

Navigating through the 2024 French Legislative Elections

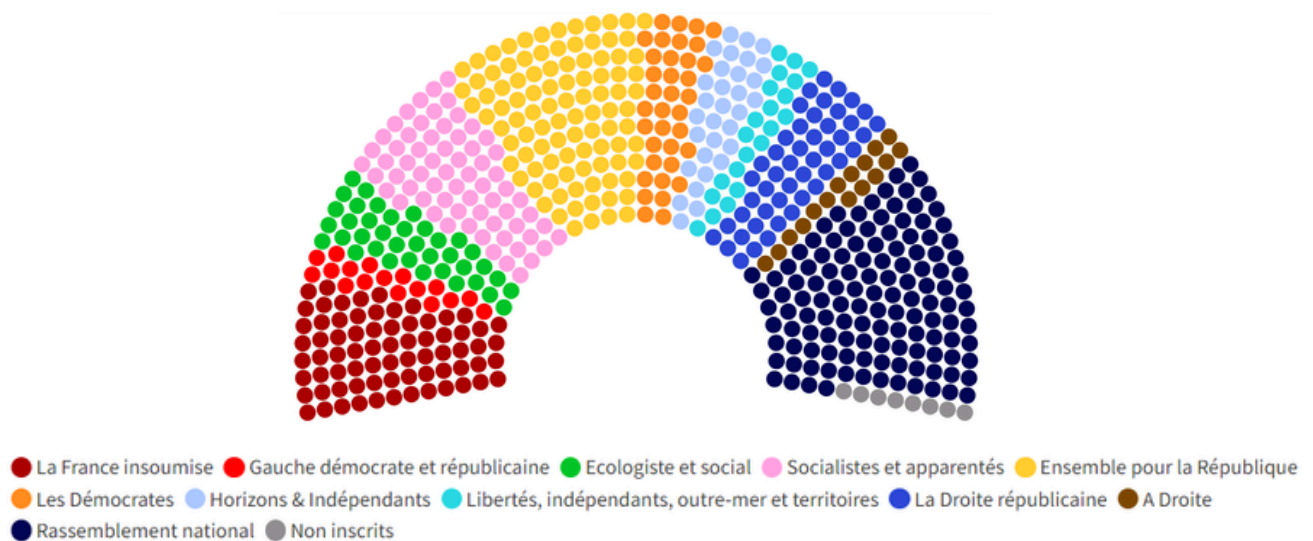
-- Fact sheet as of 22 July --



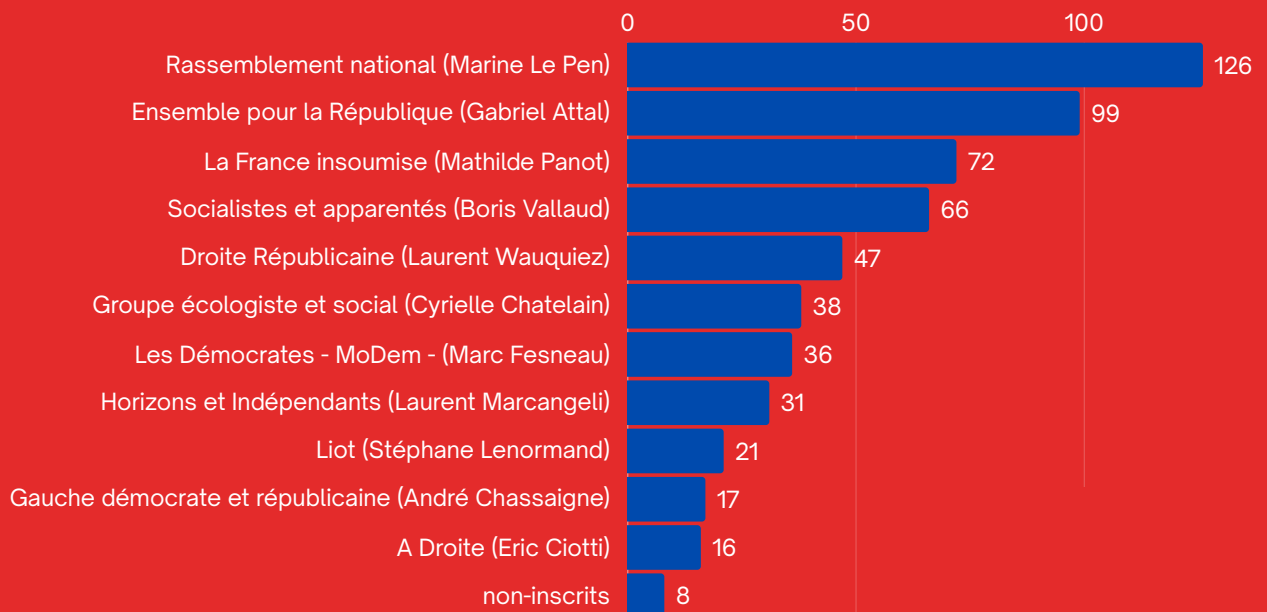
Background

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. Parliamentary groups were finalized by 18 July, and Bureau members & permanent Commission presidents elected between 18 and 20 July.

National Assembly composition



Political Parties' Presidents & number of Deputies



The 22 members of the National Assembly “Bureau”

The Bureau is the highest collegial authority of the Assembly; it has all powers to regulate the deliberations and to organize & manage the different services.

President

The President's primary mission is to ensure that debates are conducted in good conditions within the hemicycle and to ensure compliance with the rules & procedure of the Assembly. He/She is the guarantor of the proper conduct of discussions and ensures discipline and respect among deputies. In case of absence, the President can be replaced by one of the six Vice-presidents.

On 18 July, **Yaël Braun-Pivet** (*Ensemble pour la République*) was reelected as President of the National Assembly with only 13 more votes than *NFP* candidate, André Chassaigne. *La France insoumise* (*LFI*), the extreme-left party founded by Jean-Luc Mélançon, is contesting the result of the election claiming that the 17 votes cast by the resigned ministers of the current government are “unconstitutional”.

6 Vice-presidents

The six Vice-presidents assist the President of the Assembly and replace the latter in case of absences. They give the floor to deputies, make sure that debates are held properly, occasionally settle disputes and have the power to impose sanctions on other deputies during sessions:

- **Nadège Abomangoli** (*La France Insoumise*)
- **Clémence Guetté** (*La France Insoumise*)
- **Xavier Breton** (*Droite Républicaine*)
- **Annie Genevard** (*Droite Républicaine*)
- **Roland Lescure** (*Ensemble pour la République*) - *current minister delegate (Industry & Energy) of the resigned government*
- **Naïma Moutchou** (*Horizon*).

3 Quaestors

Quaestors have extensive budgetary authority and significant power in the administrative management of the National Assembly:

- **Brigitte Klinkert** (*Ensemble pour la République*)
- **Christine Pires Beaune** (*Socialistes et apparentés*)
- **Michèle Tabarot** (*La Droite Républicaine*).

12 Secretaries

The secretaries are in charge of supervising voting operations and, when necessary, counting ballots (e.g., when electronic voting has failed or when individual voting operations are required):

- **Stéphane Peu** (*Gauche démocrate et républicaine*)
- **Mereana Reid Arbelot** (*Gauche démocrate et républicaine*)
- **Sébastien Paytavie** (*Groupe Ecologiste et Social*)
- **Sabrina Sebaihi** (*Groupe Ecologiste et Social*)
- **Eva Sas** (*Groupe Ecologiste et Social*)
- **Gabriel Amard** (*LFI-NFP*)
- **Farida Amrani** (*LFI-NFP*)
- **Inaki Echaniz** (*Socialistes et apparentés*)
- **Sophie Pantel** (*Socialistes et apparentés*)
- **Lise Magnier** (*Horizons*)
- **Christophe Naegelen** (*Liot*)
- **Laurent Panifous** (*Liot*).

The elected Presidents of the 8 “Permanent Commissions”

The Permanent Commissions are essential working bodies of the National Assembly. They prepare the legislative debate in public session, inform the Assembly and ‘control’ the government’s action.

