

Corinne Deloy

Translated by Helen Levy

Analysis
1 month before
the poll

Will the French give a parliamentary majority to François Hollande during the general elections on 10th and 17th June?

Five weeks after having elected the President of the Republic, 46 million French citizens are being called again on 10th and 17th June to renew the National Assembly, the lower chamber of Parliament.

The parliamentary election includes several new elements. Firstly, it is the first to take place after the electoral re-organisation of January 2010 that involves 285 constituencies. Moreover, French citizens living abroad will elect their MPs for the very first time: 11 constituencies have been especially created for them. Since it was revised on 23rd July 2008, the French Constitution stipulates that there cannot be more than 577 MPs.

Candidates must have registered between 14th and 18th May (between 7th and 11th May for the French living abroad). The latter will vote on 3rd June next in the first round, some territories abroad will be called to ballot on 9th and 16th June due to a time difference with the mainland. The official campaign will start on 21st May next.

The French Political System

The Parliament is bicameral, comprising the National Assembly, the Lower Chamber, with 577 MPs elected by direct universal suffrage for 5 years and the Senate, the Upper Chamber, 348 members of whom are appointed for 6 six years by indirect universal suffrage.

MPs are elected in a first-past-the-post majority system in two rounds in 577 constituencies. To be appointed in the first round a candidate has to win the absolute majority of the vote matching at least one quarter of the voters registered. If no candidate is elected in the first round a second is organised one week later. All candidates that win at least 12.50% of those registered in the first round can stay for the second round.

The electoral law obliges the political parties to present at least 50% of women as candidates (with 2% leeway). The State reduces the aid it provides if parties do not respect this principle.

7 political parties are represented in the National As-

sembly at present:

- the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the party of former President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy, positioned on the right of the political scale has 313 seats;
- the Socialist Party (PS) the party of the new Head of State, François Hollande, positioned on the left has 186 MPs;
- the Communist Party (PCF) has 15 seats;
- the Radical Left Party (PRG), has 7 MPs;
- the Greens that lies to the left of the political scale, has 4 seats;
- the Democratic Movement (MoDem), the centrist party whose leader is François Bayrou, has 3 MPs;
- the Movement for France (MPF), a sovereigntist party has 1 seat.

The National Assembly also has 9 independent MPs from the right and 15 from the left.

The issues at stake in the general elections

Redistribution has changed the electoral landscape.

General elections in France 10th and 17th June 2012

The left now has 190 'guaranteed' seats, the right, 230. Moreover just one month before the election, the left has the advantage in 130 constituencies and is under threat in twenty others.

The general election that follows the presidential election of 22nd April and 6th May last, should enable the new head of State, François Hollande, to win a majority allowing him to govern for the next five years. The dynamic created by the presidential election and the French population's will not to suffer cohabitation give the left hope to win these general elections on 10th and 17th June next. It remains to be seen whether the Socialist Party and his allies will be able to win the absolute majority in the National Assembly.

On the left

In November 2011 the Socialist Party (PS) signed an agreement with Europe Ecology-the Greens (EE-LV), the Radical Left Party (PRG) and the Republican and Citizens Movement (MRC). 63 constituencies have been "reserved" by the ecologists, 20 of which are "winnable". It remains that the weak results (2.31% of the votes) achieved by the EELV candidate in the first round of the presidential election may endanger this agreement. The Greens hope to be able to put a parliamentary group together in the National Assembly as they succeeded in doing in the Senate after the elections of 25th September 2011. The PRG hopes the same thing and is aiming to win around 15 constituencies. Its members have rallied the Socialist Party since 2002.

For its part the Left Front – a movement rallying the Communist Party (PCF) and the Left Party (PG) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, does not officially belong to the left majority that rallies around the Socialist Party. The Communist Party needs the socialists to be able to maintain its parliamentary group. The result achieved by the Left Front candidate in the first round of the presidential election (11.1%) does not enable him to influence the socialists as much as he would have liked.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon has therefore chosen to stand in the 11th constituency of Nord-Pas-de-Calais – which is also that of the National Front leader (FN), Marine Le Pen. *"I represent the Republic and the idea that was born in this, a mining area, it is that of a workers' movement which has found new life in the programme that I represent: which puts men and women first,"* he declared. He is therefore continuing his battle against the populist right wing – in which he lost the first round on 22nd April last when Marine Le Pen clearly beat him (17.9% of the vote, i.e. + 6.8 points more in comparison with his result). The 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais, a leftwing stronghold since the end of the Second World War, has de-industrialised sharply and is suffering greatly from unemployment. It was also severely shaken by the corruption scandal that involved the local federation of the Socialist Party (the mayor, Gérard Dalongeville (PS) was dismissed from office in 2009). The outgoing MP Pierre Facon (PS) in office since 1997 is not standing again. The socialists have appointed Philippe Kermel, Mayor of Carvin.

On the right

Nicolas Sarkozy's presidential campaign caused tension with the UMP. On the centre-right there were voices of protest just after the first round. Hence, Laurent Wauquiez (UMP), the outgoing Higher Education Minister regretted that the *"right only spoke of security and immigration and not enough about the middle class"*. *"My feeling is that our defeat was not linked to believing too much but of not having assumed the spectre of our beliefs,"* he stressed. Xavier Bertrand, former secretary general of the UMP also wondered *"about the lack of information about the reforms,"* undertaken during the presidential mandate during this presidential campaign. *"The UMP lacked diversity. We should have maintained the party's double, centrist culture,"* declared former Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (2002-2005).

