



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

# Macron is approaching cohabitation, an outcome he has tried to prevent with a series of risky moves



Starting today, French President Emmanuel Macron will begin to receive the final answers to the questions of how profitable the risky steps he has taken out of necessity since the beginning of the year have been.

And not only he, but also the French partners in the EU and NATO, are very interested in the outcome of the parliamentary elections in France, where the first round takes place today and the second round in a week's time.

Macron's sudden **appointment** of Gabriel Attal as Prime Minister last January was a timely but very risky move to re-energise his faltering political project ahead of the European Parliament elections.

The risk did not pay off, as the direct competition from the far-right National Rally won twice as many seats in the European Parliament as Macron's centrist Renaissance party.

Macron has transformed an extremely risky operation into an all-or-nothing gamble by urgently calling parliamentary elections in France.

## Macron's legitimacy put to the test

His logic, according to which the French would vote "in protest" in the European elections, and that calling immediate national parliamentary elections will have the opposite effect, is unlikely to hold up today or on July 7.

Moreover, Macron's dramatic shifts in just a few months could cost him his career, regardless of the fact that he still has three years in office.

The victory of Le Pen's far-right and the government formed by them would not directly jeopardise the office of the president, where the greatest political power lies.

**Cohabitation would not only force government to adapt to the policies of a more powerful president. The concessions would have to be reciprocal**

However, such a result would seriously jeopardise the legitimacy of Macron's policies to date. Furthermore, very probable cohabitation with the opposition government would not only force a less powerful government to adapt to the policies of a more powerful president. The concessions would have to be reciprocal.

The French president and his supporters are undoubtedly hoping for the result that has so often occurred in France, namely the concentration of votes from various political options into the resistance against the extreme right.

## Have all the miracles already been used up?

But has France already run out of these electoral "miracles"? The polls **suggest** so. The far-right National Rally has 35% of support, which is 10% to 15% more than Macron's centre-right party, the third-strongest party.

In his last message before the election, Prime Minister Attal **called** on the French to prevent the far-right from winning, as this would unleash "impulses of hate and aggression."

On Monday, Macron took an even more dramatic tone, **saying** that the victory of either the far-right or the far-left would lead the country into a "civil war."



PM Gabriel Attal called on the French to prevent the far-right from winning, as this would unleash "impulses of hate and aggression"

Regardless of the poor prospects in the polls, Macron has reason to believe in a new electoral miracle, as the situation in the competing camps does not look like a homogeneous anti-Macron front either.

First of all, it is unlikely that the right-wingers from the National Rally will win at least 289 seats in the 577-seat parliament and form a new government without support.

Even if this happens, the party believes it will be a Pyrrhic victory if Macron does not resign because the RN cannot implement its programme with him in the Élysée Palace.

Aware that he will need the support of the moderate right in the elections, National Rally leader Jordan Bardella has made a shift regarding the war in Ukraine and announced that his government will continue to supply Kyiv with weapons, albeit not those that could be used against targets in Russia.

## Is cohabitation a realistic outcome?

The young leader of the National Rally thus hints that France could repeat the experience of some other European countries, where extremist politics lost its edge after coming to power.

After all, Macron took similar steps not so long ago when parliament passed stricter rules on

the entry and stay of migrants in December last year, which was his manoeuvre to win the votes of the far-right.

## Cohabitation seems to be the most likely state of affairs in France after the next two rounds of elections

Cohabitation, therefore, seems to be the most likely state of affairs in France after the next two rounds of elections. It would be the first such case since the period 1997–2002, when the president was centre-right Jacques Chirac and the prime minister was centre-left Lionel Jospin.

Macron has gone above and beyond expectations to prevent such a development. Therefore, the current parliamentary elections represent Macron's extremely risky attempt to ensure that the political image acquired in the recent European elections is not the last one before the crucial presidential elections in 2027.