

# [***Argentine president begins unusual visit to Spain, snubbing officials and courting the far-right***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C26-KB41-JC5B-G16N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Even before kicking off a three-day visit to Madrid on Friday, Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei stirred controversy, accusing the socialist government of bringing “poverty and death” to Spain and weighing in on [*corruption allegations against*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-politics-pedro-sanchez-wife-d418bdf1c934d44d11772b5b30d8ad6e) the prime minister's wife.

In such circumstances, a typical visiting head of state may strive to mend fences with diplomacy.

Not Milei. The brash economist has no plans to meet [*Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez*](https://apnews.com/video/spain-government-spain-protests-and-demonstrations-pedro-sanchez-national-21d64eaa81df451492469f7ed24e7609) during his three days in the Spanish capital — nor the Spanish king, nor any other government official. Instead, he'll attend a far-right summit Sunday hosted by Sánchez's fiercest political opponent, the Vox party.

The unorthodox visit was business as usual for Milei, a darling of the global far right who has [*bonded with tech billionaire Elon Musk*](https://apnews.com/article/milei-musk-tesla-spacex-argentina-us-texas-economy-7af43102c5dcf5398a97d1010463f5a1) and praised former [*U.S. President Donald Trump*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-javier-milei-democracy-populism-orban-450fed8348769975506d1da5e61da184). Earlier this year on a trip to the United States, Milei steered clear of the White House and took the stage at the Conservative Political Action Conference, or CPAC, where he railed against abortion and socialism and [*shared a bear hug with Trump*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-milei-cpac-argentina-biden-f8e97d401a13318f8cc55faf29021030).

Milei presented his 2022 book, “The Way of the Libertarian,” in Madrid Friday at a literary event organized by La Razón, a conservative Spanish newspaper.

The book — withdrawn from circulation in Spain earlier this month because the back-flap biography erroneously said Milei had earned a doctorate — traces his meteoric rise in ***politics*** from eccentric TV personality to national lawmaker and outlines his radical free-market economic ideas.

To thunderous applause, Milei condemned socialism as “an intellectual fraud and a horror in human terms.”

“The good thing is that the spotlight is shining on us everywhere and we are making the reds (leftists) uncomfortable all over the world,” Milei said.

He took the opportunity to promote the results of his [*harsh austerity campaign in Argentina*](https://apnews.com/article/argentina-inflation-milei-currency-cuts-peso-devaluation-beddb4f7fd0021463653af37908bcb78), celebrating a [*decline in monthly inflation*](https://apnews.com/article/argentina-inflation-milei-single-digits-3cf0adca2cdf911fb04a06c3e9c6880d) in April though making no mention of the Buenos Aires subway fares that [*more than tripled*](https://apnews.com/article/argentina-buenos-aires-subway-aa1e5b5534f4d26dbd13a4ed55278aa1) overnight.

Repeating a campaign pledge to eliminate Argentina’s central bank — without giving further details — Milei promised to make Argentina “the country with the most economic freedom in the world.”

At the event Milei gave a huge hug to his ideological ally Santiago Abascal, the leader of the hard-right Vox party and the only politician with whom Milei has actual plans to meet in Madrid.

The Vox summit Sunday seeks to bring together far-right figures from across Europe in a bid to rally the party's base ahead of European parliamentary elections in June. Milei described his attendance a “moral imperative." He also has plans to meet Spanish business executives Saturday.

Tensions between Milei and Sánchez have simmered since the moment the Spanish prime minister declined to congratulate the libertarian economist on his shock election victory last November.

But hostility exploded earlier this month when one of Sánchez’s ministers suggested Milei had taken narcotics. The Argentine presidency responded with an unusually harsh official statement accusing Sánchez’s government of “endangering the middle class with its socialist policies that bring nothing but poverty and death.”

The lengthy government statement also accused Sánchez of having “more important problems to deal with, such as the corruption accusations against his wife."

The allegations of influence peddling and corruption brought by a right-wing group against Sánchez’s wife, Begoña Gómez, had prompted Sánchez, one of Europe’s longest serving Socialist leaders, [*to consider stepping down*](https://apnews.com/article/spain-politics-pedro-sanchez-wife-d418bdf1c934d44d11772b5b30d8ad6e).

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Associated Press writer Débora Rey contributed to this report.

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