Some of the UMP and notably the members of the

Popular Right, a parliamentary group founded in 2010 by Thierry Mariani, Richard Mallié, Jean-Paul Garraud and Lionel Luca, who want to see their party re-focus on traditional issues such as security, the nation and the fight to counter immigration, do not agree with this and intend to maintain and strengthen the trend towards the right adopted by their party.

Outgoing Prime Minister François Fillon (UMP) said it was not the time to "settle scores". The future of the UMP has therefore been put on hold for the time being. According to one poll one third of the UMP's electorate (32%) supports the signature of agreements between their party and the National Front; 62% are against it. However amongst those who voted for the outgoing Head of State in the second round there is equality on this all round: 47% support alliances and the same number are against it. *"It is our duty to rally. We must not give in to intimidation from the left nor to the threats from the far right whose goal it is to divide us and then to break us,"* declared Prime Minister François Fillon. *"The UMP is a big family. I am not planning to work other than collectively and tightly knit together. We shall campaign against the rejection of the golden rule, against the right of foreigners to vote, against the fiscal hammering of the middle classes, against the destruction of the nuclear sector,"* indicated the party's secretary general, Jean-François Copé, who is leading the right's campaign in the elections of 10th and 17th June next. He recalls that the *"UMP's line is very clear, there will be no electoral alliance nor discussions with the leaders of the National Front."*

The UMP can count on the support of the New Centre (NC) led by former Defence Minister (2007-2010) Hervé Morin. The party hopes to maintain its group in the National Assembly and hopes to sign a joint programme with the UMP.

The National Front

On 22nd April the National Front candidate (FN) in the presidential election, Marine Le Pen, came first or second in 116 constituencies. She won more than 25% of the vote in more than half of them (59). The populist rightwing party will go the elections under the banner of *"Rassemblement bleu marine"*. Its leader hopes to change the FN's name after the election.

The FN's strategy mainly rests on the UMP's difficulties. *"The UMP will collapse,"* forecasts (and hopes) MEP Bruno Gollnisch (FN). The party will remain everywhere where it is able to, which means that the government right will be forced into triangular situations, the outcome of which can only be fatal.

The two round election goes particularly against the "small parties" and therefore against the National Front. Hence in 2002 when its then leader Jean-Marie Le Pen won 16.86% of the vote in the first round of the presidential election (thereby reaching the second round), his party "only" won 11.34% of the vote in the general election a month later. Moreover the FN may suffer on 10th June to the weak establishment of its leaders (mayors or general councillors) on a local level and low turnout that would make it difficult to achieve the vital 12.5% to be able to stay in the second round.

According to a BVA poll, published on 11th May last, the leftwing is due to win 45.5% and the right 49.5% in the first round of the elections. The UMP is due to win 32.5% and the National Front 16% of the vote, ie its highest level ever in the general elections. Half of the French (53%) say they want victory for the left whilst one quarter (24%) want the right to win on 10th and 17th June. Moreover 61% of the French think that the left will in these general elections; 23% believe that the right will emerge victorious from this ballot.

Reminder of the General Elections Results on 10th and 17th June 2007 in France

Turnout : 60.44%

	n° of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	n° of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)	Number of seats
Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)	10 289 028	39,54	9 463 408	46,37	313
Diverse Right (DVD)	641 600	2,47	238 585	1,17	9
Movement for France (MPF)	312 587	1,20	0	0	1
National Front (FN)	1 116 005	4,29	17 107	0,08	0
Far Right	102 100	0,39			0
Socialist Party (PS)	6 436 136	24,73	8 622 529	42,25	186
Radical Left Party (PRG)	343 580	1,32	333 189	1,63	7
The Greens	845 884	3,25	90 975	0,45	4
The French Communist Party (PCF)	1 115 719	4,29	464 739	2,28	15
Diverse Left (DVG)	513 457	1,97	503 674	2,47	15
Far Left	887 887	3,41	0	0	0
Democratic Movement (MoDem)	1 981 121	7,61	100 106	0,49	3
Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Traditions, (CPNT)	213 448	0,82	0	0	0
Diverse Ecologists	208 465	0,80	0	0	0
Regionalists, autonomists and Independentists	131 585	0,51	106 459	0,52	1
Diverse movements	267 987	1,03	33 068	0,16	1

Source : http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_votre_service/elections/resultats/accueil_resultats/downloadFile/attached-File_2/Leg_07_FE_METRO_OM.xls

A majority to François Hollande?

D-7
7 Days before
the poll

Five weeks after electing François Hollande (Socialist Party, PS) as President of the Republic, 46 million French citizens are being called to ballot again on 10th and 17th June next to renew the 577 members of the National Assembly, the lower chamber of parliament. This parliamentary election is the first to take place after the electoral redistribution of France in January 2010.

