

A photograph of a busy New York City street on a rainy day. Tall brick buildings line the street, and the wet pavement reflects the red taillights of cars and the yellow of taxis. A person with a black umbrella is walking across the street. A yellow taxi is in the foreground, and a red double-decker bus is visible in the background. A blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

NHSMUN

National High School Model United Nations

CRISIS: FRENCH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
BACKGROUND GUIDE | 53

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A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2027! We are Armen Bagdassarian and Sabeeh Mirza, and we are elated to serve as this year's Secretaries-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world's largest and most diverse high school Model United Nations conference. As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to transform today's brightest thinkers, speakers, and collaborators into tomorrow's leaders. We believe that an emphasis on education through simulation is paramount to the Model UN experience.

Realism and Accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. We strive to invite real UN, NGO, and field experts into each committee through our committee speakers program. Moreover, we arrange meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. These exclusive resources are only available due to IMUNA's formal association with the United Nations Department of Global Communications and consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

Educational Emphasis: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. Part of what makes NHSMUN special is its diverse delegate base. As such, when NHSMUN distributes awards, we strongly de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN. In particular, our daises look for and promote constructive leadership and diplomacy that strive toward consensus, as real ambassadors do in the United Nations.

Research and a Dedicated Staff: Our staffers care deeply about delegates' experiences and what they take away from their time at NHSMUN. Our Directors spend over six months preparing Background Guides, in addition to Update Briefs written to reflect the rapidly changing nature of the topics to be discussed. Our staffers are trained rigorously to provide the best conference experience possible. Our daises provide thoughtful comments on submitted position papers. Our staff aims to tailor the committee experience to delegates' reflections and research, but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates' thoughts can be heard.

Empowering Participation: The UN relies on the voices of all of its member states to create resolutions. This is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff focus on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of country assignment or skill level. Additionally, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. Delegates spend countless hours researching topics critical to the UN and broader international sphere.

Delegates, it is our sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. We look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Armen Bagdassarian
Secretary-General

Sabeeh Mirza
Secretary-General

Position Paper Requirements

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to the conference.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging. To assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#) and [Advanced Delegate Guide](#). These guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a cabinet member, delegates must be able to articulate their policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for each topic on the committee's agenda. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the [Research Guide](#). To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections.

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's role. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Country Policy – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the character's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be **no more than 10 pages long** double-spaced with standard margins and 12 point font size. This is a maximum; **3–5 pages per topic is often a suitable length**. The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned role and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for submitting position papers on or before **February 26, 2027**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, their position paper must be submitted on or before **February 5, 2027**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the committee dais and returned before February 26. Instructions on how to submit position papers will be shared directly with faculty advisors.

Submission instructions for position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at nhsmun@imuna.org.

Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.

Committee History

The Council of Ministers (*Conseil des Ministres*) is one of the oldest and most important institutions of the French executive body. Its current role was shaped by the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958, when France adopted a new Constitution that strengthened the executive branch and gave the President a central role in government. The Council of Ministers became the main forum where the President, Prime Minister, and other ministers discuss and coordinate the government's main decisions.¹

The Council does not work alone. France has a semi-presidential system, meaning that executive power is shared between the President and the Prime Minister. The President chairs the Council of Ministers, while the Prime Minister leads the government's day-to-day work. The Council also depends on Parliament to approve legislation and the national budget.² This makes cooperation between the government and the National Assembly especially important.

Over time, the Council of Ministers has remained a central part of French political life. Its role is not limited to discussing new laws. The Council examines important government decisions, approves certain appointments, and considers draft laws, ordinances, and decrees before they move forward. This makes the Council an important link between the President's political direction and the practical work of the government.³

The Council also reflects the particular structure of the French political system. Unlike the National Assembly, it does not represent political parties through elected seats. Instead, its members are appointed ministers, tied to a specific topic. Ministers are expected to defend the interests of their ministries while also supporting the government's broader agenda.⁴ This means that cooperation inside the Council is essential, because a decision about one area of policy can often affect several others.

Today, the Council of Ministers continues to meet at the Élysée Palace, normally every Wednesday under the chairmanship of the President. Before each meeting, ministers receive the documents and proposals that will be discussed. During the meeting, they can debate these proposals and raise concerns from the perspective of their ministries. Afterward, the government publishes an official communiqué explaining the main decisions taken during the meeting.⁵

¹ Élysée. "Council of Ministers." *Élysée*. Accessed August 28, 2026, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/council-of-ministers>

² European Union. "France." *European Union*. Accessed August 28, 2026.

³ Élysée. "Council of Ministers." *Élysée*. Accessed August 28, 2026.

⁴ Gouvernement de la République française. "Composition du Gouvernement." *Info.gouv.fr*. Accessed August 28, 2026.

⁵ Élysée. "Council of Ministers." *Élysée*. Accessed August 28, 2026.

TOPIC A

The Future of France

FRANCE | NHSMUN 2027



Introduction

France is one of the most important countries in Europe. It helped found the European Union and is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. It is also one of the world's largest economies. Because of this, France plays an important role in European affairs, global security, climate policy, and the world economy.¹

France is a democratic republic. Its political system comes from the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which was adopted in 1958.² With that, the country has a semi-presidential system. This means that both the President and the Prime Minister have important powers. The President is the head of state, whereas the Prime Minister is the head of government. The President sets the overall direction of the country, while the Prime Minister manages the day-to-day work of the government.³ The Prime Minister works with the Council of Ministers (Conseil des Ministres), the main decision-making body of the French government. The Council includes ministers in charge of areas such as the economy, foreign affairs, defense, justice, health, and education. Ministers use these meetings to discuss new laws, plan government action, and approve major decisions. The government issues a communiqué after each meeting to tell the public what was discussed.⁴

France has faced serious political problems since 2024. The legislative election left the National Assembly deeply divided. No political group won enough seats to govern alone. This has made it harder for the government to pass laws and approve the national budget. Ministers have had to negotiate with other parties to gain enough support. These disputes have also led to changes of government and votes of no confidence.⁵ Economic problems have made the situation even harder. France has one of the highest public debt levels in the European Union. The country has spent more than it has collected in taxes for many years. At the same time, the government must pay for pensions, healthcare, education, and other public services. The next

government will need to decide how to reduce debt without cutting services that many people depend on.⁶ Trust in government is another major concern. Many French citizens have become less confident in political leaders and public institutions. This has helped parties that present themselves as alternatives to the political system. The National Rally (RN) has gained strong support in recent elections. Its growth has changed French politics and will be important in the next presidential election.⁷

With that, the 2027 presidential election will be a major moment for France. President Emmanuel Macron cannot run for a third term in a row. France will therefore have a new president for the first time since 2017. Several political groups are already preparing for the election. The RN hopes to win the presidency. Parties on the left are discussing whether they should support one candidate. The center and the traditional right are also looking for new leaders.⁸

France's role in the European Union will be another important issue. France is one of the EU's largest members and has a strong voice in European politics. However, French parties disagree about how much power should stay in France and how much should be shared with the EU. Migration, farming, energy, defense, and economic rules are all part of this debate. The next government will need to balance national interests with European cooperation.⁹ The country also remains an important country in world affairs. It has strongly supported Ukraine since Russia invaded the country in 2022.¹⁰ France has also called for greater European cooperation on defense and security. At the same time, France has changed its approach to

Africa. Under Macron, the country has reduced parts of its military role in Africa and has sought new forms of cooperation. These changes show that France is trying to adapt its foreign policy to a changing world.¹¹

The future of France will depend on how these issues are handled. The next government will face political division, high public debt, and social tensions. It will also need to rebuild trust in public institutions. At the same time, France must decide how it wants to work with the EU and respond to conflicts abroad. These problems are connected. Economic choices can affect public trust, while political division can make it harder to act during international crises. The Council of Ministers will therefore need to work together while also protecting its own political interests.

