

The presidential majority coalition, *Ensemble*, and the left-wing coalition, NUPES, are running neck and neck but *Ensemble* is expected to retain its majority in the National Assembly on 19 June

The coalition of the presidential majority *Ensemble*, which includes *Renaissance* (formerly La République en marche, LREM), the party of President Emmanuel Macron led by Stanislas Guérini; François Bayrou's Mouvement démocrate (MoDem), and Horizons, the party of former Prime Minister (2017-2020) Edouard Philippe; and the Nouvelle Union populaire écologique et sociale (NUPES), which combines Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France insoumise (LFI); the Socialist Party (PS), led by Olivier Faure; the Communist Party (PCF), led by Fabien Roussel; and Europe écologie-Les Verts (EE-LV) led by Julien Bayou, came out neck and neck in the first round of legislative elections on 12 June in France.

Ensemble won 25.75% of the vote and *NUPES* 25.66%. These two coalitions are running ahead of the *Rassemblement National* (RN), the right-wing populist party of Marine Le Pen, Emmanuel Macron's unhappy rival in the last presidential election on 10 and 24 April, led by Jordan Bardella, which secured 18.68% of the vote; the centre-right Les Républicains (LR), which garnered 10.42% of the vote, and Reconquête!, the party of Éric Zemmour (4.24%). However, the latter was defeated in the first round of voting.

Five candidates were elected in the first round of voting, four from *NUPES* (three in Paris and one in a municipality adjacent to Paris) and one representing *Ensemble*, elected in the department of Mayenne.

While these results are symbolically important, the fact remains that the projections in seats reflect a different reality than the percentages of votes

obtained. According to the opinion poll carried out by the Ipsos-Sopra Steria institute, on the basis of the results of the first round, *Ensemble* is expected to win between 255 and 295 elected members in the National Assembly, the lower house of the Parliament, during the second round of voting on 19 June, i.e. a result close to the absolute majority (which is 289 seats) that the coalition is not, however, guaranteed to achieve. It is worth recalling that in the previous legislative elections of 11 and 18 June 2017, La République en marche (LREM) alone obtained an absolute majority (308 seats). *NUPES* is expected to get between 150 and 190 deputies; Les Républicains between 50 and 80 elected and the Rassemblement National between 15 and 25 seats.

The view that the legislative elections following the presidential elections by a few weeks were necessarily a mere rubber-stamping of the results of the previous elections and that they allowed the newly appointed head of state to obtain a government majority has now been overturned. The first round of the legislative elections appears, if not as a sanction vote against the president of the Republic Emmanuel Macron, re-elected on 24 April, at least as a vote of weak support for his programme or his political action.

Turnout was the lowest ever recorded in legislative elections since the beginning of the Fifth Republic in 1958, and more broadly in the country's history: it totalled 47.32%, 1.38 points lower than in the first round of the previous legislative ballot on 11 June 2017. A large majority of the French population therefore chose not to vote.

General elections in France

12th June 2022

02

Results of the first round of the legislative elections of 12 June 2022 in France**Turnout: 47.32%**

Political parties	Number of votes won	Percentage of votes won	Number of seats won
Various far left	266 371	1,17	
Radical Left Party (PRG)	126 707	0,56	
New Popular Ecological and Social Union (Nupes)	5 836 202	25,66	4
Various left-wing parties	713 641	3,14	
Ensemble (Presidential majority)	5 857 561	25,75	1
Various centre	283 613	1,25	
Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI)	198 055	0,87	
The Republicans (LR)	2 370 811	10,42	
Various right-wing parties	780 385	3,43	
Reconquest!	964 868	4,24	
National Rally (RN)	4 248 626	18,68	
Various extreme right-wing parties	6 457	0,03	
Ecologists	608 179	2,67	
Various	192 630	0,85	
Regionalist	291 392	1,28	

Source : Home Affairs Ministry <https://www.resultats-elections.interieur.gouv.fr/legislatives-2022/FE.html>