6,611 people, including 2,641 women (39.94%) are officially in the race, i.e. 11 on average per constituency. Europe Ecology-the Greens (EELV) are the best performers in terms of parity (49.57% of women); the Socialist Party is putting 45% women candidates forward and the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the main opposition party, less than 26%. The UMP's secretary general, Jean-François Copé chose not to respect male-female parity that has been obligatory since the law on parity on 6th June 2000, which forces political

parties to put forward as least 50% of women candidates (give or take 2%). "I took this decision with my friends of the Union for a Popular Movement which will cost us dearly in terms of a fine. Everyone has to understand that at the moment we absolutely must have a maximum number of MPs and this will be achieved via influence and the local establishment of many of us," in other words, male MPs.

The 8th constituency of Paris (a part of the 12th and 20th arrondissement) holds the record number of candidates: 23. For the first time, the French living abroad will be electing their representatives in 11 constituencies (six in Europe, two in Africa, the Near and Middle East, two in the Americas and one, whose range extends from Russia to Australia and New Zealand and across Asia). The constituency with the greatest numbers of voters (157, 363) is the first (US and Canada), the one with the least (79,756) is the 11th which is also the biggest. 700,000 French citizens living abroad (out of 1,075, 744 registered in all) have chosen to vote via the internet, a measure that is appreciated by those who sometimes live far from the polling stations (786 in all will be open abroad). The electronic vote took place between 23rd and 29th May in the first round and will take between 6th and 12th June in the second. 178 candidates are running for the eleven seats representing French citizens living abroad.

The electoral campaign for the general elections started on 21st May last.

What kind of majority will there be for the left?

The left does not seem in a position to cause a landslide victory and no is forecasting an absolute majority for the Socialist Party and its EELV allies on 17th June. Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (PS) will lead the PS's electoral campaign. "*Cohabitation would lead to an extremely serious political crisis,*" declared Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, the Minister for Women's Rights and the government's spokesperson, in order to motivate those voters who say they are not really interested in the general election.

Negotiations between the Socialist Party and the Left Front, which rallies the Communist Party (PCF) and the Left Party (PG) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon have failed. "*Work was undertaken with the Communist Party in a excellent atmosphere but there were disagreements within the Left Front,*" declared Martine Aubry, the Socialist Party's Secretary General. "*Given the magnificent courage on the part of the Left Front in the second round of the presidential election which took a decision in spite of everything because without the four million votes on the part of our party, however brilliant*

he might have been, François Hollande would not have succeeded in achieving a majority and we deserve to be respected," declared Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The latter chose to continue the battle against the National Front leader, (FN), Marine Le Pen and is standing in the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais. Under the banner "*La Gauche sans complexe et sans casserole*" (the Left, simple and transparent), he is undertaking an extremely social campaign (increase of the minimum salary to 1,700€) and is counting on division amongst the local Socialist Party. The Left Front leader's wager is not as dangerous as it might seem since François Hollande won 60.44% in this constituency in the second round of the presidential election.

The agreement signed previously (November 2011) between the Socialist Party and the EELV attributes 63 constituencies to the ecologists who will be facing leftwing dissidents in around twenty of them. The danger of seeing the left eliminated in the first round in event of the populist National Front (FN) achieving high scores is a reality in five of ten constituencies. EELV is putting 471 candidates forward in all, 236 of whom are women.

General elections in France 10th and 17th June 2012

On 16th May last François Hollande appointed Jean-Marc Ayrault as Prime Minister. He formed a government comprising 34 people (18 ministers and 16 delegate ministers) most of whom (29) have never held any ministerial responsibilities. For the first time in its history France is being led by a President and a Prime Minister who have never been government members.

The government team respects the political balance in the Socialist Party (all of the trends are represented) and more widely the balance that exists on the left (two ecologists, two radical left ministers). The most obvious absentee from the government is Martine Aubry, the Socialist Party's Secretary General who declined all other positions other than Matignon (the Prime Minister's seat in France). She also announced that she would be giving up her post as head of the party, without however giving any precise date of her departure. This government is also the first government with an equal number of men and women in the 5th Republic: 17 men and 17 women. The only regret is that equality in number does not cover equality of status, since only one woman occupies a strong position: Christiane Taubira (PRG), as Justice Minister.

The configuration of the government is not due to change after the general elections.

24 ministers are running in the general election on. President François Hollande informed his ministers that all of those who were beaten would have to give up their posts. Some decided not to stand such as Christian Taubira and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. Several ministers are in a difficult position and these are: the Culture and Communication Minister, Aurélie Filipetti, in the 1st constituency of Moselle; delegate Budget Minister, Jérôme Cahuzac, in the 3rd constituency of Lot-et-Garonne; the Social Affairs and Healthcare Minister, Marisol Touraine, in the 1st constituency of Indre-et-Loire ; the Economy, Finance and Foreign Trade Minister, Pierre Moscovici in the 4th constituency of Doubs; delegate Minister for Crafts, Trade and Tourism, Sylvia Pinel, in the 2nd constituency of Tarn-et-Garonne ; delegate Minister for

the Handicapped, Marie-Arlette Carlotti, in the 5th constituency of Bouches-du-Rhône and finally the Agriculture and Agrofood Minister, Stéphane Le Foll in the 4th constituency of Sarthe.

During the first Council of Ministers, and in line with the campaign pledge taken by François Hollande, the salaries of the Head of State, the Prime minister and the Ministers were reduced by 30%. Each minister has also signed a deontological charter promising not to have more than one mandate and to preserve themselves from all types of conflict of interest.

