnancy Center) (40008096081): Commercial register https://info.ur.gov.lv/#/data-search ; Krizinio nštumo centras (Crisis Pregnancy Centre) (303165907): Centre of Registers https://www.registrucentras.lt/ ; Vida Norte: Homepage https://www.vidanorte.org/quem-somos/ ; Asociatia Pro Vita Ptr Nascuti Si Nenascuti (Pro-Life for the Born and Unborn) (18074434): Ministerului Finanțelor https://mfinante.gov.ro/info-pj-selectie-nume-si-judet ; VBOK (Association for the Protection of the Unborn Child): Homepage https://www.vbok.nl/over-vbok/organisatie/ ; Schreeuw om Leven (Cry for life): Homepage https://www.schreeuwomleven.nl/amb/ ; Ano Pre Zivot (Yes to life): Homepage https://anoprezivat.sk/o-nas/dokumenty/vyrocnne-spravy/ ; Fundación Madrina and other Spanish CPCs; Media report, El Critic (2025). Quants diners públics reben els grups antiavortistes? https://www.elcritic.cat/investigacio/quant-diners-publics-reben-els-grups-antiavortistes-221493 ; Red Madre: Homepage https://www.redmadre.es/transparencia/cuentas- anuales/ ; Members of Federación Española de Asociaciones Provida (Provida Alcalá, Mairena): Homepages https://provida-alcala.es/documentos-asociati-vos/ and https://www.providamairena.es/ .
ADF International	Belgium	EU Transparency Register (69403354038-78): https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/datacard/alliance-defending-freedom?rid=69403354038-78 .
Anti-gender family organizations	Belgium, France, Hungary, Spain, Italy	Fédération des Association Familiales Catholiques en Europe (FAFCE) (509209111889-44): EU Transparency Register https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/datacard/%C3%A9d%C3%A9ration-des-associations-familiales-catholiques-en-europe?rid=509209111889-44 ; Mouvement Catholique Des Familles (501977987): Homepage https://m-c-familles.fr/le-mcf/unir-les-familles ; Nagycsaládok Országos Egyesülete (National Organization of Large Families) (01-02-0000107): Register of NGOs https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzek/ ; International Federation for Family Development (incomplete): Homepage https://iffdfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/memoria2021-digital-2.pdf ; Forum Delle Associazioni Familiari (Family Associations Forum) (963054450585): RUNTS https://servizi.lavoro.gov.it/runts/it-it/Ricerca-enti/Ente .
Various small and microentities combined	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	Femina Europa (589406320391-05); European Federation ""One of Us"" (478454716012-16); European Institute of Bioethics (93555467379-80); Federación Europea One of Us (073252247105-13); Profesionales por la Ética (716838314731-31) (Professionals for ethics), New Women for Europe (658024848498-94): EU Transparency Register https://www.lobbyfacts.eu ; Ассоциация Общество и Ценности (Association Society and Values) (175299044); Избор За Живот (Pro-Life Choice Association) (176599831), Поход за Семейството (March for the Family) (205563588), РОД ИНТЕРНЕТЪНЪЛ (Parents Association International) (206165092), Свобода за Всеки (Freedom for everyone) - Фондация Преображение (Transformation foundation) (130995034): Commercial register and register of non-profit legal entities https://portal.registryagency.bg/CR/en/Reports/VerificationPersonOrg ; CENTAR ZA OBNOVU KULTURE (COK) (Centre for the renewal of culture) (21004644); GLAS RODITELJA ZA DJECU - GROZD (Parents' voice for children) (42825541706); RINO (Parent Institute for Education) (21010071); Udruga ""Hrvatski pokret za život i obitelj"" (Croatian Movement for Life and Family) (56391017230); Udruga Stepinac - Bas (31831060538): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; Alliance pro rodinu (Alliance for the Family) (72088061), Rodinný svaz CR (Family union CZ) (26536234), Tradiční Rodina (Traditional Family) (07681046); Ministerstvo spravedlnosti České republiky https://or.justice.cz/ias/ui/rejstrik ; Elu Kaitseks (To defend life) (80583369); Business registry https://ariregister.rik.ee/eng/company ; Aito Avioliitto (True marriage association) (incomplete, public funding only): Grants portal https://avustukset.stea.fi/organisation/607 ; ProLife Europe eV (VR 201042): Common register portal https://www.handelsregister.de/ ; Alfa Magzat, Újszülött-, Gyermekek- és Családvédelmi Szövetség (Alfa Fetus, Newborn, Child and Family Protection Association) (11000007); Családtudományi Szövetség (Family Science Association) (01 02 0017193); Együtt az Életért Egyesület (Association Together for Life) (01 02 0013030); Emberi Méltóság Központ (Center for Human Dignity) (01-02-0015344); ERGO-European Regional Organisation (01 