



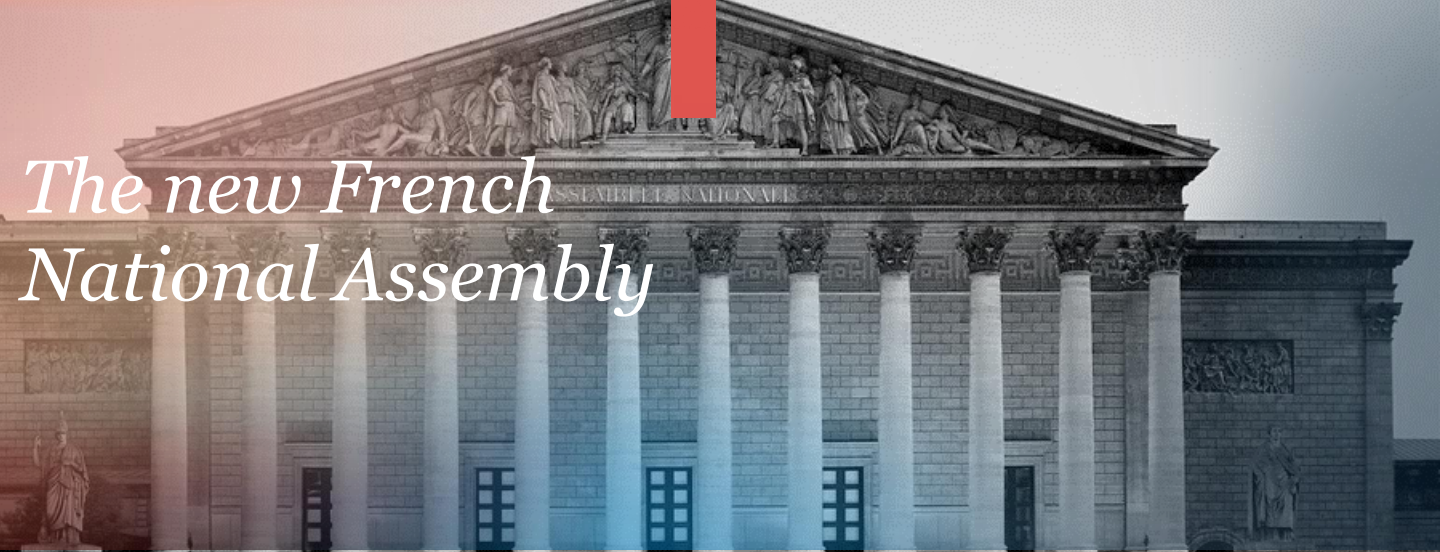
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Newsletter

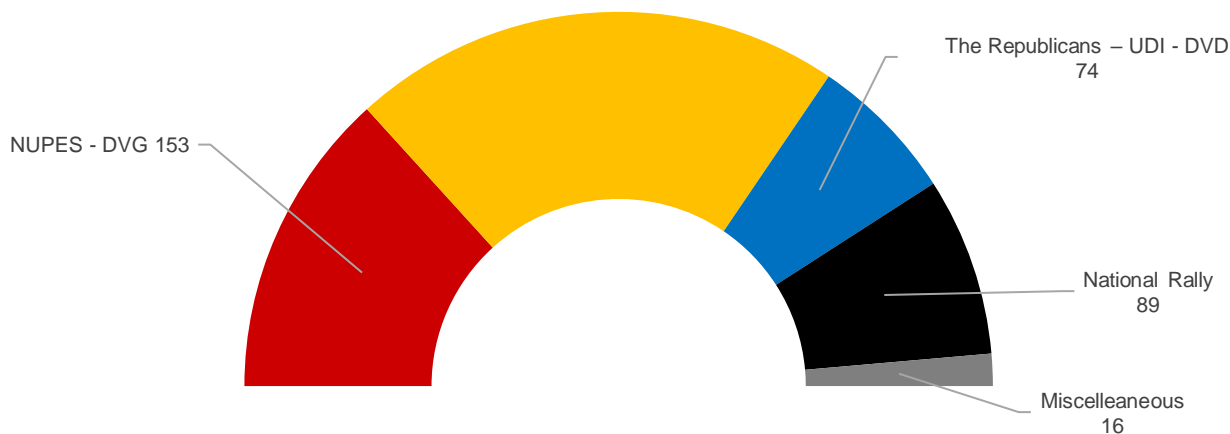
The *french* Dispatch

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The new French National Assembly



