

Macron snap election leaves rivals stunned after EU vote

France's political leaders are scrambling to prepare for snap elections after President Emmanuel Macron dissolved parliament in response to a stinging European vote defeat by the far-right National Rally.

Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire has warned the two-round vote, starting on 30 June could have "the most serious consequences" in modern French history.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats were also heavily beaten in Sunday's European elections by the conservative opposition, but he has ruled out holding early elections.

The conservative CSU premier of Bavaria, Markus Söder, said Mr Scholz's government was essentially finished and needed to follow the French example.

Germany isn't scheduled to hold fresh elections until 2025, but Mr Söder said the "country needs a new start".

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