02 4955); Kiáltás az Életért Egyesület (Cry for Life Association) (13-02-0003733); Magyar Alapítvány a Keresztény Civilizációért (Hungarian Foundation for Christian Civilisation) (01-01-0012086); Magyar Asszonyok Érdekszövetsége (Hungarian Women Association) (01 02 0009202); Magyar Bioetikai Társaság (Hungarian Society for Bioethics) (01-02-0005145); Szent István Intézet (Szent Istvan Institute) (01-09-387755) Védett Társadalom Alapítvány (Safe Society Foundation) (1 3 01004161); Register of associations https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzek/ ; Family Solidarity (124677); Pure in Heart (356064); The Life Institute-Youth Defence (Pro Life Institute) (502698); Company Registration Office https://core.cro.ie/e-commerce/company/search/ ; Centro di Studi Politici e Strategici Machiavelli (Center for Political and Strategic Studies Machiavelli) (94280910483); RUNTS https://servizi.lavoro.gov.it/runts/it-it/Ricerca-enti ; Fondazione Giuseppe Tatarella: Homepage https://www.fondazionegiuseppetatarella.it/trasparenza/ ; Asociácia ""Ĝimene"" (40008124597); Commercial register https://info.ur.gov.lv/#/data-search ; Laisvos visuomenės institutas (Institute of Free Society) (303081003); Lietuvos šeimų sąjūdis (Lithuanian Family Movement) (305850607); Nacionalinė šeimų ir tėvų asociacija (National Association of Families and Parents) (300560436); Rengimo šeimai asociacija (Family Preparation Association) (305741547); Centre of Registers https://www.registrucentras.lt/ ; Juristenvereniging Pro Vita (Pro Vita Lawyers' Association): Homepage https://provita.nl/uw-hulp-is-nodig/ ; Katholieke Stichting Medische Ethiek: Homepage https://medische.ethiek.nl/category/documenten/documenten-ksme/ ; Stichting Abortusinformatie.nl: Homepage https://abortusinformatie.nl/over-ons/amb/ ; Vereniging Kies Leven: Homepage https://kiesleven.nl/ambi-ge-gens/ ; Fundacja ""Głos Dla Życia"" (Voice for Life Foundation) (0000037425); Fundacja Ku Pełni Życia (Towards the Fullness of Life) (0000409179); Fundacja Mama, Tata, Dzieci (Foundation Mum, Dad and Kids) (Rodzina Blisko) (0000752295); Fundacja Ośrodek Analiz Prawnych, Gospodarczych i Społecznych im. Hipolita Cegielskiego (Foundation Center for Legal, Economic and Social Analysis after Hipolit Cegielski) (0000697218); Fundacja Ośrodek Monitorowania Antypolonizmu (The Anti-Polonism Monitoring Center Foundation) (0000885271); Fundacja Polska Rada Stanowa Rycerzy Kolumba/Knights of Columbus (0000384663); Fundacja Vide et Crede im. św. Jana Pawła II (St. John Paul II Vide et Crede Foundation) (0000487864); Jeden z nas (One of us) (0000480026); Stowarzyszenie „Polonia Christiana” (Association Christian Poland) (0000775730); Stowarzyszenie Rodzice Chronią Dzieci (Parents Protect Children Association) (0000609985); ""Związek Stowarzyszeń ""Konfederacja Inicjatyw Pozarządowych Rzeczypospolitej"" (Confederation of Non-Governmental Initiatives of the Republic of Poland (KIPR) "" (0000668126); National Freedom Institute https://sprawozdaniaopp.niw.gov.pl/ and Ministry of Justice https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/rdf/pd/search_df ; Asociatia Familia si Viata (18434312); Asociatia Familia Tradițională (33159968); Asociatia Familiilor Catolice Vladimir Ghika (23965078); Asociatia pentru sprijinirea femeii însărcinate și a familiei (The Association for Supporting Pregnant Women and Families) (36913780); ProVita Bucuresti (18074434); Ministry of Finance https://mfinante.gov.ro/info-pj-selectie-nume-si-judet ; Aliancia za rodinu (Alliance for the family) (42357934); Institut pre ľudské práva a rodinnú politiku (Institute for Human Rights and Family Policy) (42256232); Spoločenstvo Ladislava Hanusa (Ladislav Hanus Community) (31817904); Ministry of Finance https://www.registeruz.sk/ ; Zavod KUL.SI (3524078000); Zavod ŽIVIM (Right to life Institute) (84292539); Business registry https://www.companywall.si/ ; Asociación Española De Bioética Y Ética Médica (Spanish Association of Bioethics and Medical Ethics) (incomplete): Homepage https://aebioetica.org/archivos/Acta-definitiva-Asamblea2022.pdf ; Foro Español de la Familia (Family forum): Homepage https://forofamilia.org/blog/memorias/ ; Fundación NEOS (incomplete): Homepage https://neosfundacion.es/ ; Fundación Española de Abogados Cristianos: Vega, A. C., Antonio. (2025). Las cuentas de Abogados Cristianos: Errores, retrasos y donaciones al alza para perseguir 'ofensas a la religión'. ElDiario.es. https://www.eldiario.es/castilla-y-leon/sociedad/cuentas-abogados-cristianos-errores-retrasos-donaciones-alza-perseguir-ofensas-religion_1_11977609.html .