Cohabitation is unlikely

The main opposition party, the Union for a Popular Movement, which is campaigning according to the motto *"Together we are choosing France"* is using the high score achieved by former President (2007-2012) Nicolas Sarkozy in the second round of the presidential (48.38%). *"We must place ourselves across the country in a position of conquest,"* maintained the Mayor of Bordeaux, Alain Juppé (UMP) who also gave up running in the 2nd constituency of Gironde, saying that he wanted to devote himself to his town council and prepare for the elections in 2014.

"I don't want cohabitation for cohabitation's sake but a balanced vote of power and protection of the French citizens' pay sheets and tax forms," declared former Labour, Employment and Healthcare Minister (2010-2012) and the UMP's former secretary general (2009-2010), Xavier Bertrand, adding, *"the party has to give its all and campaign with the same energy as Nicolas Sarkozy did, delivering a convincing campaign, that is totally committed, combative and feisty. But that does not mean aggressive."*

The Union for a Popular Movement's programme wants to counter welfare handouts and the fiscal pummelling of the middle classes, communautarism, the right for foreigners to vote, lax attitudes on Europe's borders and the excesses of globalisation and relocations. It is proposing a 13 billion € reduction on social charges on labour so that 14

million jobs will be protected, the reservation of 20% of public procurement markets for SME's and the upkeep of tax free overtime and a net increase in salaries by means of a four billion euro reduction in employee contributions.

On the right the party's Secretary General, Jean-François Copé has to fight Marine Le Pen's National Front. *"I would like to say to the French who want or would like to vote for the National Front that by doing this we shall put the left in power,"* he warned. *"We are clear: no alliance with the National Front. I would like to take the time to ask François Hollande about his alliance with Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the Greens,"* he added.

The UMP has already started the battle of succession to the former President, which will take place next autumn. Indeed according to the party's statutes, in the event of its candidate's defeat in the presidential election the party has between four to six months to organise a congress and appoint its new chairman, deputy chair and its secretary general.

"The Union for a Popular Movement no longer has a natural leader," declared former Prime Minister (2007-2012) François Fillon to the weekly 'Figaro Magazine', without fearing the battle this might launch. *"It is clear. Nicolas Sarkozy is missing from the UMP, he was largely behind this political party's success and there has been a vacuum since his departure which no one can deny,"* he explained. The former Head of Government is due to face – amongst others – Jean-François Copé, in the fight for the post as leader of the party. *"The future chair of the UMP in 2012 will firstly have to be a fighting chairman, a warlord in the democratic sense of the term,"* said the Secretary General. *"That there should be various candidates and therefore various competitors for the chair of the party during the congress is completely normal but it is not the time to talk of this now,"* he also said hoping to reveal his rival, François Fillon, as the man of division at a time when the priority should be unity.

"I hope these are just unfortunate words (...) we

are committed to a legislative battle that may lead us to victory, the condition for this being of course our unity. The priority of priorities is unity," declared Alain Juppé. *"With others I founded the UMP. I will do everything I can to avoid this advantage being brought into question,"* he added.

The number of MPs seats won by the opposition on 17th June next and notably the way these will be spread amongst the supporters of either one or the other of the personalities hoping to succeed Nicolas Sarkozy as head of the UMP, will be decisive. For the time being, the electorate on the right seems more interested in the effects of the socio-economic crisis and the future of their buying power than in the leadership of the party.

A Dangerous Election for the National Front

The National Front (FN), which is not represented in Parliament, hopes of course to win seats in the National Assembly. However the majority two round voting method does not lean in its favour. The National Front's electorate (just like all of the French) will be less motivated for the general elections than they were for the presidential. If turn out is low on 10th June next, for example around 60%, all parties must absolutely win over 20% of the votes cast to achieve the 12.5% of those registered which is vital to remain in the second round.

The FN's goal is firstly to show its ability to rally, to form alliances with others parties, in short to be seen as an attractive political force. This is why the National Front is running in the elections on 10th and 17th June under the banner *"Rassemblement bleu marine"*. The party has succeeded in rallying to its new name Bernard Dutheil de la Rochère (Republican and Citizens' Movement, MRC), Olivier Eyraud (UMP) who has now been excluded from his party because of this, and Nathalie Huiart, the local leader of Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Traditions (Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Traditions – CPNT). *"There are some good people at*

the UMP, there are some good locally engaged MPs, there are many voters who do not understand the barrier that has been set up between the UMP and the National Front the means and ends of which they cannot see" declared Marine Le Pen on 22nd May. She also said that her party might "exceptionally call for a vote in support of UMP candidates or the Socialist Party depending on their human value."

The National Front is putting 572 candidates forward including 289 women. Eleven of its candidates are not party members, such as the lawyer Gilbert Collard, who is standing in the 2nd constituency of Gard, the only department where Marine Le Pen came out ahead in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last, or Jacques Peyrat in the 1st constituency of Alpes-Maritime. Apart from these two departments the party hopes to win seat in Moselle, Vaucluse and Pas-de-Calais. The party set the goal of being present in 150 of the 200 constituencies in the second round. It is campaigning on the theme of protection – economic, social, physical – national priority, support to pensioners and the fight against communautarism.

What future for François Bayrou?

