

di Pablo Livigni -

One day after the elections, it is still difficult to comprehend fully the results of yesterday's predicament. On

thing is definitely clear, the left has been deeply defeated.

The first surprise of the European elections has been the higher than expected turnout.

Indeed, while every

polling stations of the country announced it at around 42-44%, meaning around the one of 2014, it is measured

today at 50,12 %, the highest one since the early 90's. In the context of the Yellow Vest movement, the campaign

for the European elections was late to start and mostly concentrated on national stances. In the last month

before the vote, the french government decided to make the election a symbolic referendum : « for » or

« against » Macron. The far right jumped on the occasion, hoping to comfort their high score of 2014 (24,86 %)

and inflict the first defeat to LREM since the beginning of the President's mandate.

Moreover the raise of the

turnout has been particularly spectacular in rural areas and regions where the far right is usually successful.

However, still one on two french people did not participate in the ballot, the eurosceptics sentiment being higher

than ever.

The Rassemblement National is unequivocally the winner of the elections with 23,31% and more than 5 millions

votes. Not only did they held their first position for the second time in the European elections but they managed

to raise the number of votes, building on the support they received in the presidential elections. Their young

candidate has dominated the electoral debates and different political shows, continuing the already engaged

process of modernising and softening the image of the party. The far right appears to be the political option

channeling the social protestation and grievances of a massive part of the popular classes. If it had been a protest

vote for so many years, it is clear that the movement is nowadays receiving support for its xenophobic and

nationalist stance. Its victory is the demonstration of the disastrous failure of the left.

Debout la France, a far

right party that had called to support Marine Le Pen at the second round of the presidential elections has

received 3,51% (800 thousand votes). Together they represent therefore almost a third of the french voters of yesterday. Nothing seems for the moment strong enough to stop their dangerous dynamism.

La République en Marche came second in an election where Emmanuel Macron did not hesitate to publicly support its candidate and orchestrate a political antagonism « progressivist vs nationalist » that he believed would grant him victory. This political operation failed, however helped by the high turnout of its electorate (privileged people and people with high revenues and/or highly qualifications are more likely to vote in the European elections) it saved itself from ridicule. LREM does not succeed however to build politically further than it's 20% bloc that has brought it to power. Worst, the government has been arrogantly defending their policies and announcing that the result of the elections would not make them change any of their political objective. The political crisis in France might therefore settle for more years.

The right wing party, Les Républicains, has been crushed violently. Obtaining 22,41 % (around 5 millions votes), it realises its worst result ever at the European level. Confirming what the presidential elections had announced with the elimination of François Fillon, the right wing is trapped between the far right and LREM that both have channel its electorate. Difficult to see how they could find a quick solution to their situation. Today already some of its political leader asked for the party leader (Laurent Wauquiez) to resign, opening a traditional « guerre des chefs » (war of leaders).

The left has been shattered in the election. The France Insoumise has barely realised the same result as the Front de Gauche in 2014. They failed to invite themselves as a third alternative between the Rassemblement National and LREM and scored 6,31% with 1,5 millions votes. Its electorate from 2017 has spread across the whole left and towards the Greens, and mostly abstain. The Socialist party saved a few seat but continuously seems to appear in a lethargic state with their similar 6,2%. Benoît Hamon and its movement Generation.s has shortly reached the 3% threshold that allow him to reimburse its campaign fees but already announce before the voter

that, if he did not get the 5% he might leave politics. The Communist from the Communist Party lead by Ian Brossat had done a remarkable campaign but failed to convince the leftist electorate to let them a chance. They scored 2,49 % (a bit more than half a million votes).

Finally the Greens have imposed themselves as the third political option in the country. They gained a particular high support in the (18-35) electorate and partly from the one that had supported the France Insoumise. Their responsibility in the left will be huge in the years to come. Indeed, they campaign mostly on leftist propositions however they positioned themselves as « neither left or right » and sometimes sending signals to more liberal electorates. This will be the core challenge for the years to come and for the left.

In the context of high social tension, numerous yellow vest in the movement called to « vote for anyone but Macron » and it is probable that the Rassemblement National benefited from it. However it seems the France Insoumise and the Greens did too. Therefore it is still an open question to determine what effect did the social movement had on the electoral event. If numerous political commentators seem quick to answer it helped the far right, more precise analysis are required to be sure of its real effect.