

## FRANCE: Immediate and longer-term implications of the Le Pen verdict

After the verdict against far-right figurehead Marine Le Pen, one signpost to watch is the likely appeal procedure. In contrast to the four-year prison sentence, however, the five-year ban from running for office applies immediately, even while any appeal is ongoing. This does not only badly undermine Le Pen's chances of running in the 2027 presidential election. It would also bar her from defending her seat in the National Assembly in the increasingly likely case that President Emmanuel Macron calls parliamentary elections once these become possible again as of June.

### Censure risk

More immediately, the verdict re-increases the risk of a censure motion against the government of Prime Minister Francois Bayrou. While the government relies on outside support from the moderate Socialists (PS), Bayrou's opposition to lowering the retirement age back to 62 from 64 years has led to renewed questions among center-left MPs. Therefore, an RN censure motion would force the PS to decide whether it can still accept a government that has declared its intention to retain Macron's pension reform, even if a review was the key concession that motivated tacit PS support in the first place.

However, pensions are not the only item that could test the remaining level of political support for Bayrou's government. Another policy item that could motivate a renewed censure motion is the multiannual energy programming (PPE) bill. Given the political divisiveness of the question of energy policy, political support for the bill has been feeble. Therefore, Bayrou is eyeing a passage by decree, which could motivate the RN to consider another censure motion. Recall that a key policy item that ultimately prevented the initially envisaged RN support for the previous government of Michel Barnier was also an energy-related question. The corrective budget poses a similar potential risk before the summer.

### Shifting RN incentives

A censure motion would mark an RN strategy shift from tacit acceptance of the current government to challenging it more actively again by testing the weakening levels of support for it. The underlying politics should not be reduced to a personal story of revenge. Instead, as discussed in the past, the verdict against Le Pen fundamentally alters the set of political incentives and constraints for the RN. Over the last one and a half decades, Le Pen has worked steadily towards overcoming the RN's previous pariah status in French politics, improving her results during the three presidential contests she ran in. With Le Pen now banned from running in the next contest (or, in fact, for parliament), there is no immediately obvious successor as RN presidential candidate wielding similar levels of centrist acceptance, even if party leader Jordan Bardella should be watched.

Instead, in the immediate aftermath of the decision, the RN's strategy has shifted (back) to anti-system rhetoric, condemning the verdict as part of a centrist political plot against Le Pen and the party. Whether or not the RN hopes to influence judicial decision-making during the appeal in this way, the party will certainly bet on a boost to its electoral fortunes in parliamentary elections likely to be held in the meantime. However, for maximum political impact, these accusations need to be backed up by a matching stance in parliament. For a party that will now decry state institutions being captured by a liberal establishment persecuting political competitors, it would seem odd to not at least test the government with a censure motion.

[Client Portal >>](#)

**Carsten Nickel**  
Deputy Director of  
Research  
+44 20 7186 8873  
[carsten.nickel@teneo.com](mailto:carsten.nickel@teneo.com)

© 2025 Teneo. All rights reserved. This material was produced by Teneo for use solely by the recipient. This communication is intended as general background research and is not intended to constitute advice on any particular commercial investment or trade matter or issue and should not be relied upon for such purposes. The views expressed here represent opinions as of this date and are subject to change without notice. The information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable but no guarantees can be given as to its accuracy, completeness or reliability. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or otherwise, without the prior consent of Teneo. To unsubscribe click [here](#).