History and Description of the Issue

CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN FRENCH POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Trust in public institutions is important for democracy. When people trust the government, they are more likely to follow the laws, to vote, and to support government policies.¹² In recent years, public confidence has declined in many European Union countries. This has made politics more divided and elections less stable. At the same time, anti-establishment parties have gained more support.¹³

To understand this change, it is necessary to look at France's recent history. After the Second World War, France entered a period of strong economic growth.¹⁴ From 1945 to 1975, living standards rose and many new industries grew. With that, the country built a large welfare state. This system gave people access to services such as healthcare and public education.¹⁵ This period became known as the "Trente Glorieuses" (the thirty glorious years). Trust in the state was also

supported by the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. President Charles de Gaulle helped create a new political system with a stronger executive branch. The goal was to avoid the political instability of the Fourth Republic. For many years, the Fifth Republic brought more stability to France. This helped build trust in its political system.¹⁶

Over time, however, the relationship between citizens and the state changed. France faced major economic and social changes during the second half of the twentieth century. Global trade increased competition for French companies. Many factories also moved their work to other countries. Some industrial areas lost jobs and faced long periods of economic decline. This created fear and insecurity among many workers.¹⁷ The former Nord-Pas-de-Calais region is one example. It was once one of France's main industrial areas. Between 1975 and 1984, the region lost more than 130,000 jobs. Unemployment also rose to about 14 percent. These changes made many people question whether the state could protect their jobs and living standards.¹⁸

This problem can still be seen today. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2024 survey on trust in public institutions found concerns among French citizens. Many people questioned the government's ability to respond to major problems. They also had concerns about whether the government could be trusted to act in the public interest.¹⁹

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis made these concerns stronger. France was not hit as hard as some other European countries. Still, the crisis lowered trust in the government's ability to manage the economy. It also raised concerns about the state's ability to protect people during economic crises.²⁰ These concerns grew during the Eurozone crisis (2009-2012). Several countries in the euro area faced serious debt problems. Some governments could no longer pay their debts without outside help.²¹

They needed support from the EU and other international groups.²² Many economic decisions were also made at the European level. This led to debate about how much control national governments still had.²³

The COVID-19 pandemic briefly changed this trend. The French government took strong steps to protect public health and the economy. These included lockdowns, vaccine programs, aid for businesses, and the “activité partielle” scheme. This scheme helped companies keep workers during periods of low activity.²⁴ The crisis showed that trust can rise when people believe the government is acting well.

Political trust faced new problems after the 2024 legislative election. President Emmanuel Macron called the election after the National Rally (RN) gained strong support in the European Parliament election.²⁵ Macron dissolved the National Assembly in June 2024. His goal was partly seen as an attempt to test support for the far right in a national vote. The election did not give any group a clear majority. The RN gained more seats, while several left-wing parties joined the New Popular Front.²⁶ Macron’s coalition also remained a major force in Parliament. The result was a divided National Assembly. No single group

had enough seats to govern alone. This made it harder for the government to pass laws and carry out reforms.²⁷

Political instability became even clearer in December 2024. Prime Minister Michel Barnier’s government lost a vote of no confidence.²⁸ It was the first French government to fall in this way since 1962. Barnier had used Article 49.3 to pass the 2025 budget without a full vote in the National Assembly.²⁹ Article 49.3 gives the French government a way to pass a bill without a normal vote. However, lawmakers can respond with a vote of no confidence. This tool has been used many times in French politics. Its use in the budget debate showed how difficult it had become for the government to work with Parliament.³⁰ The budget crisis continued into 2026. Lawmakers first approved a temporary law to keep public services running. This gave the government more time to reach an agreement. After months of talks and several no-confidence votes, France adopted a full budget in early 2026. The long debate added to concerns about political stability and public trust.³¹

Recent surveys also show this decline in trust. Gallup found that trust in France’s national government fell 13 points to 29 percent in 2025.

Marine Le Pen

Credit: Vox España



Trust in the judicial system also fell, from 59 percent to 50 percent.³² Le Monde reported similar concerns. Around three-quarters of French people said the political crisis had increased their distrust of political leaders and institutions.³³

The problem also matters for the European Union. France is one of the EU's founding members and has a major role in European politics.³⁴ This can affect debates about migration, the economy, security, and European cooperation.³⁵ Overall, the political instability crisis has effects well beyond France, impacting the entire European continent.

The decline in trust has also helped anti-establishment parties. The National Rally is one of the main examples. The party is led by Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella and is on the far right of French politics. It presents itself as an alternative to the main political parties in France and the EU. It focuses on issues such as immigration, national control, economic concerns, and public safety.³⁶ While institutional distrust is not the only explanation for the growth of far-right movements, it has become one of the most important factors shaping political behavior in France and across Europe. Many RN voters feel that traditional parties have not listened to them. However, a lack of trust is not the only reason for the party's growth. Economic problems, immigration, social tensions, and political divisions also play a role. Still, low trust in public institutions has become an important part of France's current political debate.³⁷

France now faces a major challenge. Its

leaders must find ways to rebuild trust in public institutions. They also need to improve public services and explain government decisions more clearly. Greater openness and public participation may help restore confidence. The success of these efforts could shape the future of the Fifth Republic and France's role in the EU.

FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS

The Russia-Ukraine War is among the most pressing foreign policy issues facing France today. It has led to a European energy crisis, debates over foreign aid, and tensions within the European Union. In December of 2025, France's delegation to the United Nations pledged "Constant and unwavering" support for Ukraine. It reaffirmed this sentiment in a joint statement with the UK and Germany in June of 2026.³⁸ France has given about 8.6 billion euros in military and financial aid to Ukraine since the war began in early 2022.³⁹ It has also been a key player in the EU's aid packages to Ukraine. Furthermore, it has championed the use of sanctions against Russia.⁴⁰

France is also a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴¹ NATO is a defense alliance. It has been both a target of, and a key defense against Russian aggression. This plays out particularly in the Baltic Sea region. The Baltic Sea region lies in the northeast of Europe. The main theater of Russian aggression is Ukraine, but in the Baltic, Russia has also used hybrid tactics, including damage to undersea communication cables and the presence of the "shadow fleet." The shadow fleet is a group of

When people lose trust in their national government, they may also become less confident in European institutions.

