

La République en Marche win the absolute majority in the general elections in France

Corinne Deloy

Results

La République en Marche (LREM), (Republic on the Move!) the party of the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron led by Catherine Barbaroux easily won the general election in France in the second round of voting on 18th June in which LREM won 43.06% of the vote and 306 seats, i.e. the absolute majority (289 seats). Its partner MoDem, won 6.06% of the vote and 42 seats. The six ministers in Edouard Philippe's government, who were also candidates, were all elected.

On 18th June a slight rebalancing took place and the defeat of the traditional parties, which had been humiliating in the first round on 11th June, was attenuated somewhat. The Republicans (LR) won 22.23% of the vote and 113 seats (-81 in comparison with the previous general elections on 10th and 17th June 2012). Their allies in the Democratic and Independent Union (UDI) won 3.04% of the vote and 17 seats. The right will therefore be the main opposition force against the LREM within the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament in France.

The Front National (FN) won 8.75% of the vote and 8 seats (+ 6), including Marine Le Pen (who will now leave the European Parliament). It is the first time that the populist party, which is disadvantaged by the majority system, has won seats in electoral duels, and it also is the first time that its leader has won in an election. The Front National, which since 2015, has enjoyed good results in each election and liked to proclaim itself France's leading party, has failed however in its bid to become the major opposition party to the head of State, which it had indeed dreamed of becoming.

France Unbowed (LFI) won 4.86% of the vote, taking 17 seats including Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who will also leave the European Parliament. It will therefore form a parliamentary group without the support of its ally the Communist Party (PCF). The latter, led by Pierre Laurent won 1.20% of the vote and 10 seats. Together, under the banner of the Left Front (FG),

the two parties won 10 seats during the previous elections in June 2012 – this year they have 27. Jean-Luc Mélenchon failed however to take over the Socialist Party (PS) and assert himself as the main leader on the left.

The Socialist Party (PS) for its part is on its knees. With 5.68% of the vote and 29 seats (- 251), it has suffered the worst defeat in its history.

As in the presidential election on 23rd April and 7th May last when each of them witnessed the elimination of their candidate in the first round, the PS and the LR each won the lowest number of seats in their history after this election.

Turnout was also at an historical low: only 42.64% of the electorate went to ballot (- 12.76 points in comparison with the second round of the election in 2012). *"The electorate felt that everything had already been decided after the presidential election and wondered what the point of going to vote was,"* analyses Frédéric Dabi, Deputy Director of the opinion pollster IFOP. This fact that is inherent to the electoral system came in addition to electoral fatigue: the high abstention rate bears witness also to the gulf that exists between the electorate and the country's leaders. Many voters who were against Macron undoubtedly abstained because in the right wing opposition, as well as on the left, they found no alternative that might encourage them to turn out.

Results of the general elections on 11th and 18th June 2017 in France

Turnout: 48.71% (1st round) and 42.64% (2nd round)

Political Parties	Number of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	Number of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)	Number of seats
Far left	175 387	0,77	0	0	0
Communist Party (PCF)	615 503	2,72	217 833	1,20	10
France Unbowed (FI)	2 497 661	11,02	883 786	4,86	17
Socialist Party (PS)	1 685 773	7,44	1 032 885	5,68	29
Radical Left Party (PRG)	106 287	0,47	64 860	0,36	3
Various Left	362 328	1,60	263 619	1,45	12
La République en marche (LREM)	6 390 797	28,21	7 826 432	43,06	308
Democratic Movement (MoDem)	932 229	4,11	1 100 790	6,06	42
Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI)	687 219	3,03	551 760	3,04	18
The Republicans (LR)	3 573 366	15,77	4 040 016	22,23	113
Various right	625 395	2,76	306 240	1,68	6
Debout la France (DLF)	265 433	1,17	17 344	0,10	1
Front National (FN)	2 990 592	13,20	1 590 858	8,75	8
Far right	68 319	0,30	19 030	0,10	1
Ecologists	973 739	4,30	23 197	0,13	1
Regionalists	204 078	0,90	137 453	0,76	5
Others	500 458	2,21	100 574	0,55	3

Source: Home Affairs Ministry <http://elections.interieur.gouv.fr/legislatives-2017/FE.html>

LREM's victory is an unprecedented event in French political history. After these general elections the National Assembly finds itself totally renewed: three quarters of the MPs are newcomers. It has to be said that 40% of the outgoing MPs (50 LR and 80 PS) did not stand for re-election.

La République en Marche that was created just one year ago won the absolute majority. We might see a knock-on effect in this due to Emmanuel Macron's success in the presidential election on 23rd April and 7th May last - success that has led to the parliamentary over representation of the new President of the Republic, which was simply amplified by the simultaneous elimination in the first round of the presidential election of the candidates from the two main parties in the French political arena (LR and PS).

LREM's success also bears witness to a strong wish on the electorate's part for something completely new, and pitilessly, they have swept out the old. *"If the new president of the Republic wins the absolute majority, it will be a total political exploit. This would mean, for a time in all events, the destruction of the traditional parties,"* declared Dominique Rousseau, professor of constitutional law, just days before the election.

It is now up to Emmanuel Macron to take this majority, made up of new MPs, forward – some are even total newcomers to politics (260 candidates LREM belonged to no political party before the election), and to manage the diversity of their profiles. The result of the elections brings good news: the next National Assembly will comprise 224 women out of the 577 MPs, i.e. 39% of all of those elected, which is another record. The

representation of MPs from the private sector has also increased sharply: many new MPs are independent workers. Moreover many are actively involved in civil society.

It is however difficult to speak of a popular movement after these general elections, firstly because of the high abstention rate, which involved the majority of the citizens, but also because of the great share of the electorate, which is not represented in the National Assembly. Emmanuel Macron is the leader of a divided country: more than one French person in two did not vote in the general election and one voter in two (49.99%) voted for a populist candidate in the first round of the presidential election on 23rd April last. With 136 MPs, the Republicans and their UDI allies will be able to play a true role in the opposition. It remains to be seen which position will be adopted by the MPs on

the right as they face Edouard Philippe's government – a Prime Minister who transferred over from their camp. Some of the Republicans – called the "Constructives" have already said that they are ready to participate in the presidential majority and that they will give their vote of confidence to the government on 4th July next, the day when the head of government will deliver his general policy speech to the National Assembly (this is followed by a vote by the MPs).

The president of the Republic Emmanuel Macron now has all of the cards in hand to undertake his policy and start the reforms he wishes to implement to transform the country. The first of these is due to be that of the Labour Code – which will be revised to ensure greater flexibility on the job market. To do this the government is to employ the "directives method".

The 15th legislature will start on 27th June next.

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Publishing Director: Pascale JOANNIN

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