



DIRECTORIO
LEGISLATIVO

FORTALECEMOS
LAS DEMOCRACIAS
DE AMÉRICA LATINA

August 2023

Presidential and Legislative Elections in Ecuador

Pre electoral report



General Summary

On August 20, Ecuadorians will elect president, vice-president and 137 assembly members. The elections will follow Guillermo Lasso's decision to apply the constitutional mechanism known as "Muerte Cruzada" (Cross death in English) to dissolve the National Assembly and end his own mandate, which forced the country to call for a new early election.

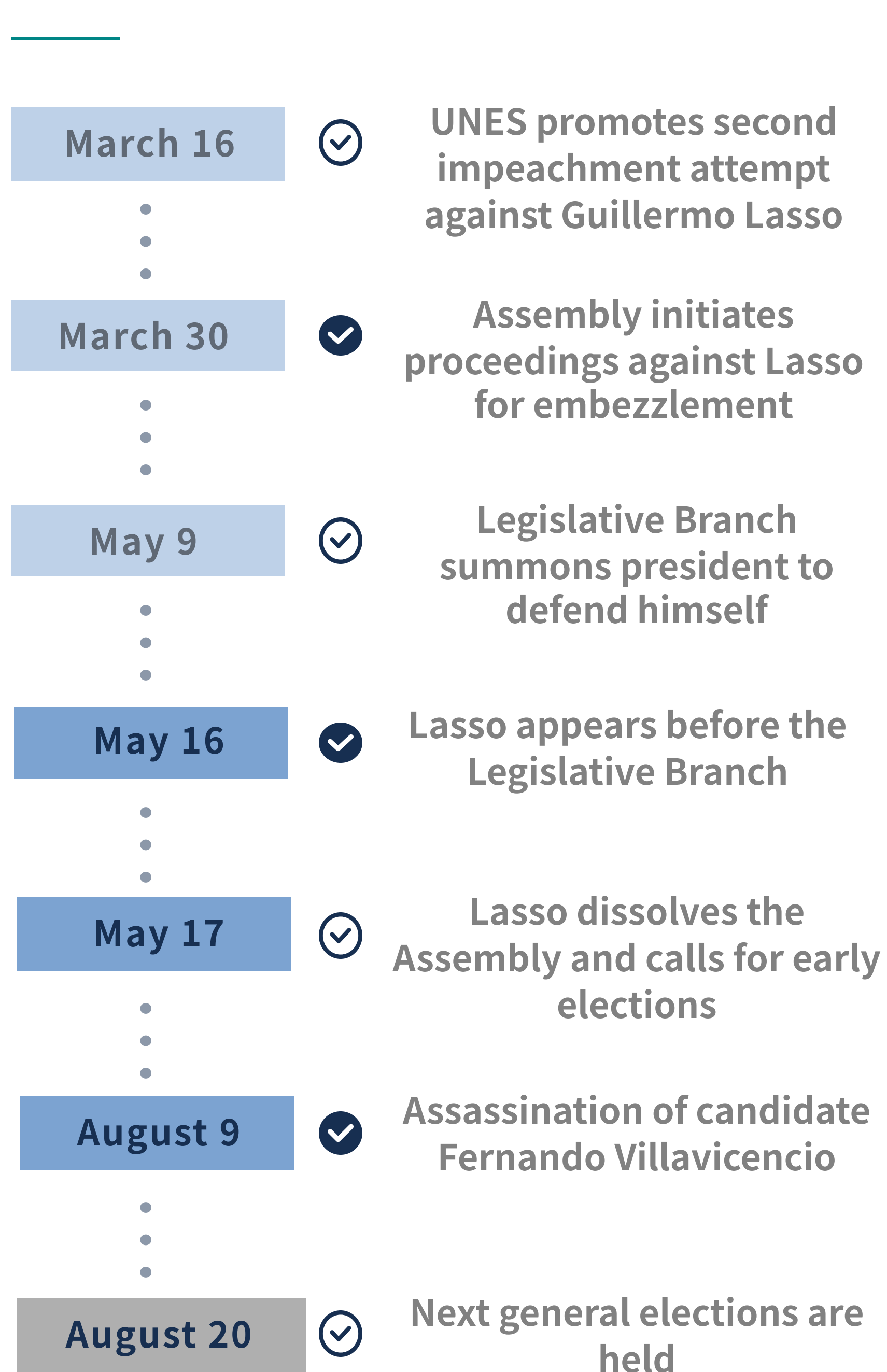
The next president of Ecuador will have a term of 18 months, during which he will have to address the central concerns of the population, particularly the growing wave of violence and insecurity. It should be noted that polls do not anticipate a first round victory for any candidate. If these estimates are confirmed, there would be a run-off election in October. The candidate for Revolución Ciudadana, Luisa González, leads the voting preferences.