Russian ships flying the flags of other countries in order to avoid sanctions.⁴² France is an observer state of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. This Council is tasked with addressing these issues.⁴³ Between direct aid, increased contributions to NATO, and increased defense spending, the war has taken a financial toll on France.⁴⁴ Some politicians from the far-right National Rally (RN) have argued that the French government should decrease aid contributions to Ukraine. RN politician and former presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, a key figure in the party, deems the aid excessive.⁴⁵

In May 2026, France, along with the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, and Spain, rejected a NATO proposal that every ally spend 0.25 percent of GDP on military aid to Ukraine. They cited the constraints it would place on national budgets.⁴⁶ France remains supportive of sanctions, like many other EU countries. However, France has begun to feel the strain of continued funding as the war continues after four years.⁴⁷ Ukraine's defense readiness is crucial to stopping the spread of Russian aggression further into Europe. But France is not at as much of a direct risk as European states along the Baltic Sea.⁴⁸ This possibly explains the difference in defence spending in percentage of GDP between western European countries and those bordering Russia. France dedicated about 2.1 percent of GDP to defense. Meanwhile, the Baltic states bordering Russia, and Poland, dedicated over 4 percent.⁴⁹ Ukraine is not a member of NATO. However, France has been supportive of Ukraine's bid to join.⁵⁰ Article Five of NATO mandates that NATO allies come to each other's defense. As Ukraine was not a member, it did not apply to this war.⁵¹

France will likely continue to be one of Ukraine's most reliable supporters. This is because of its historic support for Ukraine.⁵² However, the National Rally has gained support in the past few years, and anti-aid voices in the party, such as Marine Le Pen, have sizable platforms.⁵³ Public support for aid to Ukraine remains high. Many in France are fearing an expansion of Russian aggression. Therefore, France deems aid to

Ukraine as important. It is both a moral and national security issue.⁵⁴

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has also caused an energy crisis in Europe. In response, the EU passed a law to stop buying gas from Russia. Under the new rules, EU countries have to stop importing Russian gas that arrives by ship by the start of 2027, and gas that arrives by pipeline by autumn 2027, ending Europe's reliance on Russian energy for good.⁵⁵ In September 2022 there was sabotage, cutting off gas supply. The sabotage happened on the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 pipelines. After the sabotage, gas could not flow through them anymore. Next to that Russia also stopped supply to some EU buyers. This happened at a time when reserves were already low in the EU. This resulted in a 50 percent decrease of Russian gas imports in the European countries of the OECD.⁵⁶ This made the price of gas for household consumers increase significantly. In the first half of 2021, one kilowatt hour of gas cost EUR 0.0691. In the first half of 2023, it cost EUR 0.1044.⁵⁷ This represents a 51 percent price increase.

Following the invasion, the EU banned most seaborne imports of Russian oil. The Baltic states moved especially quickly.⁵⁸ France follows the EU oil embargo. The Russian energy France still buys is mainly liquefied natural gas (LNG), not oil. Remaining pipeline oil exemptions apply to countries such as Hungary and Slovakia, not France.⁵⁹ However, EU member states agreed to halt Russian energy imports under the REPowerEU plan in May 2022. After this, the EU took several measures. It reduced gas demand, stored more gas and boosted advancements in renewables. It also accelerated permitting procedures for renewables and facilitated joint gas purchasing. Following this, the EU introduced the REPowerEU roadmap in May 2025 as a follow up. It included new actions to end the remaining imports of Russian gas and oil. For instance, it prohibited the import of Russian gas. The European Commission also stated it would propose a new law between 2026 and 2027. This law would in turn prohibit the import of Russian

oil. Between 2021 and 2025, a decrease in the share of Russian imports is noticeable. In 2021 45 percent of gas imports were from Russia. In 2025, it was 13 percent. As for Russian oil, it decreased from 27 percent to 3 percent between 2021 and 2025. Russian coal represented 50 percent in 2021 and represents 0 percent in 2025.⁶⁰

Political parties on all sides have expressed concern over fuel prices. They link high costs for consumers to the government's foreign policy decisions.⁶¹ The United States' war with Iran has further raised fuel prices. The French government has not taken a firm stance on the Iran War. It must balance a crucial alliance with the United States against the interests of French citizens.⁶² For the French, the war has led to travel difficulties, and higher prices on household necessities. This is happening during a period where many are already struggling economically.⁶³ In March 2026, the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs issued a condemnation of Iran's 'escalation' of hostilities. However, it also expressed concern that France was not consulted in advance of the United States' and Israel's initial strikes.⁶⁴ The French government has expressed serious reservations

about the war. Yet, it would be difficult for the French government to condemn the United States' actions, as the condemnation could create diplomatic tension.⁶⁵

In June 2026, President Emmanuel Macron indicated that he was willing to offer greater support for the United States-proposed deal to end the war in Iran, provided that the United States increased its aid to Ukraine and continued supplying weapons and cooperating militarily.⁶⁶ This may not be popular among French citizens, however. Polling data suggests that many view the United States as an unreliable ally. Also, French people do not want to risk France's direct involvement in the war.⁶⁷

The French government's level of support for the war in Iran will influence France's political and economic relationship with the United States. Macron has navigated this by serving as an intermediary for peace talks. The June 2026 G7 summit was held in Évian-les-Bains. After the summit, Macron hosted a dinner at the Palace of Versailles, where a preliminary US–Iran deal was signed.⁶⁸ Macron hosted the signing. The deal itself was an American Iranian text, and it allowed US President Donald Trump to claim credit for ending the war. It would also avoid an escalation



President Macron and Zelensky

Credit: PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE

of hostilities, which could draw France into the conflict. President Macron also attempted to use the favor he gained from facilitating the Iran deal to pressure the United States to increase support for Ukraine.⁶⁹ This is consistent with President Macron's strategy. It consists of placating the United States on the issue of Iran while gathering support for aid to Ukraine. This ultimately could ease the burden on France.⁷⁰

Ultimately, France's foreign policy depends on its ability to work with regional allies. France has allies in Europe and NATO. It works with them to drive down fuel costs and to limit the spread of the wars in Ukraine and Iran. President Macron's government has public support for aid to Ukraine but faces opposition to the war in Iran. Challenges to current policy still exist. As far-right anti-Macron voices gain traction, he must contend with the burdens that wars place on the economy and the French people.⁷¹

NATIONAL DEBT

Public debt is the total amount of money that a government owes. Governments often borrow when they spend more money than they collect in taxes.⁷² In France, the government mainly borrows by selling bonds through the Agence France Trésor (AFT). Banks, insurance firms, pension funds, and other investors buy these bonds. In return, the government promises to pay the money back with interest.⁷³

Borrowing money is not always a sign of economic trouble. It is a normal part of running a country. Governments can borrow to build roads, improve public services, support the economy, or respond to a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷⁴ The main problem starts when debt grows faster than the economy. It can also become a problem when a government runs large deficits for many years. In these cases, paying the debt can become harder and more costly.