On Saturday, 20 July, the deputies elected the 8 Presidents of the Permanent Commissions:

- Finance : **Eric Coquerel** (*La France insoumise*)
- Economic Affairs : **Antoine Armand** (*Ensemble pour la République*)
- Foreign Affairs : **Jean-Noël Barrot** (*Les Démocrates*)
- Law : **Florent Boudié** (*Ensemble pour la République*)
- Social Affairs : **Paul Christophe** (*Horizons & Indépendants*)
- Sustainable Development : **Sandrine Le Feur** (*Ensemble pour la République*)
- Defense : **Jean-Michel Jacques** (*Ensemble pour la République*)
- Cultural Affairs : **Fatiha Keloua Hachi** (*Socialistes et apparentés*).

Gouvernement updates

A little less than two weeks after first refusing Prime Minister Gabriel Attal’s resignation, President Macron accepted his resignation and that of his government on Tuesday, 16 July. The now “technical” government, however, is kept in place to manage current affairs, likely to last for the duration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and possibly until the opening of the next ordinary session that will take place on 1 October.

The “**caretaker**” **gouvernement** has limited powers, meaning that it cannot take acts of political nature, including the creation of any laws or rights. However, little past examples are available to clearly draw the line and only the Council of State has the power to challenge decrees if considered as going beyond “maintaining the continuity” of public services.

Article 8 of the French Constitution provides that only the **President** has the power to appoint a Prime Minister with **no legal obligation to designate someone from the dominant group (coalition) at the National Assembly, and within no specific deadline.**

Until now, the President used to appoint a Prime Minister from the largest group at the National Assembly in order to avoid his government from being knowked down by the Assembly through a “**motion of no confidence**”. The latter aims at toppling a government & requires the signature of 1/10th of the Assembly’s total membership (58 members) and the adoption of an absolute majority (289 members). In the current scenario, however, considering no group has managed to gather an absolute majority, the President has more leeway.

Left-wing parties have tried forming alliance within the *Nouveau Front Populaire* to claim the Prime Minister seat, but negotiations in view of proposing a candidate have, so far, failed.

Next steps ?

According to *Article 12* of the Constitution, after a dissolution and early legislative elections, a parliamentary session is “*open by right for a period of 15 days*”. The deputies could therefore sit at least until Friday August 2, before the reopening of the ordinary session at the beginning of October.

In the absence of a new government, no new bill can be raised for parliamentary discussion which leads to empty calendars for public sessions in the hemicycle and in the Commissions this week. Only the deputies in charge of social affairs will meet on 24 July, to appoint “rapporteurs” for the 2025 finance bill & for the social security financing bill.

On August 2, the parliamentary summer break will start for deputies.



Focus on the French *semi-presidential* system

The 1958 Constitution of the Fifth French Republic adopted a mixed form of government that combines elements of parliamentary and presidential systems. The President operates as “head of State” and is elected separately from the Parliament (composed of a lower house - National Assembly - and an upper house - Senate).

He is elected by direct universal suffrage and appoints a Prime Minister, whom appoints a Council of ministers, collectively referred to as “the government”.

Unlike in parliamentary systems (e.g., Germany or Italy), **the President of the Republic has a strong role and the authority to bypass Parliament either by dissolving it, or submitting referenda to the French people.**

Moreover, in case of “crisis”, **Article 16 of the Constitution allows for all the powers of the State to be concentrated in the President’s hands.** Nevertheless, the application of this article cannot be maintained indefinitely : it must be a temporary response to precisely identified crisis situations.

“Crisis” : conditions stated by Article 16 : “a serious and immediate threat to the institutions of the Republic, the independence of the Nation, the integrity of its territory or the execution of its international commitments [...] the interruption of the regular functioning of constitutional public powers”.

Key takeaways as of 22 July

- **A clear political majority remains unfound.** Despite the tradition (name a Prime Minister from the biggest coalition - today the *Nouveau Front Populaire*) 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*.
- Despite holding the highest number of seats (126 for one party), **none of the *Rassemblement National* deputies were elected for leadership positions** (“Bureau” or permanent Commissions).
- **The summer Paris Olympics/Paralympic Games**, starting in 3 days, will be the “caretaker” government's **top priority in the upcoming weeks.**
- **The political fragmentation** of the new Assembly suggests that **no new laws or major reforms will be initiated in the next 12 months** (with a possible new dissolution thereafter).

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