

## **France Elections in 2024: Is it possible to build a coalition Government?**

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After last month's humiliating defeat to the *far-right National Rally (RN)* of Marine Le Pen in European parliamentary elections, President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the Parliament and called for national elections. The outcome of this election (in two rounds) emerged a left-green alliance the *New Popular Front (NFP)* as the surprised winner.

The **NFP** won 182 seats in the 577-seat national assembly, while Macron's centrist Together coalition retained 168 deputies and the **RN**, which after the first round on 30 June had been eyeing a majority, finished third with 143.

Therefore, not a single group secured an outright majority and the options to form a government, at least for the following 12 months, are open. The **NFP** tries to form a minority government, seeking bill-by-bill support (ordonnances), while the *centrists and the Gaullist party Les Republicans* discuss to form a transition government, as suggest Edouard Philippe Macron's former Premier, supported by deputies from the traditional right, up to the Centre-left.

Furthermore, another option could include a technocratic government of experts, which would carry out the routine work, but would not produce any legislative work. For the time being, and against the *NFP* protest to name a prime minister among them, Macron refused Prime Minister's Attal resignation, asking him to remain in office in a caretaker capacity to see out the period of the Paris Olympic Games, as well as to reassure the international community and markets that France still has a functioning government. Attal accepted to stay on in a caretaker role for as long as necessary to help oversee a smooth transition to a new government, if one can be found in a terribly divided parliament.

The fact is that the *NFP* composing members, Melanchon's *radical left LFI*, Marine Tondelier's *Greens*, Olivier Faure's *Socialists* and Fabienne Roussel's *Communist Party*, do not have common political views, not even their position towards the European Union policies, claiming a vague plan of industrial reconstruction in order to end France's dependency from Europe, mainly in the strategic areas of semi-conductors, drugs, high-tech and electric cars?

Going back to the surprise results of the ballot, we need to review the behavior of the French voters, but also the reason why President Macron suddenly dissolved the parliament by anticipation. Macron until then, he did not benefit from a majority in the general assembly and Macron was struggling to pass the bills he had in his program, as it was the case for the act of increasing retirement age from 62 to 64, which he finally passed by amendment, using the relative constitutional right. The post-holidays autumn would have been extremely difficult for his government and frequent turmoil were ahead.

The President Macron was fully aware of the French people reaction to the *RN*, considered as a fascist, anti-NATO, anti-European party, whether this is true or not. Given the French electoral system in two rounds, President Macron knew that the majority of the political parties involved, would agree to ban the election of *RN candidates*, by withdrawing their own to the benefit of *RN* opponents, whatever their political etiquette was.

The outcome showed that Macron managed to weaken, both his main opponents, Melanchon and Le Pen, mainly the later whose party came third, far from their 34% in the recent European elections.

*The collateral effects are :*

- *there is no party in parliament holding one third of the seats ;*
- *there is no party in parliament holding one fourth of the seats ;*
- *the majority of the votes were obtained in order to disallow/stop candidates to be elected, rather than from adherence to a political agenda;*
- *we gather around the table to invent, rather than find, something like a solution, from the messy situation the French people has chosen to.*

For more than 50 years, whenever France held a parliamentary election, voters would know the next day, which party would govern and with what political agenda.

*This time is different.* With parliament split into three blocks, it could take weeks if not months for deputies *to build coalitions*. The Paris Olympic Games should mark a national unity and a consensus, *but autumn will be anyway hectic and troublesome.*