

Europe in France: Top 5 French Political Party Programmes

What do the French election programs say about Europe? The following are translations of excerpts of the election programmes of the top five political parties in the 2017 French presidential election:

<u>Political Party</u>	<u>Presidential candidate</u>
En Marche!	Emmanuel Macron
Les Républicains	François Fillon
Parti Socialiste	Benoît Hamon
Front National	Marine LePen
La France insoumise	Jean-Luc Melenchon

1. En Marche!

En Marche ! (in English *Forward* or *On the Move*) was founded by Emmanuel Macron, France's former Minister of the Economy in April 2016. Although Macron was a member of the Socialist Party; his political movement En Marche! seeks to transcend the traditional party boundaries. His [programme for the 2017 elections](#) is titled "Emmanuel Macron President – Regaining our spirit of conquest to build a new France". Therein, the chapter on Europe can be found on page 20 and translates as follows:

"What cowardice and hypocrisy one hears in the talks about Europe!

Some accuse it of all evils, forgetting that they themselves negotiated and signed the treaties and all the texts that flow from them. Others claim to make France freer by leaving Europe. As if we would stand a higher chance to weigh alone against China, Russia, the United States (but also against Google, Apple, Facebook and all the digital giants) rather than together with 500 million Europeans ...

By claiming to "reverse the table", all of them weaken the image of France among our partners. A great country honours itself in keeping its word.

It is not the table that must be reversed, but the course of Europe.

We must do what all our partners have done at home: put our economy back on track and, in the interests of our children, better manage our public finances. But Europe must also change: it must not have the task of managing a bureaucracy, but of protecting our present and preparing for our future. It must therefore protect us today, and invest in tomorrow!

We will build a Europe that develops our jobs and our economy.

In order to invest much more than today we want a Eurozone budget voted on by a Eurozone Parliament and executed by a Minister of Economy and Finance of the Eurozone.

We will fight against fiscal arrangements between states and multinational companies.

They distort competition in Europe, as seen by the case between Apple and Ireland which has been sanctioned. France will be exemplary in this field.

We will reserve access to European public procurement markets for companies that locate at least half of their production in Europe under a Buy European Act.

We will generalise the Erasmus programme and extend it to apprentices. 200 000 French students and apprentices will go to live abroad in a country of the European Union each year.

We will build a Europe that protects us.

Together with Germany and other countries joining voluntarily, we will propose a European Defence Union, creating a European Defence Fund which will finance common military equipment (such as the European drones) and a permanent European Headquarters.

We will build a Europe that protects our strategic industries.

We want a mechanism to control foreign investment in Europe in order to preserve our strategic sectors.

In the Brexit debate, we will defend the integrity of the European Single Market. All companies accessing it must be subject to the same principles.

We will create a single digital market in Europe. A venture capital fund will finance the development of European start-ups.

We will create a single energy market in Europe. We will set a low carbon price in the countries of the Union.

We will give the floor to the people. We will propose citizen conventions throughout Europe as of the end of 2017, in order to give meaning to the European project. These conventions will lead to a project which will then be adopted by all the countries that wish to do so. No Member State will have the power to block this new stage.

2. Les Républicains (The Republicans)

The Republicans is a centre-right political party and is one of the two major parties in France together with the centre-left Socialist Party. In July 2016, LR published "[Le Projet Des Républicains Pour 2017](#)", in which the Chapter on Europe can be found on page 237:

"The European construction, i.e. the reconciliation of the Europeans after two world wars and their ever closer union, is an exceptional achievement. In keeping with their identities, the nations of Europe, in fidelity to their roots, especially Christian ones, have built a unique construction based on the joint exercise of sovereignty whenever it is more effective to act together rather than in isolation. As a part of this undertaking since 1950, France is destined to continue to be a driving force.

Our political family, which in all its sensitivities has consistently contributed to this policy over the past decades, in close cooperation with our partners in the European People's Party (EPP), can be legitimately proud of it.

Our conviction is that European integration is not an idea of the past: on the contrary, in the world of the 21st century, it is more relevant than ever!

Yet, today Europe is not doing well. Europeans are turning away from a Europe, which they see as impotent, unable to cope with new crises, to guarantee security and prosperity, and to effectively defend their interests and values in the world, while producing too many laws on too many issues in too much detail.

This is the case that our compatriots make. Even though the majority of the French remain attached to the idea of Europe, they do not want the Europe of today. Europe is facing an unprecedented accumulation of crises. Unemployment remains far too high and growth is much too low. The migrant crisis has spelled the end of an ill-conceived Schengen system and has drawn attention to numerous divergences on the issue of immigration. The bloody attacks committed in the heart of our continent

testify to yawning gaps in our security systems. For the first time, a Member State, the United Kingdom, could decide to leave the Union...