France's public debt has become a major economic and political issue. The country's debt

has grown quickly since the late 2000s. Today, this problem affects more than the national budget.⁷⁵ It affects the government's ability to invest, respond to future crises and maintain its welfare state. It also challenges the government's ability to preserve confidence among both financial markets and European partners. Since the 1970s, the country has consistently recorded annual budget deficits. This means that government expenditure has exceeded revenues almost every year.⁷⁶ These deficits were driven by several factors, including the expansion of the welfare state, rising healthcare and pension costs associated with an ageing population, and relatively modest economic growth. As a result, public debt gradually accumulated over time.

When the euro was created, European Union countries agreed to follow common fiscal rules to help keep the new currency stable. Under the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, member states committed to keeping their annual budget deficit below 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is the total value of all goods and services produced in a country over one year.⁷⁷ Also, it was established that their public debt should be below 60 percent of GDP.⁷⁸ These limits were introduced to reduce financial risks and prevent excessive borrowing from affecting the stability of the Eurozone. However, France has remained above the 60 percent debt target for the last two decades. Although several other EU countries have also exceeded this limit, France's rising debt has attracted growing attention from European institutions, credit rating agencies, and financial markets, particularly because of its central role in the Eurozone economy.⁷⁹

The first acceleration in French public debt occurred during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. As economic activity slowed, tax revenues declined while public spending increased to stabilize the economy and support employment.⁸⁰ These emergency measures helped prevent a bigger recession, but they left France with significantly higher levels of borrowing. Soon, Europe entered the Eurozone sovereign debt

crisis between 2009 and 2012. Countries like Greece, Ireland and Portugal required financial recovery packages. The crisis exposed structural weaknesses in the euro area and reinforced concerns about fiscal sustainability. European governments face growing pressure to reduce deficits while maintaining economic growth, creating difficult political trade-offs between fiscal discipline and social protection.⁸¹

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an even larger rise in French debt. The government spent large amounts of money to protect workers, businesses, and families. France used the “activité partielle” program to help companies keep workers during periods of low activity. The government also gave loans to businesses and increased health spending. These measures helped limit the economic damage caused by the pandemic.⁸²

After the pandemic, the focus returned to France’s debt. At the same time, high inflation led the European Central Bank (ECB) to raise interest rates. The ECB sets interest rates for countries that use the euro. Between July and December 2022, the ECB raised its main rate from -0.50 percent to 2.00 percent. Higher rates made it more expensive for governments

to borrow money.⁸³ By 2026, France’s interest payments had reached their highest level since 2009.⁸⁴

Today, France’s public debt is above EUR 3.5 trillion. This is about 117 percent of GDP. It is one of the highest debt levels in the European Union.⁸⁵ In October 2025, the French government presented a draft budget for 2026. The plan aims to reduce the budget deficit while keeping key public services. It includes spending cuts and efforts to make government work more efficiently. The government says these steps will help control debt and reassure investors and European partners.⁸⁶

France’s debt also matters outside the country. France is the second-largest economy in the euro area. This plays an important role in the strength of the common currency. If French debt keeps rising, borrowing costs could rise in other European countries.⁸⁷ It could also reduce investor trust and make EU economic policy harder to manage.

The debt debate is about more than numbers. It raises questions about the role of the state and the future of France’s social model. It also raises questions about fairness between younger



COVID-19 restrictions at a French grocery store

Credit: Ohconfucius

and older generations. France must find a way to reduce its debt without causing major social harm. The challenge is to control public spending while protecting social stability, public trust, and long-term economic growth.

RECENT PROTESTS AND STRIKES

Over the past decade, France has been consistently faced with the rise of popular protest movements seeking social and economic reforms, and policy changes. Many of these protest movements, such as the Yellow Vest (Gilets Jaunes) movement between November 2018 and June 2020, have received global attention.⁸⁸ Subjects of recent protest movements include rising fuel prices, the cost of living, proposed laws regarding religious expression, the retirement age, and violence against young girls.

In February 2021, a proposed bill meant to combat Islamic extremism led to widespread condemnation after opponents claimed it unfairly targeted Muslims. Critics included far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who called the law “anti-Muslim,”⁸⁹ and human rights groups like Amnesty International, which warned the bill risked deepening discrimination against France’s Muslim community.⁹⁰ The protests continued into 2023. After Christianity, Islam is the second most practiced religion in France.⁹¹ France’s religious policy follows the principle of “Laïcité”. This entails the strict separation of church and state.⁹² Since 2004, conspicuous religious symbols have been banned in French schools. This includes the display of images such as crosses on jewelry and religious garments such as turbans, yarmulkes, and hijabs.⁹³ In practice, this law is mainly used to target young Muslim women wearing hijabs or abayas, another kind of religious covering. A 2022 memo from France’s department of education expressed an intent to completely ban the abaya in schools.⁹⁴ Combined with the anti-extremism bills which passed in July of 2021 and allowed the legislature to restrict funding to and possibly close religious institutions seen

as promoting hateful views, the move to ban the abaya was seen as a way to target Muslims and appease far-right legislatures before an election. Proponents of the ban claim that it is in place to protect secularism and prevent the promotion of religion in public institutions. Opponents claim that it is a violation of free expression⁹⁵.

In October and November 2022, labor unions such as the Confédération Générale du travail (CGT) organized general strikes across the country, demanding higher wages in order to keep up with the cost of living. Labor unions are organizations of workers formed to negotiate better conditions.⁹⁶ A general strike refers to a large-scale strike by workers in all industries, meant to cause major disruptions to the entire country. These strikes took place around the same time as protests across the European Union calling for measures to reduce gas prices.⁹⁷ The strikes caused significant political difficulties for President Emmanuel Macron. President Macron responded by pointing out that France imports the vast majority of its natural gas and called for suppliers such as Norway and the United States to charge less, indicating that to raise prices would be to punish Europe for the effects of a war started by Russia.⁹⁸ Many students who joined the protests cited France’s restrictive religious laws as a further reason to participate in the strikes.⁹⁹

From January to June 2023, a proposal backed by President Macron to raise the national retirement age from 62 to 64 generated widespread backlash, workers’ strikes, and protests in the capital, backed by labor union leaders. Protestors objected to both the proposed reforms, and to the use of Article 49.3 of the Constitution which allowed the reforms to proceed without a vote in Parliament. The protests and strikes resulted in delays and suspensions of public transportation including key train routes, and the shutdown of tourist attractions such as the Louvre Museum. Citing concerns over possible violence, Macron’s government deployed police forces to break up the protests with tear gas. This led to further

public backlashes, as many questioned the use of excessive force on protestors.¹⁰⁰

In February 2026, far-right activist Quentin Deranque was killed during an altercation between far-right and far-left groups at a political rally. The killing led to demonstrations from both sides. Protestors pointed to the rise of political violence and to the controversial nature of Deranque's beliefs. The National Rally, France's major far right political party, has used these protests as a rallying point for their supporters, using Deranque's death to draw attention to the causes he supported ahead of pivotal elections.¹⁰¹

In May and June of 2026, weeks-long protests motivated by the kidnapping and killing of Lyhanna Rameau Bernard, an 11-year-old girl, called for justice system reforms to protect children and women. The protestors demanded more effective systems of information sharing between law enforcement agencies, and more serious investigations into charges of assault, neglect, abuse, and stalking. Police records showed that the perpetrator of the attack had an extensive criminal record, and a history of similar behavior. Advocates for expanded efforts to combat sexual violence argued that Bernard's murder could have been prevented if police had

done more to address these concerns.¹⁰² As of July 2026, the protests are ongoing and have not resulted in new legislation or judicial reforms.

