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French elections expose social discord bubbling beneath the surface, says report



Paris/DNA (ots) -

With many people grappling with the prospect of the first far-right dominated French National Assembly since the Second World War, a scientific report explores how the results reflect deep-seeded social challenges.

According to their latest report, *"When the Center Cannot Hold: Governance Performance and Political Backlash in France"*, researchers using the Berggruen Governance Index (BGI) say the outcome of the first round of voting in France on June 30th, which saw a dissatisfied electorate relegate President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance party to third place, reflects an "alarming trend" of right-wing assurgency seen across Europe.

With voters set to return to the polls for the second round of elections on July 7, the report's findings show that despite France scoring high on BGI's 2024 assessment, while boasting a high standard of living, its deep-rooted social challenges are feeding resentment.

Researchers from the Luskin School of Public Affairs at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), the Los Angeles-based Berggruen Institute and the Hertie School, a university in Berlin, Germany, were involved in the report.

Economics, inequality, and migration

The researchers say that although France is very well positioned in terms of the quality of its democracy, government, and quality of life, a closer look reveals how the country's "sluggish economic performance, persistent inequalities, and tensions around migration" have fuelled the right-wing's ascent. Should Marine Le Pen's National Rally (Rassemblement National, RN) prevail on Sunday and potentially take the presidency in 2027, the report says France's governance rating would be threatened.

Youth revolt

Although the report draws comparisons to similar developments seen in other European countries, it shows that some of France's challenges can be traced back decades. Researchers point to how regional issues stemming from centralisation, ranging from extensive financial insecurity, the dominant political and economic power of Paris, and a struggle to achieve social upward mobility have led to increased right-wing support especially among 18-25-year-old youth.

Beyond the second-round results, the report says that stemming the far-right tide is dependent on the French government taking seriously economic and social issues that drive regional inequalities. The report suggests that improving rural infrastructure and increasing regional decision-making autonomy are important steps needed to close the inequality gap.

When it comes to migrant communities, many of which are impoverished and cut-off from mainstream French society, the report states that more must be done to foster social integration and boost employment.

The report in full will be published online at <https://governance.luskin.ucla.edu/publications-2/>.

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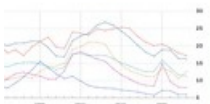
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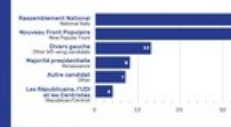
Supporters of the Rassemblement National (RN) react in Henin-Beaumont in northern France with jubilation to the announcement of the results of the first round of the parliamentary elections on June 30. The far-right RN became the strongest force and hopes to gain a majority in parliament after the run-off elections on July 7. (Photo by Francois Lo Presti/AFP) / More information via ots and www.presseportal.de/en/nr/174021 / The use of this image for editorial purposes is permitted and free of charge provided that all conditions of use are complied with. Publication must include image credits.

Youth unemployment in France, 2000-2023
Total labor force ages 15-24



Source: OECD
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Voting intention ages 18-25
2024 French Parliamentary Elections



Source: Factstory

Youth unemployment in France is higher than in the UK, the USA and Germany, for example. At the same time, 70 per cent of young French people under the age of 25 stated that they would vote for either the right-wing RN party or the left-wing New Popular Front in the parliamentary elections. The political centre receives little support from young voters. (Infographic by Factstory for DNA) / More information via ots and www.presseportal.de/en/nr/174021 / The use of this image for editorial purposes is permitted and free of charge provided that all conditions of use are complied with. Publication must include image credits.

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