

# The first round of the French general elections: PS in the lead but UMP not so far.

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Results  
1st round

The leftwing came out ahead in the 1st round of the French general elections that took place on 10th June. The Socialist Party (PS) of new President, François Hollande won 29.35% of the vote. His allies in Europe Ecology-the Greens (EELV) won 5.46% of the vote. The Left Front led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon won 6.91%.

The Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the main opposition party won 27.12% of the vote and the National Front (FN), a populist party that stood under the banner "Rassemblement bleu marine" won 13.6%.

The 1st round of the election therefore confirmed the bipolarisation of the French political landscape, notably because of the almost total disappearance of the centre, a long time ally of the right. The two "main" parties achieved high scores, the "small" parties recorded a decline in comparison with their candidate's scores in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last. The National Front, isolated in the political arena, won a much higher score than in the 1st round of the previous general elections on 10th June 2007 (+ 9.48 points) but is nevertheless at a disadvantage if it wants to win seats in the National Assembly on 17th June next.

The Democratic Movement (MoDem) achieved a much lower score than its candidate, François Bayrou, in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last: 1.76 % of the vote. The MoDem leader won 24% of the vote in the 2nd constituency of Pyrénées-Atlantiques and is not at an advantage as in the second round he faces socialist Nathalie Chabanne, who won 35% of the vote and Eric Saubatte (UMP) who won 22%.

The voting method (first past the post in two rounds) is particularly advantageous to the "major" political parties.

Turnout was the lowest ever recorded in a general election in France: 57.23%, i.e. -3.21 points in comparison with the first round of the previous elections on 10th June 2007.

Just a few weeks after the presidential election, the French expressed their weariness (22nd April and 6th May 2012) and took little interest in this election in which there was not much at stake. The parties also chose to undertake local campaigns. Many voters also believed that everything had already been decided. "*The presidential campaign was long; the French felt that they had done the most important part of the work on this occasion. The general election that follows immediately after a Presidential election struggles to generate any interest, passion and therefore motivation,*" declared the Delegate

General Manager, Brice Teinturier, of the pollster Ipsos.

According to a poll by the same institute, those who voted for François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last were the most motivated in the general election, more so than those who had voted for other candidates. 68% of those who voted for François Hollande and 66% of those who voted for Nicolas Sarkozy in the first round of the presidential election turned out to ballot on 10th June against 54% for Marine Le Pen and 53% for François Bayrou.

Quite coherently the electorate confirmed their vote in support of the leftwing candidate on 6th May last. The real question in these elections focused on the extent

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of the victory that had been forecast for the left: confirmation or amplification of François Hollande's victory of 6th May? It is still too early to answer this question since the second round may lead to very different results from those of the first round results. France does seem however to be moving towards a leftwing majority (formed by the PS and the EELV, and possibly without the Left Front), in the National Assembly. The PS, which is riding on the dynamic of François Hollande's election, could win an absolute majority on 17th June even though things are far from being decided yet. *"The French have expressed their support for change and even that they want more of this. They appreciate that promises have been kept,"* declared the PS leader, Martine Aubry. *"Nothing has yet been decided. We must call for mobilisation. We have to boost the left,"* she added. Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (PS) called for high turn out on 17th June next *"so that change can be made long term."*

Several ministers were elected in the first round including Jean-Marc Ayrault in the 3rd constituency of Loire-Atlantique; Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius in the 4th constituency of Seine-Maritime; the Overseas Minister Victorin Lurel in the 4th constituency of Guadeloupe; Transport Minister Frédéric Cuvillier in the 5th constituency of Pas-de-Calais; the delegate Justice Minister Delphine Batho in the 2nd constituency of Deux-Sèvres and the Delegate European Affairs Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve in the 4th constituency of the Manche.

Other ministers, who were struggling before the election, finally emerged in a favourable position after the first round: Culture and Communication Minister, Aurélie Filipetti, in the 1st constituency of Moselle; the Delegate Budget Minister, Jérôme Cahuzac in the 3rd constituency of Lot-et-Garonne; Social Affairs and Healthcare Minister Marisol Touraine, in the 3rd constituency of Indre-et-Loire; the Economy, Finance and External Trade Minister, Pierre Moscovici in the 4th constituency of Doubs; the Delegate Craft Trades, Trade and Tourism Minister Sylvia Pinel in the 2nd constituency of Tarn-et-Garonne and finally the Agriculture and Agro-Food Minister Stéphane Le

Foll in the 4th constituency of Sarthe.

The situation is not so clear for the Delegate Minister for the Handicapped, Marie-Arlette Carlotti in the 5th constituency of Bouches-du-Rhône. In all, the PS has won 22 seats in the first round including Alain Rousset (7th constituency of Gironde), Henri Emmanuelli (3rd constituency of Landes) and Annick Girardin (Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon).

EELV might be disappointed at its results. It did however sign an electoral agreement with the PS in November 2011, which went in its favour since it focused on 63 constituencies, including around thirty which could have been deemed winnable. The party won in 8 constituencies: the 4th of Morbihan, the 9th of Isère, the 6th of Gard, the 10th of Yvelines, the 6th and 10th constituencies of Paris, the 7th of Essonne and the 1st of Loire-Atlantique. The ecologists also have one MP already: Noël Mamère, was re-elected in the 3rd constituency of Gironde with 52% of the vote.

