

THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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A guide developed by APCO Worldwide

by **Jean Bizet**

Former Chairman of the French Senate's European Affairs Committee
Special Advisor to APCO Worldwide



AN AWAITED PRESIDENCY

After Slovenia, it is France's turn to hold the Presidency of the European Union during six months starting from January 1st, 2022. France's voice is expected to be heard, since this comes at a crucial time when Europe is at a crossroads.

France must first reassure the other 26 Member States after a viral pandemic that has put men, women and the economy of the entire continent on hold and demonstrate that withdrawing behind one's respective borders and decreasing growth were not promising for European people or for States.

France must then clearly define the strategic orientations that the EU must assume so that the EU can find its place in the evolution of the world's geopolitical tectonic plates. The EU must now develop its strategic autonomy; a strategic autonomy with multiple declinations, in coherence with its allies.

During these six months, the face of Europe will be that of Emmanuel Macron. He will no longer be at the side of Angela Merkel, whose stature and experience were reassuring well beyond the borders of Europe, and he will not be able to rely on the third man that the United Kingdom was before Brexit. According to the orientations taken by the new German coalition, the French President could get closer to Mario Draghi, the former European Central Bank President, in the aftermaths of the signing of the Quirinal Treaty for enhanced bilateral cooperation, the second signed by France in Europe, after the Elysée Treaty, initialed in 1963 with Germany.

This Presidency will certainly be based on the themes mentioned by Ursula Von der Leyen during her State of the Union address on September 14th, in which the environmental issues transcribed within the Green Deal will play a major role... but the Presidency must also focus on four determining topics:

- 】 The rule of law. It must be imposed throughout Europe. The Visegrad group (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia) must be aware that Europe has values and is not just a "cash drawer".
- 】 Solidarity. Between the 27 Member States, it is also a necessity. The financial mutualization induced by the health crisis of up to €750 billion was a strong solidarity exercise that gave the Single Market a new dimension. This Single Market makes the EU the world's leading economic market, just behind the United States.
- 】 Sovereignty. It must be financial, diplomatic, military, industrial... In its absence, the EU would be a mere observer of the confrontation between the United States and China.
- 】 The appropriation of Europe by European citizens. It is through the Conference on the Future of Europe that this process must be undertaken. European people are rich in their cultures and their diversity, but they must also be aware that they are strong in their unity since the weight of a State cannot be compared to that of a continent.

This 2022 French presidency would have some similarities with that of 2008. Fourteen years ago, Europe was almost swept away by the violent financial crisis of the sub primes. It took determination for Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel to bring rigor and transparency to international finance and this presidency changed Europe.

Today, it is the viral pandemic that has shaken Europe... and it is Europe that has in turn consolidated the economic activities of the States by pooling €750 billion of investments and by directing the ECB's policy through quantitative easing to an unprecedented level.

European strategic autonomy, which was first thought of in 2013, must now be extended well beyond the military domain. It must engage in digital technology, energy, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence...

Europe must and can play its role in these areas on two conditions: it must be more agile and more reactive, which requires two major changes in the way the European institutions operate. To free itself from the unanimity rule, including on financial issues. And to rethink the enhanced cooperation that allows certain States to engage in a specific policy without the consent of the 27; what President Macron summarized in his speech at the Sorbonne in his concept of "being on the front line".

In 2022, France will be "on the front line", a real challenge in line with the new issues of this World.

A French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (FPEU) marked by major national political changes

France will hold the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union from January 1st to June 30th, 2022. Following the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies in 2021, France will open the trio of Presidencies that it forms with the Czech Republic and Sweden. This will be France's 13th presidency of the Council (the previous one having taken place in 2008).

Since the crisis recovery period is over, the European Union is now preparing its relaunch. This means that the French Presidency will take place at the peak of the EU's activity. The European Commission's program for 2022 includes around 30 legislative proposals in addition to the 76 texts already published, listed as priorities. Among the priorities are the success of the European economic recovery, the adjustment of the Schengen agreement, the promotion of a united Europe in the face of the emergence of transatlantic alliances and progress on the topics of climate action, digital transformation and social inequality.

With a founding country holding the EU presidency, major impulses can be expected to project the EU into the post-health crisis period by 2030, with critical choices to be made at a European level on social, environmental and industrial matters.

AN UNPRECEDENTED FRENCH POLITICAL CONTEXT

The FPEU will also be conditioned by its concomitance with a key marker in French political life: the presidential election will take place halfway through the FPEU (April 2022) and the renewal of the National Assembly will follow in its wake. This busy electoral calendar implies a limited action margin for France, which will have less than three months to make progress on the main issues due to the reserve period preceding the election (the official campaign for the presidential election starting on March 28, 2022) and the change of government in May.