At the same time, the structure foreseen for the next National Assembly is similar to the legislative one prior to its dissolution imposed by Lasso, characterized by a significant dispersion of political groupings without the possibility of establishing their own agenda. However, it is highly probable that the Revolución Ciudadana movement will be the space that will break through with the largest bench.

After the elections, the Actuemos movement and other legislative coalitions are expected to win a considerable number of seats, although they would not reach a strong majority to impose their agenda. In this context, it would be necessary for them to establish connections with traditional political spaces, such as the Partido Social Cristiano, in order to create alliances that would facilitate the implementation of their legislative agendas. In addition, this collaboration could help build a legislative majority to act as a counterweight to the Revolución Ciudadana movement.

Under this scenario, the next president will need to establish negotiations and consensus among the various political forces in order to assure his government plan. The ability of these emerging coalitions to collaborate and forge agreements will largely determine the effectiveness of the decision-making process and the accomplishment of concrete goals for the country.

How did this election Sunday come about?



After a first failed attempt in 2022, in March the political movement allied to former president Rafael Correa, Unión por la Esperanza (UNES), promoted a new impeachment process against president Guillermo Lasso under the charge of alleged crimes against public administration. The request was supported by opposition legislators of the Partido Social Cristiano (PSC), a fraction of the Izquierda Democrática (ID) and Pachakutik.

In the midst of the impeachment process, the Assembly summoned the president to exercise his right of defense against the accusations of embezzlement. Lasso attended in mid-May, however he did not succeed in dismantling the process against him.

The day after appearing before the Assembly, the agreements of the different blocks were in favor of Lasso's dismissal. Faced with this scenario, the president decided to appeal to a constitutional mechanism (called "muerte cruzada") to end the legislators' mandate and bring forward the elections which were scheduled for 2025. Following this decision, elections were called for August 20, with a possible run-off on October 15.

The purpose of the measure was to decompress the political scenario that seemed irreconcilable between the ruling party and the opposition, however, far from that, it resulted in an increase of the political and social conflict. Once the campaign began, the political climate increased in intensity and violence. The highest peak of this climate was the assassinations of the presidential candidate for Movimiento Construye Fernando Villavicencio and the leader of Revolución Ciudadana Pedro Briones for reasons that have not yet been clarified but identified by the ruling class as political crimes.

In this context, this weekend's elections are taking place.

Candidates and Proposals

Luisa González - Revolución Ciudadana

She is the only woman among the presidential candidates and is part of a progressive left-wing political movement associated with the figure of former President Correa.

She was a public official under the administration of Rafael Correa (2008-2017), serving in various high-ranking ministerial portfolios.



Proposals

- Generate taxes to large transnational platforms.
- Increase export volumes.
- Maintain the system of free medicines for retirees.
- Promote the energy and mining sector.
- Rebuild and recover the credibility of Justice.

Jan Topic - Alianza por un País sin Miedo

Businessman and "outsider" in Ecuadorian politics who seeks to offer a generational change and political renovation.

