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A Sovereignist Foreign Policy?

The World as Seen by National Rally Lawmakers

Marc HECKER



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- *War 2.0: Irregular Warfare in the Information Age* (Praeger, 2009, with Thomas Rid; translated into Mandarin in 2011).

Translation

This study was translated from French using artificial intelligence. Only the original version is authoritative.

Executive summary

The National Rally's (Rassemblement national—RN) “de-demonization” strategy appears to be paying off: Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella's party is steadily gaining ground in elections, and polls place it in the lead for the spring 2027 French presidential election. The period of normalization for this far-right movement has coincided with an era of upheaval on the international stage. Within this context, a fundamental question arises: what would the RN's foreign policy look like if it came to power?

To gain a clearer understanding, we used an original methodology: verbatim transcripts of debates from three National Assembly committees (“Foreign Affairs,” “European Affairs,” and “National Defense and Armed Forces”) were collected, spanning from the dissolution in 2024 through the summer of 2026. The author analyzed these thousands of pages using a specialized artificial intelligence tool.

The remarks by RN lawmakers reveal a focus on defending sovereignty, national interests, and the purchasing power of the French people. The party led by Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella presents itself as a kind of shield, seeking to protect the French people from external threats and actors contributing to France's decline. Among its recurring targets are European institutions, German leaders, and the Algerian regime.

RN lawmakers regularly weigh in on major international issues. For example, while they express support for Ukraine, they voice significant reservations about the aid provided to Kyiv. Their condemnation of the 2022 Russian aggression does not prevent them from questioning the sanctions, particularly in the energy sector. Regarding the Middle East, they view the region through the lens of energy costs, the fight against Islamism, and immigration.

In short, the lawmakers are sketching out the contours of a sovereignist foreign policy whose details remain vague. Their positions nevertheless allow us to anticipate some major changes and identify areas of friction—or even crisis—with France's current allies or partners. A few specific proposals are put forward by RN's members of parliament, such as abolishing the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) or reducing funding for the French Development Agency (AFD).

Résumé

La stratégie de « dédramatisation » du Rassemblement national (RN) semble porter ses fruits : le parti de Marine Le Pen et Jordan Bardella progresse régulièrement aux élections, et les sondages le placent en tête pour le scrutin présidentiel du printemps 2027. La période de normalisation de ce mouvement d'extrême droite a correspondu à une ère de chamboulement sur la scène internationale. Or, il n'est pas évident de savoir précisément ce que pourrait être la politique étrangère du RN s'il parvenait au pouvoir, d'autant que ses deux figures de proue ne paraissent pas toujours alignées.

Pour tenter d'y voir plus clair, une méthodologie originale a été utilisée : les verbatims des débats de trois commissions de l'Assemblée nationale (« Affaires étrangères », « Affaires européennes » et « Défense nationale et Forces armées ») ont été collectés, de la dissolution de 2024 à l'été 2026. Ces milliers de pages ont été analysées avec l'aide d'un outil spécifique d'intelligence artificielle.

Il ressort des interventions des députés du RN une focalisation sur la défense de la souveraineté, des intérêts nationaux et du pouvoir d'achat des Français. Le parti de Marine Le Pen et Jordan Bardella se présente comme une sorte de bouclier cherchant à protéger la population française des menaces venues de l'extérieur et des acteurs contribuant au déclin de la France. Parmi ses cibles récurrentes se trouvent les institutions européennes, les dirigeants allemands et le régime algérien.

Les parlementaires du RN se prononcent régulièrement sur les grands dossiers internationaux. Par exemple, s'ils expriment leur soutien à l'Ukraine, ils émettent des réserves majeures sur l'aide apportée à Kiev. Leur condamnation de l'agression russe de 2022 ne les empêche pas de remettre en cause les sanctions, en particulier dans le domaine de l'énergie. Sur le Moyen-Orient, ils observent la région à travers le prisme du coût des hydrocarbures, de la lutte contre l'islamisme et de l'immigration.

En somme, les députés esquissent les contours d'une politique étrangère souverainiste au contenu encore flou. Leurs positions permettent néanmoins d'anticiper quelques changements majeurs et d'identifier des sujets de friction – voire de crise – avec les alliés ou partenaires actuels de la France. Quelques propositions précises sont énoncées, comme la suppression de l'Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration (OFII) ou la baisse des dotations de l'Agence française de développement (AFD).