It is therefore estimated that the FPEU will be divided into three phases:

- › a very intense and political first phase, with all the informal ministerial summits and Presidency events at the beginning of the year;
- › followed by an intermediate phase in the Spring during the French election campaign, when the reserve period applied to the government will automatically slow down activity, and;
- › a third and final phase of political conclusion in June, simultaneous with the French legislative elections. This conclusion and the overview of the FPEU could thus be carried out, depending on the results of the presidential election, by an outgoing President renewed and strengthened by the ballots or by another President of the Republic. But in any case, a President still campaigning to secure a majority in the National Assembly.

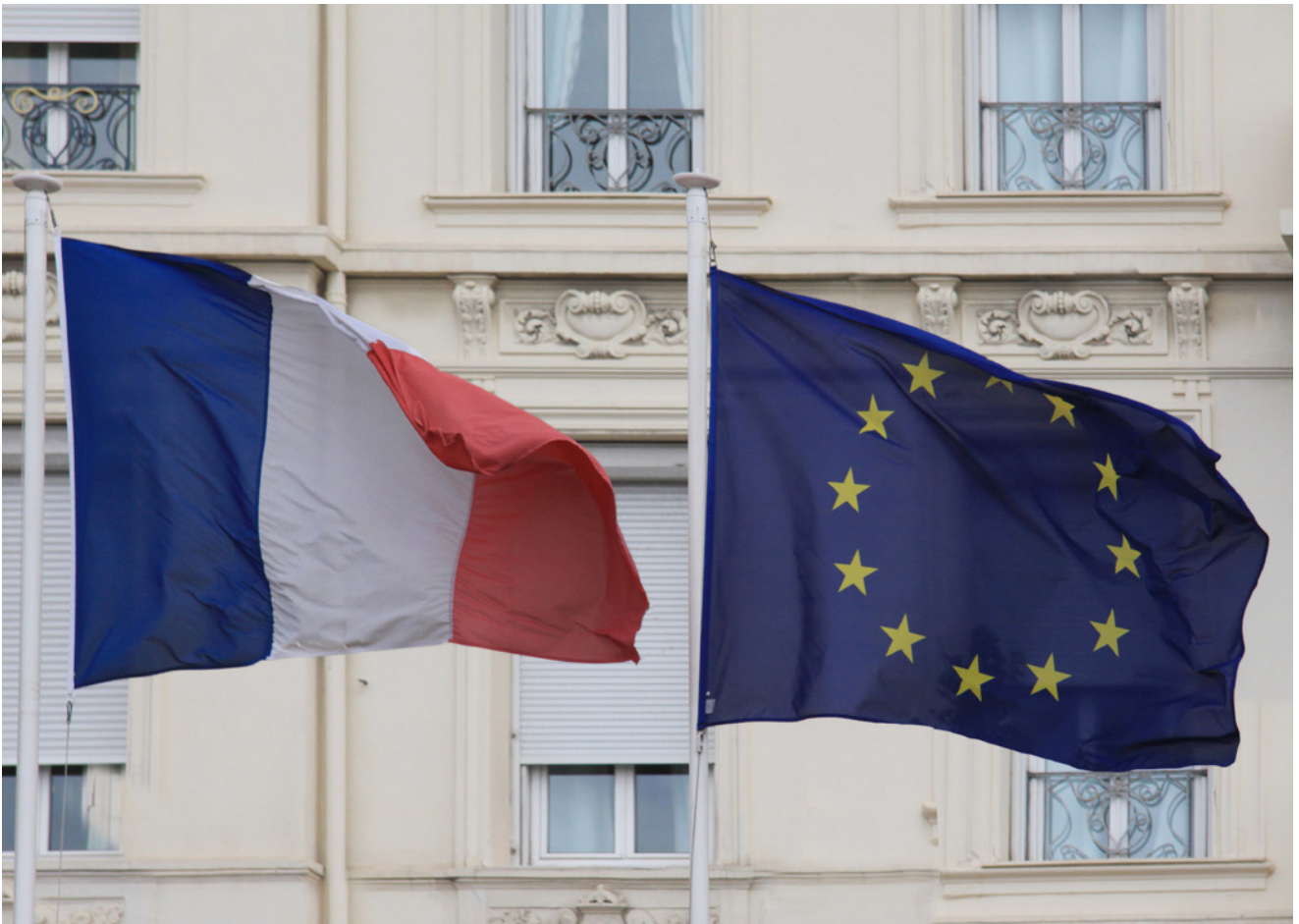


POLITICAL RECOMPOSITIONS UNDERWAY AMONG FRANCE'S MAIN ALLIES IN THE EU

Another political factor likely to influence the FPEU is the reorganization of the German executive, and its implications for the way in which the Franco-German couple will be able to continue to play a leading role during the next French presidency. France needs Germany's support to make progress on its major issues. The government agreement reached by the SPD, the Greens and the Liberals (FDP) on November 24 reflects a priority for a more federalist Europe, going "further in (the ambition) of European integration than Macron", according to Sébastien Maillard, director of the Institut Jacques-Delors. However, it will be necessary to wait for the priorities of the new Chancellor Olaf Schultz (SPD) and the definition of his role within his own coalition, to understand his role at the EU level more clearly, which will deprive France of a clear German leadership to support it on the European scene for an extended period of time.

Political developments in Italy should also be closely monitored if, as some scenarios suggest, Mario Draghi were to leave the Council Presidency in February 2022 for the Presidency of the Italian Republic, at the risk of jeopardizing the implementation of the recovery plan in Italy and, for the FPEU, of losing a strong ally.

The FPEU will therefore be part of a complex agenda, but its objectives will be ambitious and its success vital. President Macron, who made Europe a marker of his campaign in 2017, should highlight the FPEU during the upcoming political campaign to enhance his record on the EU.



Ambitions and priorities of the French presidency

Under the triptych of “recovery, power and belonging”, the FPEU will be structured around five strategic priorities, with the aim of achieving the EU’s strategic autonomy and creating a strong European model to compete with the United States and China. The details of the priorities should be communicated at a press conference of the President of the Republic on Thursday, December 9:

1. FOR A GREEN EUROPE