However, as we have demonstrated between 2007 and 2012, with a strong political will, Europe can pull itself together: with the initiatives taken by France and our political family aimed at getting Europe out of the impasse of the Constitutional Treaty; by making the French Presidency of the European Union in 2008 an exceptional success, welcomed by all; by making Europe a major actor on the international stage, from its decisive intervention in the Russian-Georgian war to its action in the G20; and finally by overcoming, with Angela Merkel, the Euro crisis between 2010 and 2012.

Since then, this momentum has subsided. Francois Hollande's European record is particularly weak, as evidenced by the initial denial of the renegotiation imprudently promised on the March 2012 Fiscal Compact, the absence of any major initiative since then, the breakdown of the Franco-German engine and the inertia of socialist power in the face of the crises facing Europe.

It is urgent for our country to again take initiative in Europe and regain our role as the engine of European construction and to promote our interests therein. *Between the inertia of François Hollande, which leads to impotence, and the demagoguery advocated by Marine Le Pen, which would lead to isolation and failure by being profoundly contrary to our historical genius, there is room for a France that assumes its place and role in Europe. This is in line with our interest as well as with our history.*

The choice is not between the withdrawal from chauvinism, obscurantism, xenophobia on the one hand, and the European model of the founding fathers and technocracy of the 1970s on the other. The future is to overcome this opposition by inventing another conception of Europe that touches the hearts of European peoples and makes it a reality today.

France is interested more than ever in taking leadership of a strong Europe, a Europe that acts, a Europe that protects to face the challenges of the 21st century.

*For this, a new stage of European construction is needed. A quarter of a century later, after the founding of the Union, at the time of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and after the consolidation with the Maastricht Treaty in 1991, a new stage is needed: that is why we believe that **a new Treaty, a re-founding treaty, is indispensable.***

A new treaty is needed to create a "Schengen 2", which guarantees effective protection of Europe's borders and provides it with a common immigration and asylum policy. A new treaty is needed to enable the Eurozone to provide itself with a genuine economic government. A new treaty is needed so that the European Union focuses on the essentials instead of regulating everything and thus gives the Member States the necessary room for manoeuvre.

*We propose that France take up the initiative in Europe now. We propose to our partners, and obviously to our German partner, to **begin negotiations for an act to recast the level of the treaty.***

In four subchapters, the Republicans concretely demand to

1. Reform Schengen and create a "Schengen 2" with closer cooperation on matters such as border control, security, immigration, social tourism and "forum shopping".
2. Go further with economic integration and create a European Monetary Fund to ensure the independence of the Eurozone.
3. Reduce European regulation and introduce reforms to concentrate on the essentials.
4. Create new forms of cooperation with its large neighbours, Russia and Turkey, in particular with regard to economic and security issues.

3. Parti Socialiste

The Parti Socialiste (Socialist Party), is the largest party of the French centre-left and one of the major political parties in France, along with Les Républicains. In 2012, François Hollande was elected President of France. In December 2016 he announced not to seek re-election for 2017. After defeating Manuel Valls in the second round of the primary in January 2017, Benoît Hamon became candidate for PS in the 2017 presidential elections. The party published different so-called “Cahiers de la présidentielle” (Books of the Presidential Election), of which the one on Europe is divided in five parts, which in a shortened version can be translated as follows:

1 / In view of the terrorist threat, we demand better European coordination by implementing a European Security Act

[...] The Pact must be a pact of confidence: every European citizen must be protected by the collective defence effort of the Union. This pact must be effective and give Europe the means to face strategic challenges, both within and outside its borders.

Domestically, we advocate the strengthening of police cooperation between Member States. [...]

Judicial cooperation has to be extended by means of exchanging criminal records. The resources of Eurojust are to be strengthened and the powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office are to be extended. In the long term, we advocate the establishment of a European anti-terrorist prosecutor's office.

Finally, we propose to establish more cooperation with those countries most exposed to terrorist threats, in particular the neighbouring countries of the European Union around the Mediterranean.

Externally, the common foreign and security policy must be rethought and equipped to meet today's challenges and threats. [...]

We advocate that an immediate operational reserve be put in place. Consisting of forces identified by the Member States and jointly trained, it would give the EU a rapid response to crises, which it now lacks.

In the medium term, we propose to provide the Union with civilian and military means to ensure collective security missions for Europeans.

