

France's next president: Emmanuel Macron

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Oxford Analytica Conference Call

Tuesday, 9th May, 15:00 UK time



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In the second round of the French presidential elections, voters faced a stark – and consequential -- choice between the right-wing populist economic nationalism of Marine Le Pen and the pro-EU centrist liberal globalism of Emmanuel Macron.

They chose the latter, but not with the conviction that Macron's two-to-one victory at the polls suggests. Nearly two in five French voters chose 'neither of the above' by abstaining, spoiling their ballot paper or leaving it blank.

French politics has entered a new era, with the country divided and mainstream political parties in disarray. The governing Socialist party of outgoing President Francois Hollande may be in terminal decline. Meanwhile, Le Pen is indicating she intends to fill even more of the vacuum left by the collapse of the mainstream conservative right.

France is divided. The former investment banker and economy minister who is now to be country's president despite never holding elected office before faces immense challenges in bridging those divides, challenges exacerbated by his lack of a broad-based political party to support him in government as June's parliamentary elections bear down.

How Macron rises to those challenges and to revitalising the reform-resistant French economy will shape not just France over the next five years, but the European Union and the world beyond. While his presidency will not shake the 'European project' in the way the Eurosceptic Le Pen could have, Macron could still make life uncomfortable for Brussels. He wants a less austerity-driven eurozone and a more open EU. Most of all, he wants to reform the EU 'to make it work better'.

Macron's France could potentially challenge Germany's primacy over steering the direction the EU takes and could imply a harder European line in Brexit negotiations.

And if Macron's presidency fails, has Le Pen changed the debate in France sufficiently that her vision and her party is what France defaults to in five years' time?

Join us on Tuesday, May 9th to put your questions to three of Oxford Analytica's expert advisors on France and European affairs about the new political era that French voters have ushered in.

Chair

Paul Maidment, Director of Analysis and Managing Editor, Oxford Analytica

Paul Maidment joined Oxford Analytica in December 2014 as the Director of Analysis and Managing Editor of the Oxford Analytica Daily Brief.

He is an award-winning journalist who founded the New York-based digital editorial consultancy Bystander Media in 2010. A pioneer in combining digital and print journalism, he was previously Editor of Forbes.com and Executive Editor of Forbes, transforming a magazine website into the leading online destination for business, finance and up-scale lifestyle. Before joining Forbes in 2001, Paul was the founding Editor of the Financial Times' award-winning web site FT.com and Assistant Editor of the newspaper. His early career as an editor and foreign correspondent encompassed The Economist, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the BBC in the U.K. the U.S. and Asia — a depth of journalistic experience and breadth of media that gives him a unique perspective on the changes transforming publishing and the world economy. Paul was inducted into the Digital Hall of Fame in New York in 2010.

Panellists

Chris Morris, Contributor, Oxford Analytica

Chris Morris has been a BBC correspondent for more than 25 years, and he's recently moved back to the UK after spending most of his career abroad. For the past 5 years he was the BBC's Europe Correspondent based in Brussels. He now works for the BBC's newly-created Reality Check team. He is an expert on Brexit, on the EU and on Turkey in particular. He covered the French Presidential elections from Paris in both 2002 and 2012.

Vanessa Rossi, Advisor on Global Economics and Finance, Oxford Analytica

Advisor in global economics and finance in Oxford Analytica; formerly Senior Research Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. Vanessa Rossi has extensive experience within private, government and academic sectors including the European Commission and senior roles with consulting groups in the UK and Germany. Her previous positions include the Research Director for Swiss Bank Corporation, London, and Director of International Economics, Oxford Economics; also graduate researcher at Princeton University and extensive range of publications and media work.

Lise Herman, European Institute, London School of Economics and teaching fellow at Sciences Po, Paris

Dr Lise Herman was awarded her PhD in European Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science and is currently a Teaching Fellow at Sciences Po (IEP de Paris - Euro-American campus, Reims). Her research seeks to develop new theoretical and methodological tools to study the role of parties and partisanship in contemporary democracy. She has published her work in outlets such as the European Political Science Review, the LSE Review of Books and Books and Ideas, and her work is forthcoming in the American Political Science Review. Lise Herman has been an external expert for Oxford Analytica since April 2014, and in this quality regularly writes OA briefs and profiles on French and Hungarian domestic politics.