One French intelligence unit, the Directorate-General for External Security, is considered to be a component of the Armed Forces under the authority of the Ministry of Defense. The other, the Directorate-General for Internal Security operates under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior.[154] France's cybersecurity capabilities are regularly ranked as some of the most robust of any nation in the world.[155][156]

French weapons exported totaled 27 billion euros in 2022, up from 11.7 billion euros the previous year 2021. Additionally, the UAE alone contributed more than 16 billion euros arms to the French total.[157] Among the largest French defence companies are Dassault, Thales and Safran.[158]

France uses a civil legal system, wherein law arises primarily from written statutes;[81] judges are not to make law, but merely to interpret it (though the amount of judicial interpretation in certain areas makes it equivalent to case law in a common law system). Basic principles of the rule of law were laid in the Napoleonic Code (which was largely based on the royal law codified under King Louis XIV). In agreement with the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the law should only prohibit actions detrimental to society.

French law is divided into two principal areas: private law and public law. Private law includes, in particular, civil law and criminal law. Public law includes, in particular, administrative law and constitutional law. However, in practical terms, French law comprises three principal areas of law: civil law, criminal law, and administrative law. Criminal laws can only address the future and not the past (criminal ex post facto laws are prohibited).[159] While administrative law is often a subcategory of civil law in many countries, it is completely separated in France and each body of law is headed by a specific supreme court: ordinary courts (which handle criminal and civil litigation) are headed by the Court of Cassation and administrative courts are headed by the Council of State. To be applicable, every law must be officially published in the Journal officiel de la République française.[citation needed]

France does not recognise religious law as a motivation for the enactment of prohibitions; it has long abolished blasphemy laws and sodomy laws (the latter in 1791). However, "offences against public decency" (contraires aux bonnes mœurs) or disturbing public order (trouble à l'ordre public) have been used to repress public expressions of homosexuality or street prostitution.[citation needed]

France generally has a positive reputation regarding LGBTQ rights.[160] Since 1999, civil unions for homosexual couples have been permitted, and since 2013, same-sex marriage and LGBT adoption are legal.[161] Some consider hate speech laws in France to be too broad or severe, undermining freedom of speech.[162]

France has laws against racism and antisemitism,[163] while the 1990 Gayssot Act prohibits Holocaust denial. In 2024, France became the first nation in the European Union to explicitly protect abortion in its constitution.[164]

Freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed by the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The 1905 French law on the Separation of the Churches and the State is the basis for laïcité (state secularism): the state does not formally recognise any religion, except in Alsace-Moselle, which continues to subsidize education and clergy of Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Judaism. Nonetheless, France does recognise religious associations. The Parliament has listed many religious movements as dangerous cults since 1995 and has banned wearing conspicuous religious symbols in schools since 2004. In 2010, it banned the wearing of face-covering Islamic veils in public; human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch described the law as discriminatory towards Muslims.[165][166] However, it is supported by most of the population.[167]  
  
  
  
France has a social market economy characterised by sizeable government involvement and diversified sectors. For roughly two centuries, the French economy has consistently ranked among the ten largest globally; it is currently the world's ninth largest by purchasing power parity, the seventh largest by nominal GDP, and the second largest in the European Union by both metrics.[169] France is considered a great power with considerable economic strength,[170] being a member of the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Group of Twenty largest economies. France ranked 12th in the 2024 Global Innovation Index, compared to 16th in 2019.[171][172]

France's economy is highly diversified; services represent two-thirds of both the workforce and GDP,[173] while the industrial sector accounts for a fifth of GDP and a similar proportion of employment. France is the third-biggest manufacturing country in Europe, behind Germany and Italy, and ranks eighth in the world by manufacturing output, at 1.9 per cent.[174] Less than 2 per cent of GDP is generated by the primary sector, namely agriculture;[175] however, France's agricultural sector is among the largest in value and leads the EU in overall production.[176]