Since 2018, human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have expressed concern over the amount of force used on protestors by the police. Amnesty International reports the excessive use of tear gas and rubber bullets, while Human Rights Watch has raised alarm over an increase in preventative arrests, which target protestors who have not yet committed a crime or engaged in acts of violence¹⁰³. Amnesty International has called for the repeal of vague anti-protest laws that could be interpreted to justify excessive fines or high arrest rates, and a reduction of force by armed forces. In June 2025 and May 2026, celebrations following soccer team Paris Saint-Germain's Champion league victory turned violent, as fans clashed with police resulting in hundreds of arrests and injuries in Paris. Both years thousands of police were deployed to address the riots, with 6,000 officers deployed in 2026. Officers were reported to have used violent tactics, including excessive physical force and tear gas.¹⁰⁴ Given the frequency of widespread protest movements in France,



Yellow Vest Protests

Credit: Elekes Andor

particularly in Paris, it is understandable that concerns exist around the safety of protestors and the actions of law enforcement sent to prevent violence. Given the fact that international watchdogs have raised concerns over the rights of protestors, it is worth addressing the relationship between the police and civilians.

Current Status

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

France is heading toward an important presidential election in 2027. The vote will take place on 18 April, with a second round on May 2. France uses a two-round system for presidential elections.¹⁰⁵ If no candidate gets more than half of the votes, the top two candidates go to a second round. Voters then choose between the two finalists.¹⁰⁶ The election comes after years of political unrest and lower trust in the government. For the first time in a decade, President Emmanuel Macron will not be a candidate, as the French Constitution limits presidents to two consecutive terms. Although Macron will leave the office in 2027, he has not ruled out a possible return to politics in the future, including a potential presidential campaign in 2032.¹⁰⁷ Without a current president looking for re-election, the race is more open than usual.

Understanding how France reached this point requires looking at the country's recent political evolution. Emmanuel Macron was first elected president in 2017. He ran as an alternative to France's old left-right divide. His new movement, called *La République En Marche!* and now known as *Renaissance*, won the election and a large number of seats in Parliament. This gave Macron a strong base for his reform plans.¹⁰⁸ He won again in 2022, but his group lost its full majority in the National Assembly. This made it harder for his government to pass new laws. The government had to work with other parties or use tools such as Article 49.3.¹⁰⁹

A key question for 2027 is whether the *Rassemblement National* (RN) can win the presidency. The party has gained much more support over the past ten years. Marine Le Pen has worked to make the party look more moderate and ready to govern.¹¹⁰ In 2018, the party changed its name from *National Front* to *Rassemblement National*. It has focused on national control, immigration, and public safety. This has helped the party move away from the more extreme image linked to its founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen.¹¹¹

Marine Le Pen remains one of the main figures in the race. In 2025, a French court found her guilty of misusing European Parliament funds. The case involved money meant for parliamentary staff. The court gave her a five-year ban from running for office, but she appealed the ruling.¹¹² In July 2026, an appeals court upheld her conviction but cut the length of the ban. This means she can run in the 2027 election.¹¹³ Polls still show strong support for Le Pen, even though the funds case can influence the campaign.¹¹⁴

The left is also divided over the election. The *Nouveau Front Populaire* (NFP) alliance brought several left-wing parties together during the 2024 election. However, these parties still disagree on many issues. Tensions are strong between the center-left and *La France Insoumise* (LFI).¹¹⁵ Jean-Luc Mélenchon remains one of the main figures on the left. He may run for president again. Other left-wing leaders want a new candidate who could attract more voters. The left must decide whether to unite behind one candidate or run several campaigns.¹¹⁶

The center is also looking for a new leader after Macron. Former Prime Ministers Édouard Philippe and Gabriel Attal are seen as possible candidates. Both could seek to lead the center after Macron leaves office.¹¹⁷ The traditional right faces a similar choice. *Les Républicains* (LR) must decide how close it wants to move toward the more conservative side of French politics. Bruno Retailleau and other right-wing leaders are part of this debate.¹¹⁸

The 2027 presidential election can bring a major change in French politics. Macron will not be on the ballot, and no group has a clear lead. The next president will face a divided country and many serious problems. These include high public debt, social unrest, and debates about France's role in Europe. The new president will also need to build support in Parliament. How well they handle these issues will shape the future of France.

CURRENT DEBATES IN FRANCE POLICY

France is entering a time of important political change. The next government will need to make difficult choices about the economy, public spending, and social programs. Political parties have different ideas about how to solve these problems. As a result, leaders will need to find common ground in a deeply divided country.

One of the biggest debates is pension reform. In 2023, President Emmanuel Macron's government raised the legal retirement age from 62 to 64 years old. The government said this change was needed because people are living longer and the pension system costs more each year.¹¹⁹ Citizens pointed out that workers, especially those with physical jobs, should not work longer before they can retire. With that, large protests took place across France.¹²⁰ In 2025, Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu paused the reform until after the 2027 election. He hoped this would reduce political tension and gain support from opposition parties.¹²¹

France's role in the European Union is another

major issue. France helped create the EU and has always played a leading role in it. French leaders have often seen the EU as a way to promote peace, trade, and economic growth.¹²² Together with Germany, France has shaped many important European decisions. Today, however, many people question how much power the EU should have over national policies.¹²³

The main debate is no longer about leaving the EU. Instead, it is about how power should be shared between Paris and Brussels. The idea of "Frexit" received attention in the past, but few major political parties now support it. Recent surveys show that support for the EU has grown in many European countries.¹²⁴ Even so, many debates remain. These include migration, farming, trade, and European rules. Some political parties want France to make more decisions on its own. Others believe that stronger European cooperation is the best way to solve shared problems.¹²⁵

Economic policy is also part of this debate. France wants more freedom to spend money on defence, clean energy, and industry. Some EU members agree with this view. Others believe all countries should follow the same budget rules. This debate raises an important question for the future of the EU: how can countries protect their own interests while working together under the same economic system.¹²⁶

TRADE DISPUTES

French trade policy is heavily influenced by the European Union, which often negotiates trade

The 2027 presidential election is getting closer, and many issues are already shaping public debate.

deals as a singular entity. The United States and the European Union are each other's largest trading partners. Trade between them is about \$1.9 trillion a year, making up about 30 percent of total global trade.¹²⁷ While France may be at odds with the United States over foreign policy issues such as the Iran War and Ukrainian defense, the European Union as a whole remains on good terms with the United States, and has actively pursued trade agreements.¹²⁸

