

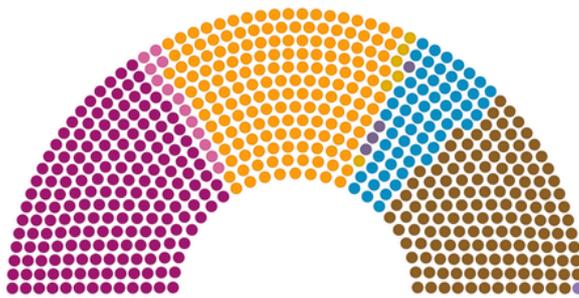
# Navigating through the 2024 French Legislative Elections

-- Fact sheet as of 15 July --



## Background

On 30 June and 7 July 2024, France held legislative elections following the dissolution of the National Assembly by President Emmanuel Macron on 9 June, after his *Renew* alliance was defeated in the European Parliamentary elections on the same day. Although no coalition gathered a majority in French Parliament, the left coalition called *Nouveau Front Populaire* (*NFP*) unexpectedly topped the second round, whilst the *Rassemblement National* (*RN*) fell short of projections.



- Ind. center (6) ● LR conservatives (46)
- RN and allies (143) ● Ind. right (14)
- Regionalists (4) ● NFP left-wing alliance (182)
- Macron's coalition (168)
- Ind. left (13) ● Misc. (1)

Source: *le Monde*

## “Majority” stakes

### Absolute majority vs relative majority

The French National Assembly is made up of 577 seats, meaning that a party needs 289 seats to hold an **absolute majority** (50% of votes). A party holds a **relative majority** when it has gathered the highest number of seats without reaching 50% of the votes. When no party has the absolute majority, then coalitions and agreements have to be reached between various parties to pass laws. In practice, however, most laws are passed with a relative majority, the rule being that only 50% of physically-present deputies have to vote to pass a law.

In the present case scenario - and at this point in time - there is no “clear” relative majority with 193 *NFP* deputies, 165 for the presidential coalition and 143 for *RN*.

## What next ?

### Milestone 1: finalizing Parliamentary Groups by 18 July

Article 12 of the French Constitution provides that “the National Assembly meets *ex officio* on the second Thursday following its election”. Consequently, **political parties can form parliamentary groups until 18 July**, provided however that they are composed of at least 15 deputies. By the end of that day, the exhaustive list of the members of the Chamber’s political Groups will have to be provided to the Secretary General to the Assembly’s presidency. Although seen as unlikely as of today, it is still possible for a “clear” majority to emerge, albeit a relative one.



## PARTIES – ELECTED PRESIDENTS – ESTIMATED EXPECTED NUMBER OF SEATS

**Rassemblement National** : Marine Le Pen (125)

**Renaissance** : Gabriel Attal (99)

**La France insoumise** : Mathilde Panot (75)

**Parti socialiste** : Boris Vallaud (69)

**La Droite républicaine** : Laurent Wauquiez (45)

**MoDem** : Marc Fesneau (35)

**Horizons & indépendants** : Laurent Marcangeli (27)

**A droite** : Eric Ciotti (17)

**Groupe écologiste** : *pending* (33)

**Partie Communiste Français** : *pending (unsure if will meet the 15 deputy threshold)*

**Liot** : *pending (unsure if will meet the 15 deputy threshold)*

### Milestone 2 : first Plenary Session & election of the President on 18 July

On 18 July, at 3 p.m., the **17th Legislature** will officially open at the Palais-Bourbon during a plenary session presided by (according to tradition) the oldest member of the Chamber, assisted by the six youngest deputies. The Chamber proceeds to the election of its **President** - considered to be the “4th most important person in the State” - held by secret ballot. Each group submits the list of its members running for the presidency.

### Milestone 3 : election of the Bureau on 19 July

On the second day following the first plenary session, elections to the very prestigious “Bureau” are held. The Bureau includes :

- 6 Vice-presidents
- 3 Quaestors
- 12 Secretaries.

### Milestone 4 : election of the 8 Commission Presidents on 20 July

Also highly strategic, the elections to the presidencies of the 8 permanent Commissions will take place on 20 July. They include: Finance, Economy, Foreign affairs, Social, Sustainable development, National defense, Laws and Cultural affairs. According to tradition, the Finance Commission is presided by a member of the opposition, although at this point in time there is no clear majority, and therefore no clear single opposition group.

## Government changes

Although no definite forecasts can be made, it is expected - in the current circumstances - that President Emmanuel Macron will appoint a new prime minister within the upcoming weeks. The Constitution, however, **does not set a time frame within which this appointment has to be made.**

A non-binding custom requires that the President take into consideration the composition of the National Assembly when choosing his Prime Minister. He is, however, not bound to follow that custom and remains **free to choose a Prime Minister from a non-majoritarian political party.**

If the chosen candidate declines the appointment, the President will have to choose another candidate, likely to be "**more technical**" to lead a government composed of experts, senior civil servants, or economists to manage the "current affairs" of the State for at least a year.

**! The President cannot pronounce a new dissolution of the National Assembly for 12 months.**

To ensure State continuity, particularly on the eve of the Paris Olympic Games, the President announced on 8 July that his government would remain in place "*as long as necessary*". Thus, to date, Gabriel Attal's government remains in full exercise, implying that the 17 ministers who have been elected/re-elected as deputies will not be able to sit at the National Assembly for 1 month, starting from 7 July. After that 1-month period of time, they can be represented at the Assembly by a designated substitute.

**! During this interval, the presidential majority is *de facto* deprived of 17 deputies.**

These past days, different sources stated that President Macron would accept the government's resignation on 17 July, allowing the presidential coalition to be fully represented at the National Assembly's elections for strategic roles.

## What is a "resigned" government & what does it mean?

After a presidential election or a legislative election, the republican tradition states that the Prime Minister submits his resignation to the President, resulting in the resignation of his entire government. As mentioned previously, the President is free to accept or to refuse this resignation.

When he accepts, the government then becomes a "caretaker" government. In practice, this means that the ministers remain in office for an indefinite period, until their successors are appointed. However, their powers are very limited and restricted to handling "current affairs" (no new proposition laws).

## Other takeaways as of 15 July

- **A clear political majority remains unfound** and discussions between political parties are still in full swing.
- The position of the coalition *Nouveau Front Populaire* (NFP) in the National Assembly does not grant it full powers to govern, despite what some party leaders may attempt to convey.
- Despite the tradition (name a Prime Minister from the biggest coalition - today the *NFP*) and given the high number of votes received by other political parties and the strong polarization among the "three blocs", there is no certainty that the future Prime Minister will emerge from the *NFP*.
- **The coming weeks will be determining to understand the new political landscape** and identify relevant contacts within the government and parliament.
- The political fragmentation of the new Assembly also suggests that no new laws or major reforms will be initiated in the next 12 months (with a possible new dissolution thereafter).
- **The summer Paris Olympics Games**, starting in 10 days, will be one of the government's (whether in *full exercise* or *resigned*) **top priorities** for the coming weeks.

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