
MARION MARECHAL-LE PEN CALLS FOR 'FRANCE FIRST' IN SPEECH TO US CONSERVATIVES AT CPAC

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Former lawmaker Marion Marechal-Le Pen railed against the European Union and Islam in her speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference. The 28-year-old is a rising star among far-right conservatives in France.

France should follow the example of US President Donald Trump and pursue a "France first" agenda, Marion Marechal-Le Pen told a gathering of US conservatives outside of Washington, DC, on Thursday.

Marechal-Le Pen, an arch-conservative and former lawmaker, is the niece of Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's far-right National Front party (FN). Marechal-Le Pen has been touted as a future leader of the party despite her decision to retire from politics last year.

Uncovering the appeal of Frances far-right

What Marechal-Le Pen said:

Speaking in English moments after US Vice President Mike Pence finished his speech, she said: "I'm not offended when I hear President Donald Trump say 'America first'," adding: "I want America first for the American people, I want Britain first for the British people and I want France first for the French people."

Marechal-Le Pen also criticized the European Union in her 10-minute speech: "France is no longer free today ... Our freedom is now in the hands of the European Union." The FN is known for its Euroscepticism. Marine Le Pen ran against French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017 on an anti-EU platform.

On immigration and Islam, Marechal-Le Pen said: "France is in the process of passing from [being] the eldest daughter of the Catholic Church to the little niece of Islam."

She also said she had recently launched a political science school in order to train future conservative leaders, but she offered no details on where the school would be or when it would open.

Why the speech matters: Marechal-Le Pen withdrew from the political limelight last year after her aunt lost the second-round presidential run-off to Macron. She has, nevertheless, been popular among the FN's grassroots members. Her views on abortion, immigration and Islam have often been more hardline than those of Marine Le Pen. Some observers have touted Marechal-Le Pen as

a future FN leader. The party has been struggling to remain united following the presidential election defeat.

What is CPAC: The Conservative Political Action Conference is an annual gathering of high-profile conservatives in the United States. Trump, a Republican, is set to give a speech to attendees on Friday.

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