

The current political situation in the left is extremely complicated and the future perspectives, especially those concerning the European election, are blurry. This is partly due to the division of the left forces but also the possible alliances; the most probable configuration is five or six lists (including the Parti Socialiste's list whose belonging to the left is very questionable). Here is a summary presenting briefly the situation of each political organisation belonging to the left. The Parti Socialiste will surely have its own list. Even though the PS is not included in Macron's coalition in the Parliament, its relationship with macron and its policies is at best ambiguous. The PS is trying to differentiate itself from Macron by formulating some critics on his policy, but their last congress (in February and March 2018) did not voiced strong critics the policies implemented by Hollande and Valls during the last five years. In addition their political line is very close to Macron's; most of the time they argue against the method and some minor details in order to differentiate themselves. The new leadership[1]wants to save the party apparatus and thus will present a list and position the PS as a constructive light-opponent to Macron. These disagreements and opposition are pure form and rhetoric, because in the end Macron's policy is simply deepening Hollande and Valls's reforms.

The Greens (Europe Ecologie Les Verts - EELV) want to have their own list in order to recuperate politically and escape marginality. Indeed they lost all their members of parliament in the legislative elections and, in the presidential election they didn't present a candidate and supported Hamon. Most of their members left the party either for joining Hamon's new movement or for joining Macron. Traditionally the European elections are the best election for the French Greens (they almost overtook the PS in the 2009 election). They might gather 2 to 3% and this will help the leadership justify the necessity for the party to survive (while currently their survival looks very compromised) and not to merge with Génération.s or La République En Marche (LREM).

Hamon will also have his own list, which will be the French branch of Diem 25. Varoufakis is working closely with Hamon to such an extent that they wrote a common column last week in the Guardian[2]. Hamon's European stances are now aligned with Diem 25 and he is acting as Diem 25's spokesperson in France. However Hamon, regarding national policy, has been advocating for unity and a large gathering of left forces against Macron (in the tradition of the unity of the left, such as during the Jospin's governments), which makes me think that he will try to bring on his list the PCF and the Greens and of course people from civil society (trade unions, associations, activists from diverse struggles and backgrounds).

The PCF's mantra for the European election is similar to the previous elections: the broader and larger gathering of the left is necessary in order to fight Macron, the right and the far-right[3]. The only difference with previous elections is the refusal of the PCF to include the PS among potential partners (this positive achievement has to be underlined). So they opened discussions, officially with everybody but their privileged ally is Hamon. Pierre Laurent in an interview[4]stated that Hamon is responsive to the PCF's proposal for a dialogue while France Insoumise is not even answering. On the other hand, Pierre Laurent is also discussing with Varoufakis and the two discussions are not connected yet (according to my information); one of the problems with Diem 25 is the very strong commitment of the current leadership of the PCF to preserve the independence and identity of the

PCF (this will of defending the survival of the apparatus and the refusal of any dilution of the communist identity is reinforced by the internal struggles as the congress approaches). This commitment sounds hardly compatible with Varoufakis's conception of a European movement, particularly if Varoufakis' conception is the integrated, transnational party described a few weeks ago. The PCF will want to preserve the EL and this might reveal itself difficult with Varoufakis's promotion of Diem 25. The second problem will be Syriza as the PCF is strongly defending anything done or said by Tsipras, his government and the party while Varoufakis has a very different attitude towards Tsipras... From the current balance of forces inside the PCF and the latest interviews and press releases, my bet is that the PCF will either present a common list with Hamon or present its own list (which will also include trade unionists, activists from civil society and so on). The winning option will depend on the balance of forces inside the congress and the potential compromises which will be allowed by Varoufakis and/or the PCF. In my opinion, the option privileged by the current leadership and notably Pierre Laurent is an alliance with Hamon.

Ensemble! is torn apart between people supporting Mélenchon and other opposed to him. The most probable outcome will be a split of the organisation between the ones supporting France Insoumise's lists and the others who will try to organise a list gathering various left tendencies (maybe with the PCF, maybe with the Greens, maybe with Hamon, difficult to say). Nevertheless Ensemble is a very small organisation and most of their elected representatives (Autain, Fiat, Obono) are already involved in France Insoumise. But the part of Ensemble which is against FI can provide hundreds of activists and a few candidates (second fiddles known by no-one outside of the radical left networks) for garnishing a list which will claim to unite the left (and Générations, as well as EELV as well as the PCF will try to be the incarnation of unity).

