
FRANCE'S NATIONAL FRONT PARTY CHARGED OVER EU 'FAKE JOBS'

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France's far-right National Front (FN) has been charged with giving party members suspected fake jobs as assistants at the European Parliament, the party has confirmed.

Its treasurer said they were the "natural follow-on" from charges laid against leader Marine Le Pen in June.

About £4m allegedly went to FN assistants who were not working for MEPs, but doing party work in France.

The FN denies the charges and says it will prove it did not embezzle cash.

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The party is accused of illegally claiming millions of euros from the European Parliament in funds earmarked for parliamentary assistants to pay staff based in France instead.

The charges were brought by French prosecutors on 30 November, FN treasurer Wallerand de Saint-Just said.

Ms Le Pen is one of 17 FN lawmakers - along with her estranged father Jean-Marie Le Pen and her partner, FN vice-president Louis Aliot - being investigated over salaries paid to around 40 parliamentary assistants.

The allegations first arose on 27 April, ahead of the second round of voting in the French presidential election.

Ms Le Pen, who denies the charges against her, was beaten by Emmanuel Macron but later won a seat in the French parliament in legislative elections, retaining her parliamentary immunity.

The FN is highly critical of the EU, rejecting its liberal, free-market agenda.