



What In-house Counsel Need to Know About the UK and France Elections

Government



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While there is a lot of attention being paid to the upcoming US election, France and the United Kingdom held elections last week that put a spotlight on the shifting political sands of Europe. Here's what in-house counsel should know about the elections' outcomes.

United Kingdom

- On July 4, the UK's center-left Labour Party won the general election by a landslide, securing its largest majority since the early 2000s and regaining control of parliament for the first time since 2010. Labour leader Kier Starmer was officially welcomed as prime minister by King Charles on July 5, while his predecessor Rishi Sunak pledged to step down as the Conservative Party (commonly called the Tories) leader.
- Starmer's platform — and approach — was modest compared to Labour's previous leader Jeremy Corbyn (who won his own seat as an Independent running against a Labour candidate). In his first speech as prime minister, Starmer promised to steer the United Kingdom toward "calmer waters" after the Tories shuffled through five prime ministers in less than 10 years.
 - Starmer has pledged to [prioritize economic growth](#). Announcements to liberalize planning and encourage housebuilding are expected soon, with housebuilding companies leading a UK stock market rally last week.
 - Starmer has also pledged to fix the "botched" Brexit deal negotiated by his predecessors, addressing problem areas of trade, research, and security.

France

- France held its own legislative election following the 2024 European Parliament election in which France saw a significant shift toward the far-right National Rally party. The first round of voting took place on June 30, with the second round on July 7.
- French President Macron and his centrist Ensemble coalition lost ground to both the left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) coalition and the National Rally.
- The left NFP coalition secured the most seats outright but remains well short of the threshold for an absolute majority. France now faces a hung parliament, and Macron declined the resignation of Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, asking him to stay in office for the moment to ensure stability post-election.
 - A coalition of Ensemble and NFP will span a complex spectrum of political ideologies, making policy and governance an ongoing struggle.

What it means

- Elections can be a time of change, uncertainty, or even disruption. The change in legislative leadership in the United Kingdom and shake-up in France may impact the regulatory landscape for businesses operating in these countries.
- In-house counsel can help businesses navigate these challenging times by staying abreast of proposed and implemented regulatory changes.
- In-house lawyers should also remain cognizant of how polarizing elections might affect the workplace climate and work with leadership to ensure a respectful, professional environment is maintained.
- In France, the election may also impact the trajectory of legislation introduced earlier this year that would extend a form of legal professional privilege to in-house counsel.

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