



By: TA | AP Insight

How may Macron respond to France's political crisis?



Outgoing French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu, aiming to calm the political storm triggered by his **resignation** on Monday less than 24 hours after unveiling his ministers, faced a tight deadline Wednesday to break the deadlock caused by his departure.

After accepting Lecornu's resignation, President Emmanuel Macron gave him 48 hours to hold further talks with political parties, citing the need to preserve national stability.

The tight time frame for Lecornu bought Macron some time to consider his options. But all eyes turned to Macron on Wednesday as **debate** swirls about how he may respond to France's political crisis and dig himself out of the crisis.

The fragile coalition between Macron's centrists and the conservatives unraveled almost immediately after Lecornu's government was announced, leaving parties deeply divided, and he failed to secure the parliamentary backing needed to pass the 2026 budget.

Lecornu invited all political forces to talks, but far-right leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella of the National Rally party rejected the call, pressing instead for snap elections. On the far left, France Unbowed officials also boycotted.

The French constitution gives large powers to the president, who names the prime minister.

Even when weakened politically, he still holds some powers over foreign policy, European affairs and negotiates and ratifies international treaties.

The president also is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Macron, whose approval ratings have sunk to record lows, has not indicated his next move if Lecornu fails. Rivals say his choices are limited to calling new elections, appointing a prime minister from outside his camp or resigning.

Here is a closer look at Macron's options:

Choosing an outsider for a political cohabitation

Republicans party leader Bruno Retailleau, along with the Socialists, Greens and Communists, have pushed for the inclusion of a prime minister from another party.

Retailleau, who withdrew support from the government coalition, said he could join a new cabinet only under such an arrangement.

The left argues cohabitation is overdue

The left also argues cohabitation is overdue. Their alliance, the New Popular Front, **won** the most seats in the 2024 French legislative **election**, though it fell short of a majority and later split amid infighting with Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed.

Under cohabitation, the prime minister governs with the backing of parliament, while the president retains influence mainly over foreign policy, defense and European affairs.

France has seen three such periods, most recently from 1997 to 2002, when President Jacques Chirac **shared** power with Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

Calling snap elections

The French president can dissolve the National Assembly and call elections before the end of deputies' terms.

The tool has been used repeatedly under since 1958 to resolve political crises, but it carries risks of deepening divisions.

Macron already tried this path last year after the European elections, when the National Rally surged to a historic win.

The move produced a fractured Assembly in which the far right and left now hold more than 320 seats, while centrists and conservatives control 210. That fragmentation has led to chronic instability and a rapid succession of governments.

The National Rally views a snap election as a golden chance to come to power

While unlikely to win an outright majority, the National Rally views a snap election as a golden chance to come to power. Jordan Bardella, the party president, has said he would be ready to work with Republicans MPs in order to secure a majority.

Lecornu voiced hopes Wednesday morning that a compromise could be reached to end the crisis and avoid new elections.

“There is a will to secure a budget for France before Dec. 31,” he said ahead of a meeting with Socialist officials. “And this will is creating momentum and convergence, which clearly pushes back the prospect of a dissolution.”

Resignation is possible but unlikely

Macron’s second term is set to end in May 2027 and he has repeatedly said he will not resign.



Édouard Philippe has suggested the president should step down and call an early presidential election once the 2026 budget is adopted

But if his mind changed and he quit, the Constitutional Council would declare a vacancy, the Senate president would assume interim powers and a new presidential election would be held within 35 days.

On the far left, Melenchon's France Unbowed has asked for Macron’s departure.

More surprisingly, and a sign of Macron's growing isolation inside his own camp, Édouard Philippe, Macron’s first prime minister after he swept to power in 2017 and once a close ally, has suggested the president should step down and call an early presidential election once the 2026 budget is adopted.

Since 1958 and the inception of the Fifth Republic, only one French president has resigned: Charles De Gaulle after losing a 1969 referendum.