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# French elections: Le Pen's RN wins first round

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Dr. Ralph Solveen

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**The Rassemblement National (RN), Marine Le Pen's right-wing populist party, received by far the most votes in the first round of the French parliamentary elections, while President Macron's camp suffered a heavy defeat. The "New Popular Front" formed by the left-wing parties received the second most votes. However, nothing has been decided yet, as a second round of voting is necessary in most constituencies. The Macron camp and the left-wing alliance have announced that they will withdraw their candidates if the other camp's candidate performs better in the first round. This reduces the RN's chances of winning an absolute majority of parliamentary seats. However, a coalition between the Macron camp and the left-wing alliance is unlikely to happen.**

## RN wins most votes, ...

As predicted by the polling institutes, Le Pen's Rassemblement National (RN) and its allies won the first round of the French parliamentary elections with around 33% of the vote. The New Popular Front, formed by the left-wing parties, received the second most votes with around 28%, while the parties supporting President Macron's policies came a distant third with a good 20% of the vote (Chart 1).

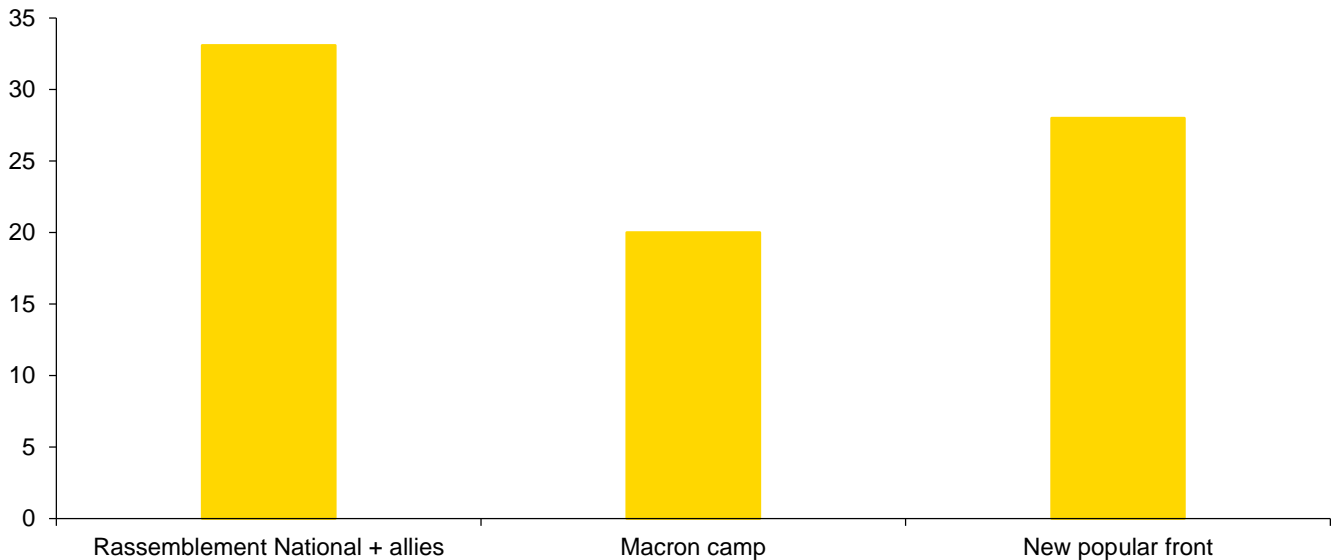


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### Chart 1 - Le Pen's RN wins first round of French parliamentary elections

Share of votes in the 1st round of the French parliamentary elections, in percent



Source: Le Monde, Commerzbank-Research

### ... but decision is postponed until next Sunday

This result has not yet decided anything. Only in a few constituencies did one candidate receive an absolute majority of votes. As a result, there will be a second round of voting in most constituencies next Sunday. All candidates who received at least 12.5% of the vote in the first round will be allowed to run in this round. The candidate with the most votes is then elected.

### Macron camp and left alliance move closer to each other, ...

In many constituencies, the outcome will also depend on how many candidates run in the second round. Last night, both the Left Alliance and the Macron camp announced that they would withdraw their candidates if the other camp's candidate performed better in the first round of voting and therefore has a better chance of defeating the respective RN candidate. When the Macron camp made its announcement, it remained unclear whether this also applies if the candidate of the left-wing alliance belongs to Jean-Luc Mélenchon's far-left LFI. The conservative Republicans, some of whom had already cooperated with the RN before the first round of voting, rejected such a speech or an election recommendation against the RN. Which candidates will run in which constituency will be known by tomorrow evening at the latest, when the deadline for declaring candidacies for the second round of voting expires.

