
FRANCE'S [] NATIONAL DEBATE': TAXES, PUBLIC SERVICES, ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOCRACY

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The French president wants to hold a great national debate by mid-March in an attempt to find a way out of the yellow vest crisis. The head of state has revealed the debates main topics in a letter addressed to the French people. EURACTIV France reports.

President Emmanuel Macron has written a letter to the French people to launch the great national debate that he intends to hold over the coming weeks.

At the outset, he said that France of all nations, [is] one of the most fraternal and one of the most egalitarian. Its also one of the freest because everyone is protected in their rights and their freedom of opinion, conscience, belief and philosophy.

French yellow vests caught up in social networks

As it enters its fourth week of protest, Frances yellow vest movement continues to be active on Facebook. While the social network has allowed the movement to grow, Facebook is struggling to create a structure for the movement. EURACTIV France reports.

Great disorder has won peoples minds

In France, but also in Europe and around the world, not only great concern but also a great disorder has won peoples minds. We have to respond to this with clear ideas, the French president stated. He then indicated that he would accept no form of violence, whether against elected representatives, the media, journalists, state institutions or public servants.

Among the subjects to be discussed are taxation, the organisation of the state and public bodies, and how both of these topics are structured.

The third topic to be addressed is the ecological transition.

I committed to objectives of preserving biodiversity and fighting against global warming and air pollution. Today, no one disputes the urgent need to act quickly, the French President wrote. The longer we delay questioning ourselves, the more painful these transformations will be, he continued.

The final topic will be that of democracy and representation.

This system of representation is the foundation of our Republic, but it has to be improved because many do not feel represented following the elections, Macron said.

This is the very problem highlighted by the yellow vest movement, which notably contests every authority's basis for national representation. Many French MPs have received threatening and insulting letters, unlike MEPs, who are not among the movements targets.

Imposed subjects

This debate is an unprecedented initiative, from which I am firmly determined to draw all conclusions. Its neither an election nor a referendum. Personally expressing your story, your opinion and your priorities is what is required here, regardless of age or social condition, the French president concluded.

This attempt to consult the population has already got off to a troubled start as the chairperson of the national committee for public debate has been called into question due to her high salary.

Known for her outspokenness and her independence of mind, Chantal Jouanno would have advocated a more liberal approach for holding the national debate than the Élysée, leaving French citizens greater room for manoeuvre in raising topics. The Élysée preferred to impose its own topics, unlike the approach taken during the citizen consultations held last year.

Citizens consultations: France dreaming of ecological Europe

The European Council between 13-14 December will focus on the findings of the citizens consultations. French people dream of having a more ecological and more socially just Europe, where there is greater citizen participation. Can the EU meet their expectations? EURACTIV France reports.

Nevertheless, it must be noticed that the issue of migration is hardly referred to in the letter, contrary to what had previously been mentioned. French people are primarily concerned by environmental and economic issues, according to opinion polls.