"To all those who abstained, I tell them to believe in the strength of their vote. Millions of French people have chosen the candidates of the presidential majority. We are the only political force capable of having a majority in the National Assembly. Only this strong and clear majority will allow us to respond to pressing issues. Faced with the situation in the world and the war at the gates of Europe, we cannot afford approximation. I call on all Republican forces to rally around our candidates. It is our values that are at stake, freedom, equality, fraternity and secularism", declared Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne (Renaissance) when the results were announced. "Nothing would be more dangerous than to add to the world disorder, one that is French as proposed by the extremes (...) They are both trying to weaken the country's unity," warned President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron during the electoral campaign as he spoke of NUPES and the Rassemblement National. "On the left, there is no longer a Socialist Party or Greens but only Melenchonist candidates, who support leaving Europe and NATO, communitarianism and who have an ambiguous relationship with the police. These

are red lines for our electorate," said Stanislas Guérini, general delegate of Renaissance and current Minister of Transformation and Public Service.

The members of the *Ensemble* coalition are trying to build an anti-Mélenchon front and are trying to persuade themselves that the electorate on the left will vote for the presidential majority in a duel between it and the Rassemblement National and that voters on the right will do the same when *Ensemble* is opposed to NUPES.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon's *NUPES* has nevertheless succeeded in establishing itself as the main opponent of Emmanuel Macron's presidential majority since it has succeeded in uniting all the forces of the left behind it for this legislative election. "For the first time in the Fifth Republic, a newly elected president has failed to secure a majority in the subsequent legislative elections. I call on our people, in view of this result, and the extraordinary opportunity it presents for our personal lives and for the destiny of our shared homeland, I call on our people to go to the polls next Sunday," said Jean-Luc Mélenchon when the results

were announced. The leader of the left, who did not stand in this election himself, has to mobilise abstentionists if he hopes to win in the largest number of constituencies. In the *NUPES*, the candidates from La France Insoumise (LFI) are in the majority, but having won the left-wing votes in the first round of voting, they have no reserves. It is worth noting the poor overall result of the left-wing forces in these legislative elections, which did not manage to convince more than three in ten voters (29.36%).

For her part, Marine Le Pen invited her electorate "*not to choose between the destroyers from above and the destroyers from below*", in other words between the coalition of the presidential majority and that of the forces of the left, in the second round of voting in the constituencies where these two coalitions will be competing. The *Rassemblement National*, which is heavily disadvantaged by the two-round majority electoral system, is nevertheless guaranteed to increase its number of deputies (probably double it) on 19 June. It has considerably increased its number of votes compared to the first round of the previous legislative elections of 11 June 2017 (+ 1,258,172 votes) and should be able, for the first time in its history, to form a group in the National Assembly (it did so already in 1986 but with thanks to the proportional vote). However, Emmanuel Macron's unfortunate rival in the last presidential election is witnessing her place as the first opponent of the head of state threatened by Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the forces on the left. Marine Le Pen is expected to be re-elected to the National Assembly, which will give her a platform, while Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who is not a candidate, will be absent from parliament.

Finally, *last but not least*, The Republicans are likely to see their number of elected representatives fall, but perhaps less than they might have feared. Unlike the *Rassemblement National*, LR has a real territorial anchorage and can hope to benefit from a voting system that favours it. Thus, in the constituencies where they are opposed to *NUPES*, the Republicans could benefit from the votes of those of the presidential majority coalition in the second round. Opponents of the presidential majority, the Republicans could find themselves in a position of kingmaker if the *Ensemble* coalition does not obtain an absolute majority on 19 June. In this case, the presidential majority could choose to form alliances with the right-wing forces in the National Assembly in order to govern. In this case, the electoral failure of the right would not necessarily mean political failure.

In the second round on 19 June, the *Ensemble* and *NUPES* coalitions will compete in 272 constituencies. 113 duels will oppose *Ensemble* and the *Rassemblement National*, 61 RN and *NUPES*. Eight triangular elections will be organised.

The presidential majority, led by Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, has one week to win and, if possible, win an absolute majority on 19 June. The *Ensemble* coalition will have to fight hard if it does not want the momentum created by Jean-Luc Mélenchon to deprive it of too many elected representatives, or even ministers.

To do this, there is no doubt that the residential majority will continue to brandish the threat that a *NUPES* victory would paralyse the country and prevent the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, from implementing the programme for which he was re-elected on 24 April.

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