In ideological terms, he defines himself as right-wing in terms of market regulation, application of economic austerity, but left-wing in terms of social issues



Proposals

- Creation of tax incentives for employers
- Promotion of public-private investments based on tax incentives.
- Promotion of environmental conservation
- Reduction of the size of the State in terms of secretariats and ministries.
- Simplification of the tax system

Candidatos y Propuestas

Otto Sonnenholzner - Alianza Actuemos

He was vice-president during the government of Lenín Moreno. He is seeking votes from other members of the business elite, as well as from right-wing economic liberals.

Also, his government plan is focused on citizen security and economic recovery.



Proposals

- Promote orange economy as an axis of sustainable development.
- Develop employment programs for young people.
- Protect and strengthen dollarization
- Promote the reactivation of private investment.
- Strengthen public security, access to justice and transparency.

Yaku Pérez - Claro que se Puede

Left-wing indigenous leader. He was president of the Confederation of the Peoples of the Kichwa Nation (ECUARUNARI in Spanish) between 2013 and 2019.

He is running for president for the second time, with the alliance formed by the Partido Socialista, Unidad Popular and Democracia Sí.

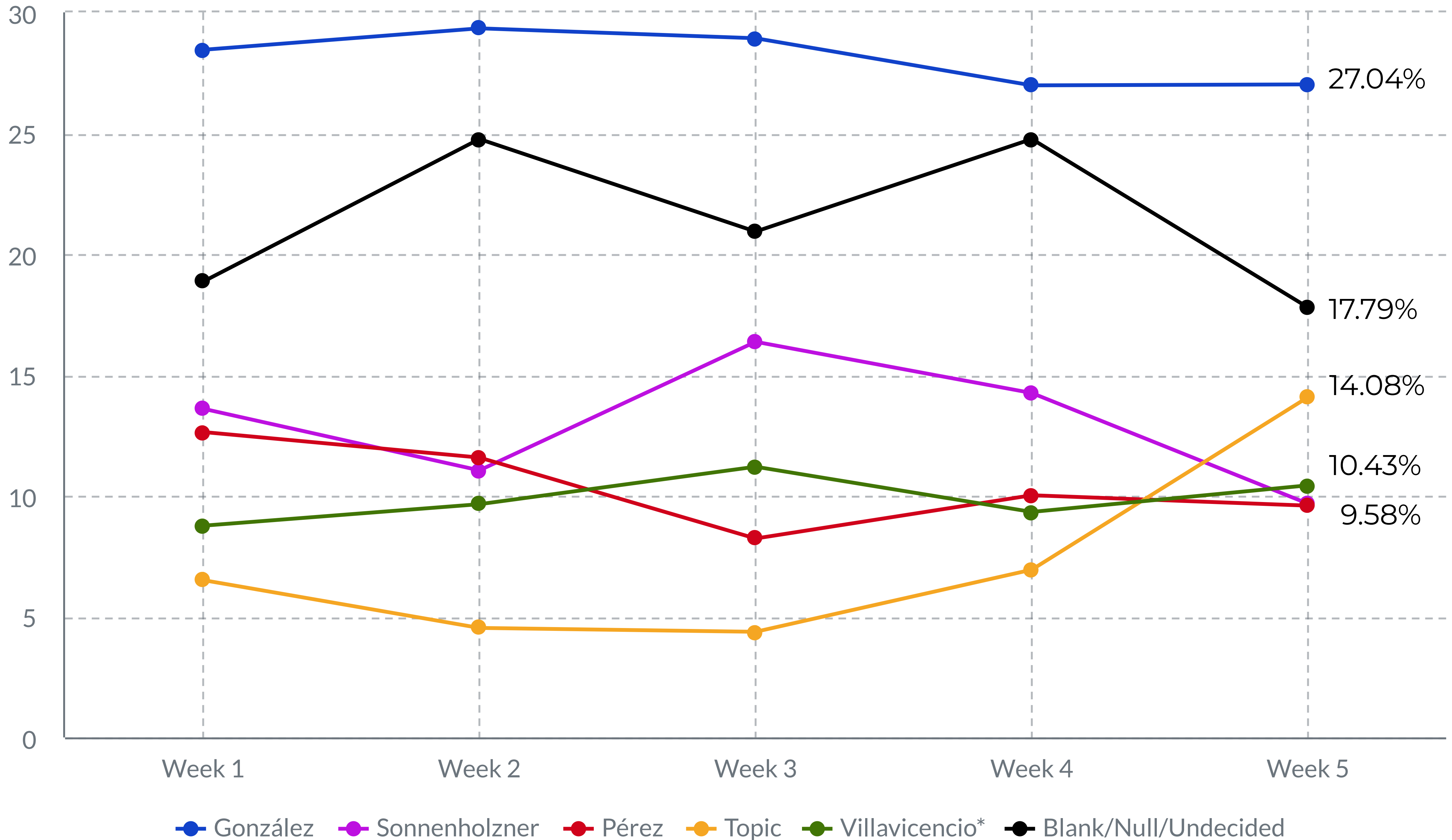


Proposals

- Promote new sources of employment.
- Promote the separation of the banking system from the State.
- Protect nature, water and biodiversity.
- Creation of a new ethical, social, political and economic pact expressed in a National Constituent Assembly.
- Increase and expand tax collection

What are the surveys saying?