This is especially necessary due to the exit of the United Kingdom, the only nation in Europe besides France capable of conducting foreign operations. The British withdrawal can be seen as an obstacle to the establishment of a common European army.

Finally, we advocate for the strengthening of cooperation in the defence industry. [...]

2 / Facing the migration challenge we want a common, global and solidarity-based policy, to reform Schengen and to reform the Dublin Regulation

The migratory challenge will be met on our continent with the values of progress, humanity and responsibility. We need to combine solidarity and respect for the right of asylum with refugees on the one hand; and firmness and respect for the law with regard to irregular immigration on the other. It is on these two conditions that we can best accommodate those who have an imperative need to be; and it is in this way that our fellow citizens will accept displacements which are bound to last.

For the socialists, Europe is the only way to tackle the migration challenge, provided that it sets its objectives clearly and that it does indeed have the means to do so. Populist and xenophobic forces have made immigration the heart of their opposition to the European Union. The campaign on the British referendum was the ultimate and sad demonstration. For the Socialists and the European Social-

Democrats, this must be the occasion for a start. It was in order to develop a common, just and effective migration policy that we wished to bring our fraternal parties together in Paris on 8 July 2016.

Distinguishing asylum seekers from economic migrants as decided by the European Union, is necessary.

That is why we support the principle of setting up hot spots in countries of first arrival. Their role is complex and demanding. Arriving refugees must be treated with dignity and by following the procedures of verification and non-refoulement. We are there and will be vigilant. But a policy like that must be efficient.

We propose that the human resources of Frontex be strengthened and collectively financed:

Better control of the borders of the Schengen area is necessary in order to fight more effectively and more co-ordinatedly against human traffickers. This real body of border guards, now constituted, will have to ensure to carry out its missions respecting the fundamental rights of the migrants and the refugees. Again, we will be vigilant.

We propose a new Dublin regulation to clarify and strengthen the European asylum system.

The reception of migrants and refugees cannot be solely based on the countries of arrival. Concluded in September 2015, the relocation agreement must be sustained and all EU Member States must be involved, with fairness and accountability. We therefore propose the establishment of common rules on conditions for admission, installation, fair and equitable distribution to all Member States. Finally, we advocate the creation of a European Refugee Office. Independent, it will be in charge of welcoming the refugees in the territories of first arrival and to ensure the implementation of a decent reception and adapted to their course by the Member States.

The integration of refugees must be facilitated:

Access to school and university for children and young people, access to language and vocational training, employment, medico-social services and housing must be better supported and financed in partly by States and partly by the European budget. Such a policy is essential if the arrival of these women, men and children is to succeed. It is by putting into service, or completing, these provisions that Europe will live up to history and itself.

3 / In face of the challenge of growth, we want an investment pact and to launch a continental investment programme

All-market and all-austerity have never brought good things for Europe. Eight years of crisis have shown that they do not have a positive effect on growth and quality employment, especially in the most deindustrialised territories and for the most vulnerable Europeans. The British referendum is the latest illustration. Because we want Europe to embody hope again, we propose that a massive hemispheric investment program balance the effects of necessarily diverse fiscal and exit strategies. Crisis, necessarily variable according to the States. This is the meaning of this investment pact that we are proposing and which brings us back to the Europe of projects. It is of general European interest: for growth, for employment, for business, for territories, for the future.

We propose an environmental investment pact:

It must focus on the ecological transition as a priority. If we as Europeans want to keep our joint commitments made at COP21 to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 40% and increase energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy by 27% by 2030, Europe must also be given the means. The European Commission's "Juncker" plan to support the European Commission's investment - which the Socialists and European Social-Democrats took up despite the European right, which did not want it - is a first step. 315 billion euros of investments are foreseen in Europe. In June 2016, 249 French projects have

been approved, which will benefit from 12.8 billion euros of guaranteed financing from the European Investment Bank (EIB), for a total of 100 billion euros of investment. For the socialists, this plan must be extended, amplified and cannot be subject to the profitability criterion dictated by the market players.

We hope that these investments will be directed primarily towards continental infrastructures which are currently lacking, especially in areas where private markets and investors are not. We advocate that they finance new energies and energy saving, significant strategic, economic and environmental issues. This approach would also provide the European community with the energies we call for. We also advocate that this investment effort help to strengthen the circular economy and the agro-ecological transformation of the European agricultural model, which is essential for the future.

