

## France

**Type of Government:** Unitary Semi-Presidential  
Constitutional Republic

**President:** Emmanuel Macron

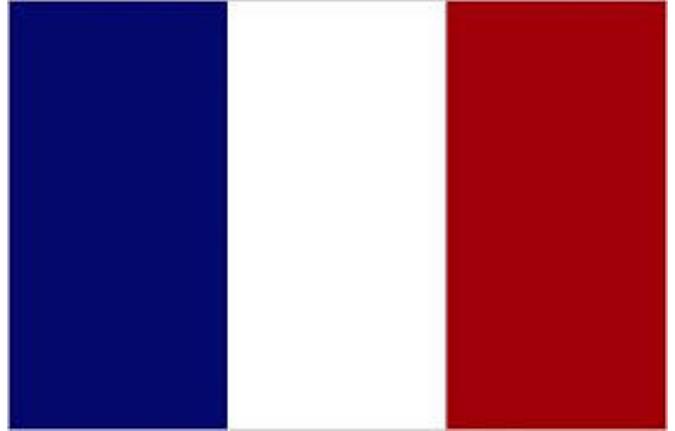
**Prime Minister:** Jean Castex

**Capital City:** Paris

**Ideology:** Liberal Western democracy

**Region:** Western Europe & Others

**Neighbours:** Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, Spain, the UK (by sea).



### DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 67 million.
- **Religion:** 51.1% Christian, 5.6% Muslim, 39.6% none.
- **Age:** Median age 41.4 years, life expectancy 81.9 years.
- **Ethnicity:** No official statistics available. Estimates: 85% white, 10% North African, 3.5% black, 1.5% Asian.
- **Language:** French (official).

### POLITICS

#### Domestic politics

- French democracy is deeply rooted in secular political values. Relative to comparable democracies like the UK, French tradition has been more influenced by left-wing ideals; however, in 2017, Emmanuel Macron brought to power a 'radical centrist' party, 'En Marche!', defeating both of France's major historical parties in the process.
- Like other states in Western Europe, French politics has been influenced by the modern growth of right-wing nationalism. Marine le Pen is one of the most recognizable faces of that movement in Europe, but lost the most recent presidential election to Macron.
- There are high profile protest movements in France, including the Yellow Vest Movement, criticising the Macron administration's lack of commitment to improving conditions for the working and middle class and related issues.
- As of March 2020, Macron's reform agenda (the cause of the continuing Yellow Vest protests) has been suspended to allow the government to focus on fighting the coronavirus pandemic. He has acknowledged that his pension reform is not feasible after the pandemic.



## Foreign policy concerns

- France is one of the major players in the European Union.
- France puts significant effort into maintaining its cultural and diplomatic ties with former colonies (La Francophonie), as well as focusing on projection of cultural influence more generally. This includes protection of the place of the French language in diplomatic circles.
- France maintains several overseas territories, including French Guiana and the islands Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, and Réunion. France has several border and territory disputes stemming from its colonial past with Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritius, Suriname, Vanuatu, and in Antarctica.
- France is usually one of the most enthusiastic proponents for UN intervention in crises, and dedicates large numbers of troops to peacekeeping.
- France is often reluctant to use its veto in the Security Council.
- France provides significant amounts of development aid, and in 2018 expressed a commitment to ensuring this aid is sustainable and targeted.
- France is a member of more multilateral organisations than any other country.

## ECONOMY

- The French economy is free market oriented and is the second largest economy in the EU.
- The leading industrial sectors in France are telecommunications, aerospace and defense, ship building, pharmaceuticals, construction, chemicals, textiles, and automobile production.
- Tourism is a key sector, while the traditionally highly-prioritised agricultural industry receives a great deal of support from EU policies.
- France has invested heavily in nuclear power, and consequently is the smallest emitter of carbon dioxide among the top 7 most industrialised countries.
- Major export partners are Germany (16%), Spain (7.6%), the USA (7.3%), Italy (7.2%), the UK (7%), and Belgium (6.8%).
- Major import partners are Germany (19.3%), Belgium (10.6%), the Netherlands (7.9%), Italy (7.8%), Spain (7%), the USA (5.8%) and China (5.1%).

## MILITARY

- The French Armed Forces contain around 366,000 active personnel and is split into five branches: the French Army, the French Navy, the French Air Force, the National Gendarmerie and the National Guard.
- France has a special military corps called the French Foreign Legion. Members become French citizens at the end of their service.
- France has been one of the more willing proponents of EU military cooperation.
- France maintains the third-largest nuclear weapons reserve in the world.