Finally the Democratic Movement leader (MoDem), François Bayrou will find it difficult to retain his seat as MP in the 2nd constituency of Pyrénées Atlantiques. *"There is obviously a political equation that is not easy to settle,"* he declared. Taking fifth position in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last with 9.13% of the vote, François Bayrou then announced that he would be voting for François Hollande in the second round. *"After great debate I decided to oppose Nicolas Sarkozy whose obsession with Islam was dangerous for our country,"* he recently declared in explanation of his choice, adding *"it seemed to me that the country needed change."*

The party is standing under the label of "Centre for France" (CpF) with 471 candidates, a quarter of whom are not members of the Democratic Movement. *"My commitment in the general elections is that the National Assembly needs voices that say when it is fair and conversely when it isn't. If we want to serve the country then we need balance. If per chance the right should win the majority in the hemicycle, I can say that it will be a catastrophe for the country. We just have to look at the present atmosphere in the two camps. Violence has entered the debate which is damaging. The risk of have a warring majority against the new President is real. Jean-François Copé himself used the word "war","* warned Jean-François Bayrou. *"France has no chance of recovering if the next elections end in cohabitation and stalemate,"* the leader of the Democratic Movement also pointed out calling for the new President François Hollande *"to review in depth his economic programme" because "the financial crisis is not yet behind, but ahead of us."*

It is likely that the French will give François Hollande the majority that will enable him to govern for the next five years. The general elections organised just after presidential vote have always confirmed the choice made in the latter election. According to the most recent poll by Ipsos on 25th and 26th May last, the UMP is due to win 35% of the vote, the Socialist Party 31%. The National Front is due to win 15%, the Left Front 8% and EELV 6%. IFOP published a poll on 30th May crediting the socialists with 34% of the vote and the UMP with 32%. The FN is due to win 15.5% of the vote, the Left Front, 7% and EELV 3.5%.

The UMP is calling for voters not to give power to the left, which now holds the presidency of the republic, the Senate (the Upper Chamber of Parliament), the great majority of the regions and departments and also the country's main towns. The right has been in this position twice, for the first time between 1995-1997 and the second between 2002-2004.

The first round of the French general elections: PS in the lead but UMP not so far.

The leftwing came out ahead in the 1st round of the French general elections that took place on 10th June. The Socialist Party (PS) of new President, François Hollande won 29.35% of the vote. His allies in Europe Ecology-the Greens (EELV) won 5.46% of the vote. The Left Front led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon won 6.91%.

The Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the main opposition party won 27.12% of the vote and the National Front (FN), a populist party that stood under the banner "Rassemblement bleu marine" won 13.6%.

The 1st round of the election therefore confirmed the bipolarisation of the French political landscape, notably because of the almost total disappearance of the centre, a long time ally of the right. The two "main" parties achieved high scores, the "small" parties recorded a decline in comparison with their candidate's scores in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last. The National Front, isolated in the political arena, won a much higher score than in the 1st round of the previous general elections on 10th June 2007 (+ 9.48 points) but is nevertheless at a disadvantage if it wants to win seats in the National Assembly on 17th June next.

The Democratic Movement (MoDem) achieved a much lower score than its candidate, François Bayrou, in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last: 1.76 % of the vote. The MoDem leader won 24% of the vote in the 2nd constituency of Pyrénées-Atlantiques and is not at an advantage as in the second round he faces socialist Nathalie Chabanne, who won 35% of the vote and Eric Saubatte (UMP) who won 22%.

The voting method (first past the post in two rounds) is particularly advantageous to the "major" political parties.

Turnout was the lowest ever recorded in a general election in France: 57.23%, i.e. -3.21 points in comparison with the first round of the previous elections on 10th June 2007.

Just a few weeks after the presidential election, the French expressed their weariness (22nd April and 6th May 2012) and took little interest in this election in which there was not much at stake. The parties also chose to undertake local campaigns. Many voters also believed that everything had already been decided. "*The presidential campaign was long; the French felt that they had done the most important part of the work on this occasion. The general election that follows immediately after a Presidential election struggles to generate any interest, passion and therefore motivation,*" declared the Delegate

General Manager, Brice Teinturier, of the pollster Ipsos.

According to a poll by the same institute, those who voted for François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April last were the most motivated in the general election, more so than those who had voted for other candidates. 68% of those who voted for François Hollande and 66% of those who voted for Nicolas Sarkozy in the first round of the presidential election turned out to ballot on 10th June against 54% for Marine Le Pen and 53% for François Bayrou.

Quite coherently the electorate confirmed their vote in support of the leftwing candidate on 6th May last. The real question in these elections fo-

Results
1st round

cused on the extent of the victory that had been forecast for the left: confirmation or amplification of François Hollande's victory of 6th May? It is still too early to answer this question since the second round may lead to very different results from those of the first round results. France does seem however to be moving towards a leftwing majority (formed by the PS and the EELV, and possibly without the Left Front), in the National Assembly. The PS, which is riding on the dynamic of François Hollande's election, could win an absolute majority on 17th June even though things are far from being decided yet. *"The French have expressed their support for change and even that they want more of this. They appreciate that promises have been kept,"* declared the PS leader, Martine Aubry. *"Nothing has yet been decided. We must call for mobilisation. We have to boost the left,"* she added. Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (PS) called for high turn out on 17th June next *"so that change can be made long term."*

Several ministers were elected in the first round including Jean-Marc Ayrault in the 3rd constituency of Loire-Atlantique; Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius in the 4th constituency of Seine-Maritime; the Overseas Minister Victorin Lurel in the 4th constituency of Guadeloupe; Transport Minister Frédéric Cuvillier in the 5th constituency of Pas-de-Calais; the delegate Justice Minister Delphine Batho in the 2nd constituency of Deux-Sèvres and the Delegate European Affairs Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve in the 4th constituency of the Manche.

