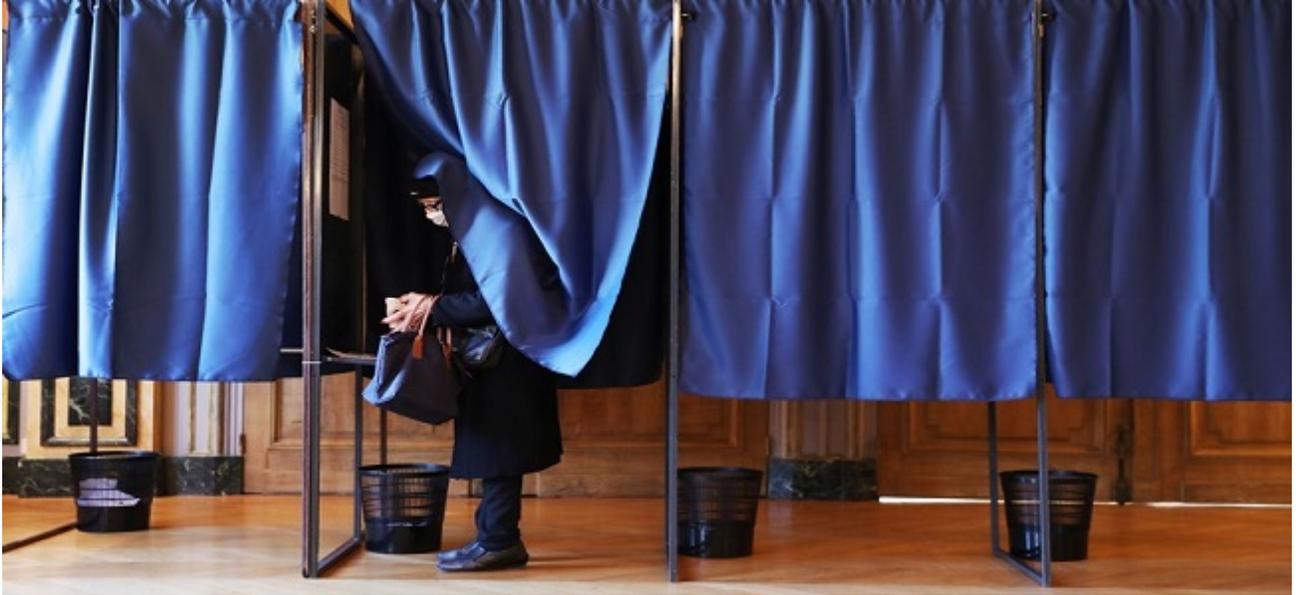


# Highly Anticipated Rematch Begins in Presidential Election



A rematch in the United States between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton remains one of several possibilities for the 2024 presidential election; in France, the equivalent match-up is already in full swing. The first round of voting on April 10 resulted in the expected advances of President Emmanuel Macron and [challenger](#) Marine Le Pen. The two faced each other in 2017 and will now duel again through an intense two-week campaign before the runoff on April 24.

## First round of election complete

Macron and Le Pen [advanced](#) as expected but there were some surprising results from the first round of the election that indicate a major shift in the future of French politics and one that is here to stay.

The traditional representatives of the two-party system in France, the

Republicans and the Socialists, have effectively disintegrated in less than a decade.

Moderate conservative Valérie Pécresse, representing the Republicans, received less than five percent of the vote. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, running for the Socialists, obtained less than two percent.

Ahead of both was right-wing firebrand and political novice Éric Zemmour, who received a disappointing seven percent after competing with Le Pen for much of the race. Unlike the fallen traditional parties, Zemmour's Reconquête was in its first election and still has a very promising future.

In third place and close behind Le Pen was Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who seized the leftist vote from the old Socialist and Communist parties after running a populist anti-Macron campaign.

Macron came in first but Le Pen was clearly on everyone's minds as the other candidates made their concession speeches and the pollsters got back to work.



**Defeated candidates offer their endorsements**

Zemmour encouraged his supporters to vote for his right-wing rival, but the rest of the candidates have begrudgingly lined up behind Macron. The incumbent now has endorsements from Communists and Republicans alike as he begins his campaign for the second round.

Mélenchon could not bring himself to support Macron, but he did repeatedly shout to his backers that not one vote should go to Marine Le Pen and her National Rally in the runoff.

Candidates, however, do not control their voters. Polls have shown that those who voted for Mélenchon in the first round are divided into roughly equal thirds between Macron, Le Pen, or abstaining altogether.

The enthusiasm gap could be a concern for Macron; he is not a particularly popular candidate and he has done little real campaigning so far. Many who support him for the second round are doing so only because they see him as the lesser evil.

Le Pen is also a divisive figure but she can call on a strong base of enthusiastic younger voters and a large swathe of the French working class that loathes Macron and all he stands for.

Polls continue to put Macron in the lead but Le Pen is easily within striking distance. The next two weeks of campaigning will decide if Macron can hold off his old rival again or if Le Pen can keep up the momentum to avenge her 2017 defeat.