ANNEXES

ANNEX 4

(PART 2)

FINANCIAL DATA SOURCES

Organization / Group	Region / Country	Source of information
In the Name of the Family	Croatia	U ime Obitelji (27741674988): Business Register https://www.companywall.hr .
NFP / NaPro Organizations	Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Spain	Centar za prirodno planiranje obitelji (Center for Natural Family Planning) (85271663607) and FertilityCare Split (87603587875): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; Centrum naděje a pomoci z.s. (Center of Hope and Help, Inc.) (60553626): Ministerstvo spravedlnosti České republiky https://or.justice.cz/ias/ui/rejstrik ; Filia Alapitvány (Billings Society) (18-1030129-15): Register of NGOs https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzeke ; NAOMI - Billings Ireland (20012496): Charities Regulator https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/ ; Fundacja "W trosce o płodność" (Caring for Fertility) (0001002112), Instytut Rozwoju Płodnictwa i Ginekologii (Institute for the Development of Obstetrics and Gynaecology) (0000418275): Narodowy Instytut Wolności https://sprawozdaniaapp.niw.gov.pl/ ; Fertilitas Servicios De Naprotecnologia (B87954046): Company register https://sede.registradores.org/site/invitado/mercantil/deposito-cuentas-solicitud
TFP Organizations	Croatia, Estonia, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia	"Udruga Vigilare (10032997386), Zaklada Vigilare (82093960280): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; SAPTK (Foundation for Protection of Family And Tradition) (90010611): Business registry https://ariregister.rik.ee/eng/company ; Fédération Pro Europa Christiana (FPEC) (Federation for Christian Europe) (519094981), Avenir De La Culture (Future Of Culture) (344030002), Droit De Naître (Right To Be Born) (407650175): The Business Directory https://annuaire-entreprises.data.gouv.fr/ ; Irish Society for Christian Civilisation (381474): Register of Charities https://www.gov.ie/en/departments-of-justice/services/search-or-download-the-public-register-of-charities/ ; Všj Krikščioniškosios Kultūros Institutas (Christian Cultural Institute): Centre of Registers https://www.registrucentras.lt/ ; Stichting Civita Christiana (Civita Christiana Foundation): Homepage https://civitaschristiana.nl/anbi ; Stowarzyszenie Kultury Chrześcijańskiej Im. Ks. Piotra Skargi (Rev. Piotr Skarga Christian Culture Association) (0000112287) (incomplete); Ministry of Justice https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/ ; Nadácia Civitas Christiana (53542312), Nadácia Slovakia Christiana (50468332): Register of financial statements https://www.registeruz.sk/ ;
Abstinence education / Anti-CSE Lobbies	Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy	Udruga "Teen Star" (82293818525): Business registry https://www.companywall.hr/ ; Cler Amour et Famille (775664709): National organization registry https://annuaire-entreprises.data.gouv.fr/ ; SOS Education: Homepage https://soseducation.org/hous-connaître/#rapport-activer ; TeenSTAR Magyarország Egyesület (01-02-0017300): Register of NGOs https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzeke ; Teen Star Italia (97722950017): RUNTS https://servizi.lavoro.gov.it/runts/it-it/Ricerca-enti .