Other ministers, who were struggling before the election, finally emerged in a favourable position after the first round: Culture and Communication Minister, Aurélie Filipetti, in the 1st constituency of Moselle; the Delegate Budget Minister, Jérôme Cahuzac in the 3rd constituency of Lot-et-Garonne; Social Affairs and Healthcare Minister Marisol Touraine, in the 3rd constituency of Indre-et-Loire; the Economy, Finance and External Trade Minister, Pierre Moscovici in the 4th constituency of Doubs; the Delegate Craft

Trades, Trade and Tourism Minister Sylvia Pinel in the 2nd constituency of Tarn-et-Garonne and finally the Agriculture and Agro-Food Minister Stéphane Le Foll in the 4th constituency of Sarthe.

The situation is not so clear for the Delegate Minister for the Handicapped, Marie-Arlette Carlotti in the 5th constituency of Bouches-du-Rhône. In all, the PS has won 22 seats in the first round including Alain Rousset (7th constituency of Gironde), Henri Emmanuelli (3rd constituency of Landes) and Annick Girardin (Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon).

EELV might be disappointed at its results. It did however sign an electoral agreement with the PS in November 2011, which went in its favour since it focused on 63 constituencies, including around thirty which could have been deemed winnable. The party won in 8 constituencies: the 4th of Morbihan, the 9th of Isère, the 6th of Gard, the 10th of Yvelines, the 6th and 10th constituencies of Paris, the 7th of Essonne and the 1st of Loire-Atlantique. The ecologists also have one MP already: Noël Mamère, was re-elected in the 3rd constituency of Gironde with 52% of the vote.

The UMP can be proud of its result, although it has lost ground in comparison with the first round of the previous general election on 10th June 2007, the score is still high. Indeed it came out equal with the PS even though it has won less seats in the 1st round (9 against 22 for the PS). The decline of the MoDem and the FN in comparison with the presidential election has obviously benefited the UMP. The New Centre, led by former Defence Minister (2007-2010) Hervé Morin and an UMP ally, won in 13 constituencies.

"Everything has not yet been decided" stresses the UMP's Secretary General Jean-François Copé, who has called for a "general mobilisation" and is asking the electorate *"not to put all of their eggs in one basket."* "First there has not been a pink wave," indicated former Prime Minister

(2007-2012) François Fillon. "The Socialist Party must not win all of the power," he added.

Two former ministers in the government led by the latter are in difficult position: Nadine Morano, former Apprenticeship and Professional Training Minister (2010-2012) in the 5th constituency of Meurthe-et-Moselle, who is lagging behind Dominique Potier and to a lesser degree, former Employment and Healthcare Minister (2010-2012) Xavier Bertrand in the 2nd constituency of Aisne who will be facing socialist Anne Ferreira in the second round.

Finally the former Secretary General of the Presidency of the French Republic (2007-2011) and former Interior, Overseas, Territorial Communities and Immigration Minister (2011-2012), Claude Guéant, will face to rivals on 17th June in the 9th constituency of Hauts-de-Seine: Thierry Solère, a dissident UMP candidate and socialist Martine Even.

"Tonight given the abstention rate and the profoundly un-democratic way of voting that for the last 25 years has deprived millions of voters of an MP, we confirm our position as the third political force in France," declared FN leader, Marine Le Pen, who won the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais with 42.36% of the vote. In the second round she will be facing socialist Philippe Kermel, the Mayor of Carvin, who won 23.5% of the vote. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Left Front leader who was standing in this constituency again lost his wager of beating the FN leader, a battle he already lost in the first round of the presidential election on 22nd April when Marine Le Pen clearly beat him. Jean-Luc Mélenchon won 21.48% of the vote on 10th June. The Left Front came 5th in 5 of the 577 constituencies: the 5th of Puy-de-Dôme, the 2nd of Cher, the 4th and 11th constituencies of Seine-Saint-Denis and the 4th of Hauts-de-Seine. On this point he fared better than the National Front, which apart from in the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais dominated the election in 3 other places: the 2nd constituency of Gard, where Gilbert Collard won 34.57% of the vote, the 3rd of Vaucluse where Marion Maréchal Le Pen, grand-daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen (former FN leader) and Marine Le

Pen's niece won 34.63% of the vote and the 3rd constituency of Bouches-du-Rhône.

On 10th June the French living abroad were called to vote to elect their MPs for the first time in the history of the 5th Republic. The way they voted was a source of surprise: the leftwing candidates won in 7 of the 11 constituencies reserved to the French living abroad but turnout was low however, totalling 20.7% on average. The left is running favourite in the second round in the 2nd constituency (Caribbean and Central and South America) where ecologist Sergio Coronado won with 35.88% of the vote); in the 3rd constituency (Northern Europe the Baltic States, UK and Ireland); the 4th constituency (Benelux); the 7th (Germany, Central Europe and the Balkans excluding Greece) and the 9th (North Africa), where Pouria Amirshahi (PS) won 47.23% of the vote.