Projections

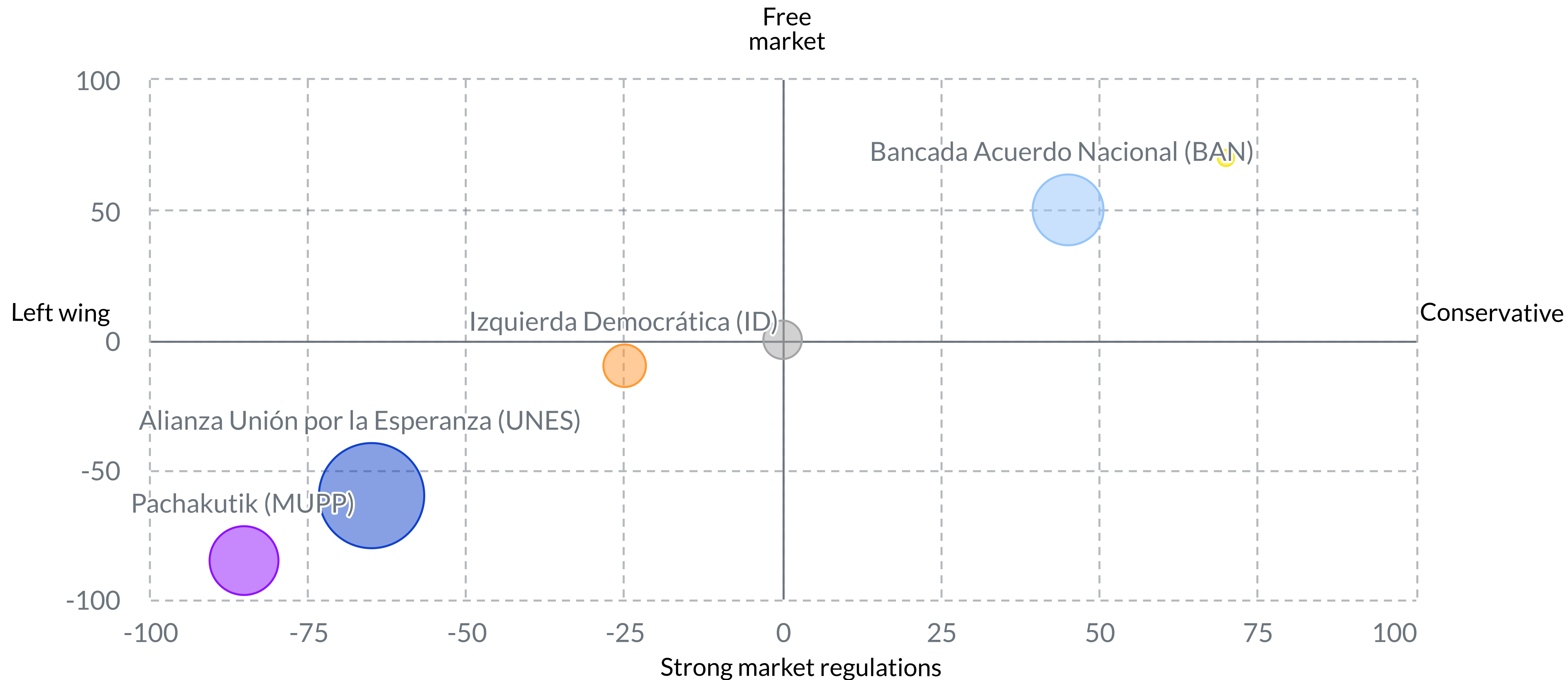


Source: Own elaboration
*He was assassinated in a public act last August 9

Projections

- Surveys show that **Luisa Gonzalez, candidate of Revolución Ciudadana is leading the polls**, despite a slight drop in the last few days. Although she leads the space, she is far from achieving the necessary votes to win in the first round.
- A great unknown on Sunday may be **who will win the second place**. Four candidates are contesting within a margin of less than three percent for the second place and with it to enter an eventual runoff. It should be noted that among these candidates, the best positioned, with a very small lead, is **Jan Topic**. In turn, Topic has in his favor that in recent weeks the trend in the polls has been increasing (unlike the other candidates).
- **The polls show that none of the candidates would reach the threshold of 40% of the valid votes**, together with a difference of more than ten percentage points over the second to win on Sunday. Thus, there is a **high chance of run-off election in October**.
- Regarding the level of decision, **polls indicate that a considerable percentage of the population has not yet defined its vote**, which suggests a political panorama susceptible to changes. On the other hand, there could be significant transformations in electoral preferences that were not anticipated by the polls, due to the recent impact of the assassination of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio.
- What every political space in contention will have to consider is that the results of the **legislative elections will be a central element to take into account when designing its governance plan**, especially if a similar dynamic to the one faced by President Lasso during his term in office is presented. The lack of a parliamentary majority and the inability to generate consensus limited the Executive's ability to promote key initiatives in his administration. Therefore, the **outcome of the composition of the Assembly will be a determining factor in the future president's ability to carry out his agenda and fulfill his proposals** in the short period of his term.

What was the ideological profile of the dissolved Assembly?



* The parties were placed based on their positioning in relation to economic and social issues.

