

APR 17, 2022

Macron vs. Le Pen

This is The Weekly Letter for April 17, 2022. [About this newsletter](#)

News

International

The [first round](#) of the French presidential election was held on April 10. Incumbent Emmanuel Macron (28%) and far-right challenger Marine Le Pen (23%) won the most votes and will advance to the second round. Leftist Jean-Luc Mélenchon finished a close third with 22% of the vote, an impressive result given the disarray of the French left. The candidates of the traditional center-right and center-left parties, which dominated French politics for decades, performed abysmally, with Valérie Pécresse of The Republicans winning just under 5% of the vote and Anne Hidalgo gaining less than 2%. Eric Zemmour lost his battle for leadership of the far-right, finishing with only 7% but succeeding in amplifying his racist views and, in comparison, softening the image of Le Pen. Green candidate Yannick Jadot was unable to break through in this election, finishing with under 5% of the vote.

The first phase of the campaign was dominated by coverage of [Zemmour](#), who believes in the 'great replacement' conspiracy theory which alleges that sinister elites are replacing white French citizens with non-white migrants. Macron ran a [low-key campaign](#), preoccupied first with managing Covid-19 and then with the war in Ukraine. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Macron's [poll numbers](#) rose, but the race tightened in the closing days.

Le Pen, who has a history of closeness with Russia, is [less committed](#) to the EU and NATO than Macron. Le Pen has sharply right-wing stances on migration and the treatment of French Muslims, although Macron is no progressive on these issues either. An [article](#) in Le Monde notes that Le Pen "wants to abolish birthright citizenship and the automatic acquisition of nationality through marriage." Other policies include support for "the systematic deportation of 'illegal immigrants, delinquents and foreign criminals,' as well as undocumented minors" and "a ban on wearing the veil in the street and in academic contexts." (Le Monde, 4/12)

The second round of the presidential election takes place on April 24.

Environment

The Washington Post [reports](#) on what impact current national climate pledges would have on global temperature increase:

"The good news: Long-term pledges that nations have made to cut greenhouse gas pollution have the collective potential to avoid some of the most catastrophic impacts of climate change.

The bad news? According to a [new study](#) published Wednesday in the journal Nature, humanity can hit a key target of the 2015 Paris climate agreement only if countries fully live up to those promises. And most are nowhere near on track to turn their ambitions into reality."

The current pledges give the world "just over a 50 percent chance of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius" but only a 6 to 10 percent chance of limiting warming to 1.5 Celsius, the Paris agreement's more ambitious goal. (Washington Post, 4/12)

Meanwhile, climate activists in the UK have recently engaged in new acts of civil disobedience, the website DeSmog [notes](#):

"In the past two weeks, hundreds of people have been arrested for blockading fuel depots by climbing over fences, digging tunnels, and clambering on top of oil tankers. Scientists in lab coats have glued themselves to government buildings and doused Shell's London headquarters with fake oil."

Rebellion, a new documentary focusing on the early days of the Extinction Rebellion climate movement, is airing on Netflix in the UK. (DeSmog, 4/14)

U.S.

Former President Donald Trump has endorsed J.D. Vance in the Republican primary for an Ohio U.S. Senate seat, [according to](#) The New York Times.

"The move amounted to a major bet on Mr. Vance and on Mr. Trump's influence over Republican primary voters in conservative-leaning Ohio, where several high-profile candidates are facing off in a contentious and at times nasty campaign to replace Senator Rob Portman, a Republican who is retiring." (NY Times, 4/15)

Vance has been at odds with most U.S. politicians, including Republicans, in his comments on Ukraine. In an [opinion piece](#) for The Columbus Dispatch published on March 31, Vance wrote: "I will be damned if I am going to prioritize Ukraine's eastern border right now when our own southern border is engulfed by a human tsunami of illegal migrants."

Opinion

Dominique Moïsi: French election—"Should Ms. Le Pen succeed, it would be a [victory of anger](#)." (NY Times, 4/12)

Daniel Sherrell: We can't let Democrats fail to [respond to the climate crisis](#). (The Guardian, 4/7)

Michelle Goldberg: Congress is failing to provide additional [global Covid aid](#). "Our gruesomely dysfunctional politics are going to lead to more illness and death across the globe, and we're increasing the odds that a new viral mutation will once again upend American life." (NY Times, 4/11)

Interview: Fabian Wisotzky [speaks with](#) Oksana Dutchak, deputy director of the Center for Social and Labour Research in Kyiv, about the war in Ukraine and what positions the global left should take. (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 4/8)

Have some thoughts about a current event? Want to reply to an opinion article featured in the newsletter? To create a conversation about the news, all are encouraged to share their views. Send your letter along with your name and where you're writing from to theweeklyletternewsletter@gmail.com or reply to this email. Please be aware that the newsletter is published on the website theweeklyletter.ghost.io and sent by email to subscribers. Letters that are hateful or contain misinformation will not be published.



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