Other anti-abortion lobbies	Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	Hnutí Pro život Cr (Movement for Life of the Czech Republic) (46260358): Ministerstvo spravedlnosti České republiky https://or.justice.cz/ias/ui/rejstrik ; Retten til Liv (Right to live): Homepage https://rettentiliv.dk/hvem-er-vi/organisation/budget-og-regnskab/ ; Alliance Vita (Life alliance) (398966358): National organization registry https://annuaire-entreprises.data.gouv.fr/ ; Ja zum Leben (Yes to life) (incomplete): Homepage https://ja-zum-leben.de/startseite/aktuelles/ ; Movimento per la Vita Italiano (Movement for life): Homepage https://www.mpv.org/bilancio-sociale/ and https://www.mpv.org/trasparenza/ ; Stowarzyszenie Marsz Niepodległości ("March of Independence" Association) (0000406677): Narodowy Instytut Wolności https://sprawozdaniaapp.niw.gov.pl/ ; Forum Zivota (Life Forum) (31815839 and 45739358): Register of financial statements https://www.registeruz.sk/ ; Zavod Iskreni (Institute Sincere - for the Culture of Life) (2262983000): Business registry https://www.companywall.si/ ; Fund. Universitaria San Pablo (CEU) (public funding only, incomplete): Media report Trujillo, A. M. C., Noemí López. (2021). Las subvenciones que reciben los centros que aparecen en el sobre del aborto de Madrid. Newtral. https://www.newtral.es/subvenciones-aborto-madrid-sobre-dinero-publico/20211214/ .
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)	EU	Homepage: https://www.comece.eu/press-office/annual-reports/ .
European far-right political parties and their foundations	EU	European Christian Political Party (ECP; former ECPM) and Sallux, European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and New Direction Foundation, Patriots.eu (former Identity and Democracy) and Identity and Democracy Foundation, European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/political-parties-and-foundations/audit-reports-and-donations .
World Youth Alliance Europe	EU, Croatia	World Youth Alliance Europe (761301733102-03) EU Transparency Register: https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/datacard/world-youth-alliance---eu-rope?rid=761301733102-03 ; SSM Hrvatska (WYA Croatia) (93537511521), SSM JI EUROPE (World Youth Alliance Southeast Europe) (50632350819): Business Register https://www.companywall.hr .
European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ)	France	EU Transparency Register (359785447255-67): https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/datacard/european-centre-for-law-and-justice?rid=359785447255-67 .
Fondation Jérôme Lejeune	France	SIREN: 407796556: Official journal https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/pages/accueil/ .
Fonds de dotation GT Editions	France	SIREN: 800366072: Official Journal https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/pages/accueil/ .
Fonds de dotation Stella Domini	France	SIREN 843697327: Official journal https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/pages/accueil/ .
Fonds du Bien Commun	France	SIREN 894156652: Official journal https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/pages/accueil/ .
Institut des Sciences Sociales, Economiques et Politiques (ISSEP) (Institute of Social, Economic and Political Sciences)	France	SIREN 834901365: Official Journal https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/page/associations-recherche/?disjunctive.source&sort=cronosort&q=834901365&q.titre=#resultare .
Barankovics István Foundation	Hungary	Orac publishing: https://jogkodex.hu/doc/6955241 .
Batthyány Lajos Foundation (Danube Institute)	Hungary	Homepage: https://bla.hu/kozerdeku/ .

