

European
Elections monitor

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translated by Helen Levy

Results

Socialist François Hollande is the new
President of the Republic of France

François Hollande (Socialist Party, PS) was elected President of the French Republic with 51.63% of the vote in the second round of the presidential election that took place on 6th May. He beat his rival, outgoing head of State, Nicolas Sarkozy (Union for a Popular Movement, UMP), who won 48.37% of the vote. The socialist candidate's victory can certainly be explained as much by a feeling for political change on the part of the French as their rejection of Nicolas Sarkozy as a person.

Turnout was high; it totalled 80.34%.

"I can see the task that lies ahead. I promise to serve my country. I know what it demands," declared Mr Hollande in his speech after the announcement of the first results. *"This evening there are not two Frances, there is just one nation with a common future. Everyone will be treated with the same rights and duties. Too much division, too many rifts have led to the separation of our citizens. It is over!"*, he added. *"I ask to be judged according to two criteria: justice and youth,"* indicated the winner of the election, quoting the numerous areas of work which await him, including reviving production, reducing deficits, controlling the debt, protecting the social model and re-orienting Europe towards growth and employment for the future. Just a few days ago Mr Hollande admitted that he was quite apprehensive about becoming President of the Republic. *"The country's problems will not go away if Nicolas Sarkozy leaves office, he will not take with him the public debt, unemployment, and social emergencies, I can see what is being asked of me. Time will not be on my side,"* he declared.

Outgoing Head of State Nicolas Sarkozy acknowledged defeat and wished the new Head of State *"the best of luck amidst all of the problems"*. He declared that he was *"entirely responsible"* for the defeat. *"I am not someone who does not assume his responsibilities. I have to learn from all of this,"* he stressed adding, *"another era is about to start. In this new era I shall remain with you. I share your ideas and your beliefs. And you can count on me to defend those ideas and beliefs."*

The campaign he undertook on the far right and its attempts to rally both the votes of Marine Le Pen's electorate (National Front FN) and those of François Bayrou (Democratic Movement, MoDem), which were the cause of tension in his party, prevented him from winning. *"The governance of the UMP lacked diversity. We should have maintained the party's dual centrist culture,"* declared former Prime Minister (2002-2005) Jean-Pierre Raffarin.

According to an Ipsos poll for France Télévision, Radio France, Le Monde and Le Point, those who voted for Marine Le Pen, who gave no instructions on how to vote but who said that she personally would be voting blank in the second round, mainly voted for the outgoing Head of State, Nicolas Sarkozy (51%). One quarter of them (25%) are said to have abstained, 14% chose François Hollande and 10% imitated their candidate and voted blank. As for those who voted for François Bayrou, who said that he would

vote in support of the socialist candidate, most voted for Nicolas Sarkozy (41%), 29% chose François Hollande and 30% are said to have voted blank or void or they simply did not go to vote.

Nicolas Sarkozy, who said during his campaign that he would give up politics if he failed in the presidential election, has not repeated this declaration. *"I shall remain amongst you and you will be able to count on me but my place will no longer be the same. My commitment to my country will now be different,"* he indicated. The Head of State is therefore going to step back without announcing his withdrawal from political life though. Nicolas Sarkozy has however said that he would not undertake the campaign for the upcoming general elections that will take place on 10th and 17th June next.

During his electoral campaign François Hollande announced the first measures that would be implemented if he won on 6th May. The first of these which is symbolic is a 30% reduction in the remuneration of the President of the Republic and the members of the government. The socialist candidate declared that as of 29th June, and amongst other things, he would introduce an increase of 25% in the September school allocation, cap petrol prices, he would propose the renegotiation of the European budgetary pact in order for it to include growth measures, he would introduce retirement for people aged 60, who started work at the age of 18 and who have contributed for 41.5 years into the system; there would also be a maximum difference of between 1 to 20 in terms of salaries in state companies (RGPP). Between 3rd July and 2nd August Parliament will have to meet in extraordinary session and approve, amongst other measures, the draft law on financial programming establishing the goal of a return to balance in 2017, fiscal reform (review of tax niches and the creation of a 75% tax band (applicable to people earning over one million euros per annum) and the abolition of social VAT.

Aged 57, François Hollande is a high ranking civil servant who started his career as an auditor for the Court of Auditors. He joined the Socialist Party in 1979 and after the election of François Mitterand as President in 1981, he was an advisor to the Presidency of the Republic. He then became director of the cabinet of two government spokespeople, Max Gallo (PS) and Roland Dumas (PS).

Elected first as an MP in 1988, he succeeded Lionel Jospin in

Presidential election in France 6th May 2012 (2nd round)

1997 as head of the Socialist Party by becoming its first secretary – a position he occupied until November 2008. In that year he was also elected general councillor of the department of Corrèze and became the President of the General Council of the same region. He was re-elected to this post in the local elections in March 2011. Just after this election on 31st March 2011 he said he would be running for President in 2012. François Hollande was elected by the Socialist Party on 21st October after having won 56.67% of the vote on 16th October in the second round of the primary election in which he faced Martine Aubry. On 6th May François Hollande, who has never occupied a government post in the 30 years of his career became the 7th President of the Fifth Republic and the 2nd from the PS.

Several international appointments are being scheduled for the new Head of State, including the G8 and Camp David (USA) on 18th and 19th May and the next NATO summit on 20th and 21st in Chicago. François Hollande has said he reserving his first journey abroad for Germany and Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU).

From a domestic point of view the battle for the general election that will take place on 10th and 17th June next has now started with the PS hoping to provide François Hollande with a majority that will enable him to govern; the UMP is calling for the electorate not to give the PS the same power that it already holds in the Senate (the Upper Chamber of Parliament), in most of the country's regions, departments and major cities.

Presidential Election Results of 22nd April and 6th May 2012 in France

Turnout: 79.48% (1st round) and 80.34% (2nd round)

Candidates	No of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	No of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
François Hollande (Socialist Party, PS)	10 272 705	28.63	18 000 438	51.63
Nicolas Sarkozy (Union for a Popular Movement, UMP)	9 753 629	27.18	16 869 371	48.37
Marine Le Pen (National Front FN)	6 421 426	17,9		
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (Left Front, FG)	3 884 822	11,1		
François Bayrou (Democratic Movement, MoDem)	3 275 122	9,13		
Eva Joly (Europe Ecology-The Greens, EELV)	828 345	2,31		
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (Debout la République, DLR)	643 907	1,79		
Philippe Poutou (New Anti-Capitalist Party, NPA)	411 160	1,15		
Nathalie Arthaud (Lutte ouvrière, LO)	202 548	0,56		
Jacques Cheminade (Solidarity and Progress, S&P)	89 545	0,25		

Source : Interior Ministry <http://elections.interieur.gouv.fr/PR2012/FE.html>

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