France Insoumise will definitely have its own list and will surely ally with nobody. France Insoumise already launched their process of opening to their whole basis (the 500 000 people who signed in on their electronic platform) the working groups on the program[5] and also the possibility for every "member" to apply for being on the list[6]. France Insoumise is a war machine in times of campaign, and the fact that they are already working on their program, the composition of their list but also their arguments and trying to polarise the political agenda should not go unnoticed. Most of their spokespersons insist on the link between Macron's rail reform and the EU (through the fourth railway package and other things); they are connecting Macron's policies to the EU neoliberal framework in almost all of their interventions (in the Media and in public). One of Mélenchon's advisors also published a week ago a book about "insousmission" in Europe. They seem decided to go alone to this election and present the stakes as a referendum against Macron's policies which are similar to the Commission's recommendations. Their current focus is on the alliance at a European level; they launched their movement with Podemos and Bloco and a campaign on tax fraud and avoidance will be released soon in order to concretize this alliance and solidify the alliance. In addition to this campaign, FI will try to expand their movement. In an interview published yesterday, Mélenchon said he was confident in the fact that his European movement will soon be joined by the Green parties from Denmark and Sweden[7]. Manuel Bompard, the coordinator of the campaigns of France Insoumise (the de facto leader of the organisation Under Mélenchon's instructions) attended

Levica congress which took place by the end of March and in his Facebook post he mentioned the broadening of the participants of their European campaign against tax avoidance. In mid-February, Mélenchon also visited Naples's mayor, Luigi de Magistris and people from Potere al Popolo[8] and in my opinion he didn't travel to Naples only to demonstrate his support before the elections ... In October he went in Greece and met with Konstantopioulo but also with Popular Unity (in order to keep all options open). All these elements, once connected, arrive to a conclusion: Mélenchon and France Insoumise are in an all-out political offensive for expanding their movement, reach and pass, by the end of the European elections, the threshold of 25 MEP from 7 countries required for forming a new group. Podemos and FI will, most probably, have 10 to 12 MEP each, so with allies in several countries, this possibility seems much more probable and credible. And the inclusion in a common campaign against tax evasion or the signature of a consensual manifesto is objectively one of the best tool for doing so ...

Finally, the far left will surely have one or two lists, depending on the ability of the two Trotskyist far-left organizations (LO and the NPA) to reach an agreement. For the time, two lists seems the most likely option; their combined electoral weight is around 1 - 1.5% so it is marginal in comparison to the whole electorate but might deprive another list of the dozens of thousands of votes necessary for overcoming the 5% threshold ...

In conclusion, with a 5% of the votes threshold for having any MEPs it is very unlikely that the PCF or the Greens and even Hamon got any MEP's unless the three of them (or two of them) form an alliance (while the far left won't get any MEP for sure). There had not been any electoral poll since the one mentioned in Angelina's paper[9] (the poll was conducted in November) so it's quite difficult to estimate the accurate electoral balance of forces. What is sure is that France Insoumise's leadership is unchallenged for the time being even though their attitude is criticized by many in the social movement. Actually the context of a social movement is forcing France Insoumise to comply with the unity behind the trade unions and the workers on strike. The balance of forces in the left will be clearer after the social movement, whatever its outcomes might be, as the discussions will keep going during the mobilisations.

[1]<https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/Meet-the-next-leader-of-Parti-Socialiste>

[2]https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/09/pan-europe-party-progressive-eu-brexit-yanis-varoufakis?CMP=tw_t_gu

[3]<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2018/04/16/97001-20180416FILWWW00156-europeennes-le-pcf-pour-une-liste-commune-avec-les-opposants-de-gauche-a-macron.php>

[4]<http://lvsl.fr/pierre-laurent-5-mai-reussi-5-mai-additionnerait-forces>

[5]<https://lafranceinsoumise.fr/2018/04/12/elaboration-programme-europeen/>

[6]<https://lafranceinsoumise.fr/2018/04/12/ouverture-candidature-elections-europeennes/>

[7]<https://www.lejdd.fr/politique/melenchon-au-jdd-la-chienlit-cest-macron-3626606>

[8]<https://melenchon.fr/2018/02/17/vlog-a-naples-rencontre-potere-al-popolo/>

[9]As a reminder this poll estimated that the far left (united) would receive 1% of the votes, the PCF would gather 2%, France Insoumise would reach 14% while the PS would receive only 8% of the votes and 4% to the Greens. However this poll didn't included Hamon which might significantly change the results of the PS and the Greens.