



NO.  
**04**

Newsletter

# THE **FRENCH** DISPATCH

- *THE RESULTS*
- *KEY TAKEAWAYS*
- *WHAT IS FRANCE WAKING-UP TO?*
- *THE WORLD IS CLOSELY WATCHING*



# THE RESULTS

On Sunday 10th April, the French people cast their votes in the first round of the Presidential election. The first round registered a success for President Emmanuel, leading the polls with 27,60%, ahead of Marine Le Pen with 23,41%, and of Jean-Luc Mélenchon 21,95%. Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen will go head-to-head in the second round on 24th April for what promises to be a tightly fought election that will shape not only France's future but that of the European Continent.



## EMMANUEL MACRON

Votes

**9 560 545**

% Voted

**27,60**



## MARINE LE PEN

Votes

**8 109 857**

% Voted

**23,41**

With a slightly lower turnout for the first round compared to 2017, three candidates have improved their scores: Emmanuel Macron gains nearly 4pp and one million votes, Marine Le Pen increases her share of the vote by 2pp and 500,000 votes, while Jean-Luc Mélenchon gains nearly 3pp and 600,000 votes. The remaining candidates received significantly fewer votes. The sizeable gap between the top three candidates and the other candidates is a consequence of tactical voting by the French electorate. With the main political camps trying to get to the second turn, there was little space for other contenders to succeed in the race.

### What presided over the vote?

Beside tactical voting, the main issues for voters was 'purchasing power' in light of the rise of inflation. 60% of the electorate stated purchasing power as their main consideration when casting their ballots. Social protection ranked second, followed by security.

The focus on purchasing power and social issues were particularly important for the electoral base of both Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen, which highlights a deep wariness among the French population regarding the state of the country's social structure. Addressing this issue will therefore be key for Emmanuel Macron in the second round.

## What's next?

Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen now have two weeks to convince voters ahead of the second round.

### The second round will be held on the 24th April.

The decisive moment of the campaign will be the traditional head-to-head debate between the two candidates, which already was a turning point in the 2017 elections. The election night has already offered insights into the core strategy of the two candidates: Emmanuel Macron will aim to demonstrate that he is the only one able to safeguard France's economic success, maintain France's profile at a European level and ensure France's resilience in the face of a host of political, international, economic and social crises.

To mitigate the influence of Marine Le Pen, Emmanuel Macron will need to lead a more active campaign in the second round and meet more often with his electorate. He has already announced several visits in far-right strongholds, notably in Northern France. Marine Le Pen's bid will be to showcase that she is the candidate close to the people, who cares and protects the more vulnerable. Rising prices and inflation, particularly in the energy sector, purchasing power and social issues will be at the forefront of voters' minds as we head towards the next voting round.

		Votes	% Voted
	JEAN-LUC MÉLENCHON	7 605 225	21,95
	ÉRIC ZÉMMOUR	2 442 624	7,05
	VALÉRIE PÉCRESSÉ	1 658 386	4,79
	YANNICK JADOT	1 587 534	4,58
	JEAN LASSALLE	1 095 700	3,16
	FABIEN ROUSSEL	799 334	2,31
	NICOLAS DUPONT-AIGNAN	718 242	2,07
	ANNE HIDALGO	604 217	1,74
	PHILIPPE POUTOU	265 834	0,77
	NATHALIE ARTHAUD	195 884	0,57

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

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## 1 THE PATH TOWARD THE ELYSEE WILL NOT BE AN EASY ONE FOR EMMANUEL MACRON

In 2002, when the far-right first made it to the second round of the French presidential election with Jean-Marie Le Pen (Marine Le Pen's father), angry and worried voters took to the streets. All political parties united to create "republican front", to protect republican values and make sure the far-right would be defeated in the polls.

Twenty years later, and as the far right is reaching the second round of the elections for the third time (2002, 2017, 2022) the risk picture is different. Already two of the first-round contenders, including Eric Zemmour who gathered 7% of the votes, are directly supporting Marine Le Pen in the second round. Some prominent conservative leaders are not giving a clear indication of who they will support, although the conservative candidate Valerie Pécresse has declared that she will vote Emmanuel Macron.

With more than 22%, the far-left candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon will play a decisive role in what outcome we can expect on 24th April. Last night, he called on his voters to not give any vote to Marine Le Pen, though this is not the same as a clear endorsement of Emmanuel Macron. The attitude of Mélenchon's voters will be one to watch in the second round.



