

Vive la France or what does the victory of Emmanuel Macron mean for Europe and Armenia?

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From a student to Rothschild banker, to civil servant, to the victory as President of the Republic of France. At the age of just 39 Macron is France's youngest leader since French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who took power at age 35. The newly elected president defeated¹ Marine Le Pen of the far-right Front National with more than 66 per cent of the vote, in the second round of the elections.

French presidential election: Official result



Emmanuel Macron
En Marche
66.06%



Marine Le Pen
National Front
33.94%

Source: French interior ministry

BBC NEWS

The victory of Emmanuel Macron was greeted with joy and claps in Brussels the “heart” of European Union. Congratulations started coming in². President of the European Council Donald Tusk praised French voters “for choosing Liberty, Equality and Fraternity over

¹ Elections results France 2017

<http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Espace-presse/Les-communiqués/Resultats-globaux-du-second-tour-de-l-election-du-President-de-la-Republique-2017>

² World leaders congratulate Macron on victory as EU breathes sigh of relief

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/07/theresa-may-congratulates-macron-on-victory-as-eu-breathes-sigh-of-relief>

tyranny of fake news”. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker was similarly overenthusiastic, congratulating Macron on having a parallel view on Europe to his own. When Emmanuel Macron walked³ to give his victory speech in front of the Louvre, Ode to Joy was played in the background. The new French president wants⁴ comprehensive reform of the bloc, particularly of the euro zone. Mr. Macron wants a common fiscal policy, a joint finance minister, a euro zone debt instrument, and completion of the banking union. Macron is a liberal centrist, pro-business and a strong supporter of the European Union, in contrast⁵ to his opponent Marine Le Pen. For EU leaders, a victory for Le Pen would have endangered the survival of their entire project. She campaigned to leave the euro, and to hold a referendum in France on remaining a member of the EU. Macron’s victory represents a break from the populist wave that has swept across Europe. Since United Kingdom’s BREXIT referendum and US President Donald Trump’s election last year, populism has posed an existential threat to the European Union. The United States and France share similar feelings of dispossession. It may be based on tensions about identity, with Mexican immigrants and the language issue, the few but conspicuous Muslim immigrants, viewed as threats. In France, with the largest percentage of Muslims of all EU countries except Bulgaria, the prospect of another wave of Muslim newcomers, combined with an immediate terrorist threat, has tipped public opinion against immigration. A major issue for the less educated French is what jobs and acquired benefits they might keep as the digital economy takes control.

Fulfilling the promise of change will not be easy for Macron. Like Britain and the US, France remains deeply divided between those who favor a liberal, open society and those who look for closed politics and borders, between supporters of European and global integration and proponents of nationalism and protectionism⁶.

³ EU anthem 'Ode to Joy' plays as Macron arrives at victory rally

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2Ey1fjHSws>

⁴ Macron pledges 'profound' EU reforms on first official visit to Berlin

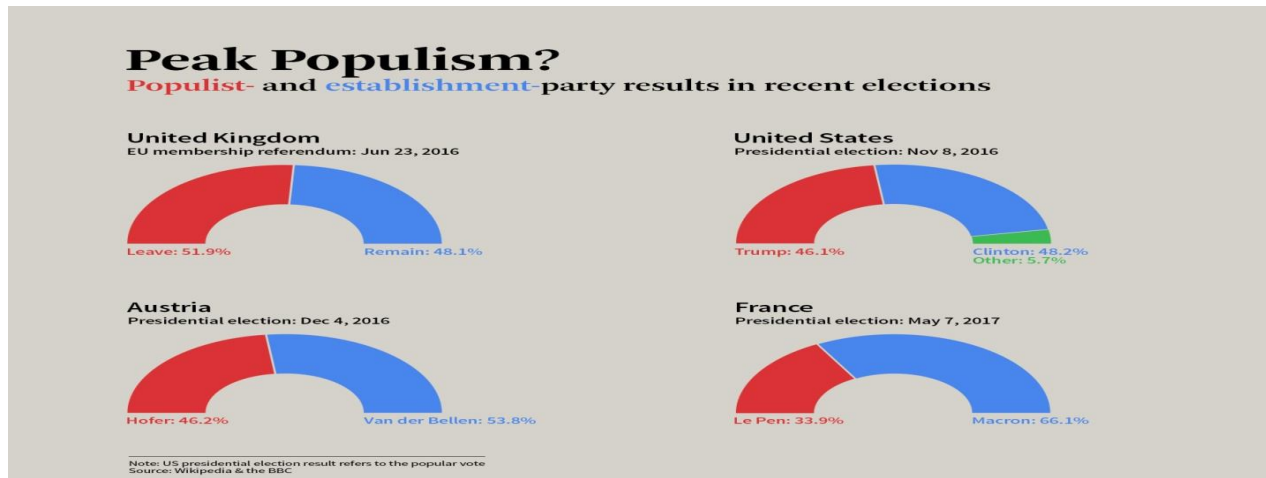
<http://www.france24.com/en/20170515-macron-first-visit-merkel-france-germany-profound-european-union-reforms>

