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by Emma Phillips

Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen are the winners of the first round of votes in the 2022 Presidential Election. The initial results started coming in from early yesterday evening, with the final line-up for the second round coming as no great surprise. The president incumbent took 27.6% of the vote and the far-right national rally candidate took 23.4%. The far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon just missed out as he was a mere 1.5% behind Le Pen. Otherwise, Eric Zemmour took 7.4% and no other candidate's share of the vote exceeded 5%.

A very tight second round now lies ahead with a poll run by Elabe predicting a victory for Emmanuel Macron with 54%. This figure is a far cry from the 66% he managed to pull against Marine Le Pen in 2017. The lion's share of last night's unsuccessful candidates have expressed their support for Macron as he goes into the second round and are urging the public to give him their vote. Yannick Jadot, Fabien Roussel and Anne Hidalgo have all said they will be voting Macron. On the left, Jean Luc Mélenchon and Philippe Poutou are calling for the public to give no voice to the far right. Meanwhile, on the other side of the political spectrum, Eric Zemmour and Nicolas Dupont Aignan have said they are supporting Marine le Pen.

So far, this election has seen a 25% abstention rate, meaning there has been a lower voter turn-out than in 2017. However, this still does not top the 2002 election when a record 28% of French people did not vote in the first round.

Once last night's results had been announced, a spontaneous anti-fascist protest gathered in Rennes. Several hundred people flocked to the city centre, chanting anti-fascist and anti-capitalist slogans. Some shop windows and street furniture were destroyed.

Russia was described as a “monster” by Volodymyr Zelensky last night. In his nightly video to social media, the Ukrainian president accused Moscow of failing to recognise its responsibility for war crimes. Over the last few days, the bodies of 1,200 civilians have been found in the Kyiv region. Volodymyr Zelensky also warned of a mounting intensification of the Russian offensive in the east of the country.

And finally, the departments of the Haute Garonne and the Tarn are on orange weather alert this morning for strong winds. Gusts of up to 120 km/h are expected in the evening.