France

Type of Government: Unitary Semi-Presidential Constitutional Republic
President: Emmanuel Macron
Capital City: Paris
Ideology: Liberal Western democracy
Region: Western Europe & Others
Neighbours: Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Andorra, Spain, the UK (by sea).

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Population: 67 million.
- Religion: 51.1% Christian, 5.6% Muslim, 39.6% none.
- Age: Median age 41.4 years, life expectancy 81.9 years.
- Ethnicity: No official statistics available. Estimates: 85% white, 10% North African, 3.5% black, 1.5% Asian.
- Language: French (official).

POLITICS

Domestic politics
- French democracy is deeply rooted in secular political values. Relative to comparable democracies like the UK, French tradition has been more influenced by left-wing ideals; however, in 2017, Emmanuel Macron brought to power a 'radical centrist' party, 'En Marche!', defeating both of France’s major historical parties in the process.
- Like other states in Western Europe, French politics has been influenced by the modern growth of right-wing nationalism. Marine le Pen is one of the most recognizable faces of that movement in Europe, but lost the most recent presidential election to Macron.
- There are high profile protest movements in France, including the Yellow Vest Movement, criticising the Macron administration’s lack of commitment to improving conditions for the working and middle class and related issues.

Foreign policy concerns
- France, along with Germany, is one of the major players in the European Union. Engagement with the Union has been primarily trade-based, but has also been used as a more general platform to
boost France’s diplomatic power.

- France puts significant effort into maintaining its cultural and diplomatic ties with former colonies, as well as focusing on projection of cultural influence more generally. This includes protection of the place of the French language in diplomatic circles.

France is usually one of the most enthusiastic proponents for UN intervention in crises, and dedicates large numbers of troops to peacekeeping. This is particularly true where a crisis is occurring in a former French colony.

- France provides significant amounts of development aid, and in 2018 expressed a commitment to ensuring this aid is sustainable and targeted.

- France is a member of more multilateral organisations than any other country.

ECONOMY

- The French economy is more mixed than the UK’s or US’s, with the government a significant actor in the power, defence, and public transport sectors. French politics generally puts high value on diminishing inequality.

- The economy is diverse and advanced. Tourism is a key sector, while the traditionally highly-prioritised agricultural industry receives a great deal of support from EU policies.

- Major export partners are Germany (16%), Spain (7.6%), the USA (7.3%), Italy (7.2%), the UK (7%), and Belgium (6.8%).

- Major import partners are Germany (19.3%), Belgium (10.6%), the Netherlands (7.9%), Italy (7.8%), Spain (7%), the USA (5.8%) and China (5.1%).

MILITARY

- The French Armed Forces contain around 366,000 active personnel. It is split into five branches: the French Army, the French Navy, the French Air Force, the National Gendarmerie and the National Guard.

- France has been one of the more willing proponents of EU military cooperation.

- France joined the US and UK’s strikes on Syria in April 2018.

- France maintains the third-largest nuclear weapons reserve in the world.

- Despite its nuclear stockpile and large defence industry, France has shown strong rhetorical commitment for arms control and non-proliferation.