The Presidency wishes to combine its national ambitions in terms of ecological transition with the priorities of the European Commission. In line with recent national legislations such as the AGEC (anti-waste for a circular economy) or Climate & Resilience laws, the main objectives will focus on the decarbonization of the economy, through the Fit for 55 package, but also on issues relating to the energies included in the green taxonomy (France pushing for its nuclear model, to also achieve the third priority of this FPEU - see below). The question of a carbon tax at the borders should also be on the agenda.

2. FOR A DIGITAL EUROPE

European digital sovereignty is a key issue that will be addressed by the French Presidency. The strategy will be based on innovation and the identification of European champions, particularly in the sectors of cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and the cloud, as well as on the regulation of platforms, particularly through the finalization of texts such as the DSA (Digital Services Act) and the DMA (Digital Markets Act).

The issue of e-health and data management will also be addressed in this framework.

3. FOR AN INDUSTRIAL EUROPE

In a context of trade conflict between China and the United States, supply chain problems (rising costs of maritime

transport, congested ports) and shortages, and a drop in industrial production in Europe, France is pushing for the emergence of a European industrial sovereignty that will enable it to ensure its strategic autonomy and complete its recovery. This ambition will be built around a greater promotion of European investment, trade protection measures (such as a carbon tax at the borders) and the adoption of a minimum corporate tax rate within the EU by mid-2022.

4. FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE

To fight inequalities in workers’ wages within the EU, the Presidency will work to advance the legislative proposal to establish adequate minimum wages as well as rights for platform workers.

5. FOR THE EUROPE OF TOMORROW

To better deal with external threats, the French Presidency will put the reform of the Schengen Agreement on the first quarter’s agenda. This implies rethinking European governance to integrate a better protection of its borders, while migratory tensions in Eastern Europe, and in the Channel with the United Kingdom, will have occupied the news cycle this autumn.

These reflections will also be based on the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe, launched on May 9, 2021, the conclusions of which will be published in the Spring, with the aim of enabling citizens to take greater ownership of the EU.

EUROPE’S EXPECTATIONS

While the risks associated with COVID-19 remain a concern for Brussels, its priority is now to relaunch Europe’s economy and return its legislative program to normal. It is in this perspective that France will have to lead its Presidency.

Brussels can thus expect France to:

- › monitor the implementation of the recovery plan for the reconstruction of the European economy;
- › ensure that the main legislative changes on the agenda (Fit for 55, DSA/DMA, etc.) are finalized;
- › make progress on the management of the migratory crisis, an issue on which the Member States remain divided since the crisis of 2015;
- › drive the conversation on how to best leverage the EU added value on health policy in the wake of the pandemic across key files (rare diseases, review of the pharmaceutical legislation, etc.).