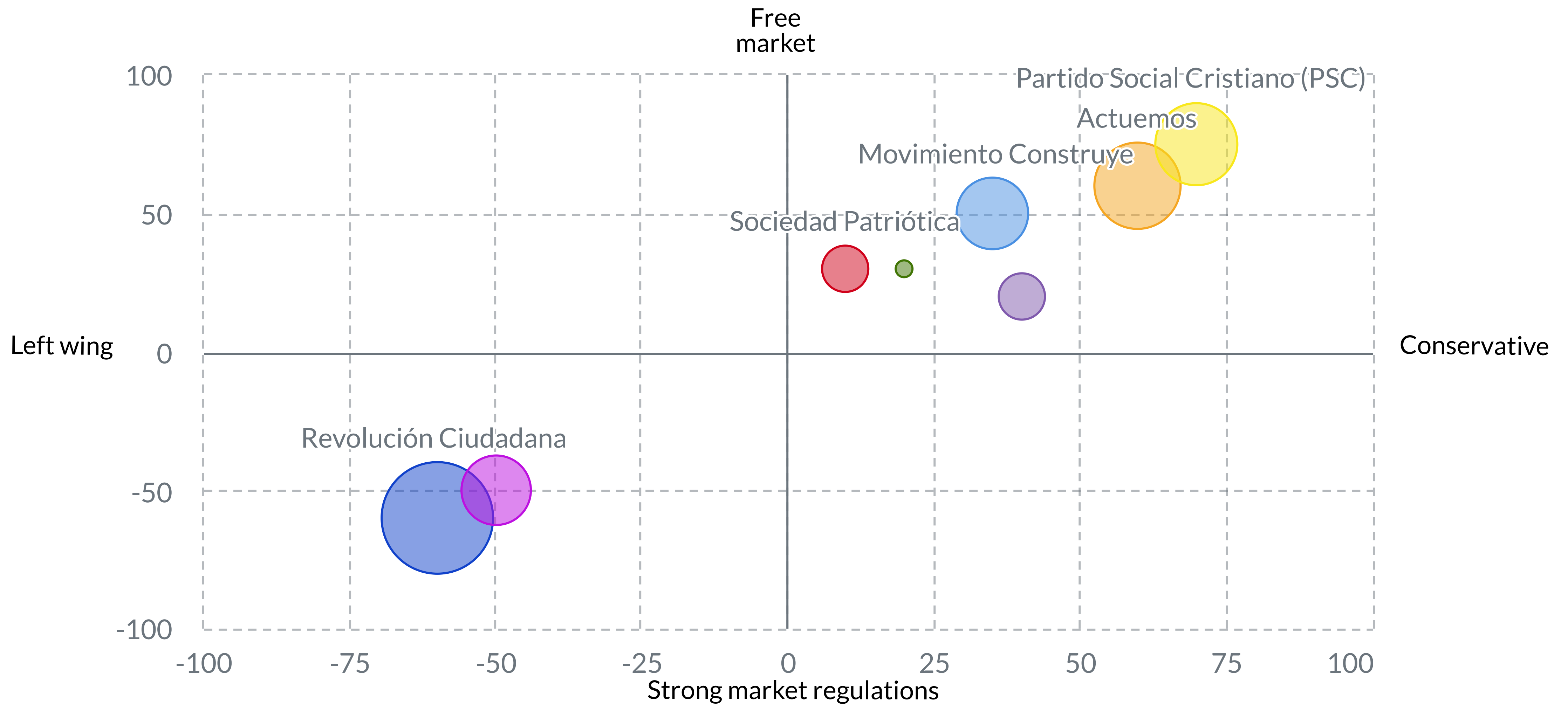
* The size of each circle matches the number of legislators elected for the period 2021-2025.

Before its dissolution, the Ecuadorian National Assembly reflected a **diverse political spectrum in which various ideological forces converged**. The parliamentary dynamics were characterized by the presence of multiple parties and coalitions representing **center, left and right tendencies, in which no single force was able to impose its particular priorities**.

What was the ideological profile of the dissolved Assembly?

- Among the more progressive left-wing factions were the **Pachakutik party** and the **Unión por la Esperanza (UNES) party**, backed by former President Rafael Correa, while a more centrist faction was represented by the Izquierda Democrática. Alongside them, there were other groups advocating more conservative approaches in fiscal and economic terms, such as the Partido Social Cristiano and the pro-government Creando Oportunidades movement.
- Although the **government succeeded in grouping the smaller movements** present in the National Assembly and forming the **coalition known as the Bancada del Acuerdo Nacional**, the Executive was unable to generate consensus with other sectors, which limited its ability to govern and promote its own legislative agenda.
- As can be seen in the graph, the **ideological distance of the majority forces in the National Assembly is an explanatory factor regarding the complexity Guillermo Lasso had to deal with in order to build consensus around his government agenda**. Being his bench the only one located in the conservative and liberal pro-market portion, the construction of agreements became more complex, and the president had to give in on multiple provisions of his government agenda in order to achieve the legislative approval of part of his campaign proposals. The early end of his administration could also be explained, among many other factors, by this ideological distance and his inability to build consensus with these other parties.
- In any case, it is important to point out that, in spite of the ideological divergences and the recurrent traditional confrontations between the left and right sectors, the debates to remove Lasso from office had the effect of leaving these discrepancies in the background and consolidating a solid opposition with the capacity to remove the president from office. In this way, it became clear that, **depending on the urgency and relevance of the situation, parties are capable of forging alliances with opposing political formations in order to promote their own interests**.