The rightwing has all of its chances to win in the 6th constituency (Switzerland, Liechtenstein); the 10th (South Africa) and the 11th (Asia-Australasia), where Thierry Mariani (UMP) won 32.59% of the vote. The situation is uncertain in the 1st constituency (USA and Canada), where Corinne Narassiguin (PS) won with 39.65% of the vote ahead of Frédéric Lefebvre (UMP), 22.08% ; the 5th (Spain, Portugal), where the PS and the UMP are running neck and neck and in the 8th (Mediterranean, from Italy to Turkey and Israel) where Daphna Poznanski-Benhamou (PS) drew ahead with 30.5% of the vote. Valérie Hoffenberg (UMP), who won 22.2% of the vote, does however some chance.

On 10th June the French opted for coherence and realism. François Hollande's electorate chose to provide the new president with a majority; those on the right privileged voting for the UMP candidates which achieved a decent score in the 1st round of the general election. The question before 10th June is still the same though: will the PS win the absolute majority in the National Assembly by itself? The candidates still running have one week in the electoral campaign to convince their voters. The answer will come on 17th June next.

Results of the 1st round of the general elections on 10th June 2012 in France

Turnout: 57.23%

	Number of votes won	%	Elected in the first round
Far Left	254 736	0.98	0
Socialist Party (PS)	7 581 803	29.35	22
The Radical Left (PRG)	434 400	1.65	1
The Left Front (FG)	1 802 056	6.91	0
Various Left (DVG)	920 550	3.4	1
Europe Ecology-Greens (EE-LV)	1 418 141	5.46	1
Democratic Movement (MoDem)	603 574	1.76	0
Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)	6 907 541	27.12	9
New Centre(NC)	548 106	2.2	1
Radical Party (PR)	307 090	1.24	0
Various Right (DVD)	1 087 422	3.51	1
National Front (FN)	3 572 536	13.6	0
Various	304 547	1.17	0

Source: <http://elections.interieur.gouv.fr/LG2012/FE.html>

The Socialist Party-led wins the absolute majority in the National Assembly

Results 2nd round

The Socialist Party (PS), which is original party of François Hollande, President of the Republic elected on 6th May last, led by Martine Aubry, won the majority in the National Assembly, the lower chamber of Parliament in the second round of voting on 17th June. The PS won 280 seats, the Radical Left, 12 and Various Left 22. Since September 2011 the left has also held the majority in the Senate, the upper chamber of parliament.

Europe Ecology-The Greens (EE-LV), led by Cécile Duflot, won 17 seats and will be able to form a parliamentary group. However the Left Front, a movement that rallies the Communist Party (PCF) and the Left Party (PG) led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon won 10 seats. The PS is therefore free to undertake its policy without having to call on the Left Front, which has radical ideas about the economy and the EU.

Although it holds the majority the left does not hold the 3/5 majority of the Congress (555 seats) however, which brings together the two chambers of parliament and which would have enabled it to make constitutional reforms and even put forward a referendum without the opposition's agreement.

The Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the main opposition party of former President of the Republic Nicolas Sarkozy and led by Jean-François Copé, won 194 seats, the Radical party 6 and Various Right 14. The New Centre won 12 seats. The Democratic Movement (MoDem) won 2 seats in the National Assembly. However its leader François Bayrou lost the seat that had been his since 1986. Finally the Front National led by Martin Le Pen and which was running under the banner "Rassemblement Bleu Marine", won 2 seats. Turnout was the lowest ever recorded for a general election in France: 55.41%.

Finally 155 women will sit in the National Assembly (+ 48).

The general election result therefore means victory for President François Hollande and the government led by Jean-Marc Ayrault (PS). The head of State now has a "wide, strong, coherent" majority which he said he wanted so that he could implement his programme and which the French had chosen in a context of severe economic crisis. *"The French have strengthened their request for change that emerged last week in the first round of voting. I would like to thank them for the trust they have shown in us. It is an honour. It is up to us now to succeed in bringing back justice,"* declared Martine Aubry when the results were announced. All of the ministers in the government led by Jean-Marc Ayrault, who ran in the election, were elected or re-elected.

The only downside to the PS's victory was the defeat of former socialist presidential (22nd April and 6th May 2007) candidate Ségolène Royal (also the former partner of the head of State, François Hollande) because of a dissident PS member - in the 1st constituency of Charente Maritime. The latter, Olivier Falorni, who won the support of Valérie Trierweiler, took advantage of the votes on the right and won 62.97% of the vote against 37.03% for Ségolène Royal. *"This result is a political betrayal,"* declared Ségolène Royal. Martine Aubry has confirmed that Olivier Falorni, excluded from the party, will not be able to sit with the PS group in the National Assembly.

Another mainstay of the socialist party, Jack Lang, was also beaten. The former Culture Minister (1981-1986), won 49.12% of the vote in the 2nd constituency of Vosges against Gérard Cherpion (UMP), who won 50.88%.

With 215 seats the UMP has suffered an acceptable defeat. The rightwing electorate faced a complicated choice. Indeed although they wanted their political side to win they were against cohabitation.