In July of 2025, a trade agreement between the European Union and the United States led to concern from French politicians in many political parties.¹²⁹ The French government claimed that the EU had not been aggressive enough in their negotiations and had ended up with less than they could have gotten from the US. The key point of the deal was a 15 percent tariff on European products entering the United States. This was meant to counteract Trump's proposed 30 percent tariffs that would have automatically taken effect in August had a deal not been reached.¹³⁰ Both then-Prime Minister François Bayrou, a member of President Emmanuel Macron's governing coalition, and right-wing opposition leader Marine Le Pen publicly criticized EU leadership for agreeing to the deal.¹³¹ Additionally, ministry-level officials expressed disappointment that the deal did not include the Anti-Coercion Instrument, an EU tool meant to limit a foreign government's ability to pressure European companies with trade and investment restrictions.¹³²

French officials have also sought to employ more aggressive negotiating tactics and trade policy in order to counter the rise of China.¹³³ According to the Chinese government, trade between France and China was valued at USD 68.8 billion as of December of 2025, and has been growing over the past few years.¹³⁴ Once again, the French government has expressed concern that France is not on a level field with its trading partners, and may be losing out on favorable deals due to weak negotiating. Trade with China is one instance where French national policy conflicts with that of the EU. While EU policy is mainly focused on

cooperation and building positive relationships with trading partners in order to avoid future aggression and trade wars, French policy is focused on protecting competitiveness and protecting the interests of French companies. Because of this, France has lobbied the EU for a more aggressive trade approach, which is not always supported by allies such as Germany and Spain.¹³⁵ France's involvement in high-stakes trade disputes directly impacts the French people, as tariffs might raise the prices of household goods, and trade restrictions might limit access to affordable goods. China, in particular, is a major supplier of affordable cars, electronics, and clothes to France and the EU. Though France may want to be more aggressive in negotiations with China, French consumers rely on Chinese products, and restricting access might ultimately hurt the French economy.¹³⁶

Bloc Analysis

MACRONISTS

The Macronist ministers are part of the political group led by Emmanuel Macron. It began in 2016, when Macron created En Marche!. The group was later renamed Renaissance. At the time, many French voters were unhappy with the main political parties. For years, French politics had been split between the left and the right. Macron wanted to offer another choice.¹³⁷ Before Macron, the Socialist Party was the main force on the left. The Republicans were the main force on the right. Both parties had lost support after years of economic and political problems. Macron used this situation to build a new center. His first presidential win came in 2017. He then formed a cabinet with people from different parts of the political scene.¹³⁸

His approach mixes free markets with social policies. It also places France firmly within the European Union. His governments have backed changes to help French businesses grow. These

changes included new labor rules and lower taxes for some firms. They also aimed to bring in more private investment.¹³⁹ At the same time, Macron's allies have defended public services such as schools and health care. There are different views inside the group. Some members want lower taxes and fewer rules for companies. Others give more weight to social programs and public services. Bruno Le Maire was a key voice for the first side. He often called for lower spending and tighter control of the state budget. Other members have put more focus on workers and social support.¹⁴⁰ The group has lost support in recent years. Many voters see Macron as distant from their daily lives. His government has also faced criticism over its economic reforms. In 2022, his coalition lost its full majority in the National Assembly. The 2024 election made the situation even harder. Parliament became more divided, so Macron's allies had to seek help from other parties.¹⁴¹

This creates a major problem for the group. Macron cannot run for a third term in 2027. His allies must now find new leaders and a new plan. They also face strong competition from both the left and the right. The group still has an important place in French politics. Its future will depend on whether it can keep voters after Macron leaves office.

CONSERVATIVES

Conservatives in the French Cabinet may come from a number of different political parties. The primary conservative political party in France, the Republicans, are not a member of the governing coalition, however several politicians affiliated with the party hold ministerial positions. These include former Minister of Culture Rachida Dati, Minister of Housing and Urban Renovation Vincent Jeanbrun, Minister of Agriculture Annie Genevard, and Minister of Transport Philippe Tabarot. As a result of their affiliation with the current government, these ministers have been suspended from the party.¹⁴²

Les Républicains (The Republicans), which sits with the European People's Party in the European Parliament, mainly holds Gaullist views. This means that Republicans tend to favor foreign policy that limits dependence on institutions such as the EU, and more centralized governance. However, as more moderate voters look towards the Renaissance Party, the Republicans have shifted right in order to appeal to a new base. The Republicans have embraced positions such as restricting immigration and fewer restrictions on businesses.¹⁴³

Other center-right and conservative parties include Horizons and The Democratic Movement (MoDem), both of which are coalition members. Horizons and MoDem are both considered to be center-right and closely aligned with the Renaissance Party. Horizons began as a more moderate section of the Republicans before eventually splitting off into its own party as the Republicans moved more towards the right. MoDem is the most central leaning of the conservative parties.¹⁴⁴

France's right-wing party is the National Rally Party (RN), led by Marine Le Pen. The RN supports extreme restrictions on immigration, limits on the power of the EU, conservative social policies including restrictions on LGBTQ+ rights and access to reproductive healthcare.¹⁴⁵ The RN does not currently hold any seats in the Council of Ministers. Le Pen was convicted of misusing EU funds. An appeals court in July 2026 upheld the conviction but shortened her ban on holding office, which means she can run in 2027. The conviction itself was not overturned.¹⁴⁶

INDEPENDENTS

Independent refer to cabinet ministers and politicians who are not affiliated with or nominated to their positions by a specific political party. Independents may have many ideological affiliations and may be quite different from one another.

In the Cabinet of Ministers, the backgrounds

of independents range from career politicians who have chosen not to align themselves with a party to experts in their area of governance without any background in politics. Because of this, the label of ‘independent’ may be a strategic decision, or it may simply be a result of not having sought elected office in the past. A minister with a background in politics may choose to remain independent because of ideological differences with major parties, or the desire to maintain independence, as party-affiliated officials often have to represent their party’s official positions.

As for ministers without a political background, these include scientists, business officials, diplomats, and other professionals who were selected for a ministerial position due to their expertise in their office’s specialty. Examples in the current French government include Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises, Trade, Crafts, Tourism and Purchasing Power Serge Papin, the former CEO of a successful retail company, Minister for Higher Education and Research Philippe Baptiste, a computer scientist with a background in artificial intelligence research, and Minister of Culture Catherine Pégard, a former journalist and administrator of the Palace of Versailles Museum.

Because these officials have never sought elected office before their appointments, it has not been necessary for them to declare a political party. There are currently six independent ministers in the French government, and two independent deputy ministers.

Committee Mission

France is entering a critical period. The 2027 presidential election will result in the country’s first new president in ten years. At the same time, the government must respond to rising debt, political polarization, and growing public distrust.¹⁴⁷ The decisions made by the Council of Ministers will shape France’s future both before and after the election.

The Council of Ministers is the decision-making body of the French executive branch. Weekly meetings are led by the President of the Republic and are also attended by the Prime Minister and government ministers.¹⁴⁸

The Council cannot solve every problem on its own. Many government proposals require support from Parliament before they can become law. A divided National Assembly can delay or reject legislation, making it harder for the government to carry out its agenda. Ministers must also weigh public opinion, budget limits, and the interests of other political parties. When developing policy, delegates must balance these competing priorities while maintaining a stable government.

