

# French parliamentary elections: Macron's successful bet

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La République En Marche (LREM), Emmanuel Macron's newly created political party has taken a decisive lead in the first round of the legislative elections with 32% of the votes on Sunday June 11. Les Républicains (LR, right) come second with 21%, followed by the Front National at 13% (FN, radical right), La France Insoumise at 11% (LFI, radical left), and Parti Socialiste (PS) with a bit less than 10% of the votes (including its traditional allies).

In a two-round single member district electoral system, the lead of LREM (despite being around 11%) could lead to a hegemonic domination in the lower house. Predictions for the second round foresee that LREM will hold between 350 and 450 seats out of 577<sup>1</sup>. This constitute an unprecedented result and a clear victory for Macron's party.

LREM's coming victory marks a further step in the presidentialisation of the regime. Indeed, since 2002, the legislative elections are held a few weeks after the presidential election. Even a new party like LREM, with many unknown candidates coming from "civil society" can secure a large victory in the legislative election once its leader has been elected president<sup>2</sup>. In 2017, LREM may even have an absolute majority without the help of the Modem – its centrist ally. This victory needs to be qualified, since the first round of the legislative election 2017 sets a new record of abstention since 1958: 51.3% of registered French voters did not turn out to the polls. One consequence of that, is that in the second round, all districts but one will oppose two candi-

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the full results of the second round of the legislative elections, see [Michel in this volume \(a\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> For analyses concerning the Macron's victory in the second round, see [Paparo in this volume](#).

dates (every candidate that obtains more than 12.5% of registered voters in qualifies for the run-off; out of comparison there more than 2 candidates in 34 districts in 2012). In short, the citizens who turn out to vote have plebiscited political change and Macron's agenda, but the political recomposition of the political system remains undecided.

The notable political consequence of this election is the complete collapse of the PS: the record low result of the presidential election has been confirmed ([Michel in this volume \(b\)](#)), and the PS is likely to obtain between 20 and 30 MPs (compared to 292 in 2012). Notably, many of the leading figures of the party (former ministers, its secretary general, former presidential candidate Benoit Hamon) have not been able to qualify for the second round.

The Front National has also underperformed in this election. Although Marine Le Pen looks in position to enter parliament for the first time, her party may not obtain more than 5 to 10 MPs in total. Jean-Luc Mélenchon's LFI faces a similar situation, in which the leader is in good position to win, but the party will underperform compared to the results of the presidential election.

The mainstream right party, LR, will form the biggest opposition group in parliament, possibly getting around 100 to 150 MPs on June 18. All opposition parties will campaign up until next Sunday, but in view of their likely historically low results of next week, established parties will need to engage in profound reorganization. President Macron, on the other hand, is likely to be able to count on one of the most hegemonic chambers in history to undergo his agenda of reforms and political transformation.

## References

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