What might the new Assembly look like?



* Parties were ranked based on their position on economic and social issues.

*The size of each circle corresponds to the voting intention of each coalition according to an average of polls.

Sunday's elections will be distinguished by an electoral offer predominantly tilted towards the pro-free market quadrant and with conservative tendencies. In spite of this inclination, polls suggest that the distribution of seats could be mostly in favor of the more progressive wing of the political spectrum, due to the high probability that the Revolución Ciudadana movement will manage to form a considerable bench in the Assembly.

Legislative Branch: Projections



- New electoral coalitions with a right-wing orientation (such as the Actuemos and Por un País sin Miedo alliances) have also emerged, which have gained relevance in the electoral political context in the absence of candidacies from traditional parties such as the current ruling CREO, Izquierda Democrática or Pachakutik. This trend underlines the changing dynamics and the search for strategic affinities between different political forces with the purpose of strengthening their positions and maximizing their representation in the Legislative.
- The formation of these coalitions reflects the complexity of the future political arena. In principle, the new Assembly will have a more fragmented profile and a more marked polarization between two antagonistic tendencies. The non-existence of center spaces that could act as communicators between both poles could generate a new complexity for the new president and his caucus to move forward with the approval of their legislative agenda.

Political key leaders

These elections are the result of a process of deterioration in the relations between the National Assembly and the Executive Branch. Gradually, blocks that had few communicating vessels among themselves were aligning with the opposition to President Guillermo Lasso in a scarce repository of consensus in other thematic agendas. The next president will have to address the bond with legislators in order to avoid a similar scenario.

In this sense, some of the possible legislators of the new Assembly will have greater influence with the possibility of building agreements between benches and powers.

The main **political articulators aspiring to reelection (with concrete chances for this to happen) are the following:**



Pierina Correa: She is sister of former President Rafael Correa and current national candidate representing the Revolución Ciudadana movement. Correa announced that the political movement will seek to promote the legislative agenda of UNES that was "pending", including bills aimed at expanding universal coverage for groups such as informal traders, artists and transporters, among others.



Marcela Holguín: She began her political career in 2017 when she ran as a candidate for Assemblywoman representing what at that time constituted the Alianza PAIS movement and this time she is running as a contender for Revolución Ciudadana. Before the closing of the Assembly, Holguín was the first vice-president of the legislative body.



Esteban Torres Cobo: In the previous legislative period, he served as coordinator of the Partido Social Cristiano (PSC) bench. During his time as legislator, Torres was elected as second vice-president. In addition, Torres also played a role as interpellant in the impeachment process against Lasso.

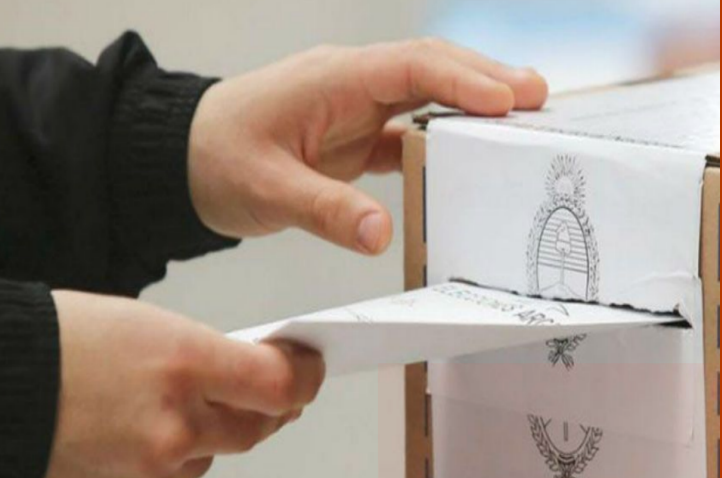
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