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French National Developments

Surprise snap elections stoke far-right's parliamentary rise, even as outright victory halted

- The National Rally - the main far-right party in France - came out victorious in the European Parliament elections, securing 31% of the votes and 30 seats in the European Parliament.

President Macron endured a severe defeat as his party secured only 14% of the votes - losing almost 8 points compared to the previous 2019 vote.

- This far-right victory - which was unlikely to significantly influence domestic policies within France itself - was nevertheless met with unexpected political decisions.

Despite Macron's majority in the National Assembly, the President dissolved the Assembly as a result of the European results, therefore calling for snap parliamentary elections.

- Much speculation surrounded this decision. It is now clear Macron had two scenarios in mind:

a) Secure an absolute political majority, larger than the one he had since 2022 by presenting himself as the primary opposition to the National Rally's rise, and potentially incorporating some leftist parties into a governmental coalition.

To be included, leftist parties would have to "*respect republican values*", in other words explicitly oppose the Palestinian resistance and adopt Islamophobia as a foundation for their governance.

b) In case of a loss to the far-right, Macron believes that this early rise to power would disrupt their political dynamic and appeal - as such power would come with blame for the deep structural crises France will face in the next few years - and could prevent their victory in 2027, the next scheduled presidential election.

- The first round of these parliamentary witnessed a sweeping far-right victory, obtaining 33% of the votes - i.e. 12 million voters, a historic breakthrough.
- To oppose the far-right a large "republican front" was called by Macron and the left, according to which every party must support any candidate facing a National Rally nominee.
- The call was [almost completely endorsed](#), with some political actors - Macron and his right-wing allies - refusing to support far-left candidates deemed outside of the "republican front" for their overt support of Palestine and condemnation of State-led racism and Islamophobia.
- [Polls predicted that voters would not fully](#) follow this voting instruction. In other words, the political tool once able to disrupt the translation of the National Rally's votes into parliamentary seats seemed effectively obsolete.
- The polls were misleading as their predictions were far too pessimistic. Despite securing the most votes compared to the other parties, the far-right couldn't overcome the front and achieved a disappointing third place with 142 elected MPs. The leftist alliance secured the most seats, 187, then the presidential coalition with 159.
- The 5th Republic's natural functioning is predicated upon the hegemony of the President's party, the necessary condition of a stable and unimpeded rule, inspired by the French past monarchy.

The vote, with a fragmented and unprecedented parliamentary composition, upset that - with three blocs sufficiently large to influence the policy-making process, yet insufficiently numerous to rule alone.

- The Left and the Macronist center (with some of its right-wing allies) are negotiating the conditions of a coalition. This potential coalition could form a '*plural majority*', an expression used by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, meant to last until the 2027 presidential election and capable of supporting a government.

Macron has, however, tried to delay and disrupt the appointment of a new Prime Minister, which would by convention need to come from the dominant party/bloc - namely the left.