

France is bracing for a new wave of protests today, 17 October

18 OCTOBER 2026

Filippo Perini



„Front de Gauche Demonstration for a 6th Republic – 05May13 – Paris (France) – 42“ von philippe leroyer, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Today, 17 October, is perhaps the most eagerly awaited day for the protest movements and for all the young French people who have risen up against the government and the latest political reforms, in a protest that began in the poorest northern suburbs and has spread across the whole of France, and beyond to some European cities.

The authorities are forecasting unrest, and this echoes the accusations made in parliament, with Prime Minister Lecornu having recently accused La France Insoumise – represented by Mélenchon, who is standing in the 2027 presidential election – of fuelling the protests, against a backdrop of an increasingly polarised socio-political context.

The poor quality of school infrastructure and reduced investment in education are the main criticisms levelled at the Macron government,

but so too are the rising cost of living and record levels of public debt, which are leading to a standstill on reforms

Against the backdrop of these protests, the race for the Élysée in 2027 is underway, with the main candidates holding extremely divergent views, ranging from support to outright condemnation.

