Beat: Politics

FRANCE'S RIGHT FACES ITS OUTSIDERS Vs BRUNO RETAILLEAU's SLOW CAMPAIGN

LISNARD'S LOCAL NETWORK & KNAFO'S RISING

Paris, Washington DC, 12.10.2026, 20:53 Time

USPA NEWS - The 2027 presidential campaign is no longer a simple contest between familiar party leaders. On the right, Bruno Retailleau has secured the official nomination of Les Républicains, while Laurent Wauquiez questions whether an autonomous LR campaign can reach the second round. Beyond them, two outsiders are reshaping the conversation from very different directions: Cannes mayor David Lisnard, who is constructing a liberal candidacy through local networks and social media, and Reconquete MEP Sarah Knafo (Eric Zemmour's girlfriend), whose publishing success has made her a political figure in her own right.

This multiplication of candidacies matters because Marine Le Pen remains far ahead in current first-round polling scenarios, at 35 to 37 percent (35/37%). For the traditional right, the question is whether its candidates can recover political space from the Rassemblement National (RN) or whether divided campaigns will leave more voters available for the far right's wider electoral ecosystem.

REPUBICAN BRUNO RETAILLEAU: A PARTY NOMINATION, NOT YET A BREAKTHROUGH

Bruno Retailleau was chosen as Les Républicains' official 2027 candidate by party members in April. His campaign promotes authority, immigration control, security and national sovereignty, while insisting that the traditional right must remain independent from both the Macron-era centre and the Rassemblement National.

But the strategy has a structural weakness. Current polling places him around 7 to 10 percent, depending on the scenario. That gives him an identifiable core electorate but no guaranteed path to the run-off. Laurent Wauquiez, who has ruled himself out as a candidate, has alternated between supporting Retailleau's legitimacy and urging the right to confront the risk of fragmentation. His positioning reflects a wider concern: an independent LR line may preserve the party's identity yet fail to create a winning presidential coalition.

YOUNG DAVID LISNARD: THE LIBERAL OUTSIDER WITH A LOCAL BASE

David Lisnard is pursuing a different method. The mayor of Cannes, president of the Association of Mayors of France and founder of Nouvelle Énergie has built his campaign away from the Paris television circuit, relying instead on local elected officials, digital campaigning and a message of economic liberalism. He places lower public spending, administrative simplification, entrepreneurial freedom and a smaller state at the centre of his appeal.

David Lisnard says he has already obtained 500 pledges of sponsorship from elected representatives the threshold needed to enter the presidential race. These are not yet official endorsements: they must be confirmed during the formal sponsorship period in 2027. But the claim demonstrates why he cannot be dismissed as a purely digital phenomenon. He combines online visibility with an unusually deep territorial network, helped by his role at the AMF (association of Mayors of France), even though that role cannot legally deliver endorsements automatically. He transformed his media invisibility into an asset !

His dilemma is political. David Lisnard may attract liberal conservatives, business-minded voters and former Macron supporters disillusioned with the central bloc. But if he remains isolated, his candidacy could divide the broader centre-right vote rather than build a route to the Elysee (French Presidency). A future agreement with other right-wing forces is possible, but it remains speculation until parties, candidates or elected officials formally announce it.

YOUNG SARAH KNAFO: A BOOK BECOMES A POLITICAL PLATFORM

Sarah Knafo's ascent shows how political influence can now be built outside traditional party machinery. The Reconquête MEP and partner of Eric Zemmour has turned her first book, Le Casse du siècle ("The Hold up of the Century, describing a "robbery of the frenhc state toward their citizens) , into a striking political success. Published by Fayard in September, it had sold more than 200,000

copies by late September, according to sales data reported by La Croix. Its argument, that France's public finances are weighed down by waste and that major savings are possible , gives Sarah Knafo a recognisable message at a moment when debt, taxation and purchasing power dominate political discussion.

The book does not make her a presidential candidate, and Eric Zemmour remains Reconquête's most obvious potential standard-bearer. Yet Sarah Knafo's meetings, media presence and ability to turn a technical fiscal message into a popular political product have expanded her personal authority. She may strengthen Reconquête, compete with the RN for attention on the radical right, or become an important figure in negotiations over a possible "union of the right." No outcome is predetermined, yet her popularity makes her a political actor who cannot simply be reduced to a supporting role.

THE CIOTTI QUESTION AND LE PEN'S ADVANTAGE

Eric Ciotti's (Mayor of Nice) Union des Droites (Union of the Rights, very rightist) has already built parliamentary links with the Rassemblement National, creating a possible bridge between parts of the traditional right and Marine Le Pen's movement. If candidates such as Lisnard or Sarah Knafo are not drawn into other alliances, some of their voters, activists or themes could eventually reinforce a broader right-wing coalition around this ecosystem. That is a political possibility, not a settled alignment: David Lisnard's liberal line and Knafo's Reconquête identity do not automatically translate into support for either Eric Ciotti or Marine Le Pen.

For now, Marine Le Pen benefits from the disorder around her. The more fragmented her rivals become Bruno Retailleau defending LR independence, David Lisnard building a liberal alternative, Eric Zemmour and Sarah Knafo competing on the radical right, and the centre still unable to choose a common candidate the easier it is for the RN to hold its lead, i.e Marine Le Pen. The right's challenge is therefore not simply to name a candidate. It is to decide whether it wants to compete as several ideological brands or as a coalition capable of threatening the frontrunner.

A RACE OF ALLIANCES MUST BE DELICATELY BUILT ON STRATEGY & TACTICS

The election remains months away, and early polling should never be mistaken for a final result. But one trend is already clear: the 2027 campaign will be shaped as much by alliances as by manifestos. Bruno Retailleau's nomination gave LR a candidate. David Lisnard has built the beginnings of a local electoral machine. Sarah Knafo has shown that a book can become a campaign platform. Eric Ciotti holds a potential bridge to the RN, while Marine Le Pen retains the strongest position in the polls.

The question for the right is whether these parallel ambitions will produce competition, negotiation or eventual consolidation. If no strategic agreement emerges, the most powerful candidate may be the one who has done the least to compete for the space: Marine Le Pen, waiting at the centre of a divided opposition…/

SOURCES

Official French government calendar for the 2027 presidential election.

Toluna Harris Interactive polling for M6 and RTL, October 2026.

Reporting on Bruno Retailleau's LR nomination and campaign strategy.

Statements and reporting on David Lisnard's claimed 500 sponsorship pledges.

Sales reporting and publisher information concerning Sarah Knafo's Le Casse du siècle.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-27271/frances-right-faces-its-outsiders-vs-bruno-retailleaus-slow-campaign.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Rahma Sophia RACHDI, Jedi Foster

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Rahma Sophia RACHDI, Jedi Foster

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619