



NAVACELLE

Focus

A year of criminal justice: major criminal trials from July 2025 to July 2026

Navacelle looks back at the criminal trials held in France that made headlines for their legal, political, social, or criminal significance.

July 2026

Marine Le Pen's appeal trial:

alleged misuse of European funds and eligibility issue ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

In January and February 2026, Marine Le Pen appeared on appeal in the case concerning the European Parliament assistants of the National Front (now National Rally), relating to the alleged improper use of European Parliament funds. Beyond the issue of the defendants' criminal liability, the proceedings carry major political significance due to their potential consequences for Marine Le Pen's eligibility to stand in the 2027 presidential election.



Investigation

- March 2015: referral of the matter to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) by the President of the European Parliament.
- June 2017: Marine Le Pen was placed under formal investigation for misappropriation of public funds.
- The investigation concerns the alleged use of European Parliament funds to pay parliamentary assistants of the National Front/National Rally, who allegedly performed duties primarily benefiting the party rather than parliamentary work (estimated loss: €1.4 million to €3.2 million).
- The National Rally and 25 defendants were referred to trial before the Paris Criminal Court. Marine Le Pen is presented as the instigator of the scheme.



Trial

- **March 2025:** Convicted at first instance of Marine Le Pen and sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment, including 2 years under electronic monitoring, a €100,000 fine and a 5 year ban on standing for public office, with immediate enforcement pending appeal.
- 12 defendants including Marine Le Pen lodged an appeal against the decision.
- **13 January to 12 February 2026:** Appeal hearing before the Court of Appeal.



Sentencing

On 7 July 2026

- From 6-month suspended sentence to 3 years' imprisonment, including 2 years suspended, fines and additional sentences, including ineligibility periods.
- Following the offenses of:
 - misappropriation of public funds by MEPs,
 - use of the proceeds of this offense by parliamentary assistants,
 - accomplices to this offense for certain National Rally leaders,
- For Marine Le Pen: 3 years in prison, including 2 suspended sentence, and 1 with electronic monitoring, a fine of 100,000 euros, and 45 months' ineligibility, including 30 months suspended sentence. The period of ineligibility began on the date the judgment was handed down (31 March 2025) and has now been fully served.
- For the National Rally: a fine of 2 million euros, including 1 million euros in principal, and the confiscation of 1 million euros (same penalties as decided by the judgement) for use of the proceeds of habitual misappropriation of public funds by a legal entity.



Upcoming legal proceedings

- Louis Aliot has expressed his intention to lodge an appeal to the Court of Cassation.
- Marine Le Pen also announced that she would file an appeal with the Court of Cassation and run in the presidential election.
- Other defendants and general prosecution office could follow until 17 July 2026.



Impacts

- **Highly publicized case due to strong criticism expressed by Marine Le Pen and her supporters against the judiciary and the first-instance decision.**
- **By considering that the period of ineligibility has been fully served, the Court of Appeal does not prevent Marine Le Pen from standing in the 2027 presidential election.**
- **A landmark case highlighting the issues surrounding the monitoring of the use of European funds and the criminal liability of politicians in the management of public resources.**