

European
Elections monitor

Corinne Deloy

RESULTS

Emmanuel Macron leads the first round of the French presidential election and will face Marine le Pen on 24 April

Incumbent President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron (*La République en marche*, LREM), took the lead in the first round of the presidential election held on 10 April. With 27.84% of the vote, he cut clearly ahead of Marine le Pen (*Rassemblement National*, RN), who won 23.15% of the vote. This is the first time that an outgoing head of state has led in the first round for twenty years.

Bis repetita. As in the previous elections on 23 April and 7 May 2017, the two candidates will face each other in the second round of voting on 24 April. They both improved their first-round results compared to the 2017 presidential election. Marine Le Pen nevertheless brings her party's score to a level that has never been reached before, despite the presence of Eric Zemmour, another candidate from the radical right.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (*La France insoumise*, LFI) came third with 21.95% of the vote. He attracted a "useful vote" from the left-wing electorate, as he was the best positioned player in this political camp in the pre-election opinion polls. The centre-right and radical right voters did the same by voting in the first round for the candidate of their camp best placed in the opinion polls, namely Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen. Although Jean-Luc Mélenchon's rise was quite significant during the last days of the campaign, he nevertheless narrowly failed to qualify for the second round.

Far behind the three leading candidates, we find Eric Zemmour (*Reconquête!*) who garnered 7.07% of the vote. The candidate enjoyed a certain momentum when he entered the campaign before seeing his support wane.

Valérie Pécresse (*Les Républicains*, LR) came fifth with 4.78% of the vote, below the 5% required to be reimbursed for campaign expenses. While global warming and ecological issues are one of the French population's main concerns, Yannick Jadot (*Europe écologie-Les Verts*, EE-LV) did not manage to establish himself in the presidential campaign: he won 4.63% of

the vote. The Green candidate called on his supporters to help his party financially by launching an appeal for donations. He was followed by Jean Lassalle (*Résistons*, RES) 3.13%; Fabien Roussel (*Parti communiste*, PCF) 2.28%; Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (*Debout la France*, DLF) 2.06% and Anne Hidalgo (*Parti socialiste*, PS) 1.75%.

While the Socialist Party was wiped out in the previous presidential election in 2017, the main party of the governing right, the Republicans, experienced the same fate in the first round on 10 April 2022. Together, the two parties that have ruled successively under the Fifth Republic since its creation in 1958, have never obtained a result as low as this: 6.53%. Ten years ago, on 22 April 2012, François Hollande (PS) and Nicolas Sarkozy (*Union pour un mouvement populaire*, UMP) achieved overall 55.81% of the vote.

Valérie Pécresse did not manage to strike the right tone and space to develop her campaign, caught between an outgoing president of the Republic who crossed boundaries into her territory and Zemmour who led the right towards greater radicalism as he campaigned on questions of identity.

The French political scene, which for decades was divided between left and right, has had its day. It has now disintegrated. The progressive vs. nationalist divide, which was established during the previous presidential election in 2017, was confirmed in the first round of voting. On the political chessboard, there are radical forces (from the right - 32.53% - and the left - 25.6%) and, on the other, a moderate centre that

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includes part of the social-democratic, liberal forces (38.71%). Everything now has to be rebuilt; the next months and years will be those of restructuring, both on the right and on the left.

The two radical left-wing candidates closed the race: Philippe Poutou (*Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste, NPA*) 0.77% and Nathalie Arthaud (*Lutte ouvrière, LO*) 0.56% of the vote.

Turnout was down compared to the first round of 2017, but it was not as low as the opinion polls had predicted. It stood at 74.86% (- 2.91 points). Nevertheless, abstention remains the highest since the first round of the presidential election on 21 April 2002.