"It is a dear victory for the left, a defeat for the right. We shall be a constructive opposition force working for the country's well-being but we shall be extremely vigilant," declared former Prime Minister (1995-1997) Alain Juppé. *"We have to think hard about what brings us together, about the base of our common values before our congress (that will take place in the autumn),"* he added. The UMP will now re-position between a rising Front National and an apathetic centre. The UMP candidates who said they were totally against drawing closer to the FN achieved better results than those who said they felt an affinity with these ideas.

For example former Minister Nadine Morano was beaten in the 5th constituency of Meurthe-et-Moselle. She won 44.33% of the vote against 55.67% for Dominique Potier (PS).

The Front National can be proud of its result in this election, whose voting method (majority in two rounds) does not work in its favour. The election of 2 MPs is a success for Marine Le Pen even though she failed to win her own seat by 118 votes in the 11th constituency of Pas-de-Calais, where she took 49.89% of the vote against 50.11% for her socialist rival Philippe Kemel. *"Apart from my own personal case, we only have reason to be pleased because in dozens of constituencies we have achieved some spectacular results in this, the second round of voting, showing that the voting advice of the main parties did not achieve any great following and that the re-organisation of political life is on its way,"* declared Marine Le Pen. *"There are only two of us in Parliament but we represent over 6 million voters, and we have made it!"* said the new FN MP Gilbert Collard. The 2nd MP in the constituency of Vauduse, is Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, Marine Le Pen's niece and grand-daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, with 42.24% of the vote. Aged 22, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen is the youngest MP ever to be elected during the 5th Republic. Although the FN is still isolated in the political arena it has been progressing and has asserted itself in these general elections as it did in the presidential election on 22nd April and 6th May, as the third political force in France. The FN had not managed to win a seat in the National Assembly since 1988.

The election sounded the death knell for the Democratic Movement, whose leader François Bayrou was beaten in the 2nd constituency of Pyrénées-Atlantiques. He won 30.17% of the vote against 42.76% for Nathalie Chabanne (PS) and 27.04% for Eric Saubatte (UMP). MoDem won 2 seats: Jean Lasalle in the 4th constituency of Pyrénées-Atlantiques (50.98% of the vote) and Thierry Robert in the 7th constituency of Reunion Island (66.90% of the vote).

Finally the left won 8 of the 11 seats reserved for the French living abroad, who were called to vote for the first time in the history of the 5th Republic; the UMP won in three constituencies: the 6th (Switzerland, Liechtenstein), the 10th (the southern part of Africa) and the 11th (Asia-Australasia).

The long electoral period is now over in France. Strengthened by its absolute majority in the Assembly, the left, led by François Hollande and Jean-Marc Ayrault, will now be able to govern. Its first goal to bring order back to public finance can no longer be delayed. The socialists have said they will undertake the country's recovery "fairly and without austerity." Economy,

General elections in France 10th and 17th June 2012

Finance and Foreign Trade Minister Pierre Moscovici revealed on 14th June that the growth forecasts were going to be adjusted. Economic slowing will force the government to announce cuts in public spending. Parliament will have to approve a draft corrective finance law rapidly (the reform of the Wealth Tax, the raising of inheritance tax, the introduction of a surtax on banks and oil companies, the re-arrangement of tax niches), which according to forecasts, should bring in around 10 billion € into the State coffers. A report by the Inspectorate General for Fi-

nance indicated that the French state had to save on 5 billion euros yearly in order to consolidate its national accounts.

One thing is certain. With François Hollande in the Elysée (the seat of the President of the French Republic), with the absolute majority in the National Assembly, the Senate and in most of the regions (24 out of 26), the departments and the country's main towns, the French left, now in a hegemonic position, cannot afford to make any mistakes.

General Elections Results in France on 10th and 17th June 2012

Turnout: 57.23% (1st round) and 55.60% (2nd round)

Parties	Votes	%	Number of MPs
Left Front (FG)	249 525	1.08	10
Socialist (SOC)	9 420 426	40.91	280
Radical Left (RDG)	538 324	2.34	12
Various Left (DVG)	709 409	3.08	22
Europe-Ecology-the Greens (VEC)	828 916	3.60	17
Regionalist (REG)	135 354	0.59	2
The Centre for France (CEN)	113 196	0.49	2
Centrist Alliance (ALLI)	123 352	0.54	2
Radical Parti (PRV)	311 211	1.35	6
New Centre (NCE)	568 288	2.47	12
Union for a Popular Movement (UMP)	8 740 625	37.95	194
Various Right (DVD)	418 135	1.82	15
Front National (FN)	842 684	3.66	2
Far Right (EXD)	29 738	0.13	1

Source : <http://elections.interieur.gouv.fr/LG2012/FE.html>

See all of our publications on our site:
www.robert-schuman.eu

Publishing director : Pascale JOANNIN

THE ROBERT SCHUMAN FOUNDATION, created in 1991 and acknowledged by State decree in 1992, is the main French research centre on Europe. It develops research on the European Union and its policies and promotes the content of these in France, Europe and abroad. It encourages, enriches and stimulates European debate thanks to its research, publications and the organization of conferences. The Foundation is presided over by Mr. Jean-Dominique Giuliani.