Presidential majority 245

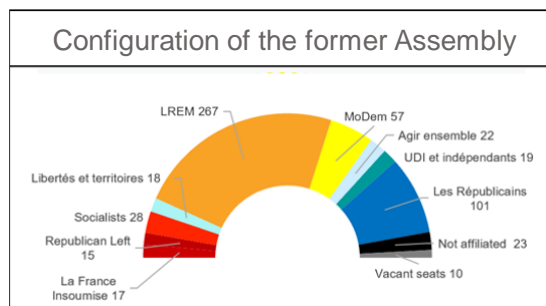


A political equation with no obvious solution: who will rule France for the next five years?

While the parliamentary elections should have clarified the political landscape, France is heading toward a period of political uncertainty. The last round of the electoral marathon ended in a rare situation in the Fifth Republic and blurred the future for the next five years of French politics. With his coalition ‘Ensemble’ winning only 245 seats (a loss of 105 seats compared to June 2017), French President Emmanuel Macron’s party fell significantly short of reaching the threshold required to secure an absolute majority (289 seats). The far-right, *Rassemblement National* (National Rally), and the far-left, *La France Insoumise* (Unbowed France), leading the Left coalition *Nupes* (Nouvelle Union Populaire Ecologique et Sociale or New Environmental and Social People’s Union) have known the most significant gains, reaching both more than 80 seats.

‘Ensemble’ will be the main force in the National Assembly and no other coalition can reasonably claim the right to form a government. Yet, the result triggered a tremendous disappointment for the outgoing majority and has been coined as a political earthquake with the President’s party *Renaissance/LaRem* losing almost half its seats in comparison with 2017 (166 vs. 308). Three recently appointed ministers but also the two main figures of the outgoing National Assembly, its President, Richard Ferrand and the majority whip, Christophe Castaner, have lost their seat in the ballots.

In such a situation, Macron will most probably need the support of other political forces to be able to form a stable government. The conservative party, *Les Républicains*, although losing a third of its share of seats in comparison with the last term, might become the key for the President to secure some occasional and/or topical majorities. Nothing is however granted as, among the Conservatives, a strong stream reluctant to join forces with *Ensemble* to form a new government remains important. Hence, Sunday evening, the Party leader stated that the group will remain in the opposition.





Beyond the uncertainty of building a strong majority, **Sunday's main political fact is the constitution of a strong far-right political group, following historic results for the *National Rally* which sees its share of seats multiplied by 10.** With 89 seats, it could be the main opposition group, and therefore receive a consequent toolbox to express its firm opposition to Emmanuel Macron, including increased financial means but also the possibility to call for a motion of no confidence and to challenge adopted bills in front of the Constitutional court.

The Left-alliance, *Nupes*, will, all together, be the main opposition force. Yet, its performance was not as strong as what had been expected in the past few weeks. It will still have a large room for expressing its sharp opposition to the government, but its impact will depend on the ability of its four composing forces to remain united.

This election is a landmark in the French political history, with a political equation that seems without solution and the fear of immobilism, while key challenges lie ahead for the country and its economy. The room for maneuver of the newly re-elected president is tighter than any of his predecessors has ever faced, and if Emmanuel Macron manages to solve this equation and find enough support to appoint a government, the real question will be for how long he can keep it.

With the establishment of the new Assembly, the formation of the political groups and the designation of its decision bodies, as well as the reshuffling of the government, the weeks to come will be decisive for setting the stage for next political battles, which might be fought in- as well outside Parliament.

What does this mean for the political agenda?

