

France

Type of Government: Democracy, very centralised state

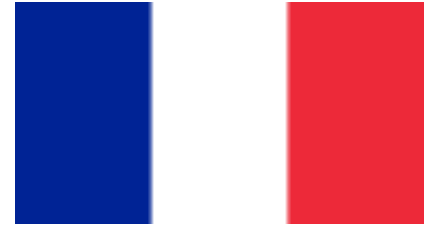
President: Francois Hollande, (term ends 2017)

Capital City: Paris

Ideology: Leftist. France is historically suspicious of capitalism.

Region: Europe (same as United Kingdom)

Neighbours: Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Andorra, Italy, Spain



DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Population:** 65.9 million people; France is the 21st most densely populated country in the world
- **Religion:** Secular but historically Catholic: 51% of people declare themselves as Catholics; 31% agnostics or atheists.
- **Age:** Average life expectancy at birth is 78 years for men and 85 years for women.
- **Ethnicity:** 85% white, 10% North African, 3.5% Black and 1.5% Asian. France is the leading asylum destination in Western Europe.
- **Language:** French is the national language and a key French concern. Infamously, the French have a standing commitment to veto any UN Secretary-General candidate who is not fluent in French.

ECONOMY

- France has the world's 5th largest economy and the 2nd largest in Europe.
- Considered, with Germany, one of the two pillars of the European Union, a super-national body that serves as a free trade zone for most European countries.
- France has traded using the Euro alongside 11 other nations since 1999.
- The government still retains significant influence over key infrastructure, with major ownership of transport, electricity, nuclear power and telecommunications.

Major Industries

- Like most developed countries, France is dominated by the services sector. Financial Services, Banking and Insurance are major parts of France's economy. France is home to the 4th and 5th largest banks in the world, Credit Agricole and BNP Paribas.
- Moderate but famous manufacturing sector, including Airbus.
- Although the number of people employed in agriculture is low, it is seen as a highly important part of French society. The French are primarily responsible for keeping EU agriculture tariffs high.
- Tourism is a major industry. France is the most commonly visited country in the world.

Exports

- **Major Partners:** Germany 16.7%, Italy 8.3%, Spain 7.4%, Belgium 7.4%, UK 6.7% and US 5%
- France is the world's 6th largest exporter of manufactured goods
- Major exports include: machinery and transportation equipment, aircraft, plastics, chemicals, pharmaceutical products and beverages.

Imports

- France is the world's 4th largest importer of manufactured goods
- Major imports include: plastics, crude oil, vehicles, machinery

Natural Resources

- France has some coal, iron ore and bauxite mines, but coal veins are deep and difficult to reach and unsuitable for the manufacturing of steel.



MILITARY

Size: 228,656 total. France currently has troops active in Mali, fighting Islamist forces in 'Operation Serval'.

French troops frequently participate in peacekeeping.

Army: 122,328 regular personnel. France has been a recognized nuclear state since 1960 and has the third largest stockpile. It is currently has the 5th largest military budget in the world. France is also a major arms seller, with arms being a large export market, with the exception of nuclear weapons.

Airforce: 49,827 regular personnel. France has one of the largest aerospace industries in the world. Alongside the submarines, it is estimated that France has around 60 nuclear tipped ground-to-air missiles and 10 long-range nuclear strike aircrafts.

Navy: 38,643 regular personnel. The Navy currently has 4 nuclear submarines with nuclear missiles.

POLITICS

Domestic politics

- France is the wealthiest country in Europe, and has a high Human Development index ranking of 20th in the world, with corruption also low, ranking 24th for transparency in government.
- France is profoundly sceptical of free market economics; their taxes are high and government services plentiful. Immigration is a major domestic issue.

Foreign policy concerns

- France has a strong interest in helping its former empire (which all speak French), mostly situated in northwest Africa; this is one of the factors that drove France to intervene in Mali.
- France is a member of NATO, despite leaving the organization in 2003 after it vehemently opposed an invasion of Iraq. It re-joined in 2004.
- As a pillar of the EU, France's positions on foreign policy are closely aligned with the EU's position.
- France is sympathetic to "humanitarian intervention" or invading countries conducting massacres and the like; they are strong defenders of human rights and supporters of the United Nations.

More Information

Wiki: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France>

CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>

French Foreign Policy: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy-1/>

BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/998481.stm

Latest news from the New York Times (<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/france/index.html>),

the **Economist** (<http://www.economist.com/topics/france>)

the **Guardian** (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/france>),

Al-Jazeera (<http://www.aljazeera.com/category/country/france>),