We propose an investment pact focused on innovation and digital development. *It is inseparable from a common industrial strategy that will bring forth European champions, like Airbus, as we wrote in the first issue of the presidential paper. This implies a substantial increase in funding for research projects, particularly in universities on the continent, and simplification of procedures. Finally, instruments adapted to the financing of innovative SMEs and start-ups must be set up.*

We propose a youth investment pact. *To respond to the plight of young people, many of whom are experiencing unemployment, starting with the least qualified, access to training, personalized support and mobility assistance are our priorities: we have also mentioned this in previous “Cahiers”. The Guarantee for Youth was an important innovation, led by France and Germany. Because it is a continental issue, its financing must be borne by the Union and increased to € 21 billion, as recommended by the International Labor Organization (ILO). It is time, too, that new universities of European dimension emerge to become places of innovation of the future in order for Europe to have a greater international impact. The mobility of young people must also be massively encouraged, as we wrote in the second Presidential Bulletin.*

We have ambition for this pact. In order for it not to be called into question at each national election, it must be based on its own resources and borrowing capacity. Private financing, and especially dormant savings, must be redirected towards financing of the real economy and ecological transition.

4 / For a controlled globalization we need new fiscal and commercial regulation and continue with harmonisation within Europe where it is needed

Socialists want Europe because they want to ensure that everyone can lead a quality life. And they believe in Europe, because what makes its uniqueness to the rest of the world is the welfare state. It may not be identical in each country of the EU, but it is a common feature of all its members. For this protection to remain, it is necessary to have a quality economy that ensures its financing. In the market economy, they say yes to competition once it is stimulation and emulation. But they say no to social and fiscal competition, because it weakens and disunites. The Europe we want must be regulated: to offer equitable conditions and guarantee shared rights.

That is why we advocate for social and fiscal harmonization, where necessary, with a code of convergence, as proposed by the European Parliament. This harmonization will give all the more economic and social efficiency to the investment pact that we propose. And that is why we defend the social and environmental standards necessary for a quality economy.

*At the social level and in order to combat dumping and improve the lives of all European workers, we advocate the introduction of a **European minimum wage**, which is above the poverty line and at covers least 60% of the average wage of each country. Each year, the social partners would be invited to propose an evolution of these minimum wages. Our ambition is to increase them. The announced revision of the posted workers directive, which will be based on the principle of equal pay for equal work, as the European Commission has committed itself, has the same objective.*

More broadly, we argue for a common set of social laws, with social protection adapted to the challenges of today, starting with that of digital change. Thinking about the conditions and modalities of an equal level of protection of all assets, with portable rights and attached to the person is our ambition for France but also for Europe.

On the fiscal side, we advocate converging the bases of minimum corporate tax rates. This work must be completed. In order for transnational groups to avoid taxation differences between EU Member States, we propose that a part be drawn from a European scale and come directly from the EU budget. This will be in addition to the principle of taxing the place where wealth was created, made possible by the obligation to declare their activities on a country-by-country basis.

We would like to see the proposed financial transaction tax, which is now the subject of enhanced cooperation. It pursues the same objective. [...]

5 / In terms of values, the rule of law must be guaranteed, we demand a strengthened European democracy

Determining a pact for democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights: [...] Faced with nationalist and xenophobic forces active on the continent and in power in Hungary and Poland, we must remember that the fundamental rights of the European Union are not negotiable and we must enforce them. Apart from recalling the fundamental principles, the EU must also be given the means to enforce them.

That is why we support the proposal for a European Pact for Fundamental rights, on which the European Parliament is working. It will give Europe the systematic and comprehensive control mechanism it lacks in order to guarantee the effectiveness of these rights at EU level and to complement existing instruments such as the Union framework for the rule of law, the procedure under Article 7 of the EU Treaty, and infringement proceedings before the EU Court of Justice.

Taking the social rights of Europeans further: For the socialists, advancing rights is an objective of the European project.

It is first and foremost the equality between women and men that we support: We want to see the implementation of programs for equal pay, respect for parity in political bodies and the boards of directors of large companies, and a better balance between private and professional life. It is in this respect that we advocate extending maternity leave at European level and regret that the new draft directive has remained a dead letter. We will also continue to work with our European social democratic partners to promote the right of women to be in charge of what happens to their own bodies by advancing the rights on abortion and contraception.

It is then the fight against all forms of discrimination that we support. Discrimination based on origin, religion, philosophical and political convictions or sexual orientation must be fought on a European level. Bringing the Anti-Discrimination Directive to the fore is always an essential objective for us.