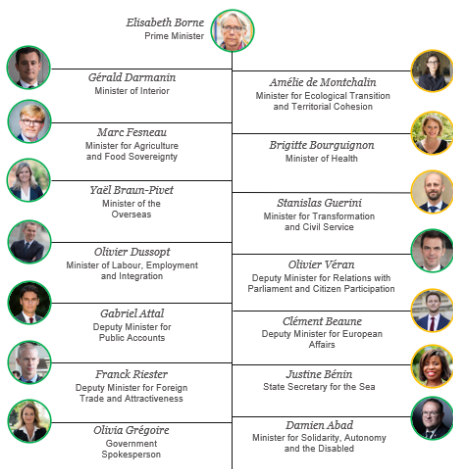
Both the far-right and the far-left coalition will be in a position to play troublemakers on key dossiers, troubling Emmanuel Macron's path to reforms and weakening his ability to build a stable coalition. **For the looming pension reform this marks an undoubtable blow of significant proportion.** The same holds true for Macron's reform plans for the healthcare and education sectors.

While certainly shaking things up on domestic politics, the results bear far less significance for security policy and foreign affairs – both of which largely lie with the President. **In Brussels and beyond, France's stance on key issues is therefore unlikely to shift significantly, notably after the election of Clément Beaune – which secures him his position Government.** The Franco-German axis, a key stabilizing factor on the continent, will remain widely untouched.

Emmanuel Macron's 2017 landslide victory provided him with the dynamics and confidence to bring in a breath of fresh air and kick-start some form of change on the international stage, and especially in Brussels. In contrast to 2017, Sunday's results add on to the already weakened president and might see Emmanuel Macron being committed more towards domestic issues and refraining from spearheading any risky oversea endeavours. However, one should not omit the possibility of an opposite scenario: in his time, conservative Jacques Chirac, whilst strained domestically by a cohabitation, was able to blossom on the international stage.





What's at stake for the current government



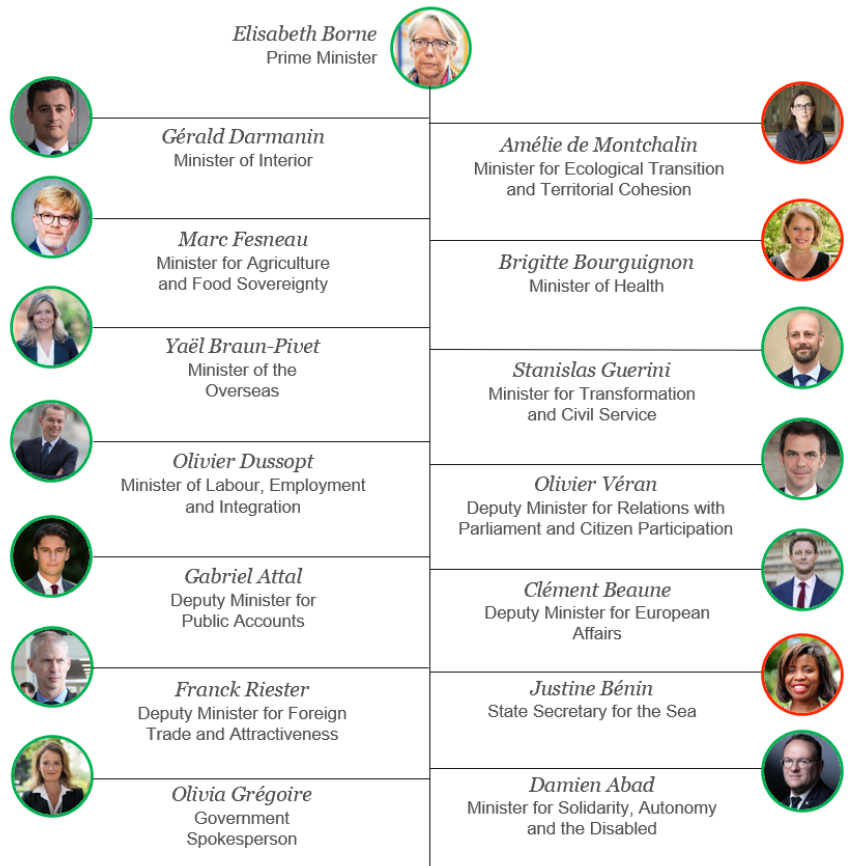
What was the projection?