Results of the first round of the presidential election on 10 April 2022 in France

Turnout: 74.86%

Candidates	Number of votes won	% of votes cast
Emmanuel Macron (La République en marche, LREM)	9 785 578	27,84
Marine Le Pen (Rassemblement national, RN)	8 136 369	23,15
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (La France insoumise, LFI)	7 714 949	21,95
Eric Zemmour (Reconquête !)	2 485 935	7,07
Valérie Pécresse (Les Républicains, LR)	1 679 470	4,78
Yannick Jadot (Europe écologie-Les Verts, EE-LV)	1 628 337	4,63
Jean Lassalle (Résistons, RES)	1 101 690	3,13
Fabien Roussel (Parti communiste, PCF)	802 615	2,28
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (Debout la France, DLF)	725 356	2,06
Anne Hidalgo (Parti socialiste, PS)	616 651	1,75
Philippe Poutou (Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste, NPA)	268 984	0,77
Nathalie Arthaud (Lutte ouvrière, LO)	197 184	0,56

Source : <https://www.resultats-elections.interieur.gouv.fr/presidentielle-2022/FE.html>

Less than an hour after the announcement of the first results, Anne Hidalgo, Fabien Roussel and Yannick Jadot called to vote for the incumbent Emmanuel Macron in the second round of voting. Jean-Luc Mélenchon hammered that "*not a single vote (should) go to Marine Le Pen*", a new position for the *France Insoumise* candidate who had refused to give an opinion on the second round of voting in 2017.

Valérie Pécresse said that she would personally vote for the outgoing head of state and that she asked her voters to "*block the extreme right*". A position that is not that of all the Republican leaders, since Eric Ciotti, who came second in the primary of this party to designate its candidate for the presidential election, declared that he would not vote for Emmanuel Macron. Philippe Poutou

said that "*not a single vote should go to the far right*", although he refused to give a voting instruction for Emmanuel Macron.

Eric Zemmour and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan were the only ones to call for a vote for Marine Le Pen on 24 April. Nathalie Arthaud and Jean Lassalle have not given any voting instructions.

Another campaign is therefore starting for the second round. Emmanuel Macron is expected to make his presence felt more, having campaigned minimally before the first round, making only a few trips around the country and not participating in any debate with the other candidates. Similarly, the outgoing President of the Republic participated in only one electoral meeting, and

this only one week before the first round. It is true that he was particularly busy due to the international situation, particularly because of the war in Ukraine, while France has held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union since 1 January 2022.

"Let us make no mistake, nothing has been decided yet. The debate that we will have in the next two weeks is decisive for our country and for Europe," Emmanuel Macron said when the results were announced. The head of state expressed his determination to bring the French together and called on his supporters to join a "great political movement of unity and action for our country" adding "At this decisive moment for the future of the nation, nothing must be the same as before. This is why I wish to extend my hand to those who want to work for France. I am ready to invent something new to bring together the various convictions and sensitivities, so as to build with them a common action in the service of our nation".

The second round on 24 April is likely to be closer than it was five years ago. Nevertheless, the outgoing head of state remains the favourite in opinion polls. According to

a survey conducted by the Ipsos-Sopra Steria institute, he would get 54% of the vote and Marine Le Pen 46%.

Marine Le Pen wants to turn 24 April into a referendum on Emmanuel Macron. She will try to rally all the people who are dissatisfied with the incumbent's five-year term.

"What will be at stake is a choice of society and even of civilisation," she said.

The *Rassemblement National* candidate has led a grassroots campaign centred on the theme of purchasing power, the French people's main concern. If some people doubted her position, especially with regard to Eric Zemmour, Marine Le Pen did not deviate from her line and she was able to impose herself as the candidate most in touch with the French. Moreover, by his very radical positions and his focus on the issues of immigration and national identity, the *Reconquest!* candidate help provide the candidate of the *National Rally* with a more acceptable and more orderly image. Marine Le Pen likes to recall that François Mitterrand (PS) and Jacques Chirac (*Rassemblement pour la République*, RPR) entered the Elysée after their third attempt to enter the supreme office.

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