The objective is to assert a powerful Europe in the face of China or the United States, and without the French electoral agenda politicizing these various issues to an excess.

Key personalities



Emmanuel Macron
President of the French Republic



Jean Castex
Prime Minister



Clément Beaune,
Secretary of State for
European Affairs



Jean-Yves Le Drian
Minister of Europe and
Foreign Affairs



Bruno Le Maire
Minister of Economy,
Finance and Recovery



Barbara Pompili
Minister of Ecological Transition



Cédric O
Secretary of State for Digital
Transition and Electronic
Communications



Julien Denormandie
Minister of Agriculture
and Food



Gérald Darmanin
Minister for Home affairs



Stéphane Séjourné
Member of the European Parliament for
France, President of the Renew Europe
group in the European Parliament, and
President Macron's point of contact in
the European Parliament



Philippe Légière-Costa
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of France to
the European Union in Brussels



Sandrine Gaudin
Secretary General for European
Affairs and Europe advisor to the
Prime Minister



Xavier Lapeyre de Cabanes
Secretary General of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Useful resources

- › The Twitter accounts of these personalities
- › The websites of the Presidency of the Republic (elysee.fr), the French Government (gouvernement.fr) and the above-mentioned ministries and institutions, as well as their social network accounts
- › The official hashtags **#PFUE2022** (in French) and **#FPEU2022** (in English)
- › The upcoming official website of the FPEU
- › You will also find content and notes on the FPEU on the [APCO Worldwide](#) website and its blog [APCO Forum](#)

Key dates for the FPEU

At the Ambassadors' Conference at the end of August 2021, the Prime Minister announced that nearly 300 events would be organized in France under the FPEU label, both official events and those led by sectoral ecosystems, including some twenty informal Council meetings and at least two European summits. The pace of events is expected to decrease with the French campaign and elections. Depending on the health situation over the next few months, events could shift entirely or partially to remote locations.

We have identified for the moment the following events, subject to confirmation; the details should be known after the press conference of the President of the Republic on December 9, 2021:

December 2021

- **9: Press conference by Emmanuel Macron and presentation of the logo and the detailed calendar of events with their location, publication of the website and announcement of the main priorities**
- **15:** Speech by the Prime Minister at the National Assembly followed by a debate on the FPEU, according to the procedure of article 50-1 of the Constitution
- **Last week of December at the latest:** the agenda for the Council meetings will be unveiled

"The only way to ensure our future is to rebuild a sovereign, united and democratic Europe"

EMMANUEL MACRON
President of the French Republic

*Speech on new initiative for Europe,
September 2017*



January 2022

- **1: start of the FPEU**
 - **6 & 7:** Meeting of the College of Commissioners (Paris)
 - **12 & 13:** Meeting of European defense ministers (Brest)
 - **13:** Conference "A stronger industry for a more autonomous Europe" (Grenoble)
 - **13 & 14:** Meeting of European foreign ministers
 - **13 & 14:** "little Cosac" - meeting of the presidents of the European Affairs committees of the parliamentary chambers of the Member States at the French Parliament
 - **18:** Event on the impact of the health crisis on access to healthcare (Paris)
- **19: Speech by Emmanuel Macron at the European Parliament in Strasbourg to present the program of the French Presidency**
 - **19:** Day dedicated to transports ("Let's dare mobility") in Paris
 - **20 to 22:** Informal meeting of European environment and energy ministers (Amiens)
 - **25:** Day on audiovisual and cinema: "independence at the service of creativity" (Angers)
 - **26 & 27:** Events dedicated to tourism (Dijon)
 - **27:** Conference on Brexit and customs formalities (Paris)
 - **28 to 30:** Events dedicated to defense (Paris)

February 2022

- **1:** Conference on sustainable urban development (Paris)
- **2:** Conference on "Citizenship, ethics and health data" (Paris)
- **3 & 4:** Ministerial Aviation Summit (Toulouse)
- **7:** Conference on trade policy and European strategic autonomy (Paris)
- **7 & 8:** Meeting of European agriculture and fisheries ministers
- **7 & 8:** Conference on "innovation, technology and multilingualism" (Lille)
- **9 & 10:** Meeting of European health ministers (Grenoble)
- **10 & 11:** Events on the consumer in the digital age and ecological transition (Strasbourg)
- **11:** Conference on maritime employment and skills (La Rochelle)
- **13 & 14:** Meeting of European trade ministers
- **16 & 17:** Space industry forum (Toulouse)
- **17 & 18:** Events on the social and solidarity economy (Strasbourg)
- **21:** Conference on agriculture, from farm to table (Brussels)
- **21 & 22:** Informal meeting of transport ministers at Le Bourget
- **22:** EU-Indo-pacific summit
- **Mid-february (TBC):** EU-Africa summit
- **25 & 26:** Informal meeting of European economy and finance ministers (Ecofin and Eurogroup)
- **27:** end of the parliamentary session (National Assembly and Senate)
- **Date to be confirmed in February:** Meeting of the European Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs (Lille)



