

Challenge: Summarize powers of France, would you change anything?

The prime minister and the Council of Ministers are chosen by the president- this is known as “the government” – the Council takes care of state departments such as education, economy, defense, etc. The prime minister coordinates and directs the Council of Ministers, under direct orders from the president.

This Council of Ministers, even though indirectly by the president, is actually quite autonomous (after the 5th Republic) it can control the parliamentary agenda, insist on parliament vote, and is protected from parliamentary sanction – it is in a strong position to press legislative programs through parliaments – the majority coalition created by this government has overtime created stability, efficiency and durability in a land of negative consensus such as France, I think that it is, indeed, a very efficient government because, even though it is autonomous, it gets a considerable amount of consensus by incorporating the president and parliament in its decisions. I would not change this entity, except for maybe increasing the level of participation of the French people in choosing their leaders, not just letting everything up to the president – at least let the people vote for president *and* prime minister.

Parliament has two chambers – the National Assembly (elected by the people) and the Senate (elected by public officials) – Government is accountable only to the National Assembly, the Senate cannot censor the government – both chambers act on all legislation – the National Assembly, if asked, can override the Senate. Since the Senate seems there just to “provide ideas” and can be “disqualified” at any time, I would simply eliminate it, and just keep the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers – it’s just too many people doing similar things; too many increases negative consensus.

The Constitutional Council is composed of 9 justices, 3 appointed by the president, 3 by the Senate and 3 by the National Assembly. The Council seems to be like

a “judge” of all laws passed – it is “feared”, since it might be a detriment in legislative processes because of its activism – even though deterrent, I think it is appropriate because it evaluates laws and decisions, confirming each time it will be the best for the country.