## 2 THE END OF AN ERA

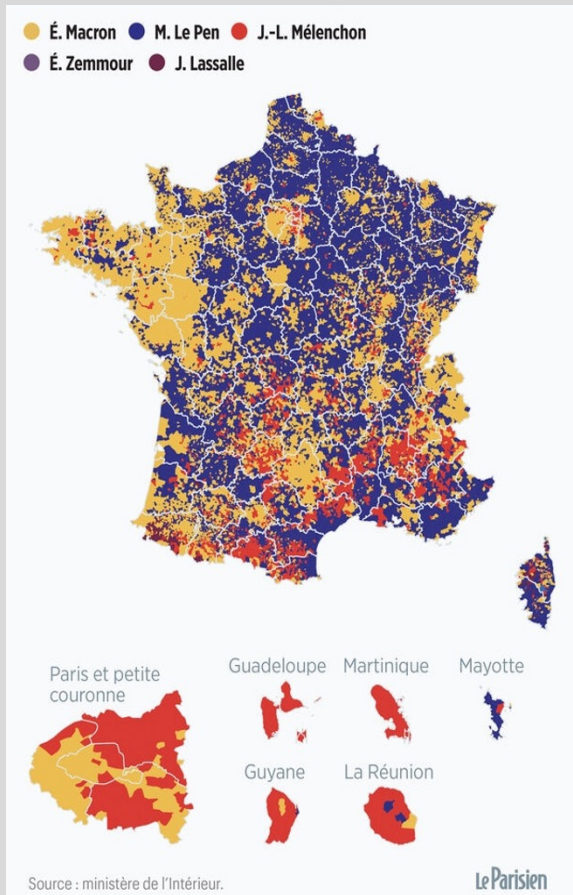
The 2017 election marked a turning point in the French political system: Emmanuel Macron succeeded in the mother of all electoral battles without the support of any major political party. The last election also saw the far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon outperforming the long-standing socialist party.

Five years on from the last presidential election, this trend has deepened further. The two political forces where all French Presidents since 1958 have originated – with the exception of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing – remain below the 5% threshold. Yesterday both the conservative and socialist party achieved the worst electoral result in history.

Three poles are clearly emerging: Emmanuel Macron dominates the centre and conservative political space, Jean-Luc Mélenchon reigns over the left and Marine Le Pen over the far-right camp. These are three political forces that do not benefit from a vast network of local representatives, and are instead forged around the personality of their leaders.

The traditional French political parties have for a long time been weak. However, this election has shown they are now on the verge of disappearing, laying the foundations for a political restructure. The Conservative candidate Valérie Pécresse lies way behind Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen, both in the traditional Conservative constituencies and cities. Socialist and Communists were severely defeated in their electoral strongholds by Jean-Luc Mélenchon. More so in this election, we are seeing personal affinity to political leaders replacing party affiliation as a factor which determines the vote of French citizens. The risk of a country divided politically between the central government and local administrations is very high on the night of the second leg. The general parliamentary elections, to be held in early June, will be another political milestone to watch for further signs of these changes and political restructuring.

## LEADING CANDIDATES BY MUNICIPALITY



For Emmanuel Macron, the path is precarious: attracting the support of the left-wing voters while limiting support of the right-wing voters to Marine Le Pen

In this context, abstention and spoilt ballots will but only serve Marine Le Pen. Mobilizing the French electorate to speak up for 'republican values', economic openness and European integration will be paramount for Emmanuel Macron.

### 3 TACTICAL VOTE AND THE RISK OF SOCIAL DISCORD

Sunday's vote highlighted the polarised nature of the electorate caused by increased tactical voting. Social-democrat voters were torn apart between Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Emmanuel Macron; the former trying to secure a position in the second round, and the latter seeking to prevent the rise of Marine Le Pen. Conservative voters mostly deserted the traditional "conservative party". They opted instead either for Emmanuel Macron, in a move to ensure the continuation of market-orientated economic policy, or for Eric Zemmour, as a more conservative alternative. Marine Le Pen gathered a sizeable share of voters by being perceived as Emmanuel Macron's most effective opponent.

#### **The result is twofold.**

Firstly, no leading candidate can claim that he or she gather votes in the name of a clearly identifiable political project. This puts the legitimacy of the forthcoming executive at risk and the incoming government will need to govern cautiously and secure legitimacy in the political and policy decisions to be able to rule. A referendum or early elections are not out of the realms of possibility.

Secondly, a significant part of the electorate is likely to feel unrepresented by the future President and Government. Political uncertainty and possible social unrest is likely to reign over the next five years.

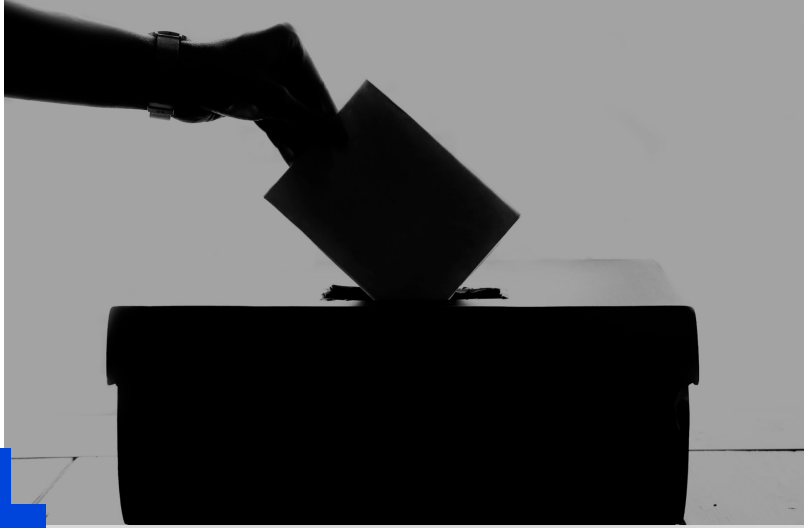
### 4 AN EVEN MORE DIVIDED COUNTRY?