In previous elections, such agreements between the other parties meant that many RN candidates missed out on a place in parliament despite good results in the first round. In the last parliamentary election in 2022, this "cordon sanitaire" - a kind of "firewall to the right" - already had clear holes in it, meaning that the RN was largely represented in the now dissolved parliament in line with its strength in the first round of voting.

### ... which makes absolute majority of RN more unlikely

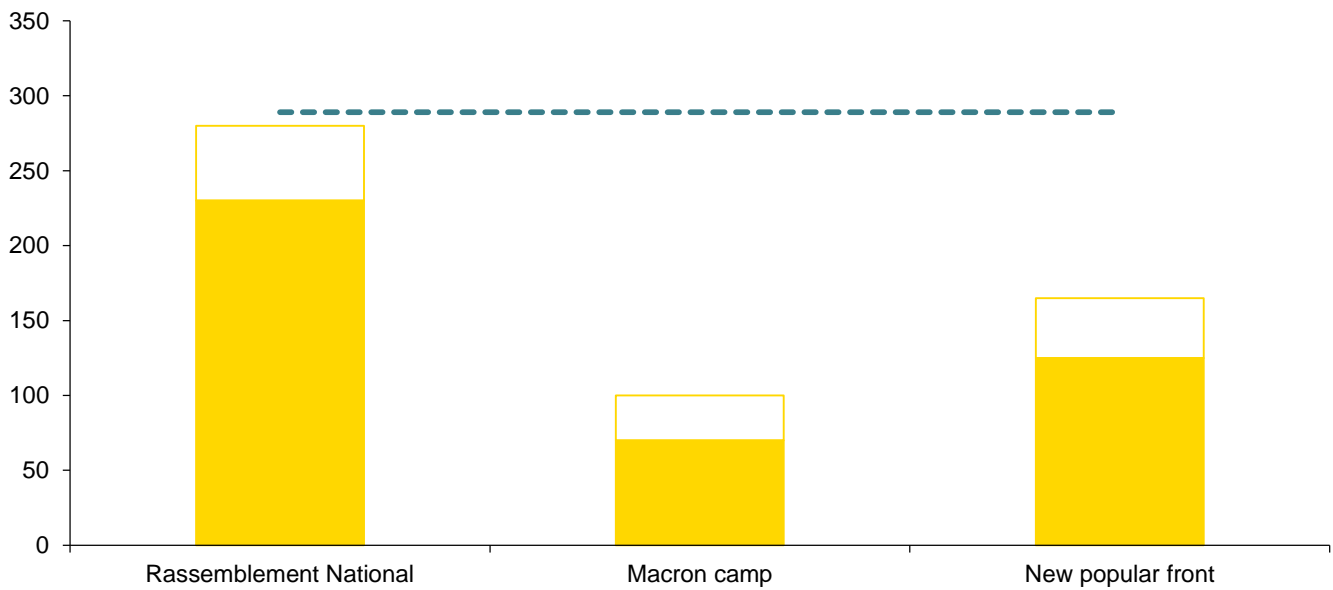
According to the projections based on the exit polls, the RN and its allies will win between 230 and 280 seats, meaning they would miss out on an absolute majority (Chart 2). The emerging cooperation between the Macron camp and the New Popular Front



would further reduce its chances. However, it is unlikely to be possible to form a coalition between these two camps to form a stable governing majority. Their ideas are too different for this, especially when it comes to economic policy (see also [Friday's Week in Focus](#)). In fact, it is likely to be very difficult to find a majority for urgent reforms over the next three years. This is also likely to make many upcoming decisions at European level more difficult.

**Chart 2 - Le Pen's party scratches at the absolute majority**

Projection for the number of seats held by the three alliances/parties based on exit polls; dashed line indicates absolute majority of 289 seats; RN: including the part of the Republicans who cooperate with RN



Source: Public Senat, Commerzbank Research



## Analysts

### Dr. Ralph Solveen

Senior Economist

+49 69 9353 45622

ralph.solveen@commerzbank.com

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#### Commerzbank Offices

##### Frankfurt

Commerzbank AG  
DLZ - Gebäude 2,  
Händlerhaus  
Mainzer Landstraße 153  
60327 Frankfurt  
Tel: + 49 69 136 21200

##### London

Commerzbank AG  
PO BOX 52715  
30 Gresham Street  
London, EC2P 2XY  
Tel: + 44 207 623 8000

##### New York

Commerz Markets LLC  
225 Liberty Street, 32nd  
floor,  
New York,  
NY 10281-1050  
Tel: + 1 212 703 4000

##### Singapore

Commerzbank AG  
128 Beach Road  
#17-01 Guoco Midtown  
Singapore 189773  
Tel: +65 631 10000