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Macron must be bold to prevent another far-right challenge

French presidential election

Commenting on the victory of Emmanuel Macron in the French presidential election, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** says:

"We sincerely congratulate Emmanuel Macron on his election as French President. Just as in Austria and the Netherlands, the national-populists have failed to achieve a majority. While it is a deep relief to see the majority of voters standing together when democracy and rule of law are at stake, this is no time for complacency. That Marine Le Pen managed to appeal to so many voters is of deep concern; we cannot allow the politics of racism and nationalism to become normalised. The very significant abstention should also be a clear signal to Emmanuel Macron that his election is not a blank cheque to pursue his pro-big-business socio-economic agenda. What he actually now faces is the enormous challenge of uniting a very divided country and rebuilding the trust of the French people, both in their future and in the ability of their political leaders to promote the general interest. In this perspective, rather than steam-rolling neoliberal labour market reforms, he will have to deliver policies that will tackle social divisions. He will also need to recognize the need for our societies to work within the constraints of our environment.

"While Macron's win is a victory for those that believe in the need for European political integration, that does not mean that democratic and pro-EU forces can rest easy. The new French government must bring new energy to the European project and take up the mantle of delivering a genuinely social Europe, where prosperity is shared by all.

"Looking forward to the upcoming parliamentary elections, we hope the French people will choose representatives who stand for a more just, more sustainable, more open, free and democratic France, assuming its full role at the heart of the European Union."

Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller** adds:

"The coming years have to be used to address the concerns of those who feel left behind. Unless Macron is bold in taking on social injustice, the likes of Le Pen will again seek to capitalise on people's disillusionment. The results of the legislative elections will be crucial in pushing Macron to be stronger on social and environmental protections.

"We will seek to put pressure on Macron, especially on climate change. He has an important role to play when it comes to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But it's not just Macron who has to deliver now. The other governments of Europe must be ready to change direction.

"Macron is right to question Germany's rigid economic dogma. The German government has to listen to its neighbours and do its part to restore collective spirit to the European project. They cannot close their eyes and ears to the economic and social problems that austerity has brought to large parts of Europe, but must work with Macron to create a new European spirit of solidarity."

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