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FINANCIAL DATA SOURCES

Organization / Group	Region / Country	Source of information
Bethlen Gabor Alapkezelő Zrt (Bethlen Gabor Fund Management)	Hungary	Homepage: https://bgazrt.hu/kozerdeku-adatok/kozerdekbol-nyilvanos-adat/beszamolok/ .
Center for Fundamental Rights	Hungary	Jogállam És Igazság Nonprofit (01 09 174001): Company Information Service https://e-beszamolo.im.gov.hu/oldal/beszamolo_kereses .
Political Network for Values Hungary Association	Hungary	Politikai Hálózat az Értékekért Magyarország Egyesület (01 02 0017430): Register of NGOs https://birosag.hu/ugyfeleknek/civil-szervezetek/civil-szervezetek-nevjegyzeke .
Human Life International	Ireland	RCN 20029814: Charities Regulator https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en/information-for-the-public/search-the-register-of-charities/sonra%C3%AD-carthanachta/?srchstr=human%20life&regid=20029814 .
Knights of Saint Columbanus	Ireland	RCN 20009182: Charities Regulator https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/en/information-for-the-public/search-the-register-of-charities .
Fondazione Magna Carta	Italy	Homepage: https://fondazionemagnacarta.it/relazioni-annuali-fondazione-magna-carta/ .
Fondazione Vita Nova	Italy	Homepage: https://www.fondazionevitanova.it/bilancio-sociale-fondazione/ .
ProVita e Famiglia	Italy	Homepage: https://www.provitaefamiglia.it/trasparenza .
Christian Council International (CCI)	Netherlands	Homepage: https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/nl/over-ons/fiscale-informatie-anbi-501c3/anbi and https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/nl/programma/doorlopend-programma (project up to 2025).
Talenting Foundation	Netherlands	Homepage: https://www.talenting.com/nl/ and https://talentingfoundation.com/beleidsdocumenten/ .
Collegium Intermarium	Poland	Fundacja Edukacja do Wartości (Education for Values foundation) (0000834289): Ministry of Justice https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/ .
Instytut na rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris	Poland	EU Transparency Register (206499215012-94): https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/ .
Lux Veritas Foundation / TV Trwam (Fundacja Lux Veritatis)	Poland	KRS 0000139773 : Ministry of Justice https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/ .
Polish anti-gender organizations	Poland	Fundacja Centrum Życia i Rodziny (Foundation for Family and Fatherland) (0000444175); Fundacja Małych Stópek (Little feet foundation) (0000417099); Fundacja Nasza przyszłość (Our future foundation) (0000091141); Fundacja Pro – Prawo do życia (Pro Foundation – Right to Life) (0000233080); Fundacja św. Benedykta (St Benedict Foundation) (0000239464); Polskie Stowarzyszenie Obrońców Życia Człowieka (Polish Association of Human Life Defenders) (0000140437): Ministry of Justice and People's Institute of Freedom https://ekrs.ms.gov.pl/rdf/pd/search_df and https://sprawozdaniaopp.niw.gov.pl/ .
Fundação AJB – A Junção do Bem (AJB Foundation – The Junction of Good)	Portugal	Homepage: https://ajuncaodobem.pt/documentos-legais/ .
CitizenGo and HazteOír	Spain	Homepage: https://prensa.hazteoir.com/memorias/ and https://www.citizenngo.org/hazteoir/nuestras-cuentas .
Fundación Disenso	Spain	Homepage: https://fundaciondisenso.org/transparencia/ .
Other Europe		
Aide suisse pour la mère et l'enfant (ASME)	Switzerland	Homepage: https://www.asme.ch/documents-asme/ .
ADF-UK	UK	Charity 1173195: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Anscombe Bioethics Centre	UK	Charity 274327: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Billy Graham Evangelistic Association	UK	Charity 233381: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Christian Broadcasting Network	UK	Charity 1101659: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Christian Institute	UK	Charity 1004774: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .

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FINANCIAL DATA SOURCES

Organization / Group	Region / Country	Source of information
Christian Medical Fellowship	UK	Charity 1131658: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Evangelicals Now	UK	Charity 296794: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Heritage Foundation	UK	Charity 1102997: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Hintze Charitable Foundation	UK	Charity 1101842: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Lawyers Christian Fellowship	UK	Charity 1139281: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
LGB Alliance	UK	Charity 1194148: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Life 2009	UK	Charity 1128355: Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Reintegrative therapy lobby	UK, Northern Ireland (UK)	Core Issues Trust (NI606015): Charity register https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-details/?regId=105095&subId=0 ; The Evangelical Alliance (212325), True Freedom Trust (1159015); Living Out (1165572); Anglican Mainstream (5467339): Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/ .
NFP / Napro Organizations	UK, Scotland (UK)	Fertility Care Scotland (SC051574): Charity Register https://www.oscr.org.uk/ ; FertilityCare Centres Great Britain (1187203), International Institute for Restorative Reproductive Medicine (1189777), Natural Family Planning Teachers Association (04130579): Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search .
Other CPCs	UK, Northern Ireland (UK)	Amber Crisis Pregnancy Care (1143127); Choices Islington (1124209); Image UK (1141832); Life 2009 Ltd (1128355); Pregnancy Centres Network (1164610); Pregnancy Crisis Care (Plymouth & SE Cornwall) (1153438); Pregnancy Crisis Helpline (1141832); Rachel's Vineyard (1191428); Seen Ltd (formerly Crossway Pregnancy Crisis Centre) (1148979); The Good Counsel Network (1096617): Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/ ; Stanton Healthcare Belfast (NIC104552): Charity Commission of Northern Ireland https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-details/ .
Various small and microentities combined	UK, Scotland (UK), Serbia	Alive to the World Educational Charity (1184798), Family Education Trust (1070500), Lovewise (1098210): Charity Register https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search ; Christian Values in Education (SC045125): Charity Register https://www.oscr.org.uk/ ; Centar za Bebe (Baby Centre) (107708062): Business Registry https://www.companywall.rs/ .
Russia		
Anti-abortion lobbies	Russia	«Спаси жизнь» (SOS-Life) (1217700431233); «За жизнь» (Pro-Life nonprofit) (1105200002160): Tbank Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
CPCs	Russia	Благотворительный Фонд «Женщины За Жизнь» (Pro-life Women Charitable Fund) (1105200002160); Дом для мамы (Mothers' House) (1197700009396): Tbank Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
Malofeev-affiliated organizations	Russia	Благотворительный Фонд ""Царьград"" (Tsargrad Charitable Fund) (9703052739); ""Царьград Медиа"" (Tsargrad Media) (7714874913); Общероссийская Общественная Организация ""Царьград"" (Tsargrad All-Russian Public Organization) (1167700052618); Благотворительный Фонд Святителя Василия Великого (St Basil Charitable Fund) (1075000006905): Tbank Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
National Centre for Missing Children	Russia	АОГ "НМЦППИПД" (1147799018795): Business registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
Orthodox television fund (TV Spas)	Russia	Фонд православного телевидения (1037739773026): Business registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
Presidential Grants Fund	Russia	Homepage, search by abortion keyword: https://президентскиегранты.рф/public/home/about .
Various small and microentities combined	Russia	Славянский правовой центр (Slavic Center for Law and Justice) (1037725047601 and 1037739391447); Фонд Архистратига Божия Михаила (Archangel Michael Foundation) (1147799015858): Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
World Russian People's Council	Russia	Всемирный Русский Народный Собор (1037700195389): Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ .
Yakunin-affiliated organizations	Russia	Фонд Андрея Первозванного (St Andrew the First-Called Fund) (1027746000446); Фонд Целевого Капитала "Истоки" (Istoki Endowment Fund) (1137799004067): Business Registry https://www.tbank.ru/business/contractor/ ; Фонд Содействия Развитию Сотрудничества Между Народами "Общественный Форум "Диалог Цивилизаций" (Public Forum Dialogue of Civilizations) (defunct) (1077799020628): Archived homepage https://web.archive.org/web/20210928130546/http://doc-research.org/about-us/ .
US Spending in Europe		
US Christian Right organizations	USA	40 Days for Life, Acton Institute, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF International), American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ-ECLJ), Capitol Ministries, Cato Institute, Christian Broadcasting Network, Donors Trust, Family Watch International, Federalist Society, Fellowship Foundation, Heartbeat International, Heritage Foundation, Human Life, International Leadership Institute, Life International, Population Research Institute, Foundation for a Christian Civilization (American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property), World Youth Alliance: ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/ .

Explanation: Smaller and less prominent organizations are grouped by common theme (e.g. CPC) as seen in the abridged financial findings. For "Various small and microentities combined" group, heterogeneous organizations with total income US\$ < 1M between 2019 - 2023 are included. In the Sources of information tab, individual organizations' identifiers are added for business/NGO registry lookup, followed by a URL of the corresponding platform. EU Transparency Register and some national data accessed through third-party platforms. Data collected between November 2023 and April 2025.



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