The French political landscape is divided. Cities voted mostly for Emmanuel Macron and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. In Paris and Lyon, Macron ranked first and Mélenchon second. In Marseille, Nantes, Strasbourg, Lille and Toulouse, Jean-Luc Mélenchon won the ballot with Emmanuel Macron ranked in second place. In all big cities, with the exception of Nice and Marseille, support for Marine Le Pen lagged far behind. In contrast, the far-right candidates lead the ballot in rural areas and mid-size cities as well as in their neighborhoods.

Symmetry is also reflected in the sociological aspect of the vote. Working class and the youth overwhelmingly voted Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Emmanuel Macron's best results were among the wealthiest and oldest voters.

Marine Le Pen gathered 34% of the working-class vote, closely followed by Jean-Luc Mélenchon (25%), with Emmanuel Macron barely reaching 20% of this category of voters. 35% of the voters aged between 18 and 24 supported Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Marine Le Pen secured 30% of voters between 25-34 while Emmanuel Macron's best score is with the 65+ voters (37.5%).

**This deep division of the electorate makes it difficult to anticipate the outcome of the second round.**



# FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

*Voting Intentions 2st Round Macron/Le Pen*



**EMMNAUEL MACRON**



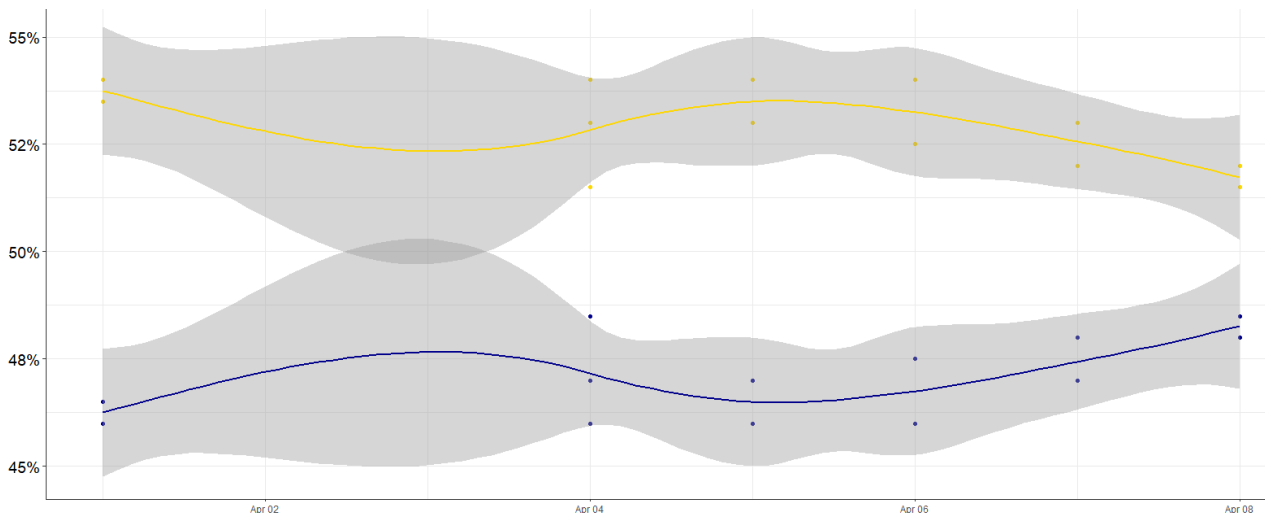
**MARINE LE PEN**

## 5 FAR RIGHT TURNOUT OVERTAKES THE LEFT

The far-right received more than 32% on Sunday and the political mood change highlighted in polls in the last couple of weeks was confirmed in the ballots. Marine Le Pen secured 23.41% of the vote and enters the second round for the second election in a row..

To succeed, Marine Le Pen has softened her image, leaving nationalistic views to one side and is recrafting her profile through the social agenda. For the first time, she will benefit from the official support from far-right contenders Zemmour and Dupont-Aignan.

Another novelty is that the votes for the left rank far below the far-right, marking a shift by the electorate towards a more right-wing political agenda. Without a doubt, the left-wing political groupings, in all their forms, will be analysing these results in detail, with the re-establishing their parties, reviving the left agenda and finding common ground for political unity.









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