Finally, we support the social and trade union rights of Europeans: In harmonising social rights, access to care and universal social insurance remain major challenges. Ensuring that these rights go forward also means giving greater recognition to the social partners at European level. We therefore call on the European Commission to solicit the European Trade Union Confederation for the drafting of all texts concerning employee rights and labour regulations and that the role of the European Economic and Social Council be strengthened.

Building a differentiated Europe and strengthening the democratic control of European Policies: Europe is based on a dual legitimacy: legitimacy given to it by states, whose governments sit on the Council, and by citizens, represented by the European Parliament. Both must be strengthened in order to meet the aspirations of the peoples for more democracy and efficiency.

In the new Europe that we are proposing, not all Member States will want to go forward, nor necessarily go at the same pace. It is important to give them a choice, but it is also important that they do not prevent other States from making progress. We want a Europe of different speeds.

The euro zone must be the first. We propose that it be endowed with a genuine economic government that fosters a common policy, manages a budget that is commensurate with the importance of the area, and provides a political and democratic counterweight to the work of the European Central Bank. Its actions must be controlled democratically by a Eurozone parliament in which national and European parliamentarians have a role to play.

***The Union of 27 must continue to carry out projects.** In our view, this is the right scale for the investment pact. For greater democratic control, we propose to increase the powers of the European Parliament by giving it the opportunity for legislative initiatives and further promote the European Citizens' Initiative. Finally, in order to develop a sense of sharing a common destiny in the Member States, we support the plan of setting up a European civic education.*

Finally, other co-operation must be encouraged, in specific fields in order to be a driving force and impetus for the rest of Europe.

4. Front National

The Front National (National Front) under Marine Le Pen published a programme for the 2017 presidential elections comprising overall 144 "[Engagements](#)" (commitments). The commitments in which Europe is mentioned can be translated as follows:

***"1) To give France its national sovereignty back. Towards a Europe of independent nations at the service of its peoples.** To regain our freedom and mastery of our destiny by restoring sovereignty to the French people (monetary, legislative, territorial and economic). For this, a negotiation will be initiated with our European partners followed by a referendum on our membership of the European Union. The objective is to achieve a European project respecting the independence of France and of national sovereignties and serving the interests of the peoples."*

***"37. To establish true economic patriotism by freeing France from European constraints and by reserving public order to French companies if the price gap is reasonable.** To reserve a part of the public order to SMEs."*

***"43. To restore order in our public finances** in order to end bad public spending practices (notably those related to immigration and the European Union) and the fight against social and fiscal fraud. To become independent from financial markets by reauthorizing the direct financing of the Treasury by the Bank of de France."*

***"61. Securing French deposits and savings** by repealing the European Banking Union Directive and the provision in the Sapin II Law which provides for the withdrawal or freezing of bank savings and life insurance contracts in case of a threat of banking crisis. To maintain freedom and plurality of means of payment."*

***"126. Transforming the Common Agricultural Policy into French Agricultural Policy.** Guarantee the amount of subsidies whose criteria will be set by France and no longer by the European Union, with the aim of saving and supporting the French model of family farms."*

***"138. Ensure equal access to public services** (administrations, gendarmerie, water, health, transport, community hospitals and health centres) throughout the country and in particular in rural areas. The liberalization of the railways wanted by the European Union will be refused. La Poste and SNCF will remain public enterprises."*

5. La France insoumise

La France insoumise (Unsubmissive France) is a political movement in France launched by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, member of the European Parliament and former co-president of the Left Party in February 2016. The parts on Europe in his programme for the 2017 presidential elections “[L’Avenir en commun](#)” (A shared future) can be found [here](#) and are titled “Sortir des traités européens” (Leaving the European Treaties).

“The Europe of our dreams is dead. The present Union is but a single market in which peoples are subject to the dictatorship of banks and finance. How to stop this nightmare?”

We have to get out of the European treaties which require us to carry out austerity policies, to abolish state action and public investments. All this on the pretext of a debt of which everybody knows that it cannot be paid by any country.

Our independence and sovereignty of our decisions must no longer be left to the ideological obsessions of the European Commission and to the superb coalition government of the right and the PS in Germany.”

Apart from this introduction, Mélenchon formulates five demands for Europe for which he also proposes methods for realisation. The demands can be translated as follows:

- *“Take immediate action and precautions in order to safeguard the interests of France*
- *Organise the British exit from the European Union without vengeance or punishment*
- *Plan A: Renegotiate the Treaties for democratic, social and ecological reform*
- *Apply a Plan B in the event that such negotiations fail; and*
- *Defend and develop cooperation with the other peoples in Europe.”*