

# FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: 1st round results April 10, 2022



President Emmanuel Macron

Marine Le Pen

by Nidra Poller

Macron 27.6%

Le Pen 23.0%

[will face off in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round on April 24<sup>th</sup>]

Mélenchon 22.2%

Zemmour 7.2%

Valérie Pécresse 4.8%

[slight variations may occur in the final count]

One by one, the candidates address their supporters. It's all quite dignified, rather eloquent, sometimes moving, and always includes respect for the results of a democratic election.

Marine Le Pen, triumphant, promises she will win in the runoff. Valérie Pécresse does not hide her disappointment but does not hang her head in disgrace. She promises to continue to defend her party and its program (in view of the legislative elections in June). Despite profound political differences with Emmanuel Macron, she will vote for him, to ensure that France is not delivered into the hands of the far Right.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, running for the third and last time, was combative. Reassuring his party that they will be a force to reckon with in the future, he inspires them to swallow the narrow defeat and prepare for the future. He hammered at his final message: We know who we will not vote for, we do not lose faith in democracy ... Not a single vote for Marine Le Pen!

Eric Zemmour, too, looks to the future, confident that he has created a movement that will continue to defend France, a movement that is the outcry of a nation that does not want to perish. Minimizing the disappointment of his low score, he congratulates his party, the "biggest in France," and congratulates himself for not turning into a "politician," that is, not lying to win votes. "We are strong, we are the only ones that can defend our civilization." And despite disagreeing with Marine Le Pen on various issues, he invites his voters to cast their vote for her on the 24<sup>th</sup> and defeat Macron.

Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, a minor also-run sovereigntist that had briefly joined Marine Le Pen in the 2017 race is the only other defeated candidate that called his voters to support her in the runoff.

The Socialist Anne Hidalgo, the Green party candidate Yanick Jadot, the Communist Fabien Roussel and several under 2% candidates also expressed support for Macron or, at the least, against Le Pen.

Emmanuel Macron of laid out the terms of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round debate in his speech to his supporters. He opened with a tribute to democracy, naming all the candidates, appreciating their fervent defense of their ideas while respecting each other; He thanked individually each candidate that had called for a vote that would block the Far Right. Building on the original base of *La République en Marche*, Macron sketched out a vision of an inclusive party that will bring together people of good will from all parties, all origins, all faiths to act together to achieve progress and face the major crises of our time.

Pinpointing an issue that I raised (see below), Macron promised to act against political Islam while respecting the values of *laïcité*, the freedom for citizens to practice any religion or no religion. And, he added, without depriving Muslims and Jews of the freedom to respect their dietary rules (= kosher and halal slaughter).

To succeed in forming what is in fact a national union government, Macron understands and made clear that he will have to fulfill some of the promises of the defeated candidates. And he is prepared to confront Marine Le Pen point by point and issue by issue.

The debate continues into the night, in radio and television studios, as representatives of the candidates confront each other, redo the match, predict the final outcome.

It looks close. Predictions are currently Macron 51% – Le Pen 49%.

My prediction? The gap will widen, as Le Pen fumbles and stumbles in direct confrontation with Macron.

## **FLASHBACK**

17:18 [5:18 PM]

I'll make a prediction, put a time on it, and everyone can trust me to not revise it after the fact.

There will not be a carbon copy of the polls, but the real results can't be too far away.

I think Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour will get a bit less than predicted. Péresse a bit more, Macron several points more.

But I'm usually wrong.

So, we'll see what emerges.

The unfortunate outcome is quite certain: Macron vs Le Pen. A bore! The only interesting race would have been Macron vs Péresse. Two candidates capable of being president, two parties capable of governing. The three other frontrunners can't govern. Apparently voters are disappointed in politicians because they don't keep their promises. So, they choose candidates that could not possibly keep their promises.

Logical?

**18 :40 [6:40 PM]**

Polls give the illusion of showing a reality. Commentators explain how this or that candidate lost or gained a point. As I've already mentioned, if you zap from one TV channel to another, the lines get crossed, blurred, and tangled.

Now, 1 hour and 20 minutes before the announcement of the results, reality is happening, polling station by polling station, one voter after another. Some people might already know something, but no one is allowed to even hint at that.

One TV channel says the abstention rate is estimated at 25%. That's not too bad. Another estimates 26,5%, close to the 30% predicted in the last weeks of the campaign. One commentator mentioned that the higher rate will probably be to the detriment of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

Journalists are mobilized hours ahead of the 8 PM announcement. They have to fill time and space with comments about what is not yet but soon will be known. Correspondents report from the sites chosen by the candidates for their election night party, get together, or slump. Hundreds of journalists are at each of these sites. Fewer, perhaps, for the low-ranking candidates. There are so many of the latter, predicted to get under 2% of the vote. That includes Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris.

Beautiful sunshine in a clear blue sky all day long today in Paris. We saw a long line of voters at one of our local polling stations. The posters on the official boards outside the station have all been vandalized. Or maybe one is intact—for the candidate predicted to get under 1%, the extremist leftist off the wall *Lutte Ouvrière* candidate. Most of the candidates, except for Zemmour and Macron, are running for the third and probably the last time. They are all entitled to equal time in the media during the last part of the campaign. A quoi bon? What's the use of this illusion of a broad choice?

Zemmour has consistently accused Péresse of being Macron-compatible. He puts on his cynical smile and assures us that at five past eight tonight she will call for a vote for Macron. In fact, she has said she will announce her choice but will make no recommendation to her voters. And Zemmour? He'll

vote for Marine Le Pen and recommend his followers to follow suit? Marine Le Pen who promises to outlaw halal and kosher slaughter. That's ok with Zemmour.

I watched a program on i24 news (French TV from Israel) where Marine Le Pen, with her usual fake smile, assured everyone that this will not cause a problem for French Jews, they'll be able to import kosher meat. And some high-profile conservative Zionists that I know personally smiled and held their tongues. What? You're telling French Jews not to worry, they won't be able to eat fantastically wonderful French meat, they can import tasteless frozen products from ... who knows? From Argentina.

Do you remember when Geert Wilders of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) banned kosher slaughter in the Netherlands? At first, his sympathizers tried to make us believe that it was a glitch, someone in the party slipped it past him while he was busy fighting Islamophobia charges in the courts. Then the truth came out. He knew about it and did not oppose it. And some of his international Jewish supporters told him not to worry, kosher meat is no big deal. Especially when you're fighting against halal.