

Ex-Iranian envoy to Paris: France faces bumpy road to political convergence



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The result of the parliamentary elections in France seems to have plunged both the country and Europe into a satisfactory shock. The far-right party led by Marine Le Pen, who won first place in the first round of the election, relegated to third place in the second round, and the leftist coalition won the most seats. Now we have to wait and see how the developments in France will go with the new political combination. In this regard, Iran Daily conducted an interview with Bahram Ghasemi, one of the senior diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who has already served as Iranian ambassador to France. Ghasemi was also Iran's ambassador to Italy, Spain and Ireland. Following is the interview:

IRAN DAILY: There has always been a fear and concern about the power of the far right in Europe. Considering the recent success of far-right parties in the European Parliament elections, what is the influence and power of the radical right parties in Europe?

GHASEMI: I believe that right-wing and radical right movements with a specific worldview have been present and emerged in different societies for a long time under different names, labels and brands, and this issue is not the only problem and dilemma of today's Europe. This problem is a wide-ranging issue and it is present in all parts of the world. Today, this kind of worldview and attitude exists in all parts of the world under different names and in different forms, but due to the European taste and values, the long experience of democracy and the presence of political parties and their deep-rooted experience of democracy as well as existence of some kind of transparency in the view along with the dos and don'ts in the manifesto of the European parties to the differences and divisions, should be judged by shining sufficient light and accurate clarification to the citizens and public opinion.

Today, the far right is present beside us and, in our region, there, here, and everywhere. The fact that it is not addressed here and there does not mean that they are not present. The difference is in having an official identification and legal registration, as well as long-standing tradition, and the long-standing parliament, beside the existence of parties as the foundation of the nation-state system there.

Owing to the transparency and impact of the media and the wide distribution of information, this extremism, even with not so many supporters, is well seen there, so society and public opinion judge their behavior and movement continuously, but here the nature of right-wing and extremists is disregarded.

This type of worldview exists in different percentages and in different quantities and qualities in all European countries with increasing or decreasing ups and downs. Poverty, inequality, discrimination, ethnocentrism and inflation, and sometimes humiliation, and tougher than that, the feeling of inferiority, and more importantly, the upward trend of migration with the killings of

war in Ukraine and Syria and the complications caused by the rise of the European Union beside the diminishing of patriot national interests, all of them exist in the formation and relative growth of this kind of thinking and everywhere in proportion to the years that have passed on their establishment.

The roots and causes of this far-rightism in Europe today are very similar to what is going on in our surroundings. But France and Marine Le Pen have more authenticity and root in Europe as news are published about them from time to time and with every election, but in other countries of old

dissolve the country's parliament. Why did he do this and did he achieve his goals?

It seems that with the superiority of the far right next to the right-wing parties in the European Parliament elections, Macron has reached the conclusion that the dissolution of the parliament with holding a snap election were inevitable. Also, not so serious and unconfirmed speculations have also been made that even before the European Parliament elections, he was thinking of working towards the dissolution of the Parliament, and he was worried about his state in the Parliament and considered it difficult to continue the work.



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and new Europe, in the last two decades or a little more, we have witnessed the rise of right-wing populist parties; from Austria to Greece, Italy and Spain, some of them have either come to power or participated in a coalition with majority parties in the government, and some of them have taken aggressive views after coming to power in the complex mechanism of Europe as their idealism has gone back.

They breathe and speak in the open atmosphere of Europe, but their efforts and demands will necessarily be replaced over time, but the fact is that new parties and new ideas come from the new conditions of human life in the transitioning and turbulent world; some disappear soon and some stay for long years. Undoubtedly, the way of thinking of these parties can have strategic and tactical changes, but they are not like socks, shoes and boots that can be thrown away.

After the success of the radical-right in the European Parliament elections, French President Macron decided to

circle; but a way out will inevitably be found and history will not stop at this point.

Winning the majority of seats by the leftists who came to remove Marie Le Pen, now they have to form a coalition with President Macron, as the French left parties mainly have a strong relationship with minorities and immigrants; as have their support in the elections, and undoubtedly, considering the number of their seats, compromising with them will not be so simple. Although they are also facing many struggles among themselves as a party or national community group. Whatever it is, the eyes of Europe and the world are carefully watching the process ahead of the Parisians.

What happened in the one week between the first and second rounds of the French elections, when the radical right relegated to the first place in the first round to the third place?

The reason for the apparent decline of the far right in the second round is very clear; because of the fear of their rise and possible majority gaining by Le Pen, many people who were in doubt to vote, rushed to the polling stations to prevent the National Rally from getting more votes. This election has had a high growth in turnout compared to the previous elections.

Worry and fear motivated the people, especially the leftists, to vote, and pushed the National Rally to fall to the third stage, and helped an important part of Europe and other countries to spare them of the worry and fear of the far-rightists. France and its adventure-filled history as the only superior political power of the European Union has always been a role-model and inspiration for other European states and even old Russia and other parts of the world before its revolution.

Considering the new state of political parties in France, what do you think is the future of politics in the country? Will Macron be obliged to introduce a leftist PM?

Under any conditions, there should be an agreement and a coalition. It is unlikely that Macron will step down, he will keep the presidency of France until 2027. We should wait for his tough negotiations with the parties, he will make all of his endeavors to keep his prime minister as much

as possible; and to satisfy the leftists, he will share some ministries with them, so this will be the best situation for him.

At the moment, the majority of the French and other European countries are happy with Le Pen's denial, although Russia is not happy and the heart of Kiev will spend the current days with a calm rate of beats, although today's Russia could be more hopeful with the coming to power of Le Pen. The possibility of reaching an agreement in this tough situation can be both difficult and time-consuming, and a critical and dark situation could prevail over the blue sky of France and the atmosphere of Europe for a while.

Simultaneously with the parliamentary elections in France, we also witnessed the presidential elections in Iran. Do you think the results of these two elections will have a significant impact on the relations between the two countries?

I believe this crisis and confusion caused by the French parliamentary elections is an internal issue of the French government and nation, and I think that according to Iran's policy, Tehran can cooperate with any government that is elected by the people of that country; of course, these developments in France are not something that leave an early impact which is directly related to us in the short term, and it is not also an issue that will change France's policy towards Iran.

Of course, for years, we have only had superficial relations, like with many other European countries; we don't have economic-commercial, technical and cultural cooperation of the past, and we don't have exchanges even at very low levels. These conditions must change one day, and I hope that with the end of this crisis in France and with regard to the Iranian election and the inaugural of the new Iranian presidency, the French government will start a wise process to improve the conditions in a realistic environment, as the Iranian president-elect has expressed numerous and important words about relations with other countries. Without a doubt, today, Iran will wait for a movement and development from Europe and especially France. As stated in the past, as long as there is wisdom, there is no need for conflict.

I hope that with the new Iranian government taking office France will start a wise process to improve ties in a realistic environment, as the Iranian president-elect has expressed numerous and important words about relations with other countries.