The UMP can be proud of its result, although it has lost ground in comparison with the first round of the previous general election on 10th June 2007, the score is still high. Indeed it came out equal with the PS even though it has won less seats in the 1st round (9 against 22 for the PS). The decline of the MoDem and the FN in comparison with the presidential election has obviously benefited the UMP. The New Centre, led by former Defence Minister (2007-2010) Hervé Morin and an UMP ally, won in 13 constituencies.

*"Everything has not yet been decided"* stresses the UMP's Secretary General Jean-François Copé, who has called for a "general mobilisation" and is asking the electorate *"not to put all of their eggs in one basket."* *"First there has not been a pink wave,"* indicated former Prime Minister (2007-2012) François Fillon. *"The Socialist Party must not win all of the power,"* he added.

Two former ministers in the government led by the latter are in difficult position: Nadine Morano, former Apprenticeship and Professional Training Minister (2010-2012)

in the 5th constituency of Meurthe-et-Moselle, who is lagging behind Dominique Potier and to a lesser degree, former Employment and Healthcare Minister (2010-2012) Xavier Bertrand in the 2nd constituency of Aisne who will be facing socialist Anne Ferreira in the second round.

Finally the former Secretary General of the Presidency of the French Republic (2007-2011) and former Interior, Overseas, Territorial Communities and Immigration Minister (2011-2012), Claude Guéant, will face to rivals on 17th June in the 9th constituency of Hauts-de-Seine: Thierry Solère, a dissident UMP candidate and socialist Martine Even.

*"Tonight given the abstention rate and the profoundly un-democratic way of voting that for the last 25 years has deprived millions of voters of an MP, we confirm our position as the third political force in France,"* declared FN leader, Marine Le Pen, who won the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais with 42.36% of the vote. In the second round she will be facing socialist Philippe Kermel, the Mayor of Carvin, who won 23.5% of the vote. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Left Front leader who was standing in this constituency again lost his wager of beating the FN leader, a battle he already lost in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April when Marine Le Pen clearly beat him. Jean-Luc Mélenchon won 21.48% of the vote on 10th June.

The Left Front came 5th in 5 of the 577 constituencies: the 5th of Puy-de-Dôme, the 2nd of Cher, the 4th and 11th constituencies of Seine-Saint-Denis and the 4th of Hauts-de-Seine. On this point he fared better than the National Front, which apart from in the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais dominated the election in 3 other places: the 2nd constituency of Gard, where Gilbert Collard won 34.57% of the vote, the 3rd of Vaucluse where Marion Maréchal Le Pen, grand-daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen (former FN leader) and Marine Le Pen's niece won 34.63% of the vote and the 3rd constituency of Bouches-du-Rhône.

On 10th June the French living abroad were called to vote to elect their MPs for the first time in the history of the 5th Republic. The way they voted was a source of surprise: the leftwing candidates won in 7 of the 11 constituencies reserved to the French living abroad but turnout was low however, totalling 20.7% on average. The left is running favourite in the second round in the 2nd constituency (Caribbean and Central and South America) where ecologist Sergio Coronado won with 35.88% of the vote); in the 3rd constituency (Northern Europe the Baltic States, UK and Ireland); the 4th constituency (Benelux); the 7th (Germany, Central Europe and the Balkans excluding Greece) and the 9th (North Africa), where Pouria Amirshashi (PS) won 47.23% of the vote.

The rightwing has all of its chances to win in the 6th constituency (Switzerland, Liechtenstein); the 10th (South Africa) and the 11th (Asia-Australasia), where Thierry Mariani (UMP) won 32.59% of the vote. The situation is uncertain in the 1st constituency (USA and Canada), where Corinne Narassiguin (PS) won with 39.65% of the vote ahead of Frédéric Lefebvre (UMP), 22.08% ; the 5th (Spain, Portugal), where the PS and the UMP are running neck and neck and in the 8th (Mediterranean, from Italy to Turkey and Israel) where Daphna Poznanski-Benhaimou (PS) drew ahead with 30.5% of the vote. Valérie Hoffenberg (UMP), who won 22.2% of the vote, does however some chance.

On 10th June the French opted for coherence and realism. François Hollande's electorate chose to provide the new president with a majority; those on the right privileged voting for the UMP candidates which achieved a decent score in the 1st round of the general election. The question before 10th June is still the same though: will the PS win the absolute majority in the National Assembly by itself? The candidates still running have one week in the electoral campaign to convince their voters. The answer will come on 17th June next.

**Results of the 1st round of the general elections on 10th June 2012 in France**

Turnout: 57.23%

	Number of votes won	%	Elected in the first round
<b>Far Left</b>	254 736	0.98	0
<b>Socialist Party (PS)</b>	7 581 803	29.35	22
<b>The Radical Left (PRG)</b>	434 400	1.65	1
<b>The Left Front (FG)</b>	1 802 056	6.91	0
<b>Various Left (DVG)</b>	920 550	3.4	1
<b>Europe Ecology-Greens (EE-LV)</b>	1 418 141	5.46	1
<b>Democratic Movement (MoDem)</b>	603 574	1.76	0
<b>Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)</b>	6 907 541	27.12	9
<b>New Centre(NC)</b>	548 106	2.2	1
<b>Radical Party (PR)</b>	307 090	1.24	0
<b>Various Right (DVD)</b>	1 087 422	3.51	1
<b>National Front (FN)</b>	3 572 536	13.6	0
<b>Various</b>	304 547	1.17	0

Source: <http://elections.interieur.gouv.fr/LG2012/FE.html>

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