
FRENCH MEDIA: PROSECUTORS TO START LEGAL ACTION AGAINST FRANCOIS FILLON

-

13.02.2017

Deutsche Welle (12 February 2017)

Citing unidentified sources close to the investigation, the French weekly "Journal de Dimanche" (JDD) said the Public Prosecutor's office was considering two options which could be taken as soon as this week.

Firstly, the case could be referred to an investigative magistrate, who will decide whether to put Fillon and his British wife, Penelope, under formal investigation.

Watch video25:59

French Election Campaign – Battle of the Outsiders?

The second option would see the case put directly before a criminal court and would see the center-right Republican's presidential candidate formally charged. His trial could start before the end of the month.

Case "won't be dropped"

JDD cited the sources as saying the likelihood of the case being dropped, which Fillon requested on Friday, now seems unlikely, and would effectively end Fillon's presidential bid.

In response to Sunday's report, the office of France's Financial Prosecutor denied the newspaper report.

"No decision has been made at this stage of the investigation and no timeframe has been agreed as of today," a spokeswoman said.

[François Fillon wife Penelope]

French presidential candidate Francois Fillon's wife, Penelope, received hundreds of thousands of euros from public funds over eight years

Fillon is alleged to have paid his wife, Penelope, several hundred thousands of euros for work she may not have done.

DW RECOMMENDS

France's Fillon urges financial prosecutor to drop 'illegal' fake work inquiry

Attorneys for the French politician have hit out at financial prosecutors investigating payments made to his wife. Fillon's lawyer has said the prosecutor is "not competent" to investigate the matter. (09.02.2017)

Macron tops French presidential opinion polls as Fillon fights for campaign

French Socialists choose Hamon as presidential candidate amid high turnout

The probe has also extended to tens of thousands of euros paid to two of his children, Marie and Charles, when they were trainee lawyers, the "Canard Enchaîné" satirical weekly said.

'Perfectly justified'

The former French prime minister has admitted making a mistake, but insists the employment of his wife and two children "was perfectly justified."

Fillon is fighting to keep his presidential campaign alive, after public support nosedived following the revelations, and has agreed to step down if he is put under formal investigation.

The latest opinion polls suggest the 62-year-old will come a close third in the first round vote on April 23, leaving far-right leader Marine Le Pen and centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron to contest the May 7 runoff. Until recently, Fillon was seen as favorite to win the presidency.

If the trial option were to be picked, the Republican party would only have until March 17 to nominate a new candidate.

mm/jlw (Reuters)

Kaynak/Source: