



ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY



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FRENCH 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

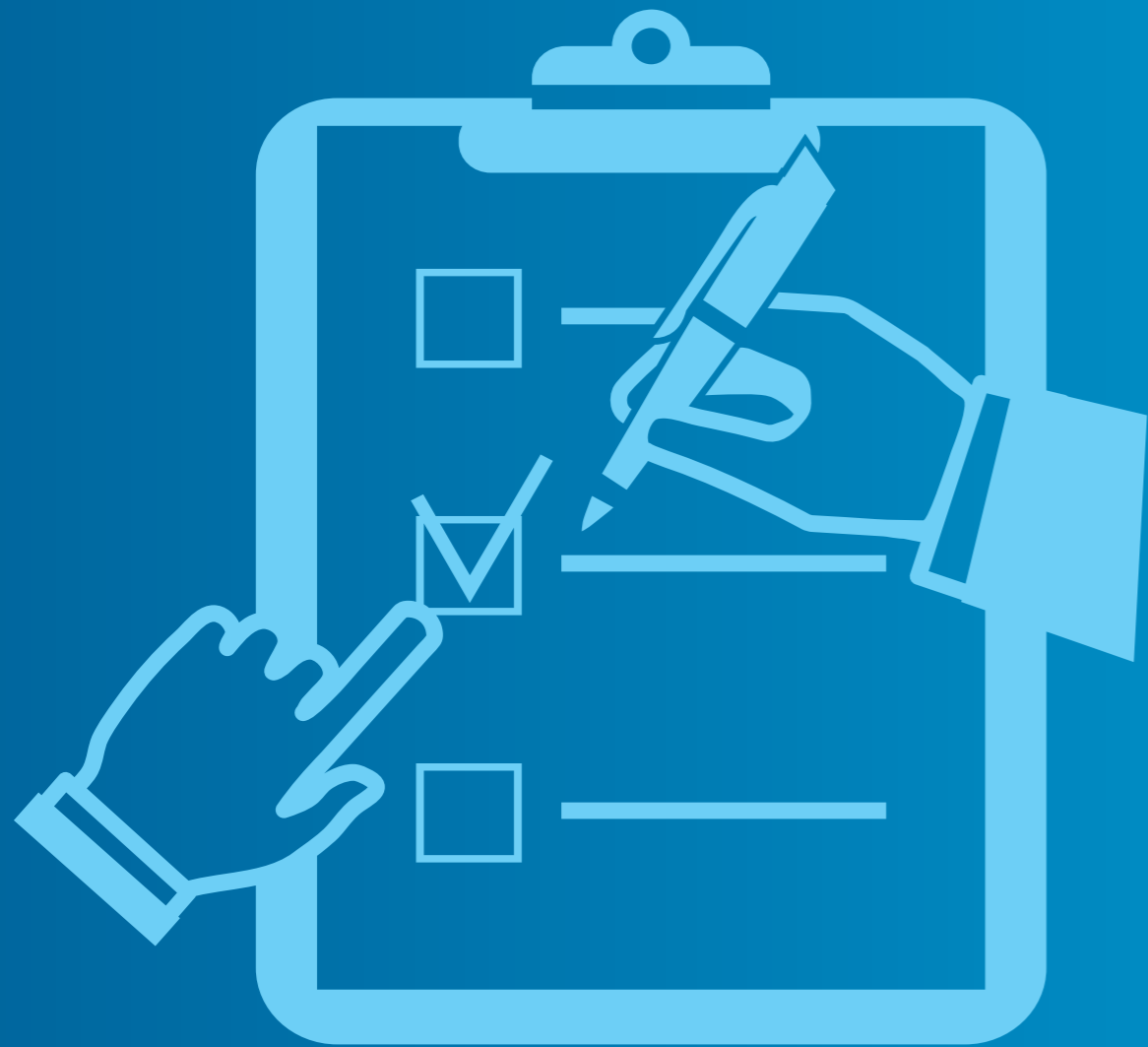
On the 23rd of April and 7th of May 2017, French citizens will vote for President François Hollande's successor. This election has taken a renewed significance in the aftermath of the UK's decision to leave the European Union and Donald Trump reaching the White House, which have increased uncertainty while leaders are called to address various political crises, including the Syrian conflict and the Euro zone as well as EU reform. As a founding member, France has taken a leading role, with Germany, in the EU integration process and the Euro zone. The new French president will have to coordinate with the new German leader, set to be elected in 2017, to reform EU institutions and negotiate with Britain to contain the aftershocks of Brexit on the EU. Similarly, the new French President in coordination with the EU will have to work with the US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin to find a solution to the Syrian conflict and the rise of ISIS which has had dramatic consequences on France.

Therefore, this report aims to analyse the impact that different candidates in the French 2017 presidential elections may have on European and international politics.

First, this report will present an assessment of the current situation in France. This will include an analysis of President François Hollande's mandate. It will also evaluate the effect of broader political trends, including the rise of political populism, the election of Donald Trump and the British vote to leave the EU, on the French presidential elections.

Secondly, this report will review the main declared candidates, their profiles and programmes according to five main themes: economy, social, security, European and foreign policies.

Thirdly, it will evaluate the likely outcomes of the elections and analyse the consequences on national and European politics.



PART I.

THE CONTEXT OF THE
2017 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION

1.1

ASSESSMENT OF HOLLANDE'S MANDATE

1.1.1 IMPROVING FRANCE'S ECONOMIC SITUATION, THE PRIORITY OF FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE'S MANDATE

François Hollande was elected in May 2012 when Europe's and France's economic situations were some of the most unfavourable following the 2008-2009 economic turmoil. In Europe, the 2008-2009 economic crisis led to the worst recession since the 1930s and the implementation of drastic austerity measures in European countries to counter the public deficits increased by the recession. For example, in 2012 Greece had to implement reforms and public spending cuts worth 13 billion euros, with the aim of securing bailout from creditors such as the EU or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to keep its financial system from collapsing¹.

In the first phase of the economic crisis between 2008 and 2012, France performed slightly better than other countries in Europe, like Italy, Spain or the UK (c.f. Figure 1). This can be explained by the fact that France is less exposed to international commercial exchanges than its European counterparts such as the UK. In addition, France has a more developed welfare state than its European counterparts which has diminished

the negative repercussions of the crisis on income and consumption².

Nevertheless, in 2012 in France, the unemployment rates were high and continuously rising (9,8% in May 2012), the state's deficit increased and reached a total of 100 billion euros and economic growth was null (0% in 2012)⁴. Hence, François Hollande's election and mandate's stakes were to implement an economic recovery plan focusing on the retrieval of economic growth, the reduction of unemployment rates and public deficits.

There were three main components of François Hollande's economic plans. First, the government aimed to implement the norms of the Pact of European Stability by reducing the public deficit. Thus, austerity has shaped French economic policy with a decrease of public spending (from 56,8% of GDP in 2012 to 56,0 in 2016)⁵ combined with an increase in taxation in the first part of Hollande's mandate. According to the OFCE, households' taxes increased by 35 billion euros⁶. This led to an amelioration of the French structural balance (-4, 8% of GDP in 2012, -3,6% of GDP in 2016)⁷, and the expectation of meeting the Maastricht criteria by 2017⁸.

¹ Inman, Philip, Graeme Wearden, and Helena Smith. "Greece Debt Crisis: Athens Accepts Harsh Austerity as Bailout Deal Nears." The Guardian, July 9th 2015,

² Ducoudré, Bruno, Pierre Madec, Mathieu Plane, Raul Sampognaro, Bruno Bjai, Xavier Timbeau, and Xavier Ragot. 2016. "Le Quinquennat de François Hollande: Enlèvement Ou Rétablissement." OFCE, Paris.

³ Ducoudré, Bruno, Pierre Madec, Mathieu Plane, Raul Sampognaro, Bruno Bjai, Xavier Timbeau, and Xavier Ragot. 2016. "Le Quinquennat de François Hollande: Enlèvement Ou Rétablissement." OFCE, Paris.

⁴ INSEE. 2012. "Informations Rapides." Insee. Paris.

⁵ Ducoudré, Bruno, Pierre Madec, Mathieu Plane, Raul Sampognaro, Bruno Bjai, Xavier Timbeau, and Xavier Ragot. 2016. "Le Quinquennat de François Hollande: Enlèvement Ou Rétablissement." OFCE, Paris.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Maastricht criteria, also known as the euro convergence criteria, are the 5 criteria which the EU member states are required to meet if they wish to adopt the EU's single currency, the Euro. They include: 1) controlled inflation. 2) A national budget deficit below 3% of GDP. 3) National debt should not exceed 60% of the GDP. 4) Controlled long-term interest rates.



FIGURE 1 AVERAGE YEARLY ECONOMIC GROWTH OF GDP (IN % OF VOLUME)

	FRANCE	SPAIN	GERMANY	ITALY	EURO ZONE	UK	US
2008T1-2012T1	-0.4	-2.4	0.6	-2.3	-0.9	-1.2	-0.2
2012T1-2016T1	0.5	1.1	0.7	-0.7	0.5	1.5	1.2

Secondly, Hollande's government reshaped France's fiscal policies in order to reduce labour costs. The goal of this policy was to reduce the high levels of unemployment and to increase the competitiveness and performance of the French economy vis-à-vis Germany, while reducing the public deficit. This policy, named "tax credit for competitiveness and employment" (CICE) was adopted in December 2012. It planned a reduction of taxes paid by companies corresponding to 4% of their payroll in 2013 and 6% in 2015. This policy was reviewed and renamed "pact

for competitiveness and responsibility" in 2014. It strengthened the reduction of employer's premium and decreased taxes on firms from 33% to 28% by 2020. The extent of these measures' effectiveness and benefits on employment and economic growth remain unclear, according to experts^{9,10}. This measure could have no short term effect as firms have total freedom on how to use the savings from the tax alleviation. However, experts have argued that in the long term the CICE should allow an increase in exports as labour costs decrease.

⁹ Gorin, Yaëlle, and Catherine Renne. 2014. "Comment Les Entreprises Comptent Utiliser Le CICE." INSEE.

¹⁰ Guillou, S., Treibich, T., Sampognaro, R., Nesta, L. «Le CICE est-il le bon instrument pour améliorer la compétitivité française ? »,OFCE.



Thirdly, Hollande's government crafted a labour market reform programme which aimed to render France's labour model more flexible, closer to that of Germany and the UK, in order to lower unemployment rates. Originally negotiated with social partners, this bill received strong opposition from the conservative unions, like General confederation of Labour (CGT) and the Workers' Force (FO), as well as from groups of MPs in the parliament, including MPs from the governing Socialist Party. This led to heightened protests and the fragmentation of the government's majority. This controversial labour reform was eventually forced through the parliament when the cabinet invoked the French constitution's rarely used Article 49.3, allowing the government to bypass parliament. It included bills easing conditions for laying off workers, using declining economic performance as a justifiable reason for dismissal; it enabled companies that have union representation and are facing economic difficulties to bypass sectors collective agreement and negotiate company specific deals with employees on overtime (from 35 hours, up to 46 hours) and lower hourly pay. In order to overcome the increase of unemployment rates, the French government has also implemented policies assisting the creation of jobs; "emplois d'avenir" (jobs of the future), "contrat de génération" (generations' contract), "prime à l'embauche pour les PME" (hiring premium for small and medium firms) to compensate

the loss of jobs in the commercial sector from 2012 and 2014, and to contain youth unemployment rates.

While these measures may have helped to curb the unemployment rates' rise, the number of unemployed people still increased by 194 000 (0,6%) between the 2nd trimester of 2012 and the beginning of 2016¹¹. 2012 to mid-2013 was marked by a strong increase in unemployment rates which was mostly explained by weak economic growth; from 2013 to the beginning of 2015 there has been a quasi-stabilisation of the



¹¹ Ducoudré, Bruno, Pierre Madec, Mathieu Plane, Raul Sampognaro, Bruno Bjai, Xavier Timbeau, and Xavier Ragot. 2016. "Le Quinquennat de François Hollande: Enlèvement Ou Rétablissement." OFCE, Paris.

unemployment rates. There has been a recovery of jobs in the commercial sector from 2015 and in the construction sector from 2016, which forecasts a decrease of unemployment rates in the last 6 months of Hollande's mandate. Then, while between 2008 and 2012 France was performing better than the Eurozone overall in 2016, the unemployment rates in France are almost identical to the ones of the Eurozone.

Furthermore, the 2012 elections were marked by the condemnation of the financial sector and of market failures, blamed for creating the 2008 economic crisis. In 2013, a bill on bank reform was adopted, aiming at separating speculative banking activities from real economic activities. Nevertheless, the criteria to define speculative banking activities were deemed too restrictive to have an impact according to the CEO of Société Générale¹².

1.1.2 SOCIAL MEASURES AND THE WELFARE STATE FROM 2012 TO 2016

The welfare state, created after World War II, is a key component of the French republic, included in the Constitution, which aims to provide protection against social risks for all people residing on French territory. With a strong welfare system, per capita spending on welfare is higher as a share of GDP than the EU-27 and the United Kingdom¹³. Nevertheless, the structure of the welfare system has been largely debated over the 5th Republic. François Hollande's mandate has been marked by the structural difficulty of financing the traditional welfare state and taking into account the evolution of requirements, including the mobility and lack of job security in professional careers.

When Hollande took office in 2012 the deficit of the social security system had reached 13.3 billion euros. François Hollande's mandate has included drastically reviewing the financing of the welfare state. By imposing severe budget restrictions in all its branches, the social security system's deficit significantly reduced to 400 million euros¹⁴.

¹² Laurent, Samuel. « Ce qu'il reste de la réforme bancaire de François Hollande ». Le Monde. February 2nd 2013.

¹³ Eurostat. 2016. « Social protection statistics ». http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Social_protection_statistics

¹⁴ Charpy, Christian. 2016. "Les Comptes de La Sécurité Sociale."

¹⁵ François Hollande, « Vœux aux acteurs de l'entreprise et de l'emploi » (speech January 18, 2016), Elysée. <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/v-ux-aux-acteurs-de-l-entreprise-et-de-l-emploi-8/>



In addition, François Hollande vowed to sketch out social protection which would increase the workers' protections by taking into account the characteristics of new professional careers¹⁵. The government created the personal activity account which sums up the rights and benefits accumulated through a professional life and allows each holder to decide how to utilise those benefits (training, help to set up a company, part-time, or early retirement). Compared to the current system, this measure centralised previous benefit packages and allows the holder to maintain its benefits despite changing careers. This measure is designed to provide greater career security and make the labour market more dynamic. Similarly, the government aimed to modernise the healthcare system by introducing a system of third-party payer and by expanding state healthcare aid.



Furthermore, young people were one of the focuses of Hollande's campaign. This secured him the support of teachers in the 2012 elections¹⁶. In order to tackle inequalities, the government created a new "orientation law" for schools, recruiting 60,000 public servants in the Education sector and providing funds to schools in priority and disadvantaged areas.

Lastly, François Hollande's mandate has been characterised by various progressive and liberal measures (e.g. reimbursing abortion, bill on the "right to die with dignity"), among which the controversial measure of same-sex marriage, which garnered a lot of attention, until its eventual adoption amidst massive streets demonstration in 2013. The same-sex marriage in France was adopted after the Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Sweden (2009), Portugal (2010) and Denmark (2012).

1.1.3 HOLLANDE'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

One of the highlights of Hollande's mandate was the United Nations conference on climate change, COP21, held in Paris. Hollande had promised during the presidential campaign in 2012 the "respect of his international engagements on reduction of

the greenhouse gases' emissions. Thus, Hollande welcomed the first universal agreement on climate change, signed by 95 countries, ratifying containing global warming under 2°C.

Furthermore, Hollande wanted to pass a bill on energy transition. The bill was adopted in July 2015 and planned the division by 4 of greenhouse gases' emissions by 2050; a reduction a fossil fuels by 30% by 2050; an increase of renewable energies which could cover 40% of electricity production by 2050; and the reduction of nuclear energy in electric



¹⁶ Piquemal, Marie. « Ecole : le bilan des années Hollande ». Le Monde. August 31st 2016.

production to 50% by 2050, in comparison to 75% currently. In addition, during Hollande's mandate, the energy climate contribution (CCE), to tax CO2, was introduced in taxes on fossil fuels.

Moreover, François Hollande has aimed to increase conversions to organic agriculture, with regional funding. Similarly, Hollande has created the Ecophyto plan to reduce by 50% the use of pesticides. Nevertheless, according to the ministry of agriculture, the use of pesticides has increased by 9% between 2013 and 2014¹⁷.

While Hollande's environmental policies may lack of tangible results, they have laid the foundations for an environmental policy which will live on after his mandate.

1.1.4 FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE'S RESPONSE TO THE NEW WAVE OF TERROR ATTACKS

François Hollande's mandate has been foremost marked by the various deadly terrorist attacks claimed by the so called "Islamic state" (ISIS) on French territory: 17 people killed in Paris from the editorial board of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, and during the hostage taking in a Jewish supermarket (7-9th January 2015); a driver decapitated his boss in Saint Quentin Fallavier (26th June 2015); an attempted attack in a train from Amsterdam to Paris (21st August 2015); 7 suicide attacks in Paris and suburbs killed 129 people and injuring 300 (13th November 2015); two policemen were killed by extremist affiliated with ISIS; 86 people killed in Nice when an extremist driving a lorry ploughed into a crowd watching a fireworks display for Bastille day holiday (14th July 2016); a priest was killed in a church near Rouen (26th July 2016).

These deadly attacks have had two main consequences on French politics.

First, the government presented a comprehensive strategic plan to counter terrorism and radicalisation in France. It included a higher mobilisation of the police and armed forces, and the restructuration of the intelligence services. The plan also included



adapting the French legal tools to the new waves of terrorist attacks. The anti-terrorist acts enabled French nationals to be tried for terrorist offences abroad; it included a ban on entering or leaving the country for terrorists; the closure of terrorist propaganda websites; new police powers enabling special investigation methods such as the widespread use of night time searches; and increased the level of transport security. The plan included measures designed to fight against radicalisation like the creation of rehabilitation and citizenship centres in each region or the isolation of radicalised prisoners. The anti-terrorism plan has led to the closure of around 20 mosques¹⁸ and an increase of 50% of house arrests from June 2016 to September 2016.¹⁹

The terrorist attacks have encouraged the government to urge the European bodies to adopt a modification of the Schengen code enabling controls to be stepped up at the EU's external borders, the creation of a European Border and Coast Guard and the revision of Firearm directive and the adoption of the Passenger Name record (PNR).

The various terrorist attacks led the government to announce controversial measures, like the amendment of the Constitution to strip extremists convicted of terror attacks of their French nationality. François Hollande announced this measure after November's

¹⁷ Polis, Angela. « Fessenheim, taxe carbone, biodiversité... le bilan de Hollande sur l'environnement ». Le Monde. April 27th 2016. http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2016/04/27/fessenheim-taxe-carbone-biodiversite-le-bilan-des-promesses-de-hollande-sur-l-environnement_4909345_4355770.html

¹⁸ Le Monde. « Quatre mosquées d'Ile de France fermées pour cause d'idéologie radicale ». Le Monde. November 2nd 2016.

¹⁹ Jacquin, Jean-Baptiste. & Pascual, Julia. « Etat d'urgence : hausse de 50% des assignations à résidence en trois mois ». Le Monde. September 19th 2016.



Paris attacks, but it ran into serious opposition within the governing party and led the Justice Minister to resign, while claiming stripping anyone from the French nationality would be anti-constitutional and incompatible with the values of French citizenship.

Furthermore, the terror attacks have heightened the debate on the place of Islam in French society.

The 1905 law forbids the State to interfere in the organisation of religions and guarantees the secularism of the state. This law has had two central consequences. First, the 1905 law ruling that the French state must not fund and meddle with religious groups, has prevented the State from implementing policies curbing radical influences in some French Muslim organisations. In light of the extremist influences in some mosques which may have led to



the radicalisation of French citizens, there has therefore been heated debates on whether the state should interfere in the financing of mosques or the training of imams.

Secondly, the 1905 law contributed to exclude some Muslim communities whose

religious practices may be in contradiction with the current conception of French secularism (“laïcité”), a key component of the French republic. The longstanding idea that faith is a private matter, has shaped the French conception of integration which has been equated to promoting the supremacy of the state over religious organisations. This has led some Muslims, including a growing, well-integrated middle class, to feel excluded as the practice of their faith may necessarily be in contradiction with the state’s secularism. For instance, the debate over the ban of headscarf in universities and public workplace as well as halal school menus, has reinforced feelings of exclusion among Muslim communities. These debates and the deadly terrorist attacks have resulted in anti-Muslim attacks tripling in 2015²⁰.

Nevertheless, in order to “build an Islam of France respectful of Republican values”, François Hollande has set up a state-backed Foundation for French Islam²¹.

1.1.5 FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE’S EUROPEAN PROJECT

During the 2012 campaign, François Hollande announced that he wanted to reform the EU, which was criticised for being too liberal and focused on deficit reduction rather than on economic revival. After his election, François Hollande travelled to Berlin to meet with Angela Merkel to renegotiate the treaty on the budget which states that structural deficit should not exceed 0,5%, signed in March 2012 by Merkel and former President Sarkozy . While Hollande could not renegotiate the treaty, he was able to add to it a pact on economic growth, which includes strengthening the single market, creating a digital single market, the consolidation of energy and research European partnerships and the reduction of the EU regulatory costs.²² Furthermore, François Hollande claimed he wanted to create a stronger European political union after the Euro zone crisis. He was able to launch a “new deal” for youth unemployment and revitalised a European Union for Energy. He also stated that he wanted to deepen the Euro zone with a common budget, a “government”



which would harmonise fiscal and social policy, and establish a Eurozone specific Parliament. Nevertheless, with Brexit, François Hollande feared that the EU would suffer from an existential crisis and called to materialise this “political Europe”. However, Angela Merkel is reluctant to proceed with the idea of further European political integration without considering first European economic convergence.

It is within the same logic of saving the EU from an existential crisis and furthering the political EU union, that François Hollande has claimed that the EU has to be firm with the UK in the Brexit²³ negotiations²⁴. Hollande has advocated for a so-called ‘hard Brexit’, which would incur the UK leaving the EU’s single market, the bloc’s customs union, and facing tariffs with EU nations, in order to protect the fundamental principles of the single market and to curb the anti-EU populist parties across the EU.

Furthermore, the EU has been confronted with the migration crisis which has revealed tensions between Berlin and Paris and the limits of the Schengen system. François Hollande has promoted a policy

which combines protection of external borders, welcoming refugees when asylum is applicable and return of economic migrants²⁵. France has nevertheless agreed to the resettlement of migrants across EU countries, and has confirmed that 24000 new refugees will be welcomed over 2 years²⁶.

1.1.6 FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE’S INTERVENTIONIST FOREIGN POLICY

In line with previous Presidents’ foreign policy, including Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande has pursued a consensual foreign policy recommending ad hoc military intervention. French foreign policy considers military force a tool of diplomacy, in particular where democratic value are challenged. Then, he has been a strong supporter of anti-terror military interventions even before the Paris attacks of November 2015. Since the attacks his efforts have increased particularly with France’s involvement in the Syrian civil war and as part of the coalition against so-called ‘Islamic State’ (ISIS).

²⁰ Libération. « Plus de 2000 actes racistes, antisémites et antimusulmans en 2015 ». Libération. January 20th 2016.

²¹ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « France : Islam and the secular state ». Financial Times. September 15th 2016.

²² Lui Président. 2016. « Lui Président, Proposer à nos partenaires un pacte de responsabilité, de gouvernance et de croissance », <http://www.lui-president.fr/engagement/proposer-nos-partenaires-pacte-responsabilite-gouvernance-et-croissance-171>

²³ In June 2016, the UK voted 52% to 48% to leave the European union. The details of the new relationship between the EU and the UK are currently being mapped out.

²⁴ Chrisafis, Angélique. « UK must pay price for Brexit, says François Hollande ». The Guardian. October 7th 2016.

²⁵ Le Figaro. « Migrants : François Hollande et Angela Merkel jouent la détente ». Le Figaro. April 7th 2016.

²⁶ Le Monde. « Crise des migrants : ce qu’a fait l’Europe, un an après la mort d’Aylan Kurdi ». Le Monde. September 2nd 2016.



Hollande has been quick to support African governments in the face of insurgencies and unrest such as in Mali and The Central African Republic. The renewed interest in Africa and the Sahel has been a consequence of the 2011 NATO military intervention in Libya. Following the political and security disintegration in Libya, the French have sought to secure the region (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso) to stop extremist fighters and weapons from destabilising former French colonies and potentially linking up with Boko Haram in Nigeria²⁷. In Mali, the military intervention started in 2013 when the Malian President requested French support. Around 45000 soldiers were sent to Mali for the “Serval Operation”. In 2016, around 3500 soldiers were still deployed in Mali²⁸. The European Union has announced that it would support French operations in Mali. In February 2013 the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) was launched to restore “lasting peace in Mali essential for long term stability in the Sahel region and in broader sense for Africa and Europe”²⁹. Nevertheless, none of the member states, who had to face reluctant national opinions, provided soldiers to support French troops on the ground, and France led the military intervention in Mali.

A year after the intervention in Mali, François Hollande announced on December 5th 2013 another emergency military intervention in Central African Republic (CAR), on the brink of a civil war between “antibalaka” militias fierce opponents of the ex-rebels “Séléka”, which include some northern rebel movements, and their leader Michel Djotodia who

took power after a coup in March 2013. In addition, the clash of the two groups took a sectarian bent as the “Séléka” were mostly Muslims, while 80% of the Central African Republic is Christian. The conflict resulted in an alarming humanitarian situation, with more than 400 000 internally displaced persons and 68 000 refugees. Backed by the UN Security Council, France intervened with 1200 soldiers on the basis of finding a humanitarian solution and securing a political transition.³⁰

In addition to the Mali and CAR interventions of 2013, Hollande has permanently assigned a total force of 3,000 soldiers throughout West Africa and hosted a summit of 5 West African leaders to discuss Boko Haram. This included Nigeria traditionally outside of France’s sphere of influence and highlights Hollande’s strong desire to lead and support anti-terror measures in Africa.



²⁷ BBC. « France- the Saharan policeman ». BBC news. March 19th 2015.

²⁸ « Operation Barkhane ». <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/sahel/dossier-de-presentation-de-l-operation-barkhane/operation-barkhane>

²⁹ European Union External Action. « EU training Mission in Mali ». European Union External Action. July 16th 2016

³⁰ Le Monde. « Six clés pour comprendre le conflit en République centrafricaine ». Le Monde. December 15th 2013.



Furthermore, France’s foreign policy has encompassed strengthening its relationship with the US. Hollande’s relationship with Obama has been a warm one. This relationship is in marked contrast with the Chirac/ Bush era and France has often been a closer ally than the UK, particularly when dealing with the Syrian conflict³¹. Hollande was the first in 2012 to recognise the Syrian National Coalition as the “unique representative” of the Syrian people, thus breaking with Bashar al Assad’s government, a stance that was backed by Barack Obama. Nevertheless, a setback in France-US relations came in August 2013 after a chemical weapons attack by Syrian government forces that crossed the “red line” established by Obama. France was ready to military intervene but Obama’s decision to consult the Congress disrupted the military intervention.³² France’s policy towards the war in Syria has overall been more interventionist than other European countries, in particular the UK.

France has called for Bashar al-Assad to step down and joined airstrikes inside Syria against the so-called ISIS. French warplanes have attacked oil and gas installations used by the so-called ISIS and deployed France’s only aircraft carrier to support operations against the group in Syria and Iraq. France has retaliated against so-called ISIS who claimed to have carried out the Paris attacks and have recruited about 600 French foreign fighters.³³ In addition, France has been the first country to join the US-led coalition in Iraq and has provided logistical support to anti-Assad Syrian rebels, including Kurdish fighters. France has also pushed for stronger diplomatic measures, including the resignation of the Syrian President Assad. The strong opposition of France to the Syrian regime has opened a new era in Russia-France relations. For France, Russia is destabilising the Middle East and has qualified the Russian air strikes in Aleppo of “war crimes”.³⁴

³¹ Le Monde. « La France, nouvelle « plus ancienne alliées des Etats-Unis ». Le Monde. August 30th 2013.

³² Haski, Pierre. « The Paris attacks will force France to change its Syria policy ». The Guardian. November 15th 2015

³³ Black, Ian. « France more active than rest of the west in tackling Syria ». The Guardian. November 14th 2015.

³⁴ Semo, Marc. & Wieder, Thomas. “Rencontre tendue entre Hollande, Merkel et Poutine sur la Syrie”. Le Monde. October 20th 2016.



After the Paris attacks and Hollande's vow to defeat so-called ISIS, relations between Hollande and Putin seemed to thaw as Hollande sought to create a broad alliance against so-called ISIS. Putin even ordered his military to coordinate with French forces in the campaign against so-called ISIS, a sign of rapprochement. To accommodate Russian interests Hollande has de-prioritised the removal of Assad. However, it seems that despite this thawing in relations, Hollande and Putin diverge on many issues including Ukraine and the choice of allies in the Middle East.

With Trump's election to the White House, it is expected that US-France relations will deteriorate, particularly after Hollande expressed that Trump's election marked a period of uncertainty in Europe³⁵. This relates to trade, security and diplomacy issues chief among them being the security of Europe with NATO and the resolution of the conflict in Syria.

1.1.7 STYLE, NARRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE

Hollande campaigned on the idea that he would be a "normal" president. He aimed to present himself in contrast with his predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy, who has been accused of colluding with business, frequent intrusion in the judicial system and an obsession with the media. Nevertheless, many of his critics say that François Hollande has mostly failed to appear presidential and he has suffered from low approval ratings throughout his mandate.

François Hollande's deficit of popularity can be explained by two main factors. First, his mandate created an identity crisis in the governing Socialist Party. Traditionally, in France, the Left has tended to condemn the failures of capitalism; in contrast with the German SPD, the French Socialist party did not

officially abandon Marxist ideals. Nevertheless, since the 1980s the Socialist Party has defended the idea of policies that should curb the failures of ultra-liberalism through social measures, embracing de facto social-democracy and social-liberalism. François Hollande's mandate has confirmed the shift in the Socialist Party line of embracing social-liberalism, in line with the German SPD and the British Labour party, by combining supply-side policies which would restore companies' margins and investments capacities and symbolic social measures. This shift has created dissensions and an opposition group within the Socialist Party ("the insubordinates"), who do not want to enact the social-liberal policies of the government. Hence, they have repeatedly defied the government with a motion of censure and by organising large scale protests³⁶.

Secondly, regularly involved in scandals (e.g. tweets from his ex-partners, revelations in a 662-page book based on recorded interviews), François Hollande's aim to be perceived as "normal" has according to many of his critics failed, with a succession of scandals undermining his presidential incarnation.



³⁵ Dearden, Lizzie. « Donald Trump's election as US President opens period of uncertainty in Europe, leaders warn ». Independent. November 9th 2016.

³⁶ Le Monde. « Loi travail : la motion de censure échoue, le PS se déchire, les manifestations faiblissent ». Le Monde. May 12th 2016.

1.2

THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SYSTEM



The French president is elected for 5 years, renewable once, through direct universal suffrage in a two-round election process. The candidate who gets the majority of the votes wins the elections. Unless a candidate obtains the majority of votes in the first round, the two top contenders in the first round of voting will advance to a runoff election two weeks after the first ballot. The candidate with the most votes in the second round takes office. Any French registered citizens over 18 years old can take part in the vote. Similarly, any French citizen can be a presidential candidate, but the candidates are required to gather 500 endorsements of elected officials in order to secure a place on the ballot.

The Presidential election is followed by a legislative elections to elect the MPs seated in the National Assembly. The National Assembly is composed of 577 MPs elected every 5 years in the 577 local constituencies. The legislative elections are also a two-round majoritarian electoral system. A candidate can be elected in the first round if he/she obtains 50% of the votes representing at least 25% of the registered

electorate. If a second round is required, any candidates who obtain at least 12.5% of the votes can advance for a runoff election. This can lead to cases where 3 or 4 candidates advance to the second round of the legislative elections. In the second round, the candidate who obtains the majority of the votes is elected.

The majority in the National Assembly will determine the appointment of the Prime Minister as the President has to choose a Prime Minister, who will be approved by the Parliament. Therefore, the Prime Minister and his government always come from the party that controls the National Assembly. Henceforth, the presidential and legislative elections are tightly linked. In the runoff to the presidential race, the presidential candidates are likely to form alliances with different parties and negotiate the nomination MPs candidates in each constituencies, to secure a wide parliamentary majority after the legislative election. As such, the presidential candidates are likely to support MPs candidates from smaller parties in return for their support in the presidential race and once they are elected.

1.2.1 A WIDE-OPEN AND UNPREDICTABLE CONTEST

The 2017 presidential campaign has been characterised by unprecedented uncertainty over the candidates, their support, and the outcome.

First, the novelty of the 2017 presidential elections is the organisation of 'primaries' by both mainstream political parties on the Left and the Right, to select their nominees. Before the introduction of primaries, French parties tended to agree on candidates behind closed doors. While the primaries may "advance democracy" in the selection of the presidential candidate³⁷, it has also delayed the nomination of the party candidate. In addition, while the 2012 Left primaries had been a success as they gave François Hollande the momentum and democratic legitimacy to win the presidential elections, it is unclear the impact the primaries could have on the 2017 presidential campaign. The Left and Conservatives primaries have revealed profound divisions in the traditional parties, between the social-liberal and traditional socialists in the *Socialist Party*, and between the liberal and the traditional conservative in *the Republicans*. It is then difficult to predict to what extent the liberal component of *the Republicans*, and the social-liberal electorate of the *Socialist Party* will support and vote for the candidate nominated by the primaries rather than join a more centrist candidate such as Emmanuel Macron.



The uncertainties of France's presidential race has been further increased as President François Hollande announced on December 1st that he would not run in the 2017 presidential elections.³⁸ With low approval ratings- some surveys predicted 4% of approval- members of the *Socialist Party* were concerned that he would be headed to a certain defeat if he ran allowing the conservative party's or the *National Front's* candidate to reach power.³⁹ Nevertheless, his resignation has opened a leadership crisis in the *Socialist Party* in which there is no natural successor. According to the academic Laurent Bouvet, François Hollande was able in 2012 to unite behind him the *Socialist Party*, toning down the ideological divisions in the Left to reach power.⁴⁰ However, once in power, the cleavages between sub-groups of the Left were irreconcilable leading to an ideological crisis and heightening divisions in the *Socialist Party*. This crisis in the *Socialist Party* increases the uncertainty concerning the support the Left candidate, nominated on the 29th of January 2017, may gather.



³⁷ Duhamel, Olivier. & Ferrand, Olivier. 2008. "Pour une Primaire à la française". Terra Nova. Paris

³⁸ Nossiter, Adam. « President François Hollande of France won't seek re-election ». The New York Times. December 1st 2016.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Bouvet, Laurent. « La gauche survivra-t-elle à François Hollande ? ». FigaroVox. October 27th 2016.

In addition, the primaries have proven to add new twists in the presidential race as *The Republicans'* and the *Socialist Party's* candidates have won the nomination in surprising victories. François Fillon secured the presidential ticket ruling out the predicted winners, Nicolas Sarkozy or Alain Juppé.

Furthermore, the uncertainty over the outcome of the Presidential election has been raised as a novice presidential candidate, Emmanuel Macron has steadily gathered growing popular support. Emmanuel Macron, former Minister of Economy in Hollande's government, unknown to the public three years ago, has received unexpected popular support. It is uncertain how his presidential campaign will pan out; as a novel politician and the lack of party machine to back him, it is difficult to predict the structure and the turn out of his electorate.

The combination of the *Socialist Party's* crises, the unexpected support for the outsider candidate Emmanuel Macron and the unclear influence of the primaries on the electorate's voting intentions, has made the 2017 Presidential election a wide open contest.

1.2.2 BROADER TRENDS: AN ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT MOVEMENT WORLDWIDE

The year 2016 has been marked by the rise of populist leaders: Donald Trump's election in the US; the voice given to Nigel Farage during the Brexit vote (vote to Leave the EU) in Britain; Norbert Hofer reaching the second round of the presidential election in Austria in December 2015; the growing support for the Dutch MEP Geert Wilders running for the general elections in 2017. These leaders' discourses share three core features: anti-establishment, authoritarian, and nationalist. They have emphasised the antagonism between 'ordinary people', the so-called silent majority, over the "corrupt" elite and establishment⁴¹. In addition, these leaders have tended to display authoritarian



leanings, favouring personal, charismatic leadership. Finally, these leaders' discourses have typically emphasised nationalism, excluding people from other countries and cultures. They have favoured national self-interest against international cooperation, closed borders over free movement of people or free trade, and traditional conservative values.

The rise of these populist leaders has taken place in a wider progression of far and radical Rights in Europe⁴². According to the academic Nicolas Lebourg, since 2001, there has been a clear progression of the European Far Right parties: in Germany, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) achieved the unprecedented score of 7% in the European elections in 2014; in Britain, UKIP led by Nigel Farage received 27% of the votes in the 2014 European elections; Italian political life has been marked by the rise of two Far Right movements, the *Northern league*, with strong nationalist and anti-immigration positions, and the 5 star Movement, more nebulous to define, but with tough anti-immigration positions, and also focused on social measures⁴³. The rise of the Far Right in Europe seems to have created a favourable environment for Marine Le Pen in France.

In addition, Trump's election has bolstered anti-establishment candidates, such as



Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Trump's elections was well received by Marine Le Pen who has defended the US president. She sees similarities with her perceived situation where she believes "the system" is mobilised against her. According to the academic Alexandra De Hoop Scheffer, there are three similarities between Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen, in France. First, they both portray themselves as the candidates against the status quo and the political elite. In the US, Donald Trump was the candidate against Washington, and in France, Marine Le Pen is the candidate against Brussels. They represent the distrust of political institutions which are distant and unable to tackle people's problems⁴⁴. Secondly, both Trump and Le Pen promote protectionism which resonates with people in previously industrialised regions suffering from high levels of poverty, as the service sectors generate more wealth than manufacturing sectors. Thirdly, Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump have similar stances on international affairs as they both back an alliance with Russia⁴⁵. Hence, Marine Le Pen has argued that the victory of Donald Trump in the US in November 2016 has had a strong resonance in

France, showing that there can be a victory of the people "against the political and media elite who wanted to dictate its conduct".

Similarly, the Brexit vote has represented the victory of movements or projects seemingly against the status quo and the establishment. Marine Le Pen claims that she is part of that movement which could prevail in France too. The Brexit vote has shown that people can face the "supporters of the established order, all the media and political powers who wanted nothing to change, wanted the world to continue working in the service of a few banks, a few multinationals"⁴⁶. For Marine Le Pen, the "British and American people have spoken" and the "French can speak too" allowing them to "take their destiny into their own hands"⁴⁷.

Hence, the international context seems to be favourable to anti-establishment candidates such as Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. This leads French mainstream politicians to fear that the anti-establishment and populist the *National Front's* candidate could win the 2017 presidential election.

⁴¹ Müller. Jan-Werner. 2016. What is populism ? University of Pennsylvania Press.,

⁴² Licourt. Julien. « Que pèse réellement l'extrême droite en Europe ? ». LeFigaro.fr. <http://grand-angle.lefigaro.fr/extreme-droite-europe-enquete-vote-populisme>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ De Hoop Scheffer, Alexandra. & Erner Guillaume. « Peut-on comparer Trump et le FN en France ? ». France Culture. La question du Jour. November 10th 2016.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Walt, Vivienne & Le Pen Marine. « Q&A : Marine Le Pen on Populism, Trump and Europe's future ». Time. December 6th 2016.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

1.2.3 CHALLENGES AWAITING THE 2017 PRESIDENT

The 2017 Presidential elections is occurring in a context of important transformations in the European and international relations, which will be significant challenges for the elected president.

TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY AND TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

Trump's presidency could have strategic implications for the European Union and France. Since WWII, the US has based its foreign policy on two main assumptions: closer partnerships with democracies, in particular European democracies, can help strengthen the US' security; and the US' prosperity depends on free-trade⁴⁸. Nevertheless, according to the academic Arnault Farichella, Donald Trump has called into questions this set of beliefs which have formed the backbone of the transatlantic relations⁴⁹. He has manifested willingness to create an alliance with Russia, impose an organisational reform of NATO and new tariffs on his trading partners. In addition, President Trump has manifested his discontent with the European Union and its 'liberal' migrant policy, led by Germany. He welcomed the Brexit vote and promised a quick trade deal between the US and



the UK, adding that he expected other countries to follow Britain out of the EU. Such position on Europe was negatively received in Germany and in France, and is likely to change the nature of transatlantic cooperation.⁵⁰

Furthermore, Trump's presidency is likely to challenge the Paris climate change agreement which was ratified by President Obama in September 2016. The EU will be likely to retaliate on US-EU trading relations if Trump's presidency pulls the US out of the Paris climate accord⁵¹

Thus, the new French president and the EU will have to manage the transformations of transatlantic relations induced by the Trump presidency in order to ensure the perennity of the Europe-US alliance.

THE CRISES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The new French president will be confronted with new challenges the European Union is facing- terrorism, migration crisis, the rise of populist and Eurosceptic movements, the Brexit vote and Europe's uncertain position in the world's new economic and geopolitical balance of power. These issues will force the new European leaders to rethink the European integration project which will need to overcome three main challenges: North/South as well as West/East divides, and the French-German differences.



The European Union has faced an economic crisis since 2009, which has threatened the Euro zone⁵², and had implications for national economic growth, unemployment rates and a rise in inequalities. The economic crisis has then widened the political divide between North/South Europe. Germany and Northern Europe expect the Southern member states to undertake structural reforms without accumulating public or private debt. The Southern member states, such as Spain, Greece and Portugal, which have been weakened by the debt crisis, call for more financial solidarity of the Northern member states in exchange for reforms. Indeed, Germany's austerity European policies have been contested by the Mediterranean member states who have created a coalition led by the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. They advocate for softening the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact, the 1997 agreement among the 28 member states of the European Union to limit the budget deficits⁵³. However, Germany refused strongly and has even reminded France to maintain their budget deficit under 3% of GDP⁵⁴.

This divide has strengthened disagreement on further European integration, including regarding economic, financial and fiscal union, notably about European interference in national decision-making, as well as the political union. However, in the a context of rising populist and Eurosceptic movements in several European member states, most heads of State and government are wary of an ambitious European reform which could be politically risky.

This division on the future of European integration has also strained the French-German partnership. Merkel has voiced her opposition to reinforcing the structure of the euro zone, as she is unwilling to finance other member states' debt and support greater risk sharing in the monetary union, if there is no more control over member states' debts and public spending. François Hollande in contrast has been willing to increase support to states in economic difficulties, but has been unwilling to lose sovereignty over budget and spending policies⁵⁵. Such divergent stances on the future of the European integration project are particularly important because the French-German partnership is often seen as the driving force of the EU, especially since the Brexit vote. Major disagreement between the two countries is likely to slow down any further EU integration.



⁴⁸ Barichella, Arnault. 2017. The Trump Presidency: what consequences will this have on Europe? . Foundation Robert Schuman. <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0417-the-trump-presidency-what-consequences-will-this-have-on-europe>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The Economist. « Europe gets ready for Donald Trump ». The Economist. January 21st 2017.

⁵¹ Clark, Pilita. "EU climate chief warns Trump against ripping up Paris deal". The Financial Times. November 14th 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/a224475e-aa92-11e6-9cb3-bb8207902122>

⁵² Chopin, Thierry. & Jean-François Jamet. 2016. The future of the European project. Foundation Robert Schuman. <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0393-the-future-of-the-european-project>

⁵³ The Guardian. « What is the stability and growth pact ». The Guardian. November 27th 2003.

⁵⁴ Ricard, Philippe. & Gauquelin, Blaise & Salles, Alain. « Trois mois après le référendum sur le Brexit, les fractures de l'Union Européenne ».

⁵⁵ Halifa-Legrand, Sarah. "Angela Merkel, une femme trop puissante pour une Europe en crise". Le Nouvel Obs. September 16th 2016.



Similarly, after the Brexit vote, France and Germany have showed symbolic unity and agreed on priorities to reinvigorate the European Union. Nevertheless, significant differences remain. First, while François Hollande recommends a hard Brexit to make it an example to prevent other countries leaving the EU, Merkel suggest a more pragmatic approach which would allow the EU to retain an alliance with the UK. Then, the position of Merkel and Hollande seem irreconcilable, and the future of the European Union is held up until the 2017 elections.

Furthermore, the European Union had to face a refugee crisis which created a new divide between Western member states and Eastern member states. Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Romania and Poland have voiced strong concerns over Brussels' management of the migration crisis. The European Union, under the influence of Western countries, notably Germany, have imposed a system of quotas on every member states for the relocation of migrants coming to Europe⁵⁶.

In sum, in addition to an international environment favourable for anti-establishment candidates, the broader international and European trends present new challenges for the 2017 French president. The new president will have to overcome the strong divides in the European Union impinging on the future of European integration, as well as drastic changes in the transatlantic relations with Donald Trump as the US president.



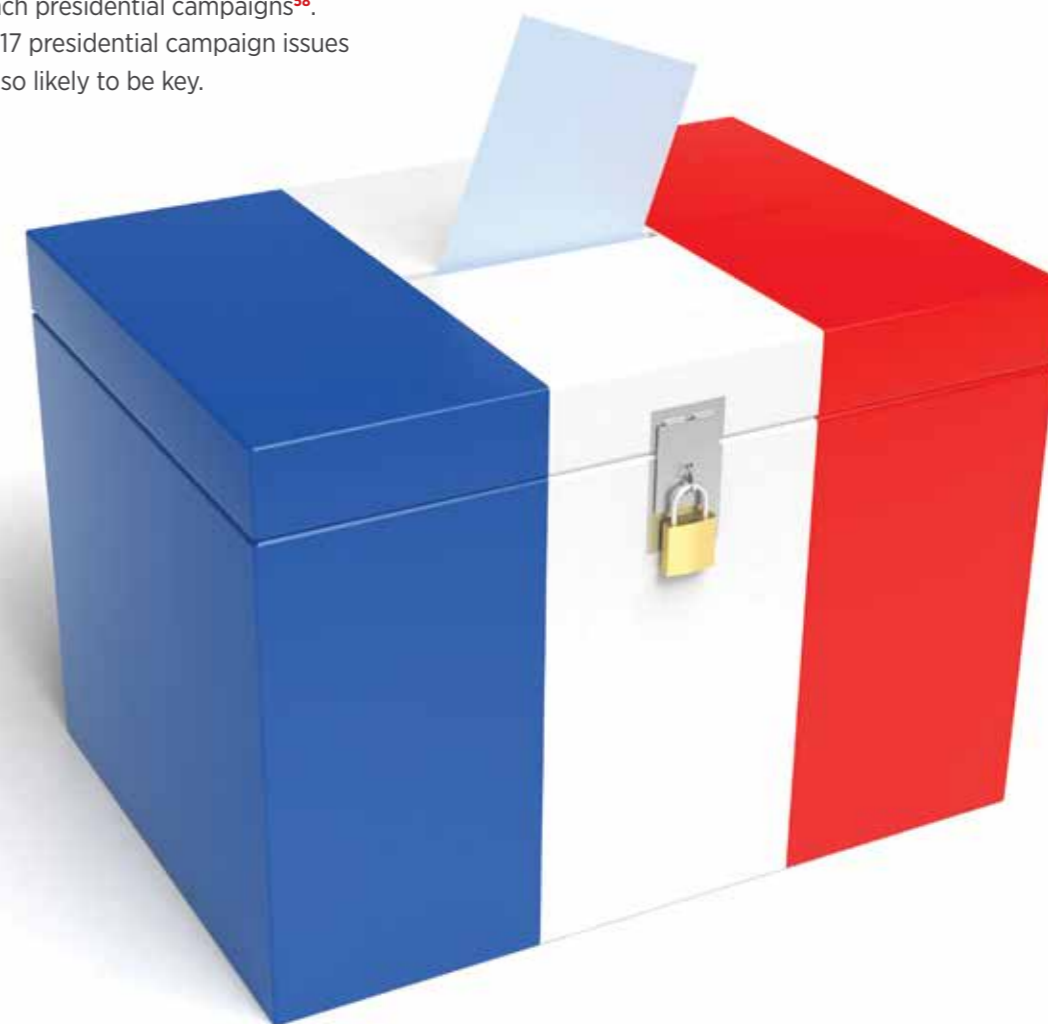
⁵⁶ Rupnik, Jacques. 2015. «L'Europe du Centre-Est à la lumière de la crise des migrants», Telos, <http://www.telos-eu.com/fr/europe/leurope-du-centre-est-a-la-lumiere-de-la-crise-des.html>

THEMES AT THE CENTRE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

In addition, to international and European issues, the new President will have to face internal challenges. According to a poll conducted in December 2016, six issues are perceived as critical by the electorate⁵⁷:

- **Unemployment rates**
- **Security and terrorism threats**
- **The French purchase power**
- **The funding and extent of the social security system**
- **Schools and Education**
- **Climate Change**

According to Jérôme Fourquet, director of department Opinion and strategies at IFOP, a focus on economic issues are usual in French presidential campaigns⁵⁸. Nevertheless, in the 2017 presidential campaign issues around terrorism are also likely to be key.



⁵⁷ fop & Fiducial. 2016. « Präsidentielle 2017 : les rapports de force électoraux à cinq mois du scrutin ». Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

⁵⁸ Coste. Vincent. « Sondage exclusif Midi Libre : les enjeux de la présidentielle 2017. ». Midi Libre. Septembre 9th 2016. <http://www.midilibre.fr/2016/09/27/analyse-jerome-fourquet-directeur-du-departement-opinion-et-strategies-de-l-ifop,1400136.php>



PART II.

THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR PROGRAMMES

This section aims to introduce the main candidates in the 2017 French presidential election. It will include a review of the candidate's background and profile. It will also present the key measures of their programme, in particular regarding the economy, the welfare state, terrorism, foreign policy and the EU. In addition, it will analyse the style and strategy of their campaign.

There are currently 14 declared candidates; 7 are backed by traditional parties, 7 are non-affiliated candidates (cf. Figure 2). Nevertheless, not all of the candidates are guaranteed to be able to run for president. They have to gather 500 endorsements from elected representatives (including MPs, councillors, mayors) before March 17th to make their candidacy official. In the following, we will review the candidacy of the declared contenders who are most likely to gather the 500 endorsements.

FIGURE 2 MAIN DECLARED CANDIDATES OF THE 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

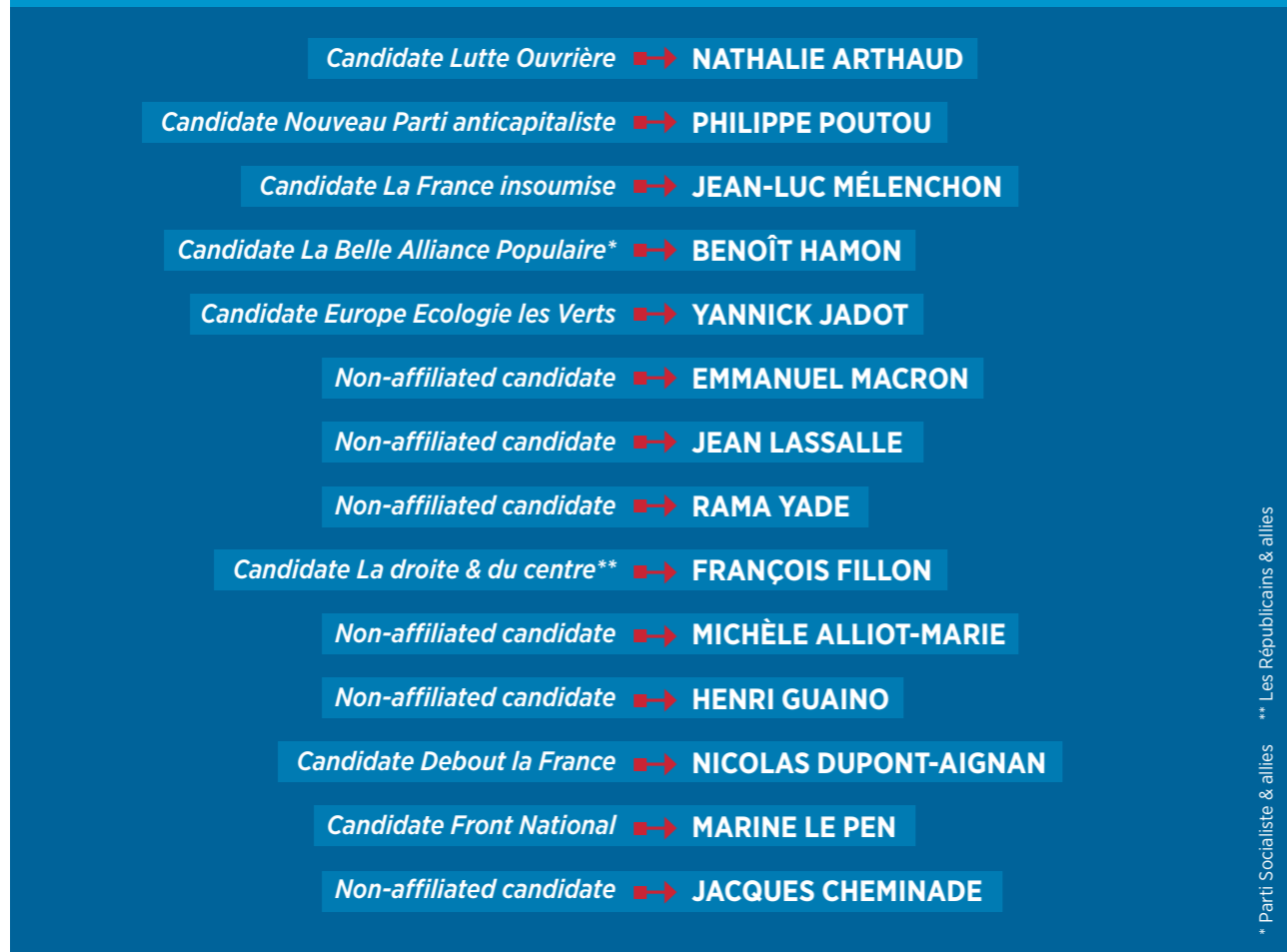


FIGURE 3 POLL ON VOTING INTENTIONS (IN %) FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF THE 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AS OF 6TH FEBRUARY 2017 ⁵⁹

CANDIDATES	3-7 FEBRUARY 2017
<i>Nathalie Arthaud</i>	0,5
<i>Philippe Poutou</i>	1
<i>Jean-Luc Mélenchon</i>	10,5
<i>Benoît Hamon</i>	14,5
<i>Yannick Jadot</i>	1
<i>Emmanuel Macron</i>	1
<i>François Bayrou</i>	5
<i>François Fillon</i>	18,5
<i>Nicolas Dupont-Aignan</i>	2
<i>Marine Le Pen</i>	26

⁵⁹ Ifop & Fiducial. 2016. « Rolling 2017. L'élection présidentielle en temps réel ». Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare

2.1

THE REPUBLICANS



The Republicans' candidate for the 2017 presidential elections was nominated on November 27th 2016 as a result of a US-style primaries, for the first time in the party's history. There were 7 candidates in the primary, including former president Nicholas Sarkozy, and former Prime Ministers Alain Juppé and François Fillon. During the primaries, three traditional trends of the conservative party, which have been theorised by the academic René Rémond⁶⁰, have competed with each other⁶¹: the *bonapartist trend*, advocating for a centralised and strong state, with a charismatic leader based on anti-elitist rhetoric, represented by Nicolas Sarkozy; the *legitimist trend*, counter-revolutionary, conservative, which was represented by François Fillon, despite his economically liberal views; and the *orleanist trend*, a liberal right-wing which seeks economic and social reforms, favouring the working class, represented by Alain Juppé⁶². The geography of the votes confirms this interpretation. In the first round of the primary, Sarkozy won the most votes

in the North-East, and around the Mediterranean, traditional *National Front* territories, showing that the electorate which had voted for Sarkozy had voted for the *National Front* in previous elections. There is an ideological compatibility between some Right-wing voters opting for for Sarkozy and those who have previously voted for the *National Front*⁶³. Similarly, Alain Juppé gathered the most votes in territories of the South West, where the electorate usually votes for the Centre and the Left. In these regions, the electorate's ideology promoting a liberal economy, while protecting social solidarity, was more compatible with Juppé's liberal position⁶⁴. François Fillon fared best in the West and North East, in notably catholic regions and in cities where the bourgeoisie resides⁶⁵, suggesting Fillon has a less defined support base than the other two candidates.⁶⁷ In the second round of the Primary on November 27th 2016, François Fillon was designated as the presidential candidate with 66,5% of the votes.

⁶⁰ Rémond, René. 1982. *Les Droites En France*. Flammarion.

⁶¹ Le Bras, Hervé. « Le retour des droites ». *Le Monde*. November 11th 2016.

⁶² Rémond, René. 1982. *Les Droites En France*. Flammarion.

⁶³ Le Bras, Hervé. « Le retour des droites ». *Le Monde*. November 11th 2016

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Jacques Lévy. « Quelle est la géographie du vote Fillon ? ». *France Culture*. November 22nd 2016.

⁶⁷ Billard, Sébastien. «Présidentielle : François Fillon, un candidat plus fragile qu'il n'y paraît ». *Le Nouvel Obs*. November 29th 2016.



FRANÇOIS FILLON

2.1.1 PROFILE

François Fillon graduated as a lawyer, and in 1976 he began his political career by becoming the parliamentary attaché of Joël Le Theule, MP of Sarthe. In 1977, he became a member of the conservative party (RPR), and deputy director of the Minister of Defence, Joël Le Theule.

He was first elected as an MP of Sarthe in 1981, where he held office for more than 20 years, and in 1983 he was elected mayor of Sablé-sur-Sarthe with a large majority (63,05%).

In 1993, he first became a member of the government by being appointed Minister of Research and Higher Education. He has since then served in different ministries, including Labour and National Education. As Minister of Labour, he undertook controversial reforms of the 35 hour working week law and the French retirement system.



In 2005, he was named Nicolas Sarkozy's political advisor for the 2007 presidential elections' campaign. After Sarkozy won the presidential elections, Fillon became and remained Prime Minister for 5 years, a record in French politics.

After Sarkozy's defeat in 2012 in the presidential elections, Fillon presented his candidacy for the presidency of the conservative party (*UMP*). However the election was controversial and he was not able to claim a win. In protest, he created a dissident MP movement with 68 MPs, which became his

support base in winning the primaries. Until mid-November, Fillon was portrayed as the third man of the primaries, rather than the leader, as the polls predicted that he could gather only 10% of the votes. Nevertheless, his ratings rose after three televised debates⁶⁸ and he surged to top position in the first round of the primaries with 44% of the votes⁶⁹. On November 28th 2016, François Fillon won the French centre-Right presidential nomination with 66,5% of the vote in the primary run-off against Alain Juppé, former Prime Minister in 1995, who had long been predicted to win⁷⁰.

2.1.2 PROGRAMME

François Fillon's programme represents the traditional French Right wing, combining economic ultra-liberalism, moral conservatism, and a focus on French national identity. His three stated priorities are: 1) the deregulation of the economy; 2) restoration of the State's authority; 3) re-asserting French values⁷¹.

A LIBERAL ECONOMIC "CHOC"

François Fillon called for profound changes and the transformation in the country, which will require putting in place an economic programme with difficult measures to implement. He has thrived with a promise of a free-market revolution, inspired by the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher⁷².

He has aimed to implement an austerity policy which would be able to curb France's debt and deficit. If he is elected president, he would seek to reduce public spending by 100 billion euros in 5 years. These savings would require decreasing local constituencies' spending, cutting 500 000 public jobs, and reducing the welfare state spending.



⁶⁸ Bajon, Carole. « François Fillon sur France 2 : le troisième homme de la primaire ». Le nouvel Obs. October 28th 2016.

⁶⁹ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « The third man Fillon achieves star billing in French primaries ». Financial Times. November 21st 2016.

⁷⁰ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « François Fillon wins centre-right primary for French presidential election ». Financial Times. November 27th 2016.

⁷¹ Fillon, François. 2016. "Les 15 Mesures Phares de François Fillon." Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/15-mesures/>.

⁷² Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « François Fillon wins centre-right primary for French presidential election ». Financial Times. November 27th 2016

Despite those cuts, in order to revitalise the economy, François Fillon would reduce corporate taxes up to 40 billion euros, which he would fund by an increase in VAT (Value added Tax)⁷³. The alleviation of taxes on firms would have an “immediate impact on French companies competitiveness, economic growth and employment”⁷⁴ he argues. He also believes that the stimulation of the French economy requires a “radical change of the work culture”⁷⁵ to favour entrepreneurship.

In order to increase the flexibility of the economic structure, he would allow each firm to negotiate working hours, in the limits of 48 hours weekly. This would require reducing unions’ prerogatives in the negotiations. He would also increase the current 35 hours maximum working week to 39 hours week for public sector workers.

With these measures, the former Prime Minister hopes to reach full employment, with a level of unemployment under 7%, and enable France to be the first European economy ahead of Germany within 10 years⁷⁶.

THE DISMANTLING OF THE WELFARE STATE AND CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL POLICIES

By implementing major cuts in public spending up to 100 billion euros, 8% of the total of public spending, François Fillon aims to reduce the size of the welfare state⁷⁷.

He would reduce healthcare spending by limiting healthcare benefits. He would also increase the retirement age to 65 years old. He also wants to limit unemployment benefits, unify all social benefits and require compensation from those benefiting from social aid. The limits on benefits follows the logic of ensuring that revenues from work are superior to those from benefits.

Regarding housing, he wants to remove the state’s control over rent, facilitate evictions when the rent is outstanding, and reduce access to social housing. The housing policy would also include reducing taxes on property, as well as norms and regulations for landlords⁷⁸.

Despite public cuts in housing and social security, François Fillon’s programme advocates for an increase in welfare spending in security, defence and justice services⁷⁹.

On social issues, Fillon aims to “protect family and values”⁸⁰. Despite his original opposition to same sex marriage, he does not advocate abrogating the same sex marriage bill, which was voted in 2013. However, he plans to prohibit adoption for gay couples. There has also been some confusion over his position on abortion. He has claimed that personally as a practising Catholic he is pro-life, but that he would not abrogate the abortion bill.



⁷³ Fillon, François. 2016. “Le Projet. La dette.” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/dette/>.

⁷⁴ Fillon, François. 2016. “Cadrage Financier.” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/cadrage-financier/>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Fillon, François. 2016. “Le Projet. L’emploi.” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/emploi/>

⁷⁷ Fillon, François. 2016. “Cadrage Financier.” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/cadrage-financier/>

⁷⁸ Fillon, François. 2016. “Le Projet” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Le Monde. « Famille, identité, libéralisme : le tryptique gagnat de François Fillon ». Le Monde. November 28th 2016.

THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND INTERNAL SECURITY

Fillon has criticised the current government for being too indulgent with regards to internal security. He argues that François Hollande has weakened police forces by creating ministerial groups which take decisions independently of the police, in turn bypassing the police authority⁸¹. Hence, his programme advocates for a two-fold strategy: 1. Increase the national police’s material resources and authority, which would allow them to properly prosecute criminals; 2. Allow local police and private security firms to contribute to the fight against criminality and terrorism.⁸²

In addition, in order to fight against terrorism, Fillon wants to pass a law allowing the removal of French nationality from French citizens who have left to fight for foreign terrorist groups and forbid them from returning to France. In addition, he wants to enable judges to prosecute all French citizens who have relations with terrorist groups for 30 years, in particular those who have travelled to Syria and Iraq, as well as allow the expulsion of foreigners considered a danger to internal security and who have been found guilty. Furthermore, in order to decrease the threat of terrorism, he aims to forbid large gatherings, the security of which couldn’t be guaranteed, and reforming intelligence agencies to increase the focus on terrorism⁸³.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

François Fillon’s environmental programme is centred on two main measures: strengthening nuclear energy, and removing the precautionary principle.

François Fillon’s environmental policies to curb climate change would rely on the strengthening of nuclear and renewable sources of energy. In line with Hollande’s bill on energy transition, he advocates closing coal-fired power plants. However, he also promotes extending the life time of nuclear reactors to 60 years, as he argues that nuclear energy is clean,



a strategic economic advantage which gives France energy independence. Furthermore, he has claimed that he would allow research on shale gas, currently forbidden by François Hollande’s minister of ecology Ségolène Royal.

Moreover, François Fillon wants to remove the precautionary principle, which was added to the French constitution by the conservative president Jacques Chirac in 2005, which binds the government to take precautionary measures for health and environmental protection. However, for François Fillon this principle restrains innovation⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Fillon, François. 2016. “Le Projet. Sécurité” Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/securite/>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Fillon, François. Environnement et transition énergétique. François Fillon 2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ENVIRONNEMENT-ET-TRANSITION-ENERGETIQUE.pdf>



THE EUROPEAN UNION: TOWARDS A UNION OF NATIONS

Fillon has claimed that the Brexit vote in June 2016, inducing Britain to leave the EU, has been a wakeup call for the EU's need to reform⁸⁵. He claims that the EU appears inefficient and an obstacle to member state's development and freedom. He also argues that the EU is perceived as a distant institution which has nourished populism and extremism. Traditionally against the Maastricht treaty, he condemns a federal EU and promotes a European Union of nations which can guarantee each country's sovereignty⁸⁶.

As the EU is facing a migration crisis, Fillon would like to renegotiate the Schengen treaty without revisiting the principle of free movement. The renegotiations of Schengen would include expelling anyone condemned for a crime, harmonising asylum rules with the creation of European asylum law, restricting access to public goods for non-Europeans, and tripling the Frontex's budget to have an effective border guard police⁸⁷.

Furthermore, he wants the EU to be able to become a military force which can have some power on the international arena. This would include cooperating with Britain despite the Brexit vote.

He would also like to reform the Euro, in order to have independence vis-à-vis the dollar, and break the dependency on American foreign policy. To do so, he suggests transforming the Euro into a reserve currency like the dollar. Strengthening the Euro is to be achieved through creating an EU political bureau, composed of the heads of member states, forming a General Secretary of the Euro zone, independent from the Commission, which would manage the economic zone, and work towards harmonising fiscal policies.

A PRO-RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

In contrast with most of the contenders for the conservative's primaries, Fillon is in favour of dialogue with Russia. The pro-Russian stance of François Fillon can be surprising in the French political context where most leaders, conservatives or socialists, rather condemn Putin's actions, in particular the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the support for Bashar al-Assad in Syria. Nevertheless an analysis of Putin and Fillon's discourse can show an ideological proximity.

In the Middle East, his priority is to defeat ISIS. In order to do so, Fillon advocates for a coalition

with Russia and an alliance with Bashar al-Assad. He believes that the Syrian forces are the only ones who can overthrow ISIS. Therefore France needs to provide them with the resources to do so. This position and analysis of the Syrian conflict and ISIS are very different from the current French foreign policy, and his election would result in a complete change of the French foreign policy⁸⁸.

Furthermore, according to Fillon, France's political and economic interests are threatened by the US, especially since Trump's election. Thus, France needs to negotiate the conditions of political and economic alliances to find a compromise more favourable to France.

STYLE AND STRATEGY

In the primaries, François Fillon has been able to gather a support base by campaigning locally. He held 64 public meetings, primarily in small spaces in different regions of France, since January 2016. This strategy was in contrast to that of other contenders, in particular Sarkozy, who held fewer and larger meetings⁸⁹. This allowed him to represent restraint and seriousness at times where the conservative leaders are involved in judicial affairs. For instances, Sarkozy has been accused of exceeding his 2012 campaign accounts by holding overly expensive meetings

which were illegally paid for by the conservative party, formerly known as the *UMP (Union for a Popular Movement)*.

Furthermore, Fillon represents a conservative and Catholic trend which has allowed him to secure the support of the strong opposition to the same sex marriage bill. His affinity for the Anglo-Saxon free-market economic model and socially conservative ideas represents a reawakening of the traditional Right.



⁸⁵ Fillon, François. 2016. "Le Projet. Europe" Fillon2017. <https://www.fillon2017.fr/participez/europe/>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Fillon, François. « François Fillon : « La France doit savoir parler à tous les Etats ». Le Monde. November 24th 2016 ;

⁸⁹ Le Monde. « Primaire de la droite : la stratégie de terrain de Fillon explique-t-elle son succès ? ». Le Monde. November 22nd 2016.

2.2

THE SOCIALIST PARTY, LA BELLE ALLIANCE POPULAIRE



The Socialist Party, La Belle Alliance Populaire
The candidate for the *Socialist Party* was nominated as a result of primary elections held on the 22nd and 29th of January. The primaries were open to candidates from the *Socialist Party* as well as from the *Parti Radical de Gauche* and the group “*Union of Democrats and Ecologists*”. The Communist party and the Green Party were invited

to participate but declined. François Hollande’s unprecedented move⁹⁰ to not seek re-election as President of France threw the selection of the Socialist candidate wide open⁹¹. 7 candidates declared their candidacy, including the former Prime Minister Manuel Valls. He reached the second round but conceded defeat against Benoît Hamon, with 41,12% of the votes.

⁹⁰ All presidents have sought re-election since WWII.

⁹¹ Chrisafis, Angélique. « François Hollande will not seek re-election as president of France ». The Guardian. December 1st 2016.

**BENOÎT
HAMON**

2.2.1 PROFILE

Benoît Hamon has been one of the public figures of the “insubordinate movement”, the movement within the *Socialist Party* that refuted François Hollande’s liberal economic policies, and the Left wing of the *Socialist Party*. Benoît Hamon, 49 years old, has long been an activist in the *Socialist Party*. He founded in 1993 the Movement for Young Socialists, and remained its president until 1995. In 1997 he founded the *New Socialist Party* with Arnaud Montebourg, and became one of the main figures of the Left wing of the *Socialist Party*.



He was elected as MEP for the East of France from 2004 to 2009 and is attached to the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. On the 16th May 2012, Benoît Hamon served as Junior Minister for the Social Economy under President François Hollande. In April 2014, he was appointed Minister of Education, but resigned in August 2014 over disagreements concerning what he considered to be the president’s pro-business economic policy. Subsequently, he joined the *Socialist Party*’ insubordinate movement⁹².

⁹² Chrisafis. Angelique. « French Socialists choose leftwing rebel Benoît Hamon for Élysée fight ». The Guardian. January 29th 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/29/french-socialists-leftwing-rebel-benoit-hamon-elysee-manuel-valls-francois-hollande-presidency>

⁹³ Legrand. Baptiste. « Ce que contient le programme (vert fluo) de Benoît Hamon ». L’Obs. December 15th 2016. <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/presidentielle-2017-primaire-gauche/20161214.OBS2682/ce-que-contient-le-programme-vert-fluo-de-benoit-hamon.html>

2.2.2 PROGRAMME

Of all the candidates from the Left Primary, Benoît Hamon’s programme was the one most centred on social and environmental reforms. He presented himself in opposition to the “social-liberal and social-democrat options”, represented by the former Prime Minister Manuel Valls⁹³.



PROMOTING A GREEN ECONOMY AND THINKING NEW MODES OF PRODUCTION

In his programme, he argues for transition to a new model of development, more respectful of the environment. In addition, he claims that there will be a rarefying of work in the near future as a result of the digital revolution. It is worth noting that by taking for granted the rarefying of employment, Benoît Hamon is the candidate who has put the least emphasis on tackling unemployment.

From these assumptions and principles, he has presented various economic reforms he would undertake.

Firstly, Benoît Hamon would encourage a reduction of weekly working hours, to 32 hours per week, by allowing employees to take more days off or work 4 days a week. This decrease in weekly working hours would be compensated by lowering employers’ contributions to social security. Nevertheless, he would not change the legal weekly working hours, which would remain at 35 hours/week. This would mean that even if an employee works 32 hours per week, they would be paid as if they had worked 35 hours.

In addition, Benoît Hamon says he will abrogate the 2015 labour bill, to give precedent to the labour code over agreements negotiated within companies. This is likely to be well received by the unions who have called for an abrogation of the 2015 labour bill.



Furthermore, Benoît Hamon wants to counter the ‘uberisation’ of work, a trend towards flexible, project-based models of employment, as the digital revolution allows people to let out their services in exchange for a fee. For Benoît Hamon, as workers are no longer employees, the ‘uberisation’ of the economy spells the end of social benefits. He therefore wants to ensure that all employees, even those involved in this new form of economy, benefit from social rights.

STRONGER WELFARE STATE

The main social measure Benoît Hamon has advocated for is a universal basic wage to eradicate poverty and foster entrepreneurship. This universal wage would be implemented in two steps: first, in 2018 the existing solidarity wage, implemented in 2009 for unemployed or underemployed workers over the age of 25, would be increased by 10% and extended to 18 to 25 years old. Eventually, all French citizens would receive €750 per month. He would raise revenue for his universal income plan by legalising and taxing marijuana sales and making companies pay taxes for using artificial intelligence and robotics⁹⁴.

⁹⁴ Benoît Hamon 2017. « Pour un Progrès Social et écologique ». <https://www.benoithamon2017.fr/thematique/pour-un-progres-social-et-ecologique/>

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ France Culture. 2017. « L’Europe idéale de Benoît Hamon ». <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/le-billet-economique/leurope-ideale-de-benoit-hamon>

PRO-EUROPEAN PROJECT

In contrast with the radical Left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Benoît Hamon has a pro-European project. Nevertheless, he advocates for a less economically liberal Europe, challenging austerity policies. He has condemned the European free trade agreements with Canada, CETA, giving more power to multinational corporations which could have detrimental social and environmental effects. He has suggested the convergence of European minimum wages, with financial compensation for the member states for whom this measure could lead to a decrease in economic competitiveness. In addition, he has claimed that France would not be able to maintain 3% of deficit over GDP as is currently outlined by the Maastricht treaty. Hence, he has requested that Germany allow France not to consider military spending in the deficit count.

In addition, Benoît Hamon promotes a more ambitious European budget than the actual budget of 145 billion euros. The European budget would finance a 1000 billion euros plan for ecological transition⁹⁵. The increase in the budget would be financed by the financial markets and the European central Bank. Benoît Hamon advocates for a federalist Europe, with sharing and pooling budgets and debts⁹⁶.



AN ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Benoît Hamon wants to link protection of the environment and social protection. Hence, ecological measures are at the centre of his programme.

He has presented five main measures. He would ban diesel in 2025 to fight against air pollution. This would include abolishing the diesel fiscal subsidies in France, and creating electrical terminals to charge cars all over the country.

Similarly, he plans to reduce to 50% the proportion of nuclear power within French energy production. This would involve closing down the oldest and more risky nuclear power plants. In order to counter the decrease of nuclear energy, Benoît Hamon advocates for the local production of renewable energy by constituencies and the creation of subsidies to help citizens equip themselves with material for the domestic production of renewable energy⁹⁷.

⁹⁷ Le Monde. « Comparateur de programmes ». Le Monde. <http://www.lemonde.fr/personnalite/benoit-hamon/programme/>

⁹⁸ At the time of this report in February 2017

INTERNATIONAL POLICIES

Benoît Hamon has not focused on international affairs⁹⁸. The only measure he has announced is the recognition of the state of Palestine. In addition, he advocates for providing humanitarian visas for refugees, and allowing refugees to work after residing for three months in France.

STYLE AND STRATEGY

Benoît Hamon's nomination has highlighted a return to more traditionally Left-wing policies, following François Hollande's unpopular presidency. Benoît Hamon represents opposition to the Centre-Left of the Socialist Party, represented by Manuel Valls, who claims that Benoît Hamon campaigns for an 'unrealistic' Left.

2.3

NATIONAL FRONT





2.3.1 PROFILE

Since its creation, the *National Front* has been led by the Le Pen family. In October 1972, the *National Front* was formed through the union of small nationalist groups, and the Poujadist⁹⁹ MP Jean-Marie Le Pen was designated as its president. In 1974, he first ran in the Presidential elections, where he garnered 0,74% of the votes. In 1983, the *National Front* stepped into the limelight when Jean-Marie Le Pen was elected city councillor in Paris. And in 1984, the *National Front* achieved its first national victory, when it won 10,95% of the votes in the European elections, and 10 *National Front* representatives become MEPs in the European Parliament. In September 1987, Jean-Marie Le Pen provoked a heated debate when he claimed that the WWII death chambers were a “detail” of history. Meanwhile, his score in the presidential elections increased (14,38% in 1988, 15,15% in 1995) until the 2002 presidential election, when he qualified for the second round with 16,86% of the votes¹⁰⁰. This trend was reversed in the 2008 elections, when Jean-Marie Le Pen only received 10,44% of the votes and the *National Front* achieved a low score at the legislative elections (4,29%). The *National Front's* low score led to cuts in its public subsidies from 4,5 million to 1,8 million euros. It is in this context that Marine Le Pen came to lead the *National Front*.

Marine Le Pen was engaged in politics from an early age, following her father, Jean Marie Le Pen, founder of the FN, through meetings and rallies. She joined the *National Front* when she was 18 years old. In 1991 she graduated from one of France's top law universities (Paris II, Panthéon-Assas). She began working as a public attorney, where she would often represent illegal immigrants.

In 1992, she started her political career as the *Front National's* candidate in the 1993 legislative elections for Paris's 16th constituency. She lost to the conservative MP Bernard Pons.



In 1998 she left her career as a lawyer behind and received her first political mandate as a regional councillor for the *Nord-Pas-de Calais* region. Simultaneously, she became head of the FN legal department until 2003. From 2000, she held a seat in the party's political office, and she started to create satellite associations to ‘de-demonise’ the *National Front* in the eyes of the public.

In 2002, when her father reached the second round of the presidential elections, she began her first national public appearances in the media¹⁰¹.

After unsuccessful bids for parliamentary election in 2002, in 2004 she was elected and has remained an MEP representing North-West France. However, her father Jean-Marie Le Pen achieved a low score in the 2007 presidential elections, for which Marine Le Pen' strategy of de-demonising the *National Front* was blamed by some high ranking *National Front* officials. Nevertheless, she has scored increasingly higher percentages of votes in the 2007 legislative elections, confirming the gradual rise of the *Front National*.

By 2011 she had risen high enough in the party ranks to take leadership of the FN. She has steered the party image towards the centre ground of French politics, to combat “Far-Right” labels, while building a manifesto based on highlighting and counteracting threats to France and traditional French life. This move proved successful during the 2012 presidential elections, where Le Pen came third with a higher



⁹⁹ Poujadism is a conservative reactionary movement to protect the business interests of small traders.

¹⁰⁰ Le Nouvel Obs. « Chronologie. Le Front National depuis 1972 ». Le Nouvel Obs. 2011, January 10th. <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/20110110.OBS5969/chronologie-le-front-national-depuis-1972.html>

¹⁰¹ Laurent, Samuel. « Marine Le Pen, une ascension très médiatique ». Le Monde. January 16th 2011.

percentage of the vote (17,90%) than her father received in 2002. Two years later, her strategy of normalising and detoxifying the *National Front* has proven effective as one of her closest colleague Steeve Briois was elected mayor of Henin-Baumont. The following European and departmental elections have further confirmed the rise of her party¹⁰².

Nevertheless, Marine Le Pen's strategy divides the party, between those who follow Marine Le Pen and want to enter conventional politics to gain seats and political power; and those who, following Jean-Marie Le Pen, refuse to transform the party's identity and want to remain an anti-establishment party outside the conventional political system. This divide has led to an open clash between father and daughter, and in 2015 Marine Le Pen excluded her father from the party following anti-Semitic and xenophobic declarations¹⁰³. He remains nonetheless the honorary President of the Party. Yet, some of her rhetoric has sharply divided public opinion, in particular her views on illegal immigration and the "Islamification" of France; in October 2015 she faced criminal charges of inciting racial hatred after comparing Muslims praying in the



street, occurring due to the lack of Mosques in France, to the German occupation during World War II¹⁰⁴¹⁰⁵. This affair has shown the limits of the detoxification of the *National Front*. Its Vice-President Louis Alliot has stated "Let's be clear on the detoxification. It only concerns the popular presumption of anti-Semitism, nothing else. Not immigration, nor Islam, on which it is not a bad thing to demonised."¹⁰⁶

2.3.2 PROGRAMME

The FN manifesto for the 2017 presidential elections with 144 'promises' was presented on the 3rd of February 2017. The agenda is similar to previous *National Front's* presidential proposals with aspects of both traditional political Left and Right¹⁰⁷. In her 2017 manifesto, she has named two main enemies: "financial globalisation and Islamist globalisation", which according to her "are helping each other out"¹⁰⁸.

A PROTECTIONIST ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

The economic programme was put together by one of the economists of the party, Bernard Monot, who promotes liberalism at the national level and protectionism abroad¹⁰⁹. This translates by combining alleviating fiscal pressure and injustice within the country, and promoting the principle of national preference when dealing with other countries.

The main measure it promotes is leaving the euro zone and re-establishing the 'Franc' as national currency. The party claims, leaving the euro zone is the *sine qua non* condition for economic growth. The party hopes to organise a referendum like the "Brexit", and disaggregate the euro into different local currencies, such as the euro-franc, the euro-mark etc..., giving each member state control over their currency policies. Once the franc is re-established, the party considers devaluing it from 20% to 25%¹¹⁰.



The party claims sovereignty over currency policies would allow France to regain competitiveness in comparison to Germany, and would prevent deflation. Re-gaining sovereignty over the currency would also enable it to fund small companies. In sum, for Marine Le Pen, the euro is responsible for price rises, unemployment, delocalisation of companies to eastern European countries, and the public deficit¹¹¹.

Furthermore, Marine Le Pen advocates for "economic patriotism" with the creation of 3% tax on imports, which would be redistributed to employees with a salary below 1500 euros per month. In addition, she would nationalise toll ways and regulate electricity and gas prices.

Regarding the budget, Bernard Monot suggests diminishing public spending to 50% of GDP¹¹². The party also promotes closing the borders and stopping immigration which it claims could save 40 to 42 billion euros yearly, according to Bernard Monot. In order to curb France's public debt, the party wants to undo the privatisation of public money. Then, the French Bank could loan to the State with no interest. The aim of the *National Front* is to reduce public spending in order to lower taxes. Their main goal is to increase people's spending power. It suggest funding a reduction of income taxes by increasing taxes on imported goods. This would allow for an increase of the minimum wage¹¹³.

Furthermore, the *National Front* promotes economic protectionism, which could reverse the trend of de-industrialisation. By further industrialising the country, Marine Le Pen hopes to curb unemployment¹¹⁴.

STRONG WELFARE STATE AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Marine Le Pen's approach to social protection combines increasing the welfare state while reducing its spending.

Like some Left-wing parties, Marine Le Pen wants to restore retirement age to 60 years old, as she claims that the pension scheme can fund earlier retirement age. Furthermore, she would enforce a "French first" policy. Only French citizens would be allowed to receive social housing and unemployment benefits, and she would put in place a programme against tax fraud and benefit abuses¹¹⁵.

Nevertheless, Marine Le Pen' priority is to maintain public services in the poorest regions. She also wants to limit the reimbursement of medical operations and increase the tariffs of medical consultations. She promotes opening new hospitals in the poorest regions in order to curb inequalities between them.

Concerning social issues, if elected Marine Le Pen would suggest the abrogation of the same sex marriage bill, voted in 2013 under President Hollande's presidency, and replace it with a civil partnership.



¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Le Monde. « Jean Marie Le Pen exclu du Front National ». Le Monde. August 21st 2015.

¹⁰⁴ Albertini, Dominique. « Prières de rue et « occupation » ; Marine Le Pen relaxée ». Libération. December 15th 2015

¹⁰⁵ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine & Khalaf, Roula. "Marine Le Pen lays out radical vision to govern France". Financial Times. March 5th 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Albertini, Dominique. « Marine Le Pen et sa relecture de « l'occupation » devant le tribunal ». Liberation. October 19th 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Front National. 2016. « Le Projet du Front National 2012 ». <http://www.frontnational.com/le-projet-de-marine-le-pen/>

¹⁰⁸ Henley, Jon. « Marine Le Pen promises liberation from the EU with France-first policies ». The Guardian. February 6th 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Bacqué, Raphaëlle. « La potion économique du FN ». Le Monde. April 7th 2015.

¹¹⁰ Le Figaro. « Pourquoi le programme économique du FN est contesté ». Le Figaro. December 9th 2015.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Public spending account for 57% of GDP in 2015. INSEE. 2015. "Dépense publique". <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1906711?sommaire=1906743>

¹¹³ Eveno, Anne & Mestre, Abel. « Le projet économique du FN passé au crible ». Le Monde. November 27th 2013.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Front National. 2016. « Retraites et dépendance ». <http://www.frontnational.com/le-projet-de-marine-le-pen/redressement-economique-et-social/retraites-et-dependance/>

This has caused division in her party, with others like her niece Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, condemning same-sex marriage as something which could open the way to other minorities' forms of unions, such as polygamy¹¹⁶.

On immigration, the FN have previously taken a strong stance on limiting legal immigration to 10,000 entries a year; deporting all illegal immigrants; amending rules on nationality and punishing "anti-French" racism more harshly. These measures run alongside their rhetoric on national identity, where Le Pen has often referred to "one language, one culture" within "one national community". She has been more careful in reference to the Muslim community after her acquittal for inciting racial hatred, instead using more coded language to describe "these people whose beliefs, values and practices are not ours"¹¹⁷.

"A PATRIOTIC ECOLOGY" AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Marine Le Pen has shaped her ecology and environmental policies to fit a patriotic and nationalist frame.

For Marine Le Pen, protection of the environment goes hand in hand with the economic policies defended by the *National Front*, notably their position against free-trade. According to the *National Front* it is possible to preserve the environment by defending protectionism and promoting economic production within French borders.

Furthermore, Marine Le Pen defends an energy transition "à la française"¹¹⁸, which would strengthen nuclear energy. Nevertheless, Marine Le Pen would also develop renewable energies, and provide funding and zero-interest loans for citizens to conduct ecological and insulation renovations in their home¹¹⁹.



NATIONAL FRONT'S EUROSCEPTISM

The *National Front* has had an unsteady position on the European Union project. In 1972, the newly created *National Front* claimed that a realistic policy of defence depended on the reinforcement of a European confederation¹²⁰ which would respect the diversity of nations¹²¹. The party was therefore "favourable to the European construction, in the absolute respect of the independence and unity of the Nation."¹²² This pro-European position in 1972 justified the candidacy of the *National Front's* representatives in the 1984 European elections.

According to the academic Valerie Igounet, there was a first shift in the *National Front's* position towards the European Union in 1992¹²³. In 1992, the *National Front's* programme promoted a Europe of nations, with the "reinforcement of the



European borders against immigration from the Third Worlds". It also encouraged a common policy against "savage imports threatening our industry and agriculture", and re-negotiating Schengen and Maastricht treaties¹²⁴. The second shift in the *National Front's* position on the EU was in 2012 when Marine Le Pen promoted renegotiating all European treaties to put an end to the EU which was portrayed as a "total failure"¹²⁵. Thus, Marine Le Pen advocates for control over French borders, leaving the Euro zone, and a new union of sovereign states which could include Russia and Switzerland¹²⁶.

Despite strengthening its anti-EU position, the *National Front* has paradoxically increased its power within the EU. After the *National Front's* success in the 2014 European elections, Marine Le Pen was elected as an MEP alongside 24 *National Front* representatives. She has therefore had the opportunity to form a Far Right European parliamentary group named Europe of Nations and Freedom, with 39 MEPs from Far Right parties from 8 different countries (France, Netherlands, UK, Poland, Italy, Romania, Austria, Belgium and Germany)¹²⁷. According to the academic Nicolas Lebourg, their common policies are focussed on "islamophobia and rejection of extra-European immigration"¹²⁸.

¹¹⁶ Hausalter, Louis. « Mariage homo et polygamie : Marion Maréchal-Le Pen embarrasse (encore) sa tante ». Marianne. March 17th 2016.

¹¹⁷ Front National. 2016. « Immigration ». <http://www.frontnational.com/le-projet-de-marine-le-pen/redressement-economique-et-social/immigration/>

¹¹⁸ Barroux, Rémi. « Ecologie : Marine Le Pen repeint le vert en bleu-blanc-rouge ». Le Monde. December 3rd 2016. http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2016/12/03/ecologie-marine-le-pen-repeint-le-vert-en-bleu-blanc-rouge_5042774_3244.html

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Igounet, V. 2016. « 1973-2016 : L'Europe vue par le FN ». FranceInfo. <http://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/2016/06/24/1973-2016-leurope-vue-par-le-fn.html>

¹²¹ Igounet, V. 2014. Le Front National. de 1972 À Nos Jours. Le Parti, Les Hommes, Les Idées.: De 1972 À Nos Jours. Le Parti, Les Hommes, Les Idées. Documents. Le Seuil.

¹²² Igounet, V. 2016. « 1973-2016 : L'Europe vue par le FN ». FranceInfo. <http://blog.francetvinfo.fr/derriere-le-front/2016/06/24/1973-2016-leurope-vue-par-le-fn.html>

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

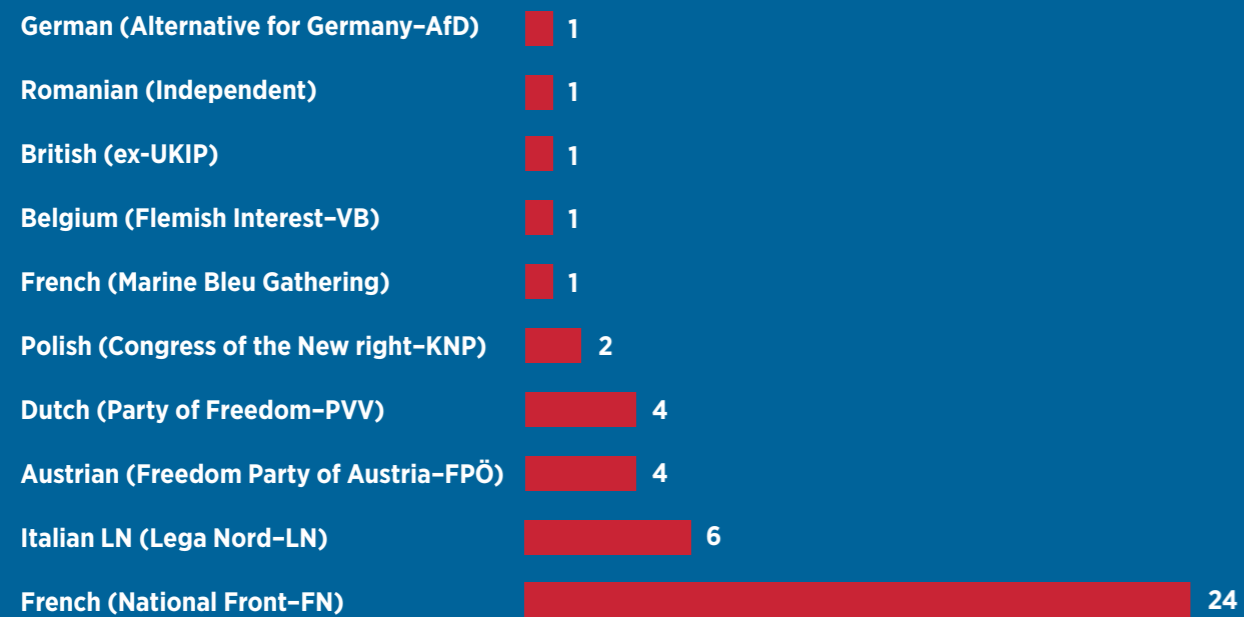
¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Marine2017. 2017. « 144 engagements du Projet Présidentiel de Marine Le Pen ». <https://www.marine2017.fr/2017/02/04/projet-presidentiel-marine-le-pen/>

¹²⁷ Parlement Européen. 2016. "Députés". Parlement Européen. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/fr/search.html?politicalGroup=4907>

¹²⁸ Lebourg, Nicolas. 2016. "Les Dimensions Internationales Du Front National." *Pouvoirs* 157 (2): 105. doi:10.3917/pouv.157.0105.

FIGURE 4 NUMBER OF MEPS IN THE EUROPEAN GROUP OF NATIONS AND FREEDOM, BY NATIONALITY



This has allowed the new group to increase subsidies from the European Union as well as an increase in political power with more speech time (2 minutes against 1 minute previously), and the right to amend bills in plenary sessions. Furthermore, by constituting a new European parliamentary group, Marine Le Pen was able to form an alternative to the Eurosceptic group and movement led by the British UKIP MEP Nigel Farage. Nigel Farage formed in 2014 the parliamentary group the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) with the Italian MEPs from the party Five Stars. They refused an alliance with the *National Front* MEPs as Nigel Farage felt that antisemitism was in the “DNA” of the *National Front*¹²⁹. Marine Le Pen’s European group is gaining grounds to become the first Euro-sceptic group in the European Parliament, as Farage’s EFDD’s future is uncertain after Italian Five star MEPs voted to leave the EFDD in light of the Brexit vote, which may lead British MEPs to leave the European Parliament and the necessary dissolution

of the EFDD¹³⁰. With the departure of the 17 Five star, the EFDD is in a vulnerable position, as one additional departure from the group will lead to its dissolution¹³¹. The vulnerability of Farage’s European group has rapidly promoted Marine Le Pen’s European group as the first Eurosceptic group in the European Parliament, increasing her political



¹²⁹ Vaudamo, Maxime. Pouchard, Alexandre. & Breteau, Pierre. « Pourquoi Marine Le Pen a dû attendre un an pour constituer un groupe au Parlement européen ». Le Monde. June 16th 2015. http://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/06/16/pourquoi-marine-le-pen-a-du-attendre-un-an-pour-constituer-un-groupe-au-parlement-europeen_4655361_4355770.html

¹³⁰ Worley, Will. « Nigel Farage lashes out after UKIP EU funding threatened by European Parliament group split ». The Independent. January 10th 2017. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-ukip-eu-funding-right-wing-european-parliament-group-splits-beep-grillo-five-meps-right-a7518961.html>

¹³¹ The rules of the European Parliament state that groups can be formed by 25 MEPs from 7 different countries.

power as Eurosceptic leader. Despite her rise in European politics, Marine Le Pen’s programme on European issues remains Eurosceptic. Membership of the EU in particular has been portrayed as an imposition of economic liberalism and multiculturalism that serves the elite and neglects ‘everyday’ citizen. The FN would look to hold a referendum on EU membership should they come into office. Marine Le Pen is the only candidate that has suggested organising such a referendum. Her goal is to demand for “the French people four sovereignties: territorial, monetary and budgetary; economic; and legislative”¹³². If the EU does not conform to these demands, she would promote leaving the EU.

The *National Front* has celebrated Britain’s decision to exit the European Union, suggesting that it has validated their analysis that people are against the EU system. Regarding Britain, the party promotes maintaining commercial agreements and argues that rejecting these would be punishing Great Britain for its decision to leave the EU, which Marine Le Pen sees as anti-democratic¹³³.

A RADICAL OVERHAUL OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY

Marine Le Pen wants a radical overhaul of French foreign policy. She wants to restore relations with the regime of Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad. In contrast, she would review relations with Qatar and Turkey which she alleges support terrorism.

Furthermore, she calls the US the most discredited power in the Middle East region, and claims that it cannot be seen as a partner in the global struggle against ‘jihadists’. Instead, defeating ISIS, will only be achieved in cooperation with Russia. She has blamed French policy on Ukraine for provoking the crisis and the US for encouraging the rupture with Putin. Marine Le Pen’s support to Putin has nevertheless been questioned as her party has benefited from a 9 million euro loan by a bank close to president Putin¹³⁴.

STRATEGY AND STYLE

Marine Le Pen has been a more appealing political leader to voters than her father by detoxifying the FN’s brand of neo-fascism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. She has also aimed to present her party as more mainstream and professional with greater political experience, rather than being solely an anti-establishment party which does not seek political power.

According to the academic Michel Eltchaninoff, who has analysed Marine Le Pen’s speeches¹³⁵, Marine Le Pen has transformed the party’s discourse strategy. In contrast with the traditional Far Right’s discourse, Marine Le Pen proclaims her republicanism and her adherence to French republican values. This shift in her discourse has allowed her to attract the traditional conservative electorate, who were previously wary of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s anti-republicanism. Similarly, Marine Le Pen has voiced her anti-liberalism, and critiques the economic elite’s power. This contrasts with her father’s discourse who was strongly in favour of liberalism. In addition, Marine Le Pen has strongly sanctioned *National Front* members, including her father, who have expressed racist or anti-Semitic remarks. This strategy has allowed her to present the *National Front* as a legitimate party and attract a wider electorate, including the traditional Left electorate constituted by the working class. Hence, in her speeches she cites authors, political figures and academics who are traditional references in the Left parties, such as Hannah Arendt, Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Similarly, she claims to not be either conservative or from the Left, aiming to distance herself from the Far Right.

Furthermore, despite a shift in her discourse to attract a new electorate, according to Eltchaninoff¹³⁶ she still makes anti-Semitic and racist references in order to retain the traditional Far Right electorate. Hence, without openly expressing anti-Semitic or racist remarks, she will make reference to the stereotypes of some communities. For instance she regularly makes reference to the “finance elite living in New York”, relating to the stereotypes of the Jewish community.

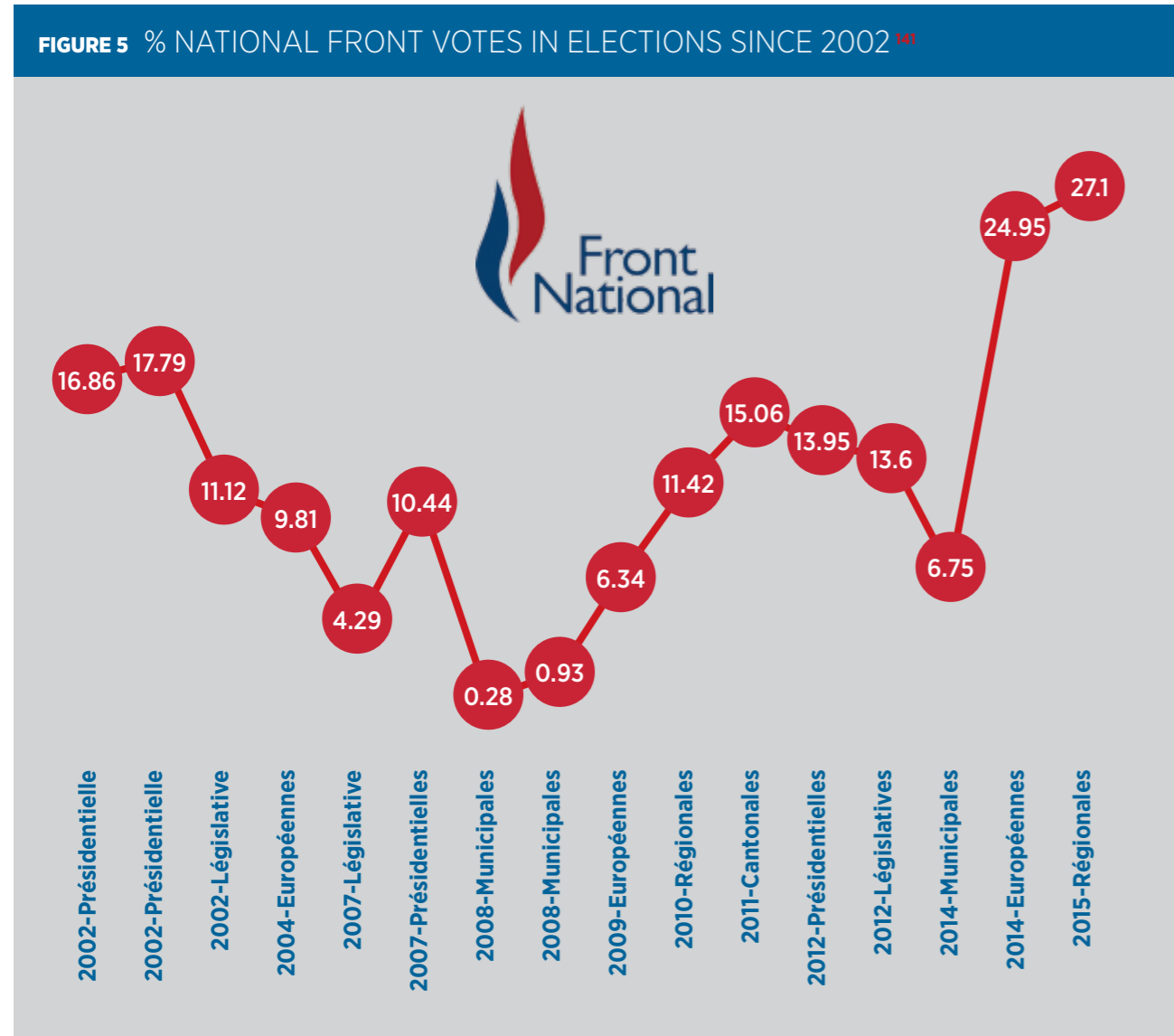
¹³² Walt, Vivienne. « France’s Marine Le Pen on Brexit: ‘This Is the Beginning of the End of the European Union’ ». The Time. June 28th 2016.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Bremmer, Charles. “ Le Pen’s party asks Russia for €27m loan”. The Times. February 19th 2016.

¹³⁵ Eltchaninoff, Michel. 2017. Dans la tête de Marine Le Pen. Actes Sud. Paris.

¹³⁶ Ibid.



Similarly, instead of talking openly about Islam, she only makes references to debates on Islam in France¹³⁷. In addition, the scholar Cécile Alduy who has studied the rhetoric of Marine Le Pen has shown that her discourse highlights the division between “them” and “us”, the “people” and the “elite”. In her speeches, “immigration” is used as synonyms of “multiculturalism”, “Muslim fundamentalism” or “terrorism”¹³⁸.

Furthermore, she presents herself as an alternative to the mainstream parties which have according to her implemented similar policies to those which led to France’s crisis, while distancing herself from

the party’s Far Right image. This strategy is aimed to diversify her electorate which would allow her to gain a national mandate. So far, according to the academic Nonna Mayer¹³⁹, Marine Le Pen’s supporters are ideologically and socially similar to her father’s. Nevertheless, since 2012 when Marine Le Pen became the *National Front’s* leader, there has been an increase in working class voters. However, according to Nonna Mayer¹⁴⁰, she has not yet extended her influence to middle and upper class voters. The results of the 2017 presidential elections will allow analysis of the sociological traits of her supporters and assessment of the impact of the shift in her discourse in diversifying her electorate.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Alduy, Cécile. 2017. *Ce qu’ils disent vraiment*. Les Politiques pris aux mots. Seuil. Paris.

¹³⁹ Mayer, Nonna. 2013. “From Jean-Marie to Marine Le Pen: Electoral Change on the Far Right.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 66 (1): 160–78. doi:10.1093/pa/gss071.

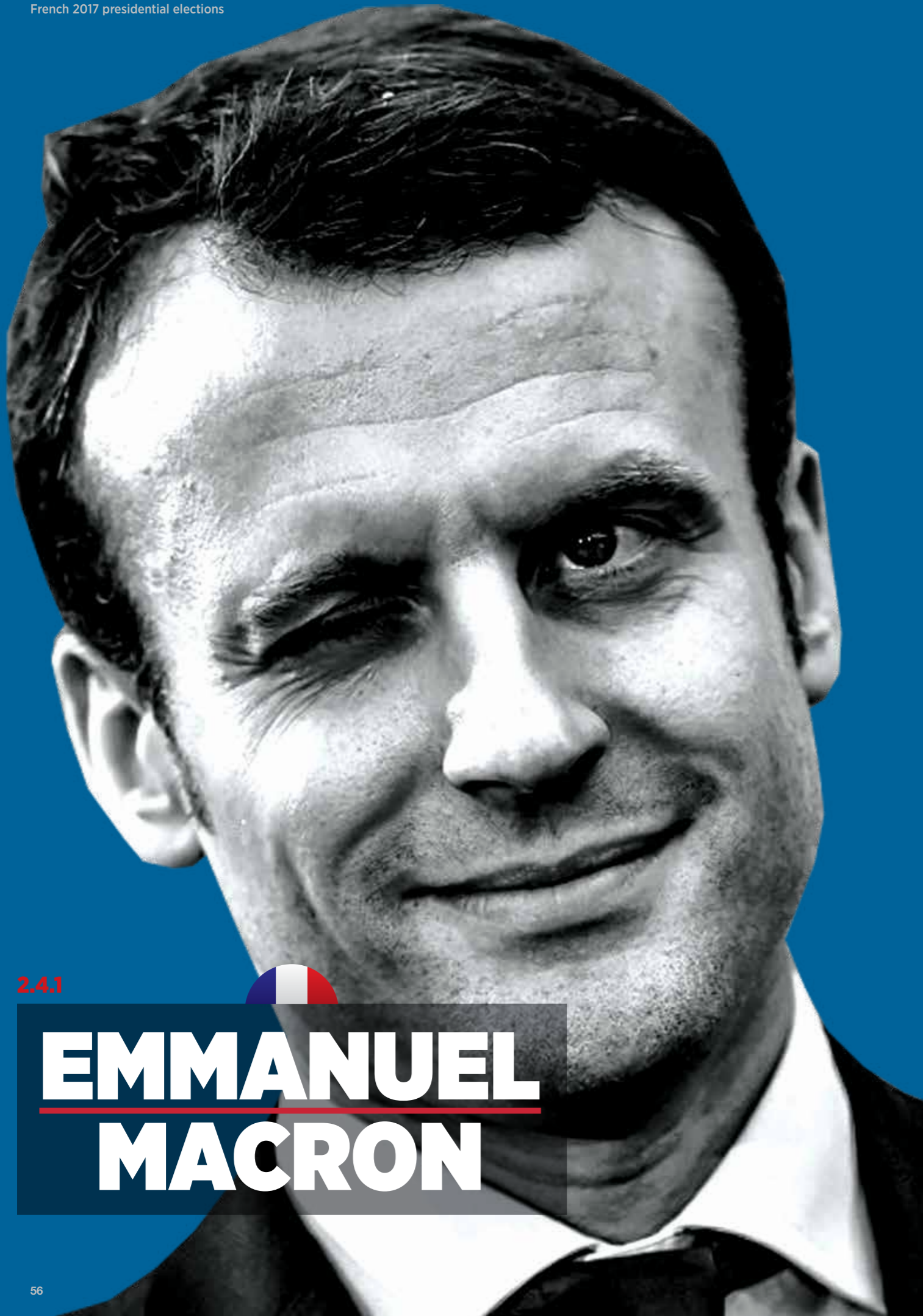
¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Ministère de l’intérieur. 2015. « Les Elections ». [http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Lesresultats/Departementales/elecresultat__departementales-2015/\(path\)/departementales-2015/FE.html](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Lesresultats/Departementales/elecresultat__departementales-2015/(path)/departementales-2015/FE.html)

2.4

NON-AFFILIATED PARTY CANDIDATES





2.4.1

EMMANUEL MACRON

2.4.1.1 PROFILE

Emmanuel Macron is an exception on the French political scene. While he attended the classic schools and colleges for politicians (Science Po Paris, ENA), he has never been an elected MP. He began his career as the assistant of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur from 1999 to 2001, and largely rose to prominence as an intellectual within politics¹⁴². He left the academic world to graduate from the elite ENA College and later became a senior civil servant, namely inspector of public finances¹⁴³. He joined the *Socialist Party* when he was 24 in 2006, where he met François Hollande. In 2008, he moved into finance at Rothschild & Co Bank. In 2012 he struck an important deal for the bank, making him a millionaire. A few days later, he joined François Hollande's team at the Elysée, where he was appointed deputy General Secretary of the presidency and advised him on economic reform. In 2014 he served as Economy minister. Despite this return to politics, he has not renewed his affiliation to the *Socialist Party*, and stayed away from party quarrels. During the summer of 2016, he resigned from the government to prepare a surprise presidential bid. He created a new centrist movement, *En marche!* ("Onwards!")¹⁴⁴, and announced his candidacy in November 16th 2016, hopeful to cast himself as non-conformist and anti-establishment outsider, in the wake of Donald Trump's victory in the US. By deciding to not take part in the Left's Primaries, he has aimed to present himself as being above traditional party politics. However, to be able to officially run for President, he will have to gather the support of 500 French elected representatives, which could prove challenging without the backing of a political party.

En Marche!

2.4.1.2 THE PROGRAMME

In a book published on November 24th 2016, Emmanuel Macron presented his programme favouring entrepreneurship and social solidarity, embracing global transformation¹⁴⁵. Inspired by Nordic-style democracies, his programme mixes pro-business deregulation and an extension of the welfare state.

PROMOTING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECONOMY

Emmanuel Macron is a pro-business reformist, with an economically liberal agenda, as illustrated by the reforms he led while he was in government between 2014 and 2016.



The central economic policy he aims to put in place is weekly working hours, adaptable to individuals, which would scrap France's 35 hours working week. The starting point of his argument is that not all workers want or need to work the same amount of weekly hours; young people may want to work longer hours as they learn their jobs while older ones may wish to work less. He would allow negotiations to take place in each professional sector to find the adequate weekly working hours. For Macron, each sector would negotiate the possibility for workers to work less, 30 or 32 hours, after 50 or 55 years old, while younger professionals would work over 35 hours a week¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴² Revault D'Allones, David & Pietralunga, Cédric. « Emmanuel Macron, itinéraire d'un enfant gâté ». Le Monde. November 31st 2016.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Macron, Emmanuel. 2016. « En Marche ! ». <https://en-marche.fr/emmanuel-macron/>

¹⁴⁵ Maillard, Sébastien. « Emmanuel Macron livre sa vision et son programme ». La Croix. November 24th 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Legrand, Baptiste. « Emmanuel Macron. Quand on est jeune, 35 heures ce n'est pas long ». Le Nouvel Obs. November 10th 2016.

This proposition is novel and contrasts with other candidates, Left or Right. Generally, the conservative party wants to increase the working hours; while the Left tends to defend the 35 hours week, or even to further seek to reduce the working hours to 32 hours per week.

Furthermore, Macron claims the economic system requires more flexibility to favour flourishing entrepreneurship. Hence, he argues that labour law should be based on social dialogue, in other words, labour regulations should be negotiated between employers and employees in each sector. This would contrast with the current situation in France where the labour laws apply across all sectors, in a one size fits all approach¹⁴⁷.

In sum, Emmanuel Macron's economic programme represents continuity with the reforms he aimed to implement while he was Minister of the Economy under François Hollande's mandate, namely liberal economic measures which would favour flexibility and the entrepreneurial sector in the French economy. This economic programme contrasts with traditional left-wing economic measures. The traditional Left, and the *Socialist Party*, tend to seek to curb liberalism, rather than promote it, as economic liberalism is equated with the destruction of the welfare state¹⁴⁸. Therefore, Emmanuel Macron's economic programme distances him from the traditional Left.

EXTENDED AND FLEXIBLE WELFARE STATE

While being liberal on economic issues, Emmanuel Macron's programme tends to also be liberal on social, cultural and political issues.

He seeks to create a new social welfare state in contrast to the current social model which he argues was built for an older economic model, which has led to social injustices, favouring those who seek permanent and stable jobs in classic economic sectors or civil servants. Hence, he wants to create a new unemployment benefit for freelance and self-employed workers. This idea is similar to what some



The Republicans politicians defend (c.f. Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet and Bruno Le Maire)¹⁴⁹. However, in contrast with some conservative leaders, including François Fillon, he does not want to progressively decrease the unemployment benefits. Rather, he wants to extend unemployment benefits when workers resign. This is a novel idea which could provide more flexibility to workers who want to move firms. In the same logic of having more flexibility in the labour market, he wants to introduce a pension scheme adaptable according to individual needs.

Furthermore, he wants to redefine the role of unions. Under his presidency, unions would no longer manage unemployment benefits, as is currently the case. The state would be solely responsible for benefits. The unions' role would solely be to negotiate labour regulations within the firms. In a country, where the unionists are mostly Left-wing voters, Emmanuel Macron recognises that this proposition would be challenging¹⁵⁰.

In sum, Emmanuel Macron's social programme is a novel one in French politics. It aims to build a social state which would give citizens the opportunity to embrace economic liberalism, while maintaining a strong commitment to social welfare. This contrasts with traditional Left-wing social models which tend to view economic liberalism as a threat to the welfare state.

PRO-EUROPEAN PROJECT

Emmanuel Macron has claimed that the reform of the EU would be the biggest challenge for the next French president. Generally, Macron is pro-European and defends the Eurozone as he wants closer ties with the rest of Europe, rather than inward-looking policies, to deal with globalisation¹⁵¹.

He has also criticised and called for a reform of EU internal functioning. He argues that voters are not satisfied with the current EU system, which has an outdated perspective, ineffective in fighting the Eurosceptics¹⁵². He condemns the failures of 'ultra-liberalism' which he believes have fuelled sentiments of a loss of control or sovereignty, which have led to the Brexit vote to opt out of the EU¹⁵³. Hence, he wants to organise democratic conventions in the 27 EU member states which would allow the emergence of a new EU project based on popular aspirations¹⁵⁴. He promotes a European budget to fund the common investments and nominate a Finance minister for the euro zone.

STYLE AND CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

At 38, Emmanuel Macron has the image of a youthful reformer. He casts himself as a radical and progressive, willing to upset the establishment, and as an alternative to the Far Right *Front National's* protest vote. He wants to target places where the Left has lost its traditional electorate- in particular among the working class- who have, in some cases, turned to the *National Front* to seek change. His first campaign meeting was in Marseille, a *National Front* stronghold¹⁵⁵. His movement "Onwards!" is a progressive movement against the established order which seeks to transform the country in an era in which many French citizens feel the need for change¹⁵⁶. His position on the political spectrum is original as he is liberal on economic and social issues. This position is unusual on the French political

spectrum, as the French Left, although broadly liberal on social issues, has traditionally aimed to curb economic liberalism. According to the academic Philippe Marlière, "in the Left psyche, liberalism is about unbridled capitalism and therefore propels images of the dismantling of the welfare state"¹⁵⁷. In his speeches, Macron rather equates liberalism with change, reform and as a way to embrace globalisation. While, the Left has tended to oppose the wealthy against the working class, and the Far Right has tended to target foreigners, Macron has uncovered a new divide in the French society: those who embrace globalisation against those who resist neo-liberal reforms. An analysis of his campaign speeches (c.f. Figure 6) shows that the words he uses most frequently are "work" (travail), "today" (aujourd'hui), or "onwards" (en marche).



¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Marlière. Emmanuel. « French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron 'anti-system' angle is a sham ». The Guardian. January 18th 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Carole Barjon, « Macron dévoile son programme : « plus de flexibilité, plus de souplesse », L'obs, November 10th 2016

¹⁵⁰ Macron, Emmanuel. 2016. Révolution. XO. Paris

¹⁵¹ L'express. « Emmanuel Macron appelle à refonder l'Europe ». L'Express. October 24th 2016.

¹⁵² Macron, Emmanuel. 2016. Révolution. XO. Paris

¹⁵³ Le Monde. « Macron veut placer l'Europe au Coeur du débat présidentiel ». Le Monde. October 28th 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ National Front gathered 45,22% of the votes at the 2015 regional elections (Franceinfo. 2015. "Carte Interactive". <http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/provence-alpes/bouches-du-rhone/metropole-aix-marseille/marseille/carte-interactive-marseille-fn-present-au-second-tour-tous-cantons-684131.html>)

¹⁵⁶ Macron, Emmanuel. « Discours de Bobigny ». November 16th 2016. http://www.francetvinfo.fr/elections/presidentielle/direct-presidentielle-apres-des-mois-de-faux-suspense-emmanuel-macron-s-apprete-a-annoncer-sa-candidature_1923163.html

¹⁵⁷ Marlière. Philippe. « French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron's 'anti-system' angle is a sham ». The Guardian. January 18th 2017.

FIGURE 6 WORD FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF MACRON SPEECHES FROM SEPTEMBER 2016 TO JANUARY 2017



Emmanuel Macron aims to capitalise on France's deep-rooted distrust of the governing class. While he claims that he has leftist values, he wants to override the traditional political parties, and trigger a "democratic revolution"¹⁵⁸. That is why he has encouraged citizens to participate in the drafting of his programme by forming local committees, and has called on civil society to come forwards to present their candidacy for *Onwards!* for the legislative elections which takes place immediately after the presidential election. Nevertheless, the displayed

participatory democracy initiative is in contradiction with a campaign highly centralised on the figure of Emmanuel Macron¹⁵⁹.

The challenge of wanting to distance himself from traditional political parties lies in the fact he does not have a party apparatus behind him to run and finance the campaign. Nevertheless, he has had the support of a few members of the *Socialist Party*, which could increase his popularity, but also risks further splitting the fractious Left wing vote.

¹⁵⁸ Le Monde. « Les trois paris d'Emmanuel Macron ». Le Monde. November 17th 2016.

¹⁵⁹ Cornudet. Cécile. « Macron, comment on construit une légende ». Les échos. January 19th 2017.



2.4.2

**JEAN-LUC
MÉLENCHON**

2.4.2.1 PROFILE

Jean-Luc Mélenchon is an important figure of the French far-Left.

He first joined the *Socialist Party* in 1977, where he represented a radical socialism and anti-liberalism movement close to communist ideals. As a member of the *Socialist Party*, he was elected deputy-mayor of Massy (1986-1995) and municipal councillor of the department Essonne (1986-2001). In 1986, he was also elected senator of Essonne, becoming the youngest member of the Senate. He resigned from his senate seat in 2000 when he entered the government as minister of Vocational Education (2000-2002) and again in 2009 when he was elected as member of the European Parliament, a seat that he still holds in 2017.



Jean-Luc Mélenchon remained in the *Socialist Party* until 2008, when his motion on the party's ideology and general policy, challenging the current capitalist "production model", promoting a greater resources sharing, independence vis-à-vis the United States which would require not joining NATO, and protection of French secularism¹⁶⁰, was rejected. Instead

the party decided on a moderate general strategy and ideology which focuses on creating policies promoting firms' innovation to reinvigorate the economy¹⁶¹. Mélenchon subsequently decided to leave the *Socialist Party* and created a new Left wing party named *Left Party*. The main goal of the party is to present candidates for the European elections, in an alliance with the Communist Party, in order to represent a Left-wing movement for another democratic and social Europe, opposed to

the ratification of the Lisbon treaty and the current European treaties. Backed by this new party, he was elected as MEP, and presented his candidacy in the 2012 presidential elections. With the support of some politicians in the *Socialist Party* and few anti-capitalist movements, Mélenchon received 11% of the votes in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, allowing him to finish 4th behind Marine Le Pen, Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. Hoping to repeat this result, he has announced his candidacy for the 2017 presidential elections¹⁶². However, this time he wants to run his campaign with no party affiliation. In February 2016, he formed a new political movement, *Rebellious France* (France Insoumise)¹⁶³, accounting for 130 000 members, whose specific goal is to back Mélenchon's candidacy.

2.4.2.2 PROGRAMME

As he aims to generate a popular movement, Mélenchon has adopted a participatory approach to develop his presidential programme. The creation of the programme encompasses several steps. First, voters online, academics and experts have been asked to contribute, add and amend ideas from Mélenchon's 2012 programme. These contributions have been synthesised and presented to members of the movement *Rebellious France*¹⁶⁴, which voted to prioritise 10 key measures during the presidential campaign on the 17th of November 2016. This has led to the publication in December 2016 of a final version of the programme Mélenchon will defend during the campaign named *Shared Future* (*L'avenir en commun*). The programme is a mix of anti-capitalism, isolationism, and environmental proposals¹⁶⁵.

ECONOMY: ANTI-CAPITALISM AND ISOLATIONISM

The principal enemies for Jean Luc Mélenchon are the financial markets, which are perceived as the root of the economic crisis in Europe.



Mélenchon rejects the dominance of financial capital on labour, and wants to fight against poverty to ensure each person has the right to healthcare, education, housing and work. In contrast with candidates from the traditional parties, Mélenchon does not want to stabilise public spending, but rather increase it to invest in French society¹⁶⁶. He aims to tackle unemployment by investing public resources in building social housing or modernising railway infrastructures. He would also nationalise energy suppliers (Total, EDF, Areva etc.), and implement an environmental plan aimed at eliminating nuclear power and reaching 100% renewable energies by 2050.

He advocates for a reduction of the weekly working hours, from the current 35 hours to 32 hours and eventually 32 hours weekly, as well as increase the number of weeks of paid leave (from approximately 4 or 5 currently to 6 or 7).¹⁶⁷

In addition, he has promoted empowering workers by allowing them to buy firms where they work and create cooperatives.

He wants to reform the structure of income tax to make it more gradual so everyone can pay within

their means, and tackle fiscal fraud. He would also introduce a tax on financial transactions¹⁶⁸. In addition, he would abrogate the free-trade deal negotiated with Canada (CETA).¹⁶⁹

A SOCIALIST WELFARE STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

A priority for Jean-Luc Mélenchon would be to draft a 6th Constitution, creating the 6th French Republic which would increase participatory democracy. The new institutions would account for blank votes, grant the right to revoke an elected representative, create "republican leave" allowing anyone to become MP without losing their jobs or benefit, introduce proportional representation in the Assembly, and implement mandatory voting¹⁷⁰.

Furthermore, Mélenchon wants to establish a minimum wage of 1300 euros per month (it was 1150 euros per month in 2016). He would also set the retirement age at 60 years old. In addition, the healthcare system would be reformed so health care services would be totally free¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁰ Mélenchon, Jean-Luc. 2008. « Congrès PS. Communiqué de Jean Luc Mélenchon, sénateur et de Marc Dolez, député ». August 27th 2008. <http://www.jean-luc-melenchon.fr/2008/08/27/communiqué-de-jean-luc-melenchon-et-marc-dolez/>

¹⁶¹ Castagnet, Mathieu. « Les motions du congrès du PS à Reims ». La croix. November 7th 2008.

¹⁶² Besse Desmoulières, Raphaëlle. « Mélenchon achève le Front de Gauche ». Le Monde. June 5th 2016.

¹⁶³ Mélenchon, Jean-Luc. 2016. « Appel de la France insoumise ». http://www.jlm2017.fr/appele_des_insoumis

¹⁶⁴ "France Insoumise"

¹⁶⁵ Besse Desmoulières, Raphaëlle. « Nouvelle Constitution, sortie du nucléaire, UE : ce que contient le programme de Mélenchon ». Le Monde. October 15th 2016.

¹⁶⁶ Le Front de Gauche. 2012. « Le programme du Front de Gauche et de son candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, L'humain d'abord ». Le Front de Gauche

¹⁶⁷ Mélenchon, Jean-Luc. 2016. « Synthèse 2 ». <http://www.jlm2017.fr/synthese2>

¹⁶⁸ Mélenchon, Jean-Luc. 2016. « Synthèse 2 ». <http://www.jlm2017.fr/synthese2>

¹⁶⁹ Geoffroy Clavel. « Les 10 priorités de Jean-Luc Mélenchon pour 2017 ». Huffington Post. October 16th 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Mélenchon, Jean-Luc. 2016. « Synthèse 2 ». <http://www.jlm2017.fr/synthese2>

¹⁷¹ Ibid.



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Mélenchon's programme has a strong ecological component. He seeks to create an "ecological plan" which would prepare a nuclear power phase-out and aim to reach 100% renewable energy by 2050¹⁷².

In addition, in the event of his election, he would add the "green rule" in the French constitution. The green rule would entail not removing from nature more than it can recreate.

EUROSCEPTIC AND ANTI-AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Jean-Luc Mélenchon has numerous European relationships that he has built in his capacity as MEP. He is part of the "European United Left-Nordic Green Left" in the European Parliament. The group includes political parties of mostly socialist and communist orientation.

Mélenchon's position on the EU contrasts with the main parties. While traditional parties are generally pro-EU, Mélenchon has started to diffuse Eurosceptic ideas which previously were the *Front National's* prerogative. His new slogan is "EU, we change it or we leave it". He identified four enemies: 1. The German government and austerity policies; 2. The Central European Bank which "oversteps its role"; 3. the ultra-liberalism of the European Commission; 4. The EU Court of Justice which promotes financial deregulation¹⁷³.

Thus, he wants to abrogate the current European treaties and negotiate new rules with European counterparts. The new rules he aims to implement include reorientation of the Central European Bank's activities to develop full employment; forbid the monitoring of the States' budget policies so they can choose freely how their taxes can be used; transform the Euro into a common currency, allow each member state to recover their monetary power; harmonise fiscal policies in Europe to prevent social dumping¹⁷⁴.

If he is not able to negotiate the current treaties with the EU member states, he would advocate for a 'Frexit' (French exit of the EU).

He also promotes leaving NATO, which France joined in 2008, and which according to him symbolises the submission of France to the US and their 'imperial politics'. He would also request Parliamentary approval for all military interventions.¹⁷⁵

STYLE AND CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Like Marine Le Pen and to a lesser extent Emmanuel Macron, Jean-Luc Mélenchon is anti-establishment and wants to speak for French voters who do not feel represented by traditional, mainstream parties. His target audience are therefore the working class electorate who

have voted for the *National Front* during the last elections, and also traditional communist voters. He has secured the backing of the French Communist Party¹⁷⁶.

Without the backing of a traditional political party, his campaign has broken the traditional codes and rules. Rather than using the usual red colour, of the socialist and communist parties, he has preferred blue. The campaign events are widely connected and interactive, with screens showing tweets, and an increased use of social media. He has also created a popular Youtube channel where he comments on the main events of the week¹⁷⁷. The use of social media has allowed Jean-Luc Mélenchon to reach a wider audience than the members of the *Rebellious France* as well as bypass traditional media which he criticises for not allowing enough time to discuss important issues¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ Besse Desmoulières, Raphaëlle. « Présidentielle : les militants communistes votent d'une courte tête pour le soutien à Mélenchon ». Le Monde. November 26th 2016.

¹⁷⁷ Matalon, Vincet. « Jean-Luc fait des vidéos : comment le candidat Mélenchon est devenu le « champion » de YouTube en deux mois ». FranceTVInfo. December 3th 2016.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

THE MAIN CANDIDATES' PRINCIPAL POLICIES

ECONOMY

WELFARE STATE / SOCIAL

EUROPEAN UNION

FOREIGN POLICY

EMMANUEL MACRON



- Reduction of corporate taxes
- Create tax benefits for independent workers
- More flexibility in weekly working hours
- Cut taxes on productive capital

- Reduce public spending up to €50 billion by the end of 2017
- Simplification of the retirement system

- Reform the EU to materialise a «political Europe»
- European Economic convergence

- Favours free trade treaties

FRANÇOIS FILLON



- Reduction of corporate taxes
- Increase of weekly working hours
- Goals: Unemployment under 7% in 2022

- Public spending cuts up to €100 billion
- Retirement age to 65 years
- Against adoption for gay couples

- Advocates for union of nations
- Reform of the €
- Renegotiate the Schengen treaty in order to expell criminals

- Favours dialogue with Russia
- Advocates for a coalition with Putin and Bashar al-Assad to fight ISIS
- More independence vis-à-vis the US

MARINE LE PEN

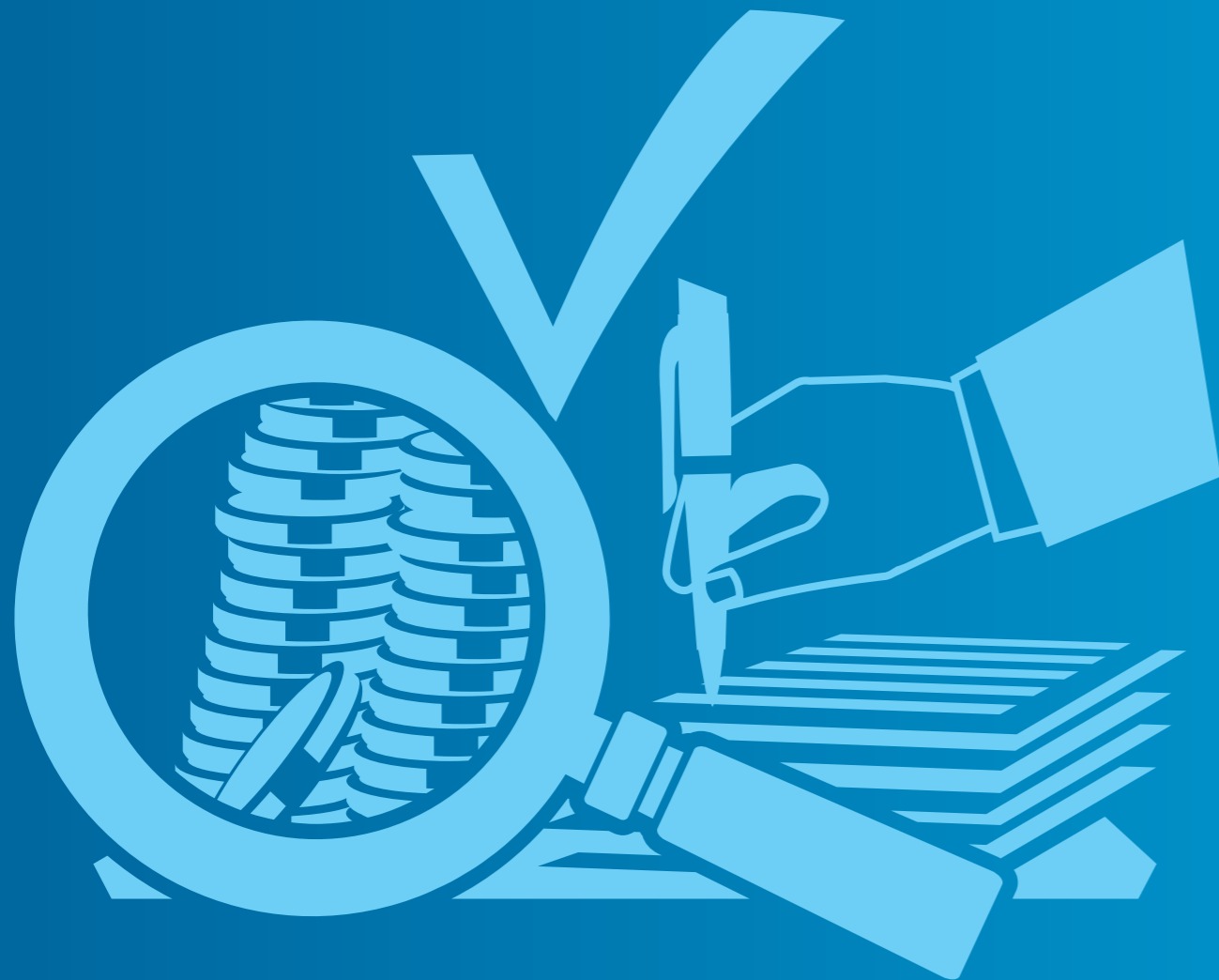


- Alleviate fiscal pressure
- Promote principle of national preference
- Re-industrialisation
- Re-establish the Franc as national currency

- Restore retirement to 60 years old
- Increase family benefits for families who have on French parent
- Abrogation of same-sex marriage

- Referendum on French membership in EU
- Transform the EU to include Russia
- Reestablish the primacy of national law over European law

- Leave NATO and create an alliance with Russia
- Renegotiate partnerships with countries from Northern Africe to stop migration



PART III.

LIKELY OUTCOMES OF THE ELECTION

This section aims to present the most likely outcome of the 2017 French presidential elections. As the 2017 presidential campaign unfolds and unpredictable events have weakened the frontrunners, the 2017 election's result is difficult to predict. Hence, 5 candidates are most likely to qualify for the second round and win the election (see figure 7): Marine Le

Pen, Emmanuel Macron, François Fillon, Benoît Hamon and Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

This section will discuss under which conditions these candidates might be able to win the elections, and how the event of their victory could impact national, European and international politics.

FIGURE 7 POLLS ON THE VOTING INTENTIONS (IN %) FOR THE 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FIRST ROUND FROM THE NOVEMBER 2016 TO JANUARY 2017 ¹⁷⁹

	16-17 November 2016	28-29 November 2016	2-3 December 2016	4-5 January 2017	3-7 February 2017
<i>Nathalie Arthaud</i>	1	1	0,5	1	0,5
<i>Philippe Poutou</i>	1,5	1	1	1	1
<i>Jean-Luc Mélenchon</i>	13	11	12,5	13	10,5
<i>Manuel Valls</i>	—	10	10	11	—
<i>Benoît Hamon</i>	—	4	4	6	14,5
<i>François Hollande</i>	10	—	—	—	—
<i>Yannick Jadot</i>	3	2	2	2,5	1
<i>Emmanuel Macron</i>	15	15	13,5	16	21
<i>François Bayrou</i>	5,5	5,5	7	5	5
<i>François Fillon</i>	20	28	27,5	24	18,5
<i>Nicolas Dupont-Aignan</i>	2	2	2	1,5	2
<i>Marine Le Pen</i>	29	24	24	25	26

¹⁷⁹ Ifop & Fiducial. 2016. « Rolling 2017. L'élection présidentielle en temps réel ». Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

3.1

FIRST LIKELY OUTCOME EMMANUEL MACRON'S VICTORY



3.1.1 UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS CAN EMMANUEL MACRON WIN THE ELECTION?

EMMANUEL MACRON'S ELECTORATE

Between June 2016 and January 2017 Emmanuel Macron has been able to consolidate a reliable electorate, despite not being backed by a traditional party. As for February 2017, Emmanuel Macron

accounts for 20% of the votes¹⁸⁰. The steady increase of voting intentions in the poll may reveal the constitution of a stable pool of voters, which allows him to aim to qualify for the second round of the election¹⁸¹ (c.f. Figure 7).

This steady increase of voting intentions for Emmanuel Macron might be crucial, as if he is able to qualify for the second round of the election, Macron is likely to win the election (c.f. Figure 8).

FIGURE 8 VOTING INTENTIONS FOR THE SECOND ROUND ON 2ND-3RD JANUARY 2017) ¹⁸²

	Marine Le Pen vs. Emmanuel Macron	François Fillon vs. Emmanuel Macron
Emmanuel Macron	65	48
Marine Le Pen	35	
François Fillon		52

¹⁸⁰ Ifop & Fiducial. 2017. Le rolling 2017. L'élection présidentielle en temps réel. Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

¹⁸¹ Rose. Michael. « Emmanuel Macron gains on François Fillon and Marine Le Pen in new French election poll ». The Independent. January 5th 2017.

¹⁸² Ibid.

It is difficult to assess the sociological characteristics of Macron's electorate as he has never been elected before. Nevertheless, his programme is likely to attract a "social-liberal" electorate, as defined by the academic Luc Roban, who votes for the Left, but want a liberal political economy¹⁸³. This electorate is mostly from higher social classes, working in the private sector and qualified. Nevertheless, this social liberal electorate only represents 6% of the population in age to vote¹⁸⁴. Hence, according to members of Macron's political movement *Onwards!*, Emmanuel Macron strategy is to mobilise non-voters and across parties¹⁸⁵, which translates in his discourse by replacing the Left/Right divide by the confrontation between the young entrepreneurs embracing globalisation and those against globalisation and neoliberal reforms¹⁸⁶. This will increase his ability to attract an electorate across parties. According to Jérôme Sainte-Marie, a specialist of voting polls, Emmanuel Macron is gathering supporters from *The Socialist Party* as well as from *The Republicans*¹⁸⁷¹⁸⁸. He has in particular been able to attract the liberal electorate of *The Republican* and from the centre, those who were supporting Alain Juppé in the primaries¹⁸⁹. Polls show that he has a favourable opinion among those who had voted in the 2012 presidential election for the centrist François Bayrou (68%), François Hollande (57%) and Nicolas Sarkozy (58%)¹⁹⁰. Although the favourable opinions may not translate into votes, it shows that Emmanuel Macron is provoking interest among the electorate from all parties. Nevertheless, he has not largely attracted the Far Right or Far-Left traditional electorate¹⁹¹.

However, the heterogeneity of Macron's electoral composition, comprising Left and Conservative traditional voters, may be a challenge preventing Emmanuel Macron from qualifying for the second round of the election. As the Left and Conservative components of his supporters have different



opinions and sensibilities, notably on issues such as social security, legal working hours or immigration, Emmanuel Macron's electorate is unstable. With no strong party affiliations or loyalties, this electorate is volatile and it will be difficult to reliably predict to what extent they will vote for Macron in the first round of the election.

Furthermore, the candidacy of the centrist François Bayrou may be a challenge to Macron's election. The president of the *Democrat Movement* François Bayrou has proclaimed his opposition to the Conservative nominee François Fillon, too conservative according to him, and weakened by scandals of alleged misuse of public funds¹⁹², and has in turn declared the possibility of his candidacy. François Bayrou's candidacy could have a negative impact on Emmanuel Macron's chances of reaching the second round of the presidential election. François Bayrou may attract the votes of the Centrist electorate, which constitutes the core of Emmanuel Macron's electorate.

¹⁸³ Roban, Luc. 2016. Existe-t-il un électoral social-libéral ? CEVIPOF.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Maillard, Sébastien. « Emmanuel Macron, les ressorts d'une percée ». La Croix. January 18th 2017.

¹⁸⁶ Marlière, Philippe. « French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron's anti system angle is a sham ». The Guardian. January 18th 2017.

¹⁸⁷ Jaffré, Jérôme. 2016. L'enquête électorale française : comprendre 2017. CEVIPOF/Science Po. No26.

¹⁸⁸ Feertchack, Alexis, & Sainte-Marie, Jérôme. « L'offre politique d'Emmanuel Macron au défi des classes populaires ». FigaroVox. January 6th 2017. <http://premium.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2017/01/06/31001-20170106ARTFIG00188-l-offre-politique-d-emmanuel-macron-au-defi-des-classes-populaires.php>

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ifop & Fiducial. 2017. Le tableau de bord politique. Les Personnalités. Janvier 2017. Ifop & Fiducial.

¹⁹¹ Ibid

¹⁹² Ficek, Isabelle. "Bayrou fait un pas de plus vers sa candidature". Les Echos. February 8th 2017. <http://www.lesechos.fr/elections/francois-fillon/0211785118434-presidentielle-bayrou-accuse-fillon-detre-sous-influence-des-puissances-dargent-2063475.php>

EXTERNAL EVENTS THAT MAY AFFECT SUPPORT FOR MACRON

External events, in particular a refugee crisis, or a terrorist attack, may be unfavourable to Emmanuel Macron in the run up to the presidency. Such events will centre the political agenda on issues like national identity, security and immigration, on which his electorate may be divided. For instance, the 31% Left component of his electorate does not agree with the statement "There are too many immigrants in France", while 56% of the Right component of Macron's electorate agrees with the statement. Similarly, in contrast with the Right component, the Left component of Macron's electorate is not in favour of a reduction of refugees in France. Therefore, if Emmanuel Macron has to announce drastic measures on this issue, it is unlikely that he will be able to reconcile the Left and Right components of his electorate, which may result in a decrease in his support.

3.1.2 THE IMPACT OF MACRON'S VICTORY

ON NATIONAL POLITICS

Although Emmanuel Macron's programme does not promote as radical change as Marine Le Pen's programme, there will be challenges in the event of his victory in the presidential elections. The French presidential elections are followed by legislative elections, through which MPs of the Assembly are elected. The president elect has to, according to the constitution, choose a Prime Minister and a government which reflect the majority in the Assembly. As the legislative elections closely follow the presidential elections, the majority in the Assembly, and the Prime Minister and his government, tend to be from the party as the President. The President will support the candidacy of MPs who support him in order to form a parliamentary majority. This process favours the nomination of small parties' candidates who have strong local roots and are willing to be part of the parliamentary majority. For instance, François Hollande's election was followed by legislative elections in which the *Socialist Party* and

its allies won the majority in the Assembly. François Hollande could then choose a Prime Minister from the *Socialist Party*.

Furthermore, the legislative elections' system have a different dynamic from the presidential elections, and tend to favour parties and MPs who have strong local roots. In theory, MPs are supposed to collectively embody the French Nation. Constitutionally speaking, they are not allowed to mention their constituency or advance local interests¹⁹³. The Assembly is called to legislate for the collective and general interest without taking into account the specific situations within constituencies. Nevertheless and paradoxically, MPs need to be active in their respective constituencies, where they are considered key actors in local political life. In addition, the electoral rule, with the two-round majority electoral system, encourages MPs to be strongly connected to their local constituencies. Therefore, the legislative elections rely on strong party and personal local rootedness. In order to have some *Onwards!* MPs in the Assembly, Emmanuel Macron announced the 577 *Onwards!* candidates for the legislative elections in order "to build a presidential majority"¹⁹⁴.



¹⁹³ Costa, Olivier and Kerrouche, Eric and Schnatterer, Tinette, 2011 French MPs between Nation and Constituencies . APSA 2011 Annual Meeting Paper.

¹⁹⁴ Roger, Partick. « Emmanuel Macron lance un appel à candidatures pour les législatives ». Le Monde. January 19th 2017.

Yet, Emmanuel Macron's political movement *Onwards!*, as a new movement does not have strong local roots, and will have to be a challenger in all constituencies. Then, winning seats in the 2017 legislative elections, which take place on June 11th and 18th, will be challenging for *Onwards!*, even more so because Emmanuel Macron has claimed that he excludes any alliances with existing political parties¹⁹⁵. With such challenges to constituting a parliamentary majority, it is likely that Macron will need to govern with either the *Socialist Party* and its allies, or *The Republicans*. The alliances with traditional parties will probably result in Macron having to modify his programme to create more consensual measures.

Furthermore, when applying the economic measures of his programme, Emmanuel Macron is likely to face a strong opposition from powerful worker unions. Despite a low level of French workers being paid-up union members, 11% of workers in 2013 compared to 26% in Britain or 18% in Germany¹⁹⁶, French unions have a strong influence in public administration and private companies. French unions' strength lies in the statutory powers they enjoy as joint managers, along with business representatives, of the French social security system and as employee representatives in the workplace. French law stipulates that unions represent all employees, union members or not, in firms with over 50 staff. While the 2016 Labour bill aimed to curb the power of the unions, trade unions have a daily say in the running of companies which makes them key actors in French political and economic life.

Yet, some of the unions are strongly opposed to Emmanuel Macron, who defended the 2016 Labour bill curbing unions' strength. In particular, in the Labour bill Emmanuel Macron promoted agreements made between employers and employees within a company who according to the new Labour bill have precedent over deals agreed by national union confederations¹⁹⁷. In addition, Emmanuel Macron's programme gives the management of the unemployment benefits to the State, rather than to the unions, as is currently the case. The more liberal Trade Union confederation, the



French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) which promote the advent of socialism through “worker self-management” is more likely to support Emmanuel Macron's programme. However, the more radical union, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), which has a stronger tradition of union action around protest, is forcefully opposed to Emmanuel Macron's proposals. For instance, members of the CGT have protested in front of the library where Emmanuel Macron was signing his book, accusing him of “social terrorism”¹⁹⁸. Therefore, it is likely that Emmanuel Macron's programme will face a strong opposition from the more radical trade unions such as the CGT.

ON EUROPEAN POLITICS

The election of Emmanuel Macron as president, is likely to bolster the current dynamic of European integration through the strengthening of the Franco-German partnership. In a speech at Berlin's Humboldt University, Macron praised the German chancellor Angela Merkel's immigration policy of upholding European “common values and preserving [European] dignity by welcoming and lodging refugees in distress”¹⁹⁹.

Moreover, Emmanuel Macron, in his capacity as Minister of Economy has maintained relationships with high level German politicians, which may predict a strong Franco-German partnership. On January 11th 2016, Emmanuel Macron met with the German conservative (CDU) Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière, close to the German chancellor Angela Merkel. He also has a relationship with the German Social-Democrats, in particular Sigmar Gabriel, who has served as Minister of Economic affairs and Energy since 2013, in Angela Merkel's government, and with whom he drafted several reform plans for the euro zone. He is also the chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Sigmar Gabriel, who will present his candidacy for the chancellery in 2017 against Angela Merkel, represents the liberal wing of the SPD, which shares many similarities with Emmanuel Macron. Therefore, whoever wins the German elections in 2017, Emmanuel Macron is likely to have good a relationship with the new German Chancellor. This is likely to bolster the Franco-German partnership as the driving force of the EU, in particular in leading the Brexit negotiations with the U.K.

While relying on a strong partnership to lead the EU, Macron is also likely to have the support of Southern European countries. Emmanuel Macron wants to

reform the EU through “democratic conventions” rather than through inter-governmental method. With the inter-governmental method of decision, European leaders tend to negotiate secretly and favour their national interests. As such, drafts of reforms for the euro zone have tended to be blocked by Germany, which holds the Maastricht treaty as basis for work²⁰⁰. However, by favouring a more democratic method of decision-making, Macron hopes for a strong reform of the European Union with a pro-growth and pro-investment strategy, while cutting slack to the EU's struggling members²⁰¹. Then, Macron is likely to gather the support of Southern European countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Italy or Greece, who have condemned the austerity policy imposed by Germany.

In addition, with the appraisal of the democratic method of European governance, Emmanuel Macron is likely to position himself as the main opposition to the flourishing nationalist and populist European Far Right group led by Marine Le Pen. In arguing for a European sovereign body which can overrule its constituent members to save the euro zone, Emmanuel Macron challenges the concept of national sovereignty defended by European parliamentary group Europe of Nations and Freedom. As such, Emmanuel Macron could position himself as the figurehead of further European integration.

To develop his influence on the European Union, Emmanuel Macron is likely to rely on the *Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe* (ALDE), including Sylvie Goulard, member of *Onwards!* as well as MEP group coordinator of ALDE.

The ALDE is a European parliamentary group which encompass parties who have been gaining more influence in recent years, such as the Spanish *Citizens* party, the British *LibDem*, or the Austrian *Neos*. These parties share some similarities with *Onwards!* as they are profoundly pro-European, with a focus on the development of integration, and promoting the strengthening of economic and monetary union, which could allow for the development of economic growth and the reduction of inequalities²⁰².

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Dares analyses. 2016. La syndicalisation en France. Des salariés deux fois plus syndiqués dans la fonction publique. Dares analyses.

¹⁹⁷ Morice. Louis. « Présidentielle : Macron, Valls, Fillon...ce que les syndicats disent des candidats ». Le Nouvel Obs. January 6th 2017.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Zaretsky. Rober. « The English-Speaking, German-Loving, French politician Europe has been waiting for ». Foreign Policy. January 17th 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/17/the-english-speaking-german-loving-french-politician-europe-has-been-waiting-for-emmanuel-macron/>.

²⁰⁰ Autret. Florence. « Comment Emmanuel Macron tisse sa toile européenne ». La Tribune. October 21st 2016. <http://www.latribune.fr/economie/union-europeenne/comment-emmanuel-macron-tisse-sa-toile-europeenne-609784.html>

²⁰¹ Zaretsky. Rober. « The English-Speaking, German-Loving, French politician Europe has been waiting for ». Foreign Policy. January 17th 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/17/the-english-speaking-german-loving-french-politician-europe-has-been-waiting-for-emmanuel-macron/>

²⁰² Brustier. Gaël. & Deloy. Corinne. & Escalona. Fabien. 2014. « Political families in the European elections May 2014 : an assessment. Fondation Robert Schuman. <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0319-political-families-in-the-european-elections-may-2014-an-assessment>

INFLUENCE OF EMMANUEL MACRON'S VICTORY ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Emmanuel Macron has rarely expanded beyond his traditional remit of economic policies in the first months of the campaign. Nevertheless, it is likely Macron's foreign policy will be in line with Hollande's policies.

Emmanuel Macron has praised France's commitment in fighting the so-called Islamic State, and declared that such commitment to fight against terrorist groups in the Middle East would persist under his presidency²⁰³. However, in contrast with François Hollande's initial position, Emmanuel Macron has claimed that he would not make Bashar al-Assad's withdrawal a prerequisite of negotiations on Syria.

This is because Emmanuel Macron sees the necessity of maintaining a dialogue with Russia, which has imposed itself as unavoidable actor in resolving the Syria crisis and in fighting against terrorist groups in the region.

This position is close to German foreign policy, and will then be likely to bolster a common and uniform European foreign and defence policy, and may give Europe a stronger international voice.

Furthermore, Emmanuel Macron's position on Trump's presidency is similar to François Hollande's. He has claimed that the relationship with the US has to be "responsible"²⁰⁴, notably regarding the climate change accord, in order to ensure the survival of the transatlantic alliance between Europe and the US.

3.2

SECOND LIKELY OUTCOME MARINE LE PEN'S VICTORY



3.2.1 UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS CAN MARINE LE PEN WIN THE ELECTION?

MARINE LE PEN'S ELECTORATE

According to the latest February polls 2017²⁰⁵, Marine Le Pen is likely to gather 26% of the votes, in the first round of the election (c.f. Figure 8). Her score has remained above 20% since the beginning of the campaign, showing that she has an established base of supporters. Nevertheless, her scores have slightly decreased in October when François Fillon was nominated after the primaries (27,5%). This

demonstrates that she lost some of her potential voters to François Fillon²⁰⁶. Yet, with 26% of the votes, Marine Le Pen will qualify for the second round of the 2017 presidential elections. In the second round of the elections, if she faces Emmanuel Macron, she is likely to gain 36% of votes²⁰⁷.

Her traditional electorate are more likely to be from the working class and be less qualified. She also attracts less politicised voters who claim to vote only in 'important' elections^{208 209}. In addition, *National Front* voters are more likely to be of no religion (25%), or non-practicing Catholics (35%), while only 1% of Muslims voters support the *National Front*²¹⁰.

²⁰³ Emmanuel Macron & Europe 1. « Emmanuel Macron : 'Je ne suis pas naïf concernant Bachar el-Assad' ». Europe 1. November 18th 2016. <http://www.europe1.fr/politique/emmanuel-macron-je-ne-suis-pas-naif-concernant-bachar-el-assad-2903900>

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ifop & Fiducial. 2017. « Rolling 2017 L'élection présidentielle en temps réel ». Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid

²⁰⁸ Ibid

²⁰⁹ Perrineau. Pascal. 2015. L'enquête électorale française : comprendre 2017. Science PO/CEVIPOF. No2.

²¹⁰ Ibid

FIGURE 9 POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF VOTES FROM THE 1ST TO THE 2ND ROUND OF THE 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

	Will vote Emmanuel Macron in 2 nd round	Will vote M. Le Pen in 2 nd round	Blank vote in the 2 nd round
Will vote Benoît Hamon in the 1st round	77%	7%	16%
Will vote J.L Mélechon in the 1st round	51%	12%	37%
Will vote E. Macron in the 1st round	98%	1%	1%
Will vote F. Fillon in the 1st round	49%	15%	5%
Will vote M. Le Pen in the 1st round	4%	94%	2%

In addition to this traditional electorate, Marine Le Pen has penetrated circles that had until now resisted the *National Front* appeal. Among the employed middle class, Marine Le Pen and her party gather most of the support (28%), ahead the Conservatives (25%), and the Left (25%). Among the farmers and in the public sector, support for Marine Le Pen has also emerged.

Marine Le Pen's challenge to win the presidential election will be to expand her support base. The president of the *National Front* has a stable base of supporters, which may allow her to reach the second round, but polls predict that she will not gather enough votes in the second round to win the elections. If her opponent is Emmanuel Macron, the majority of the Left-wing voters, and *the Republicans* voters are likely to vote for Emmanuel Macron (c.f. Figure 9).

If her opponent is François Fillon, the majority of the Left-wing voters, despite their strong ideological opposition, are more likely to vote for Fillon or cast a blank (c.f. Figure 10).

Hence, in the likely event of facing Emmanuel Macron in the second round of the presidential elections, Marine Le Pen will need to secure more transfers of votes from the Left and the traditional Right.

She might be able to attract the Left-wing voters, in particular those supporting Mélenchon, if she focuses on the liberal economic programme of Emmanuel Macron. Marine Le Pen's discourse, like that of Trump in the United States, tends to focus on the victims of deindustrialisation, for whom globalisation does more harm than good^{211 212}. According to the academic Olivier Dard, the 2008 financial crisis has encouraged the *National Front* to radicalise its opposition to globalisation, claiming that the crisis could be solved if economic measures promoted economic sovereignty, protectionism and the intervention of the state in the economy²¹³. This discourse might resonate with the Far Left voters who "think that globalisation is not necessarily a good thing"²¹⁴ and want an alternative to current economic policies. The opposition to current economic policies has led the voters of the Far Left to adopt a Eurosceptic position close to that of the *National Front*. Similarly, the electorate of the *National Front* and the Far Left share a lack of trust in the current political leaders²¹⁵. Nevertheless, strong divisions remain between the voters from the *National Front* and the Far Left. First, despite being anti-liberal and anti-globalisation, the *National Front* promotes liberal policies within French borders



which would favour private firms. This position contrasts with the Far Left which is anti-liberal on all fronts. In addition, the *National Front* strongly promotes restricting immigration in France, which is blamed for high levels of unemployment. This stance diverges from that of the Far Left electorate, which welcomes immigration²¹⁶. However, the academic Laurent Bouvet argues that as Marine Le Pen ties immigration with anti-Muslim claims, she might be able to attract the Far Left electorate, which is deeply secularist and has "incoherent views on the multiculturalism ideal"²¹⁷.

In addition, Marine Le Pen will have to overcome the challenge of attracting the traditional Right electorate which is likely to fear her anti-liberal economic policies. Nevertheless, she may be able to attract them on social themes, such as family planning, and the restriction of immigration.

In sum, in order to attract new voters to win the second round of the presidential election, Marine Le Pen may have to strongly focus on the anti-liberal elements of her programme and her anti-immigration and social conservative stances. This might allow her to attract the Far Left electorate which could prevent a lack of transfer of votes from other parties to the *National Front* between the first and second round of the election, as in 2007.

FIGURE 10 POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF VOTES FROM THE 1ST TO THE 2ND ROUND OF THE 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

	Will vote F. Fillon in 2 nd round	Will vote M. Le Pen in 2 nd round	Blank vote in the 2 nd round
Will vote J.L Mélechon in the 1st round	31%	14%	55%
Will vote E. Macron in the 1st round	58%	10%	32%
Will vote F. Fillon in the 1st round	95%	2%	3%
Will vote M. Le Pen in the 1st round	7%	91%	2%

²¹¹ Crépon & al. 2015. *Les Faux semblants du Front National*. Presses de Science Po. Paris.

²¹² Delwit, Pascal. 2012. *Le Front National. Mutations de l'extrême droite française*. Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

²¹³ Dard, Olivier. « Un discours radicalement anti-libéral ». *Le Monde*. January 14th 2011.

²¹⁴ Alexandre, Chloé. 2015. « La proximité des électeurs du front national et du front de gauche : mythe ou réalité ». *Fondation Jean Jaurès*. Note n°7.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid

²¹⁷ Bouvet, Laurent. 2011. « Le sens du peuple ». *Le Débat*. 164. p. 140-141

Northern League, was in charge of five cabinets under Berlusconi's government in 1994, including Home Secretary and the presidency of the Chamber of deputies, house of the Italian Parliament²³⁰. Silvio Berlusconi also appointed members of *Northern League* in his government when he was elected Prime Minister in 2001-2006 and 2008-2011. In contrast with the *National Front*, the *Northern League* has a strong local presence as it holds the presidency of Lombardy provinces with 10 million inhabitants and Veneto, with 5 million inhabitants. With such local strength, the *Northern League* became an ally for the conservative party to constitute a parliamentary majority. As it became a governing party, the *Northern League*, did not apply the most radical components of its programme²³¹. Similarly, the Austrian *FPÖ* has participated in conservative government without implementing the radical components of its programme. When elected to national mandates and forced to behave as traditional political actors, Far Right parties have tended to temper and eschew their radical measures, abiding by liberal policies.

Similarly in France, despite a victory in the presidential election, the *National Front* is not likely to secure a majority in the parliament, which is elected by voting in each council, especially because Marine Le Pen refuses to consider an alliance with the Conservatives. There are currently 2 MPs from the *National Front* among 577 MPs in total who were elected in 2012. Marine Le Pen will have to accommodate the parliamentary majority in order to be able to pass laws and govern, by moderating her positions. Therefore, it is unlikely that she will be able to implement the most radical measures of her programme without creating a strong opposition in the Parliament.

ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

The election of Marine Le Pen is likely to radically change the dynamic and leadership of the European Union. Her election will put a stop to the Franco-German partnership which has been a driving force in the EU, as Marine Le Pen is likely to favour



partnerships with Far Right leaders with which she has formed a group in the European parliament, the *Europe of Nations and Freedom*. It is worth noting that European Far Right parties are diverse and multiform²³². Therefore there is no unique definition of what the Far Right constitutes. Nevertheless, according to the academic Nicolas Lebourg²³³ it is possible to identify several common traits, including the concept of national preference and promote the utopia of a "closed society" which could contribute to form a homogeneous community. The Far Right parties in Europe also reject the current political systems, its institutions and values and promote an anti-establishment discourse²³⁴.

Nevertheless, by creating a European group, Marine Le Pen has been able to bolster alliances with European Far Right party leaders, who have gained grounds since 2001 in their respective countries, creating a loosely unified European Far Right network. In the event of her election, Marine Le Pen is likely to rely on this European Far Right network to govern, by using her allies' experience of government when they have been in power, and by empowering her allies who are taking part in elections in their respective countries. Thus, the election of Marine Le Pen is likely to bolster the progression of Far Right parties in Europe.

Marine Le Pen is likely to rely on her European ally the *Austrian Freedom Party* (FPÖ)'s governing experience. The FPÖ has secured strong scores in the elections

since 1999, when it won the parliamentary elections allowing its then leader Jörg Haider to form a coalition with the governing party and enter the government²³⁵. In 2015, the FPÖ became a mainstream party, when the social-democrat party the SPÖ formed local alliances with the FPÖ in order to win some regions. In 2016, Norbert Horfer, the FPÖ candidate for the presidential election reached the second round, by shifting the FPÖ discourse, avoiding xenophobic attacks and rather focusing on immigration.

In addition, the election of Marine Le Pen is likely to contribute to the rise of Far Right European parties, in particular in the Netherlands and Germany.

On March 15th 2017, a general election is scheduled to take place in the Netherlands. Dominating headlines and leading the polls, is Geert Wilders. Wilders is opposed to EU membership, the Euro union, and immigration. He has strong stances against Islam²³⁶, including calling for a ban on the Quran, halting immigration from Muslim majority countries and deporting Dutch Muslims with dual citizenships if they break the law²³⁷. According to a poll conducted in December 2016, 46% of the Dutch electorate considers that Wilders' PVV will be the most important party in the March election²³⁸. Nevertheless, the multi-party structure of the Dutch politics means that Wilders is unlikely to gain power, as a coalition of more centrist parties will likely form a government, excluding the PVV. However, Wilders' popularity will

shape Dutch policies. The election of Marine Le Pen will further increase the legitimacy of Wilders and is likely to increase his influence on Dutch policies.

Lastly, the election of Marine Le Pen is likely to bolster the legitimacy and progression of the German Far Right party, the AfD. Since WWII, Far Right parties have had a limited influence on German politics due to its history. In 2014, the neo-Nazi party scored 1% in the European elections. Nevertheless, since 2015, the dynamic created by the organisation "Pegida" (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West) bolstered the German Far Right, including the AfD, created in 2013. The AfD secured strong scores, from 12,6% to 24,4%, in all regions in the 2016 regional elections²³⁹. The AfD's momentum started with the leadership of Frauke Petry who has since 2015 promoted a strong anti-immigration and anti-migrant sentiment in opposition to Merkel's asylum policy.



²³⁰ Camus. Jean-Yves. & Lebourg. Nicolas. 2015. Les Droites extrêmes en Europe. Seuil. Paris.

²³¹ Delwit, Pascal, and Philippe Poirier. 2007. L 'extrême Droite En Europe et La Question Du Pouvoir. Edited by Pascal Delwit and Philippe Poirier. Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles. .

²³² Camus. Jean-Yves. & Lebourg. Nicolas. 2015. Les Droites extrêmes en Europe. Seuil. Paris.

²³³ Ibid

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ Camus. Jean-Yves. & Lebourg. Nicolas. 2015. Les Droites extrêmes en Europe. Seuil. Paris.

²³⁶ Boztas, Senay. " Anti-Islam Dutch MP Geert Wilders found guilty of inciting racial discrimination". The Telegraph. December 9th 2016.

²³⁷ Robins-Early, Nick. « 2017 will test the rise of Europe's populist Far Right". Huffington Post. January 12th 2017. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/europe-populist-far-right_us_587561bce4b03c8a02d3ce90

²³⁸ IPSOS. 2016. « Dernier sondage ». IPSOS. <http://www.ipsos-nederland.nl/ipsos-politieke-barometer/barometer-van-deze-week>

²³⁹ Mudde. Case. « The Berlin Elections confirm that the transformation of the German Politics goes well beyond AfD v Merkel". Huffington Post. September 18th 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cas-mudde/the-berlin-elections-conf_b_12074020.html

Furthermore, the election of Marine Le Pen could radically change the dynamics of European politics. In addition, to putting a stop to the Franco-German partnership, it could also increase the likeliness of Marine Le Pen's European Parliamentary group, *Europe of Nation and Freedom*, participating in the coalition with the traditional European parties. On January 17th 2017, MEPs elected the president of European Parliament for the first time since 1979. For 10 years, the Conservative European party, PPE, the social-democrats and the liberals shared the presidency. However, in 2017, the social-democrats refused an alliance with the PPE and backed their candidate the Italian Antonio Tajani, former spokesman for Silvio Berlusconi and ex-European commissioner for Industry and enterprises. The Social-Democrats and the Liberals presented their own candidates putting an end to the parliamentary alliance in place for 10 years. This means that in future parliamentary elections, the PPE may need the support of Eurosceptic groups such as the one led by Marine Le Pen. Such an outcome would mean that she would gain further legitimacy were she to be elected.

In addition, the election of Marine Le Pen is likely to have a negative impact on European integration. As she is deeply Eurosceptic, she calls for a "Frexit", France leaving the EU and the Eurozone. Thus, her elections will be negatively received by pro-European governments around Europe, in particular in Germany and Italy. It is likely that she will alienate herself from the rest of the EU leaders as they might fear a spill-over effect, and the rise of Eurosceptic movements in their own countries.

Furthermore, her election will put a stop to the Franco-German driving force of the EU, and therefore prevent further European integration or cooperation. In addition, her wish to leave the Eurozone, will probably have devastating effects on the monetary union, in which France represents the second biggest economy behind Germany.

ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

On foreign policy matters, the election of Marine Le Pen may undermine the European efforts to conduct a common foreign policy.

Marine Le Pen, like François Fillon, advocates for a reconciliation with Russia, which she claims can help defeat ISIS. Le Pen tends to convey Russian narratives²⁴⁰ in her discourse. Like Putin, Le Pen has claimed that the era in which the U.S and the E.U constituted a united Western leadership based on shared values has ended. She has defined herself against the US and Germany's approach to Putin, in particular the sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea in 2014 or the marginalisation of Syria's Bashar Al-Assad. In this regard, Marine Le Pen has claimed that Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was not illegal.

This position is in opposition with Germany's foreign policy, which focuses on building an alliance with the US, and would therefore further weaken the Franco-German relations.



²⁴⁰ Walt, Vivienne. « Why France's Marine Le Pen is doubling down on Russia Support ». Time. January 9th 2017. <http://time.com/4627780/russia-national-front-marine-le-pen-putin/>

3.3

THIRD LIKELY OUTCOME FRANÇOIS FILLON'S VICTORY



3.3.1 UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS CAN FRANÇOIS FILLON WIN THE ELECTION?

FRANÇOIS FILLON'S ELECTORATE

Until the 25th of January 2017, according to polls^{241 242}, François Fillon was predicted to be the frontrunner of the election and reach the second round of the presidential elections with between 24% and 29% of votes. If François Fillon reaches the second round of the presidential elections, and faces Marine Le Pen he is likely to win the election with 65 or 67% of votes²⁴³. However, late January 2017, a satirical newspaper,

Le Canard enchaîné, revealed that François Fillon, who built his campaign on the image of being an honourable and honest candidate, is alleged to have paid his wife at least €500,000 out of parliamentary funds over eight years for a parliamentary assistant job she may have never carried out. Similarly, he is accused of employing his children, who were not yet graduate lawyers, for unjustified salaries. In addition, he is accused of employing his son, out of parliamentary fund, to work on former president Nicolas Sarkozy's 2012 campaign, then contributing to illegal funding of a presidential campaign. Hence, he is facing a preliminary investigation by the state financial prosecutors for misuse of public funds for a combined €880,000 in public money²⁴⁴.

²⁴¹ Ifop & Fiducial. 2016. « Présidentielle 2017 : les rapports de force électoraux à cinq mois du scrutin ». Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

²⁴² BVA. 2016. « Observatoire de la politique nationale-Novembre 2016 ». BVA. http://www.bva.fr/sondages/observatoire_de_la_politique_nationale/observatoire_de_la_politique_nationale_-_novembre_2016.html

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Chisfaris, Angélique. « Penelopegate casts dark shadow over Fillon's presidential prospects ». The Guardian. January 27th 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/27/penelope-gate-casts-dark-shadow-over-fillons-presidential-prospects>



At the time of this report, François Fillon has admitted that employing his family members caused mistrust and was no longer appropriate²⁴⁵, nevertheless, he has vowed to maintain his candidacy. Polls show that even if 68% of voters believe François Fillon should drop his candidacy bid, the support of the core sympathisers of his party, *the Republicans*, has remained strong²⁴⁶. The support of the core Republican's sympathisers, combined with the legitimacy of François Fillon's candidacy after he was chosen by millions of French voters in the primaries, and the fact that there are no natural replacements, suggest that unless he is officially charged with misuse of public funds, François Fillon is likely to maintain his candidacy bid.

Nevertheless, this scandal has been detrimental to his chances of winning the presidential race. Having been a favourite for most of the presidential campaign, he is as of February, polling third in the presidential race, and unlikely to reach the second round of the election. If he maintains his candidacy, according to the polls, François Fillon will gather the most votes among men, the elderly, people living in Paris, and those more qualified and with higher spending power, such

as company owners, retail traders, executives, and intellectual professions²⁴⁷.

In addition to the obvious challenge of overcoming the allegation of misuse of public funds, in order to secure the victory in the 2017 presidential election, François Fillon will have to overcome three main challenges.

First, François Fillon, despite his win in the primary, would not gather the votes of all of the *Republicans'* supporters (only three quarters) and only half of the votes of the centre Right parties' supporters. Thus, in order to win François Fillon needs to secure the votes of the three trends on the Right²⁴⁸, the conservatives who represent the backbone of his supporters, the bonapartists who supported Nicolas Sarkozy and the moderates backing Alain Juppé in the primaries.

The second challenge for François Fillon to win the presidential elections will be to gain the support of the centrist electorate. The centre in France is composed of two main parties, the *Union of Democrats and Independents*²⁴⁹ and the *Democrat*

*Movement*²⁵⁰, respectively created in 2012 and 2013. France's political system is highly polarised between the Left and Right, leaving therefore little space for centrist parties, which may not have a strong ideological stance, to flourish²⁵¹. Centrist parties promote a social-democracy and social-liberalism encompassing an economic dimension, mitigating the failures of markets through social measures, and social liberalism²⁵². This position contrasts with the traditional Right, which advocates for economic liberalism but has conservative social stances, and the traditional Left, which fights neo-liberal economic policies and social injustices it can create, but promotes social liberalism. Nevertheless, since the 80s, the *Socialist Party* has embraced more liberal economic positions, aiming to curb the failures of ultra-liberalism through social measures, embracing de facto social-democracy and social-liberalism²⁵³. Similarly, the conservatives, have adopted more liberal social positions. Thus, the centre has been absorbed by the traditional Left and Conservative parties, by either forming alliances or simply joining them.

However, in 2007 a centrist candidate, François Bayrou presented his candidacy to the presidential election in opposition to the conservative candidate, Nicolas Sarkozy, whose programme had shifted to the Right, and scored 18,7%. This gave him the legitimacy to create his own party *Democrat Movement* in opposition to the newly elected president Sarkozy and his Prime Minister, François Fillon whose policies were perceived by Bayrou as likely to increase social inequalities²⁵⁴. In the 2016 conservative primaries, François Bayrou reiterated his opposition to François Fillon's programme which would "increase inequalities" and be perceived as unfair²⁵⁵. He then supported Alain Juppé in the run off to the primaries, and when François Fillon secured the presidential nomination, he announced that he would consider presenting his candidacy. Similarly, the *Union of Democrats and Independents* backed Alain



Juppé against François Fillon in the primaries, and are now divided on whether to back the *Republicans'* nominee²⁵⁶. Then, François Fillon's main challenge to win the presidential elections will be to gather the votes of centrist supporters who might not abide by his conservative programme, and might direct their vote to Emmanuel Macron, or François Bayrou if he announces his candidacy.

François Fillon's third challenge to win the presidential elections will be to gain the support of the working class and the middle class. According to the academic Jacques Lévy who has analysed geographically the results of the conservative primary²⁵⁷, the electorate who voted for him in the primaries cannot be compared to the electorate more broadly, which will be more heterogeneous, and that he will need to win over for the 2017 presidential election. Jacques Lévy notes that François Fillon has secured the backing of the traditional bourgeoisie, but not the support of "the bourgeoisie of start-ups and the working class"²⁵⁸. Hence, in order to secure a win in the presidential elections, he will have to reach out to the middle and working class.

²⁴⁵ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « Fillon says sorry but pledges to fight on ». Financial Times. February 6th 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/6d1552ea-ec8e-11e6-ba01-119a44939bb6>

²⁴⁶ Ifop. 2017. « Le regard des Français sur la candidature présidentielle de François Fillon ». IFOP.

²⁴⁷ BVA. 2016. « Observatoire de la politique nationale-Novembre 2016 ». BVA. http://www.bva.fr/fr/sondages/observatoire_de_la_politique_nationale/observatoire_de_la_politique_nationale_-_novembre_2016.html

²⁴⁸ Le Bras, Hervé. « Le retour des droites ». Le Monde. November 11th 2016

²⁴⁹ French : Union des Démocrates et indépendants (UDI)

²⁵⁰ French : Mouvement Démocrate (Modem)

²⁵¹ Rioux, Jean-Pierre. 2011. *Les centristes, de Mirabeau à Bayrou*. Fayard. Paris.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Haegel, Florence. 2013. "Political Parties: The Ump And The Right". *Developments in French Politics 5*. Cole, A, S Meunier, and V Tiberj. 2013. Book. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=MzOICgAAQBAJ>.

²⁵⁴ Boissieu, Laurent. « François Bayrou réaffirme sa prééminence au centre ». *La croix*. September 22nd 2016.

²⁵⁵ Rouden, Céline. « François Bayrou envisage une nouvelle candidature ». *La croix*. December 1st 2016.

²⁵⁶ Roger, Patrick. « A l'heure du rassemblement, les centristes s'éparpillent ». *Le Monde*. November 11th 2016.

²⁵⁷ Lévy, Jacques. & Billard, Sébastien. « François Fillon « un candidat plus fragile qu'il n'y paraît ». *Le Nouvel Obs*. 29th November 2016.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

EXTERNAL EVENTS' INFLUENCE ON FRANÇOIS FILLON'S ELECTORATE

It is likely that external events during the presidential campaign, such as terrorist attacks, a refugee or economic crisis, may favour *The Republicans'* candidate. Indeed, François Fillon's programme on immigration and security is likely to resonate with a conservative electorate: limitation of immigration, banning Salafists and Muslim Brothers' movement, expulsion of foreigners condemned for crimes. Furthermore, with such crises, François Fillon's experience as prime minister is likely to be viewed favourably, as he may appear as a safe, competent and knowledgeable candidate.



would provoke strong opposition from workers and the unions. The General Secretary of one of the largest national trade unions, the *General confederation of Labour* (CGT), has already warned that "social mobilisation will be likely" if Fillon's programme is implemented, arguing that the French workers are opposed to such reforms²⁶¹.

Furthermore, there is no consensus on whether these reforms would contribute to revitalising the French economy. His opponent in the primary, Alain Juppé, has warned that cutting 500,000 public sector jobs would be "impossible"²⁶². The economist Marc Ferracci, adviser to the candidate Emmanuel Macron, has warned that only focusing on reducing the public debt will prevent the creation of jobs and fail to foster a better business environment for start-ups²⁶³. Similarly, economist Gérard Lafay has argued that the drastic reduction of public spending will penalise economic growth²⁶⁴.

IMPACT ON EUROPEAN POLITICS

François Fillon's election as president may augur changes in European policy. Angela Merkel, in contrast with François Hollande, refuses further European integration, in particular the coordination of economic policies. Germany, whose Finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble refuses to use German taxes to finance

southern European member states' debt, is unwilling to support greater risk sharing in the monetary union if there is no more control over member states' debts and public spending. François Hollande was however willing to increase the support to southern member states who have more economic difficulties, but was unwilling to lose sovereignty over France's budget and spending policies. In addition to divergences on economic matters, Paris and Berlin have diverging views on how to negotiate the UK exit of the European Union. Hollande wants the Brexit to be costly to prevent any potential requests for a *Frexit* internally. For Merkel, the EU should adopt a tough line but remain pragmatic²⁶⁵. The Franco-German driving force of the EU has therefore to overcome deep divisions.

Under Hollande's presidency, the German-French partnership had been strained and Germany has been isolated in the EU. Hollande has had the backing of the president of the European Parliament Martin Schultz and the European Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker, who have called for lessening the Eurozone austerity policies²⁶⁶. Furthermore, with the Brexit vote, Merkel lost a key liberal economic ally in the EU, further isolating her²⁶⁷.

Nevertheless, in the event of the election of François Fillon, the dynamic in the European Union might change. François Fillon promotes, like Merkel and her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, austerity policies which would ensure budget discipline. Furthermore, Merkel and Fillon share similar visions on the governance of the Eurozone. For them, the Eurozone management will be the result of an intergovernmental agreement. Despite these similarities, François Fillon contrasts with Merkel as he aims to further European integration by mutualising member states' debts and to make the European Central Bank responsible for economic growth and employment. François Fillon seeks to get concessions from Germany on those measures by, in exchange, carrying out the reforms to reduce France's public deficits, as required by Germany²⁶⁸.



Therefore, the election of François Fillon in France could change the current dynamic of the EU. It may allow Merkel, in the event of her re-election to find a new ally, and further closer cooperation between Germany and France in reforming the EU in the aftermath of the economic crisis and the Brexit. The reinforcement of the French-German partnership is likely as Fillon has a strong relationship with fellow conservative Merkel, whom he met on a number of occasions when he was Prime Minister in 2007-2012. He was the first candidate to have met the German chancellor Angela Merkel, on 22nd January 2017. Speaking after their meeting, François Fillon said: "French and Germans are on the same page" regarding the need to not let the United States impose its 'extraterritorial laws' that have cost implications for European companies²⁶⁹.

However, the duo Fillon-Merkel may also increase division within the EU as it could provoke the opposition of the Mediterranean member-states who strongly reject austerity policies.

²⁵⁹ Durant, Anne Aël. « Dix chiffres pour résumer le feuillet de la loi travail ». Le Monde. July 21st 2016.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Le Monde. « Philippe Martinez « les français sont contre les thèmes forts des programmes de Fillon et de Juppé ». Le Monde. November 27th 2016.

²⁶² Birançon, Pierre. « France's would-be Thatcher is short on reform ». Politico. 23rd November 2016.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Lafay, Gérard. « Le programme économique de François Fillon est voué à l'échec sans sortie de l'euro ». FigaroVox. November 28th 2016.

²⁶⁵ Nerbollier, Delphine. « Brexit, unité de vue entre François Hollande et Angela Merkel ». La Croix. September 15th 2016.

²⁶⁶ Wagstyl, Stefan. « Angela Merkel : Crunch times for Europe's crisis manager ». Financial Times. July 12th 2016.

²⁶⁷ Wagstyl, Stefan. « Angela Merkel : Crunch times for Europe's crisis manager ». Financial Times. July 12th 2016.

²⁶⁸ Godin, Romaric. « Merkel-Fillon ou la glaciation économique de la zone euro ». La tribune. November 22nd 2016.

²⁶⁹ Louet, Sophie. "France's Fillon tells Merkel Russia sanctions are pointless". Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-election-fillon-europe-idUSKBN1571BL>



IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The election of François Fillon may lead to a radical change in French Foreign Policy, which could be a main test for the Franco-German alliance, the EU foreign policy and the management of the crisis in the Middle East.

Germany has become the de facto protector of Eastern EU members against expansionist Russian Foreign policy²⁷⁰. In contrast, Fillon believes that France should have an independent foreign policy, and should not necessarily follow the United States' lead. He has also argued for rapprochement with Russia, whom he views as a necessary partner for

solving the Middle East crisis. When meeting Merkel on January 22nd 2017, Fillon argued that the European Union sanctions against Russia are pointless, warning that Russia and the United States under Donald Trump may forge links that exclude the EU.

The opposition between Merkel and Fillon's foreign policy means that it is unlikely that there will be a common European foreign policy.

Furthermore, by distancing itself from the US, France may have to re-consider its current interventionist foreign policy. Like the case of Libya and Syria have shown, France needs the support of the US to military intervene in other countries.

²⁷⁰ Pescataing, Camille. « A Europe of Merkel and Fillon ? ». Foreign Affairs. November 30th 2016.

3.4

FOURTH LIKELY OUTCOME THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE LEFT

According to February 2017 polls, the declared candidates from the traditional Left, Benoît Hamon and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, are unlikely to reach the second round of the presidential election²⁷¹. Three main candidates may share the Left-wing votes, Benoît Hamon who won the Left primaries, Emmanuel Macron and the radical Left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

The fragmentation of the Left can be explained by the identity crisis experienced by the Left in France, and in Europe more generally. The *Socialist Party* in France has been characterised by doctrinal pluralism and competing socialist trends impeding the unification of the French Left.

François Hollande's election at first announced the victory of a reformist Left embracing social democratic principles of reforming the country through social dialogue and backing unions, in compromises with employers. The goal was to

promote social justice despite a liberal economy by bolstering the welfare state²⁷². This trend in the *Socialist Party* is cut off from roots into the working classes, and instead gathers its support from public sector workers, teachers, and civil servants. This trend on the Left is highly influenced by Michel Rocard, First secretary of the *Socialist Party* from 1993 to 1995, who came to signify an alternative narrative to the French Left advocating for the need for a rigorous management of the economy as a necessary condition for social progress. This trend in the *Socialist Party* was incarnated by Manuel Valls in the Left primaries.

This trend in the *Socialist Party* contrasts with the revolutionary and anti-liberal Left, which refutes market economy and capitalism, linked with the working classes. In the 2017 presidential election, Mélenchon aims to represent this trend within socialism. Nevertheless, until Hollande's mandate, these two trends of socialism tended to coexist and form governing coalitions²⁷³, making the *Socialist*



²⁷¹ Ifop & Fiducial. 2017. Le rolling 2017. L'élection présidentielle en temps réel. Ifop & Fiducial. Le Lazare.

²⁷² Escalona, Fabien, and Mathieu Vieira. 2013. "France." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Social Democracy in the European Union*, edited by Jean-Michel De Waele, Fabien Escalona, and Mathieu Vieira, 127–62. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. doi:10.1007/978-1-137-29380-0_7.

²⁷³ Sawicki, Frédéric. 2013. « Political Parties : the Socialist and the Left ». in *Development in French politics*, edited by Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Party a platform for plural Lefts. Therefore, the more radical Leftist parties contributed to the election of François Hollande in 2012 as they called their electorate to vote for him.

However, Hollande's mandate, in particular the second half, was marked by the implementation of a tougher social-liberal trend with the appointment of Emmanuel Macron as Minister of the Economy and the 2016 Labour bill. The reforms that Hollande and his government drafted did not strengthen the welfare state to increase protection against the market economy. Rather, they shifted the focus of their policy strategy towards embracing liberalism, as they questioned the legitimacy of the welfare state which could no longer be funded²⁷⁴. The definition of social justice has shifted as they promoted an environment favourable to the market economy, from which popular classes could benefit. For instance, Emmanuel Macron has declared that he "wishes that those who are less qualified could become entrepreneurs."²⁷⁵ With this political stance, the governing *Socialists* were viewed by some, as having become the representative of the globalised elite who welcomed and are integrated in the globalised economy, rather than the representatives of the working class demanding greater protection from the forces of globalisation.

In sum, François Hollande put an end to ambiguity of the *Socialist Party* which combined liberal and anti-liberal elements as a way to win elections. The penetration of tougher social-liberal trends in the *Socialist Party* created a split between factions who favour alliances with the anti-liberal Left and those who embrace the social-liberal stances. According to the academic Marcel Gauchet, the electorate has penalised the *Socialist Party* in France for allowing this fragmentation and the "Left is irremediably divided"²⁷⁶. This divide was salient during the parliamentary debate on the Labour bill in 2015. The Left was split over how to reconcile economic efficiency and employee's protection. For Emmanuel Macron, the labour bill was "a true bill for social dialogue trusting dialogue within companies". In



contrast for Arnaud Montebourg, candidate to the Left primaries, the law does not protect workers: "Everybody knows that we need flexibility in firms. The question is: what are the compensations offered to workers"²⁷⁷.

The French *Socialist Party's* ideological and identity crisis is common to other Left-wing parties in Europe²⁷⁸. In most European countries, social-democratic parties have weakened. In Western and Northern Europe, the number of members and activists have dropped. In Spain, Portugal and Greece, social-democratic parties received 40% of the votes in the beginning of 2000s. In 2010 they gathered less than 20%²⁷⁹. In Greece, the social-democratic party fell under 6% in 2015.

The victory of Benoît Hamon has shown a rejection of the social liberal trend in the *Socialist Party*, and endorsed an alternative Left. Benoît Hamon represents a more radical evolution of social-democracy, inspired by examples such as Podemos in Spain or Syriza in Greece. In line with those alternative Left European parties, Benoît Hamon's programme highlights a rejection of austerity policy implemented by President Hollande. For the Left-wing electorate who have

become disillusioned by François Hollande's mandate, perceived as a liberal drift, Benoît Hamon represents a rehabilitation of Left-wing values. According to the academic Fabien Escalona, Benoît Hamon's success is the result of the Left-wing electorate's rebellion, weary of traditional parties and career-politicians. This electorate encompasses, young qualified professionals, witnessing a decrease of their earnings in comparison with their parents, who feel politically misrepresented. This dynamic was also present in the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom.

In sum, the nomination of Benoît Hamon as the *Socialist Party's* candidate, represents a wider European trend, by which the "educated left behind" are dissatisfied with the governing Left who have implemented liberal policies and turn to more radical and alternative Left-wing ideas instead.

As such, Benoît Hamon is likely to forge alliances with the parties on the Left of the political spectrum, including the Green and Communist parties. However, Benoît Hamon is unlikely to agree with Jean-Luc Mélenchon on a single nomination, as they have antagonistic views on European policies.

Furthermore, Benoît Hamon is unlikely to gather the support of the electorate which supported the social-liberalism defended by Manuel Valls in the primaries. As such a French MP claimed it would be "impossible" for him to back Benoît Hamon "without disowning all [his] votes in the parliament" during François Hollande's mandate²⁸⁰. A group of MPs from the Right wing of the *Socialist Party* have asked for a right to not take part in the *Socialist Party's* campaign, nor support Benoît Hamon, who is perceived as representing the "radicalised Left"²⁸¹. Hence, the challenge for Benoît Hamon to qualify to the second round of the presidential election, will be to gather the support of the 8 million supporters of Manuel Valls in the primary, who may rather support Emmanuel Macron.

Therefore, in France, the ideological fragmentation of the Left could isolate the *Socialist Party* which may not be able to form a coalition to win the elections. Hence, the Left's challenge to win the 2017 presidential is to produce a platform of common and shared values attracting voters from the radical to moderate Left.

²⁷⁴ Rosenvallon, Pierre. 1981. Crise de l'Etat providence. 192. Paris : Seuil.

²⁷⁵ Fayolle, Florent. « Macron part à la conquête des classes populaires ». Challenges. September 9th 2016.

²⁷⁶ Devecchio Alexander and Gauchet, Marcel. "Nous traversons une crise profonde de l'hégémonie néolibérale". FigaroVox. Spetember 12th 2016.

²⁷⁷ Figaro. « Quand Macron, Fillon et Montebourg débattent de la loi travail ». Le Figaro. June 23rd 2016.

²⁷⁸ Escalona, Fabien. 2014. European Democracy during the Global Economic Crisis: Renovation or Resignation? Manchester: Manchester University Press.

²⁷⁹ Wieder, Thomas and Escalona, Fabien. « L'Europe, un « pacte faustien » pour les sociaux-démocrates ». Le Monde. August 12th 2016.

²⁸⁰ Chassany, Anne-Sylvaine. « French socialist MPs split over Hamon's presidential primary win ». The Financial Times. January 30th 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/4a3342e8-e6d3-11e6-893c-082c54a7f539>

²⁸¹ Caresche, Christophe. « Députés du Parti Socialiste, nous revendiquons notre droit de retrait ». Le Monde. January 30th 2017. http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/01/31/deputes-du-parti-socialiste-nous-revendiquons-notre-droit-de-retrait_5071919_3232.html



CONCLUSION

This report has aimed to offer an overview of the 2017 French presidential elections. It has first presented the context in which the 2017 French presidential elections are going to take place. This included an assessment of François Hollande's mandate since his elections in 2012. It has in particular analysed François Hollande's economic, social, security, European, and Foreign Policies. Furthermore, the present report has evaluated the broader international context in which the elections are taking place, namely the Brexit vote and the election of Donald Trump in the White House.

Secondly, this report has presented the main declared candidates in the 2017 French presidential elections and analysed their programme according to five themes: economic, social, security, European and Foreign policies.

The third section of the report intended to present different potential outcomes of the 2017 presidential election. It has argued that based on the most recent polls, Emmanuel Macron, Marine Le Pen and François Fillon are most likely to qualify for the second round of the election and therefore win the election. The Left seems to be deeply divided, and is unlikely to be able to present a common candidate which could qualify for the second round of the presidential election. Finally, the report has evaluated the impact of the election of Emmanuel Macron, Marine Le Pen and François Fillon on national politics, as well as on the European Union and French foreign policy.



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