Fifteen out of twenty-eight ministers were running for parliamentary elections. Though on paper ministers do not need to be elected at the Parliament to become a member of the Government, it is seen as a plus in terms of legitimacy. Yet there is an unwritten rule that **those who failed at being elected in Parliament must step down from their ministerial responsibilities**. If elected, the ministers leave their parliamentary seat to their deputy.

-  Elected MP
-  Not elected

What happened?

As expected, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne was elected MP, as well as eleven ministers. These include Gérald Darmanin, Minister of Interior, Gabriel Attal, Deputy Minister for Public Accounts, Olivier Véran, Deputy Minister for Relations with Parliament, and Clément Beaune, Deputy Minister for European Affairs, rising star of the presidential camp, whose future seemed very uncertain a week ago. **Some ministers failed to win a seat** - Amélie de Montchalin, Minister for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion, and Brigitte Bourguignon, Minister of Health. As explained above, it is certain that they will not be part of the next government.



What happened to the key political figures?

The second round of the parliamentary elections confirmed that leading voices of all parties were well positioned to be elected. However, some contenders in the presidential majority had to face unexpected challenges and failed to gather enough votes to be elected. Christophe Castaner, early supporter of Emmanuel Macron in 2016 and former chairman of parliamentary group *La République en Marche*, lost on Sunday in the 2nd constituency of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence to the NUPES candidate Léo Walter. More importantly, Richard Ferrand, outgoing President of the National Assembly, has been closely eliminated against NUPES candidate Mélanie Thomin.



Julien Bayou

Europe Ecologie Les Verts (NUPES)
5th constituency of Paris
Elected with 58,05%



Aurélien Pradié

Les Républicains
1st constituency of Lot
Elected with 64,63%



Jean-Michel Blanquer

Ensemble!
4th constituency of Loiret
Not qualified for second round (18,89%)



Adrien Quatennens

La France Insoumise (NUPES)
1st constituency of the North
Elected with 65,24%



Christophe Castaner

Ensemble!
2nd constituency of the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence
48,51%, not elected



Fabien Roussel

Parti Communiste (NUPES)
20th constituency of the North
Elected with 54,50%



Eric Ciotti

Les Républicains
1st constituency of Alpes-Maritimes
Elected with 56,33%



François Ruffin

La France Insoumise (NUPES)
1st constituency of the Somme
Elected with 61,01%



Richard Ferrand

Ensemble!
6th constituency of Finistère
49,15%, not elected



Boris Vallaud

Parti Socialiste (NUPES)
3rd constituency of the Landes
Elected with 59,93%



Marine Le Pen

Rassemblement National
11th constituency of Pas de Calais
Elected with 61,03%



Eric Zemmour

Reconquête!
4th constituency of the Var
Not qualified for second round (23,19%)



The French government architecture is a matter of balance among its different branches. For years, the executive gained an unchallenged prevalence over the legislative in France. Thanks to overwhelming majorities, a disciplined parliament quite continuously backed the government over the successive presidential terms. Coalition building is not part of the DNA of the French political culture, for the simple reason that it is normally not necessary to grant a government the support it requires.

Last night deeply shook this landscape. The government will not be able to rely on a stable majority in Parliament. Even more importantly, the Parliament will be split in no less than nine political groups. No major legislation will pass without the formation of tight compromises. Given the versatility of the political spectrum and the fragmentation of the Parliament, different and sometimes contradictory alliances are likely to be formed according to the different files submitted to the Members of Parliament.

Hence, for the different stakeholders, it will be key to closely monitor a moving parliament and to strategically engage with its representatives. The fate of key files could depend on small and temporary alliances that will be paramount to anticipate and understand.