⁵ 'I am the anti-Merkel': Marine Le Pen on Brexit, EU, Putin and Nato - BBC Newsnight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeEHQhARESU>

⁶ Has Populism Peaked?

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/macron-france-victory-challenge-by-philippe-legrain-2017-05>



Though Macron’s victory does not mean that the populist threat has been eliminated, it does show that such forces can be restricted. And the fact that populism has been contained in France bodes well for other European countries. Austria, the Netherlands⁷, and now France have all voted in pro-European leaders, rather than narrow-minded populists. In the September elections of Germany Angela Merkel is still likely⁸ to be the next leader. The likeliest alternative, Martin Schulz, is as passionate as Merkel about the EU. Analysts say⁹ the power of nationalistic appeals that oppose globalization, the European Union and liberal immigration policies should not be underestimated. Whether Macron and other European leaders can kill the populist movement will depend on their ability to address the concerns that have given rise to anti-establishment atmosphere: weak economic growth and high unemployment blamed on globalization and the overflow of migrants entering Europe.

Armenian perspective

Macron’s victory in the French presidential election in terms of Armenian viewpoint can be perceived on two levels: European and international influence and impact on the Armenian-French relations. Of course, these two dimensions are also significantly correlated, which is reflected in Armenia’s President's congratulatory address¹⁰, in which he speaks about the

⁷ European relief as mainstream triumphs
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39297355>

⁸ Merkel comeback continues as she wins big in regional elections copy
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/07/merkel-comeback-continues-wins-big-regional-elections-copy>

⁹ Emmanuel Macron's win in France shows Europe's populism is down, not out
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/05/08/emmanuel-macron-win-shows-european-populism-down-but-not-out/101421284>

¹⁰ PRESIDENT SERZH SARGSYAN CONGRATULATED THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF FRANCE EMMANUEL MACRON <http://www.president.am/en/congratulatory/item/2017/05/07/President-Serzh-Sargsyan-sent-a-congratulation-message-to-the-new-elected-President-of-France>

great importance of the role of France in the process of Armenia getting closer to the European family. Being a supporter of the EU, Macron's victory can be perceived important for two reasons, France's support to Armenia in European integration, particularly in the context of the forthcoming signing of the new agreement between the EU and Armenia, as well as France's greater involvement in Armenia's economy. France's involvement in the Artsakh conflict as one of the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group is also very vital. It is of great significance that Emmanuel Macron remains faithful and advances the agenda that François Hollande actively defended after the 2016 April four-day war. Here, we talk about the introduction of international mechanisms for sustaining peace and security which was in François Hollande's agenda. It is important to note that maintaining peace and stability in the Armenian-Azerbaijani and Artsakh-Azerbaijan border is not only important for the conflicting parties but also for the international security system and precisely for the European security. Another important issue is the way that Macron's being a euro-atlantist will try to contain Russia in general and particularly in the South Caucasus region, which would certainly have implications on Armenian interests.