

Macron and Le Pen parties both fared poorly in second round of French regional elections

The incumbent right-wing and socialist regional presidents were largely re-elected in the second round despite a historic abstention rate. President Macron's party and far-right National Rally (RN) fared poorly in the second round and did not win any regions. Next year's presidential elections could still hold surprises



Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen could face each other in a tight election in 2022

The recomposition of the political landscape in question

Four years after the 2017 presidential elections, which had initiated a profound recomposition of the political landscape against the backdrop of the break-up of the old left-right divide to the benefit of Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen, this regional election marks a revenge of the "old world". It also marks a halt to this recomposition less than a year before the next presidential election.

Victory of the "old world" tarnished by a historic abstention

Nothing happened as expected in the French regional elections. France is no exception to this new political norm, in which reality inflicts a new correction on poll predictions. While before the first round the polls had predicted that one or more regions would fall to the National Rally (RN) and that the candidates of the République en Marche (LRM) would play the role of kingmakers, this was

not the case. On the contrary, all incumbent regional presidents were re-elected in the second round of elections. Thus, the map of France remains coloured pink and blue on the evening of Sunday 27 June, identical to that of 15 days ago: seven regions governed by the right and five by the Socialist Party (PS). It could have been an almost total victory for the "old world" if abstention had not reached a record level of 66%, a symbol of mistrust and disinterest. All the contenders for the 2022 presidential election will have to take into account this historic abstention rate, which is probably not going to be repeated during the presidential elections, though Macron and Le Pen will probably have to put some effort in mobilising their supporters.

The 2022 presidential election is not written in advance

Given the fact that two out of three French people did not go to the polls, it would be perilous to draw a national conclusion from the regional elections. Nevertheless, an atmosphere has been created, which could be favourable to the right. Three heavyweights of the right and potential candidates in 2022 won a large victory in their region: Xavier Bertrand, Laurent Wauquiez and Valérie Pécresse. The next step for the party will be to designate a single candidate to hope to upset the announced duel between Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen in the presidential election.

As a reminder, the two finalists of 2017 are still widely favoured for the 2022 election, with 24% of voting intentions. A gap of 6 points separates them from Xavier Bertrand who appears to be the best placed outsider on the right for the moment. The left also does not seem to be dead since it maintains its territorial areas after the regional elections, even though alliance lists of the PS with the ecologists (EELV), and sometimes with the France Insoumise (LFI), did not manage to create a surprise. So the regional elections chapter is now over. The presidential election one can now be written.