

Beat: Politics

## **Pablo Casado, new leader of the Spanish conservatives**

### **Elected president of the Popular Party**

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**USPA NEWS** - Pablo Casado Blanco (37) was elected on Saturday president of the conservative Popular Party (PP its Spanish acronym) to replace former Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who was evicted from the Government of Spain by a motion of censure and resigned as leader of the Conservatives. Casado won to the former vice president of the Spanish Government, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría, by 1,701 votes against the 1,250 obtained by his rival and became the youngest leader in the history of the main right-wing political party in Spain.

Pablo Casado and Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría were the two most voted candidates in the first round of the primaries organized by the Popular Party for the first time in its history. Both arrived on Friday at the extraordinary congress of the conservatives feeling winners and with possibilities of being elected. However, on Saturday, in the voting of the delegates, the young candidate won over his rival with a speech in which he claimed the recovery of the essence of the conservative party and underscored the values that he promises to implement in politics: the family, the unity of Spain, the fight against terrorism and individual freedom. "If I win, nobody loses," said the candidate. "Here everything that is on the right of the Socialist Party fits." He promised to renew the party, currently involved in several legal proceedings for corruption, and noted that "we are the party of the early-rising Spain, of the self-employed, of the pensioners who get up early to take their grandchildren to school and want a decent pension, and the young people."

The new president of the Popular Party had a memory for his predecessors in office. "A person who is not proud of his past can not aspire to lead a political party," he said and quoted former presidents Manuel Fraga, José María Aznar and Mariano Rajoy. The latter said on Friday: "Today I am dismissing as president of the Popular Party. It is not easy, because I have a lot to thank. What you have given me more than I could ever imagine a young opposition student, a fan of politics, who pasted posters at night." Rajoy added: "I have the honor of having done something good for our country. We can say with legitimate pride that we leave a better Spain than we are. We have completely turned around the economic crisis and that is in the credit of the PP. "

Among the challenges of the new president of the Spanish conservatives is the recovery of credibility as a party. The Popular Party has lost more than six million votes in recent years and, after being evicted from the Government, has lost the first place in the preferences of the voters, since it regains the Socialist Party. Corruption has done great damage to the conservatives and, while it is true that all current Spanish political parties have cases of corruption in their ranks and that the Socialist Party is, by volume, the most corrupt in the history of Spain, no party has done corruption as much as the Popular Party. Approaching society and cleaning up its image is the main challenge of Pablo Casado, who until now was vice secretary of communication of the conservatives. In the next legislative elections he will be a candidate for Prime Minister.

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