

Poll shows French 'in mood for work not love'

Nicolas Sarkozy's presidential victory marks a turning point for France, with the electorate shifting to the right to choose economic reforms that are the norm in most other developed nations, analysts said.

The right-wing ruling party chief won after promising a "clean break" from the policies of the past, and a radical new agenda of tax cuts and work incentives.

Even the communist daily l'Humanite said today that "the victory of the right cannot be disputed".

"This is a very important moment. It's not just a change of generation at the top but also a change of politics," said Dominique Moisi of the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI).

"It is a turning-point for France: Nicolas Sarkozy now has a clear mandate for change. What the election has proved is that the French were not in the mood for love - but in the mood for work," he said.

For Hall Gardner, professor of international relations at the American University in Paris, the election marks France's coming to terms with economic reality.

"People could see the economy was not working. Taxes are absurdly high and Sarkozy made it quite clear his priority is to ease the burden."

The clear size of Sarkozy's victory over Royal is an important factor, according to Jean-Philippe Roy, political professor at the University of Tours, because it means there can be no serious objection when he undertakes his reforms.

But of equal significance is the way the whole French political landscape is set to be redrawn - with the decline of the far-right National Front creating a huge opportunity for Sarkozy's Union for a Popular Movement (UMP). - AFP

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