March 2022

- **2:** European meetings on artistic creation (Paris)
- **3:** Event “for an independent, competitive and innovative health for Europe” (Paris)
- **3 & 4:** “big Cosac” - conference bringing together the presidents of the European Affairs committees of the parliamentary chambers of the Member States in the French Parliament
- **4:** Interministerial conference on biodiversity
- **6 & 7:** Meeting of European Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Development (Montpellier)
- **7:** Day on antibiotic resistance (Paris)
- **7 & 8:** Meeting of European culture ministers
- **7 & 8:** Series of events dedicated to housing (Nice)
- **8 & 9:** Informal meeting of European telecom ministers (Nevers)
- **8 & 9:** Event dedicated to the global Europe of research (Marseille)
- **9 & 10:** Meeting on “Decarbonization tools: from nuclear power to sustainable finance”
- **10 & 11:** **Conference on the future of Europe (presentation of conclusions), in Strasbourg, with a speech by the French President**
- **11:** **EU 2030 European Summit on “the new European model”**
- **17:** Meeting of the European Ministers for the Internal Market and Industry
- **24 & 25:** **European Council meeting (Brussels)**
- **28:** start of the official campaign for the presidential election

April 2022

- **10:** **1st round of the French presidential election**
- **24:** **2nd round of the French presidential election**

May 2022

- **10 & 11:** Conference on chemicals (Paris)

June 2022

- **1 & 2:** eHealth Network meeting (Paris)
- **2:** Formal Transport Council
- **3:** Informal meeting of telecom ministers
- **12:** **1st round of the French legislative elections**
- **19:** **2nd round of the French legislative elections**
- **21 & 22:** Annual Digital Assembly (Toulouse)
- **23 & 24:** European Council meeting (Brussels)
- **27:** Formal Energy Council
- **27 & 28:** Event on maritime safety and security in the Pacific (Noumea)
- **28:** Formal Environment Council
- **28 to 30:** TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Network) days in Lyon
- **30:** End of the FPEU

“Our FPEU will be built around the idea of a “Europe that protects” with a focus on three areas in particular: I am thinking of the social dimension, the digital transformation and obviously the climate transition.”

CLÉMENT BEAUNE,
Secretary of State for European Affairs
Le Grand Entretien, Confrontations Europe,
Octobre 2021



How can APCO help you ?

France has included ambitious objectives in the agenda of the FPEU, which it links closely to numerous reforms carried out or underway at the national level and which it intends to promote at the European level. Moreover, the FPEU is a pivotal time for Europe to continue its recovery from the health crisis, to accelerate the European recovery and to act on a number of major changes in order to assert the EU's sovereignty.

However, due to the French electoral agenda, the timetable of the FPEU will be extremely constrained and will mainly be limited to the first quarter of 2021.

In this complex and fast-paced environment, APCO can help companies and organizations in this ambitious but short agenda.

1.

Strategic monitoring and analysis of the FPEU: APCO can leverage our insights and proprietary tools for on- and off-line monitoring and analysis in order to enable you to follow the personalities and themes that impact you and to identify the opportunities as well as the associated risks.

2.

Outreach and activation strategy according to the events: identification of the most relevant decision-makers and approach levers (direct contact, creation of alliances, on and offline campaign).

3.

Positioning on the priorities detailed by France: working on your objectives, your proposals and your arguments to align them with the ambitions followed by the FPEU, ensuring your issues will be heard and considered or preparing your interventions during events.

4.

Research & studies and analysis: production of original content that resonates with the events and themes prioritized by the FPEU in order to influence certain decisions.

"This reaffirmed sovereignty is only tenable if, at the same time, our Europe finally assumes the power it carries within. This will therefore be the second line of force of our Presidency."

JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN
Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs

French Senate,
November 2021



YOUR CONTACTS

In Paris:

Arnaud Pochebonne
apochebonne@apcoworldwide.com

Floriane Delandre
fdelandre@apcoworldwide.com

In Brussels:

Theo Moore
tmoore@apcoworldwide.com

Christoph Mielke
cmielke@apcoworldwide.com

ABOUT APCO WORLDWIDE

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