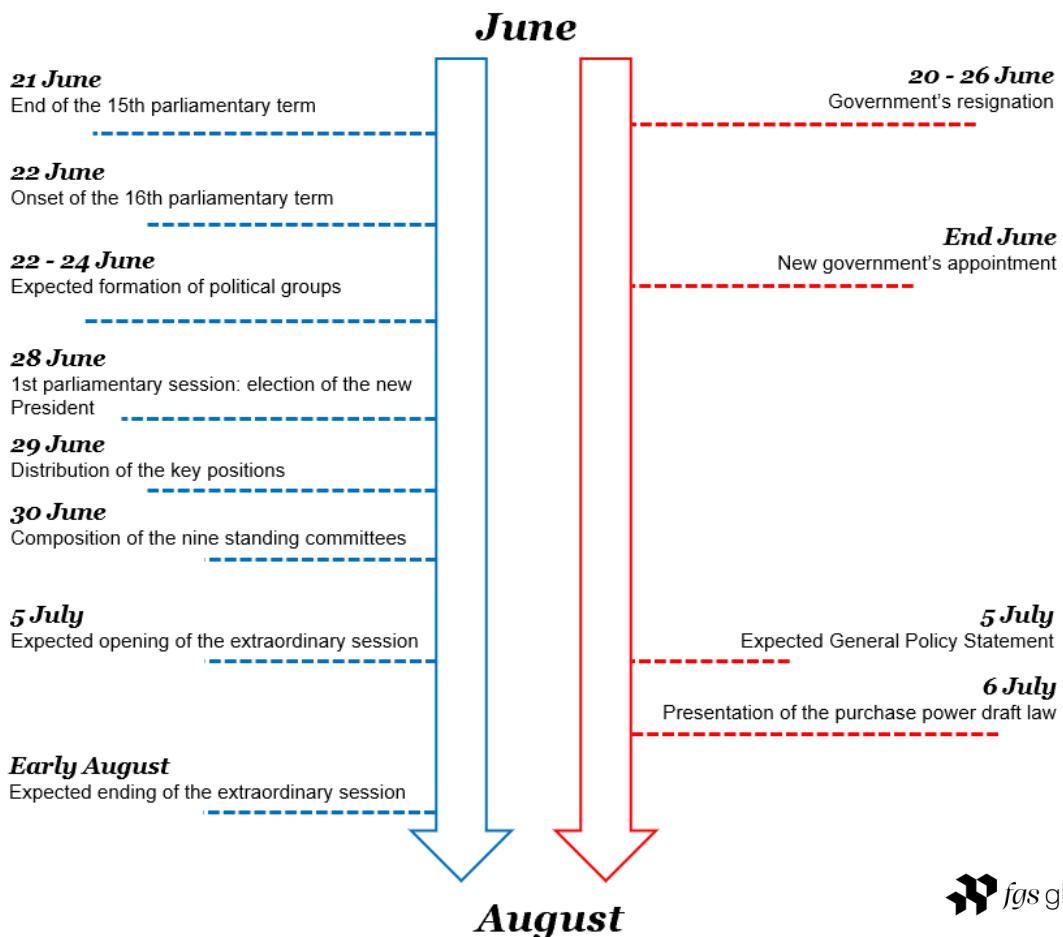
The installation of the new Assembly

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

On the June 21st, the 15th parliamentary term will come to an end. The following day (the 22nd) will officially mark the onset of the 16th parliamentary term. **In the coming days Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne will present the resignation of her Government to President Emmanuel Macron. A new government will be appointed, which will be the occasion for the executive to deliver its first signal following the elections.**

The first parliamentary session will take place one week later – on June 28th – during which the election of the new president of the *Assemblée Nationale* is set to take place. Meanwhile, on June 29th and on June 30th respectively, the distribution of key positions (e.g. six Vice-Presidents, three Quaestors, 12 Secretaries) as well as the composition of the nine standing committees (Cultural Affairs and Education, Finance, Law, Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Economic affairs, Sustainable Development and European affairs) will be decided upon. **France does not follow the mandatory procedure of a confidence vote.** Still, **on the 5th of July, the Prime Minister should deliver a general policy statement in the National Assembly** followed by a debate, which will highlight the Parliament’s position towards the Government. **The Left-alliance, *Nupes*, has already indicated that it will present a motion of no confidence.**

Shortly thereafter, the MPs will rapidly enter the ordinary parliamentary life and examine first legislative dossiers. The Government is expected to call for an extraordinary plenary session that could last till the early days of August, in order to pass priority legislative texts, primarily aimed at tackling inflation and the energy crisis.



Media coverage

What is France waking up to?

“Earthquake”, “Ungovernable!”, “Fragmented France”...

The period of uncertainty France is heading to is the main focus of today's news in France: how to govern with an absence of majority, with a powerful left-alliance within the National Assembly?



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