Throughout the committee, delegates will face difficult decisions that affect both France and the rest of the world. They may need to respond to economic problems, social unrest, or debates over France’s role in the European Union. Many of these issues are connected. A decision about government spending may affect public trust. A foreign policy decision may change France’s relationships with its allies. Delegates should consider both the immediate effects of their actions and their long-term impact on the country.

The Council of Ministers has an important responsibility: to guide France through a time of political change while protecting the country’s security, economy, and democratic institutions. Success will require diplomacy, strategic thinking, and strong leadership. Delegates should utilize the powers of their ministries wisely, work with other members of the Cabinet, and develop practical solutions that can keep France stable during one of the most important transitions in its recent history.

Character Biographies

DIRECTOR OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION FRÉDÉRIC DABI

Frédéric Dabi is the Director of the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP), an organization that studies what people of France think. He started at IFOP as a researcher in 1995 and began leading the Opinion and Corporate Strategies department in 2003. He looks at public views on politics, voting, and the work of the government.¹⁴⁹ In 2025, Dabi testified before the National Assembly about IFOP's neutrality, especially ahead of the 2027 election and polls regarding Bardella's and Le Pen's candidacy.¹⁵⁰ In the committee, he is likely to support plans that answer public needs and help people trust the government and can speak to how the public would react to any proposal debated in committee.

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR SOPHIE BINET

Sophie Binet is the General Secretary of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), France's largest trade union confederation. She is the first woman to hold this role since her election in 2023. She began her union activism in 2005 opposing the CPE youth labor contract, later led CGT's committee on gender equality and against sexist and sexual violence. She also served as General Secretary of Ugiect-CGT, representing engineers, managers, and technicians, before her current role.¹⁵¹ She speaks for workers and supports fair pay, safe jobs, and strong public services. She can explain how new laws may affect workers and their families and is likely to support plans that protect jobs, improve workers' rights, and keep social programs strong.¹⁵²

GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF FRANCE EMMANUEL MOULIN

Emmanuel Moulin is the Governor of the Bank

of France, appointed in May 2026. He helps keep the French economy strong and the banking system safe. Before this job, he worked for Citigroup, the World Bank, and the French government. Furthermore, Moulin served as economic advisor to former President Sarkozy before becoming Director General of the Treasury in 2020. He gives advice on prices, public debt, and state spending.¹⁵³ He tends to support careful spending and a stable economy.

MINISTER FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS JEAN-NOËL BARROT

Jean-Noël Barrot is the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs. As an economist by training, he taught at MIT and HEC Paris before entering government. He currently leads France's work with other countries and the European Union. He also served as Minister for Europe and Minister for Digital Affairs. He works on security, trade, and foreign policy. In the committee, he will likely support close ties with France's allies.¹⁵⁴

MINISTER FOR PUBLIC ACTION AND ACCOUNTS DAVID AMIEL

David Amiel is France's Minister for Public Action and Accounts. He helps manage state spending and the national budget. He was a member of the National Assembly for Paris and also advised President Emmanuel Macron. He works to make public services work better and use money well, supporting lower spending, a balanced budget, and good use of public funds.¹⁵⁵ He has held the post since February 2026, taking over from Amélie de Montchalin when she left to lead the Court of Audit.¹⁵⁶ Before that he served as Delegated Minister for the Civil Service and State Reform, and earlier in his career he coordinated strategy among technical advisors in the President's office and directed digital strategy at the postal group La Poste.¹⁵⁷ He is now responsible for preparing the 2027 budget, the final one of Macron's presidency.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE ANNIE GENEVARD

Annie Genevard is the Minister of Agriculture. She works with farmers and helps protect food production in France. She also served in the National Assembly and held senior roles in “Les Républicains”. She supports rural areas and local food production. A former teacher of French, she built her political base in the Doubs, serving as mayor of Morteau from 2002 to 2017 and as a National Assembly deputy from 2012 onward, where she also served as a vice president of the chamber.¹⁵⁸ In committee, she is likely to defend French farmers and food security.¹⁵⁹

MINISTER OF CULTURE CATHERINE PÉGARD

Catherine Pégard is the Minister of Culture. She works to protect French history, art, and museums. She was a political journalist before leading the Palace of Versailles. She has many years of experience in culture and public life.¹⁶⁰ Pégard has spent three decades in journalism, working her way up at *Le Point* magazine to become editor of its politics desk, before moving to the Élysée Palace as a political advisor to President Nicolas Sarkozy.¹⁶¹ She takes over a ministry still dealing with the fallout from the theft of the crown jewels from the Louvre.¹⁶²

MINISTER OF ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND INDUSTRIAL, ENERGY AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY ROLAND LESCURE

Roland Lescure helps lead the country’s work on the economy, energy, industry, and digital change. He was a member of the National Assembly and later became Minister Delegate for Industry. He wants France to stay strong, create jobs, and help businesses grow. A graduate of the École Polytechnique, ENSAE, and the London School of Economics, he began his career at the Ministry of Economy and Finance before moving into asset management at Natixis and Groupama, and later served as chief investment officer at

Quebec’s Caisse de dépôt et placement.¹⁶³ He entered politics in 2017 as a deputy representing French citizens in North America and chaired the National Assembly’s Economic Affairs Committee before serving as Minister Delegate for Industry from 2022 to 2024.¹⁶⁴ In the committee, he will support a strong economy, new ideas, and careful use of public money.¹⁶⁵

MINISTER OF HEALTH, FAMILIES, AUTONOMY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES STÉPHANIE RIST

Stéphanie Rist is the Minister of Health, Families, Autonomy and People with Disabilities. She leads health policy and supports families and people who need care. She worked as a doctor before entering politics. She also served in the National Assembly and worked on health laws. A rheumatologist by training, she headed the Rheumatology Department and the Medical Division at the Orléans Regional Hospital Center from 2005 to 2017 before entering politics.¹⁶⁶ Rist will likely support initiatives that focus on healthcare and stronger social services.¹⁶⁷

MINISTER OF JUSTICE GÉRALD DARMANIN

Gérald Darmanin is the Minister of Justice. He leads France’s justice system and works with the courts. He also served as Minister of the Interior. Born into a working-class family with Algerian and Maltese roots, he studied at Sciences Po Lille and entered politics as a deputy for the Nord before becoming mayor of Tourcoing in 2014.¹⁶⁸ He rose through Macron’s government, serving as Minister of Public Action and Accounts from 2017 to 2020, then as Minister of the Interior from 2020 to 2022, and as Minister of the Interior and Overseas Territories from 2022 to 2024, before being named Minister of Justice in December 2024.¹⁶⁹

MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOLIDARITY JEAN-PIERRE FARANDOU

Jean-Pierre Farandou is the Minister of Labour and Solidarity. He works on jobs, workers' rights, and social programs. He joined the government in October 2025 after more than four decades at SNCF. A graduate in engineering from the École des Mines de Paris, he joined SNCF in 1981 and rose through the company, running Thalys International as managing director, leading Keolis Lyon's transit operations, and directing SNCF's Proximités division before becoming president of SNCF in 2019.¹⁷⁰ Known for a conciliatory style, he negotiated a 2024 agreement with rail unions on end-of-career arrangements that helped avert strikes during the Paris Olympics, and he is expected to play a central role in reopening talks on pension reform.¹⁷¹

MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION ÉDOUARD GEFFRAY

Geffray is a career civil servant with significant experience in the field of education policy, having previously served as Director-General of Human Resources at the Ministry of National Education and then Director-General for School Education. Geffray is an independent, who has not expressed his personal political views well in office. As the Minister of National Education, Geffray has expressed passive support for bans on religious dress in schools but has not made it a centerpiece of his policy.¹⁷²

MINISTER OF REGIONAL PLANNING AND DECENTRALIZATION FRANÇOISE GATEL

Gatel's career has centered around advocacy for rural communities, having served as the Minister Delegate for Rural affairs under three separate prime ministers before assuming her current role in 2025.¹⁷³ Gatel is a member of the Union of Democrats and Independents, a political party that is not part of the current governing coalition and tends to hold liberal views.¹⁷⁴

MINISTER OF SPORTS, YOUTH, AND COMMUNITY LIFE MARINA FERRARI

Marina Ferrari has served as Minister of Sports, Youth, and Community Life since the formation of the second Lecornu government in October of 2025. Ferrari is a member of the Democratic Movement (MoDem) party, part of the governing coalition. During her time in office as an elected representative, she served on the National Assembly's Finance Committee.¹⁷⁵ As Minister of Sports, Youth, and Community Life Marina Ferrari have been a vocal opponent of FIFA's plan to privatize international soccer operations.¹⁷⁶

MINISTER OF THE ARMED FORCES CATHERINE VAUTRIN

As a career civil servant, Catherine Vautrin has held a number of different positions in France's executive branch, including Minister of Labour, Health, Solidarity of Families and Minister of Partnership with Territories and Decentralization. She has also served as a National Assembly delegate and Vice President, as a member of the Renaissance Party.¹⁷⁷ In her current role as Minister of the Armed Forces, Vautrin has been a staunch supporter of aid to Ukraine.¹⁷⁸

MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR LAURENT NUÑEZ

As Minister of the Interior, Laurent Nuñez is responsible for preventing terrorist attacks, managing emergencies, supervising elections, and managing issues of immigration and citizenship. The National Police is also under the command of the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁷⁹ Nuñez has a background in counterterrorism and law enforcement and is a member of the Renaissance Party.¹⁸⁰ In 2026, Nuñez publicly accused the "far left" of killing right-wing activist Quentin Deranque.¹⁸¹

PRESIDENT OF MEDEF PATRICK MARTIN

Patrick Martin is the president of the Movement of French Enterprises (Medef), which is a labor union of employers and heads of companies. Martin has a background in business leadership at the Martin-Belaysoud company, which is owned by his family, and the Bank of France.¹⁸² Martin is not officially affiliated with any political party, as he has never held elective office. He opposes raising the minimum wage and supports increasing the age of retirement.¹⁸³

PRESIDENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL RICHARD FERRAND

Since 2025, Richard Ferrand has served as the President of the Constitutional Council, which is tasked with ensuring that all legislation passed by Parliament and signed into law follows the constitution. Ferrand is a member of the Renaissance Party and has previously served as President of the National Assembly.¹⁸⁴ He also very briefly served as Minister of Territorial Cohesion before being forced to resign following accusations of nepotism.¹⁸⁵

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ROBERTA METSOLA

Roberta Metsola is a Maltese politician whose duties in the European Union include presiding over the European Parliament, a legislative body made up of delegates from all EU member states.

Although not a member of the French government, cooperation with the European Union is essential to the success of the French Cabinet of Ministers, giving Metsola an important role in French Politics. Metsola is a member of Malta's center-right Nationalist party, which has formed a coalition with France's Republicans in the European Parliament.¹⁸⁶

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY YAËL BRAUN-PIVET

Yaël Braun-Pivet has held office as a member of

the National Assembly for Yvelines in the North of France since 2017 and has served as the President of the National Assembly since 2022. She is the first woman to hold the position.¹⁸⁷ Braun-Privet is a member of the Renaissance Party and has previously shown support for EU-led trade initiatives.¹⁸⁸ She briefly served as Minister of the Overseas.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE GÉRARD LARCHER

Gérard Larcher has held office as the President of the Senate since 2014. Prior to his time as an elected official, Larcher served as Minister Delegate Labor and served in the Cabinet of Ministers. Larcher is a member of the conservative party the Republicans, which is not a member of the governing coalition.¹⁸⁹ He has opposed measures to ban religious clothing, specifically calling for the right to wear headscarves in public.¹⁹⁰

Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

TOPIC A

- 1** What actions can the Council of Ministers take to improve public trust in the government?
How will these actions hedge against growing favor for far-right parties?
- 2** How can the Council of Ministers take action to mitigate political turmoil and panic surrounding the 2027 election?
- 3** How should France balance issues across the world with those within its borders? What duty does France have to the world versus its citizens?
- 4** Should France reduce its budget to reduce its debt? If so, what costs should be cut to ensure the functioning of the state and society?
- 5** What should France's role in the European Union look like in the coming years? How will potential alterations in policies impact the future of France's economy?
- 6** What actions can be taken to promote bipartisanship while keeping in mind the impending election and importance of party unity and strength?
- 7** What does the future of Renaissance look like? How will the Minister's actions in the final months of the current administration impact the future of the party, and of France?

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About the Authors

TOPIC A: BRUNA NOBRE

Bruna Nobre is an undergraduate student of International Relations at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, in Brazil, with a particular interest in national defense, international security, and geopolitics. Originally from Porto Alegre, she has been involved in Model United Nations since high school and has participated in numerous conferences as both a delegate and staff member. She has served in several roles across national and international conferences, including Assistant Director for the Commission on the Status of Women at NHSMUN and research and crisis staff positions at other MUN conferences. She currently serves as a Director of the French Cabinet at NHSMUN.

Alongside her academic studies, Bruna is a research scholarship recipient working on a project in partnership with Brazil's Ministry of Health focused on the relationship between climate change and security. She also works in User Experience and Product Success at a major European technology company, where she works at the intersection of technology, users, and business processes. Her academic and professional interests center on international security, emerging global challenges, and the intersection between technology and international affairs.

TOPIC A: ANNA BARRETT

Anna Barrett is an undergraduate student studying International Affairs and Political Science at The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs and Sciences Po Paris. Her current studies focus on international politics, with a particular interest in constitutions and democratic theory. This Spring, she will begin her master's degree at GW in International Affairs with a concentration in Democracy Studies alongside her bachelor's degree. Originally from New Jersey, Anna has been involved in Model UN since high school, and is a member of GW's internationally top ranked Model UN travel team. She has served as chair, crisis director, background guide author, and Under-Secretary General for conferences at the middle school, high school, and collegiate level. This is her third year at NHSMUN, having previously served as the Assistant Director for UN-Habitat and Director of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

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