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Introduction

Few books focus on the foreign policy of the National Rally (Rassemblement national—RN), and most date from before the party changed its name in 2018.¹ The transition from the National Front to the National Rally symbolized the movement’s “de-demonization” strategy and its lofty ambitions: to rally a majority of the French people to gain power through the ballot box. This strategy has begun to bear fruit, judging by the RN’s gains in national elections over the past decade.

In 2022, Marine Le Pen won 41% of the vote in the second round of the presidential election, compared to just 34% in 2017 and her failure to qualify for the final round in 2012. In the 2022 legislative elections, 89 RN deputies were elected—compared to just 8 in 2017. This record for the far-right party was broken after the 2024 dissolution: the RN sent 125 of its members to the National Assembly. As of this writing, in September 2026, Marine Le Pen is leading in the polls for the 2027 presidential election.

The RN’s period of “normalization” coincided with profound transformations on the international stage: Brexit, Covid-19, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the regionalization of the war in Gaza, the redefinition of transatlantic relations following Donald Trump’s rise to power, trade imbalances caused by China’s production surpluses, the impacts of climate change and the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution, etc. In this brutal and uncertain world, what might the RN’s foreign policy look like?

Methodology

It is not easy to answer this question, especially since the party’s leading figures do not always seem to be on the same page.² The party’s election manifestos over the past decade have lacked specificity, with the possible exception of their overall strategic approach with respect to the European Union (EU), which the RN no longer wishes to leave but rather to transform from within.³ Furthermore, these platforms may appear outdated in light of the ongoing geopolitical upheavals. The RN’s website features

1. See, for example, M. Balent, *Le Monde selon Marine*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2012; P. Berès, J.-Y. Camus and A. Lacroix, *La Politique étrangère du Front national*, Paris: Éditions de la Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2016.

2. C. Belin, J. Cliffe, C. Lons, and C. Victor, “If Bardella Wins: Scenarios for a Far-Right Presidency in France,” *Policy Brief*, European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2026. See also C. Fieschi, “The French Far Right’s Foreign Policy: Big Ambitions, Uncertain Direction,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2026.

3. T. Dauphin, *Le Rassemblement national et l’Europe. Un souverainisme en trompe-l’œil*, Lyon: Éditions de la Lanterne, 2026.

16 thematic booklets. None of them is devoted to foreign policy. The booklet on security focuses exclusively on delinquency, crime, and terrorism, not national defense. A booklet on defense was produced for the 2022 campaign, but it was removed from the RN's website following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. One of its key points, in fact, called for a rapprochement with Moscow built on three pillars: including Russia in a European security architecture, defending multilateralism, and fighting Islamist terrorism.⁴

To better understand the RN's international stance, we decided to delve into a wealth of underutilized information: parliamentary committee proceedings. The verbatim transcripts of these meetings are public, except for closed-door hearings. Thus, we examined the minutes of three National Assembly committees ("Foreign Affairs," "European Affairs," and "National Defense and Armed Forces") over a period of approximately two years, from the dissolution in June 2024 through the summer of 2026, representing more than 300 documents. This study presents a descriptive synthesis identifying the main areas of focus for RN parliamentarians.

To help us process these thousands of pages, we used an AI tool called Pinpoint. Developed by Google for journalists and researchers, it allows closed-loop searches, meaning it does not incorporate any data beyond what the user provides. The risk of errors is therefore greatly reduced, especially since the tool "pinpoints" (hence its name) specific passages in the sources it receives, making it easy to locate exact quotes in the original documents. In other words, it performs the preparatory work that a research assistant might do. Pinpoint is coupled with Google's generative AI (Gemini), enabling it to produce analyses based on a defined corpus. We did not use this feature for the present research. We used Pinpoint solely to identify relevant passages more efficiently—in this case, statements by RN lawmakers on specific topics—within a vast corpus of documents.

We supplemented this document analysis with two interviews: one with an RN lawmaker and another with a senior party official. Two other lawmakers were approached but did not respond. These exchanges helped clarify two methodological limitations of this research. First, foreign policy was presented to us as a "reserved domain" of the RN presidency. During an informal discussion, a parliamentary staffer emphasized that the "presidency" referred first to Marine Le Pen (chair of the RN group in the National Assembly) and second to Jordan Bardella (party president). The MP interviewed, however, was more nuanced, explaining that parliamentarians had considerable leeway, except on a few particularly sensitive issues. He also downplayed the differences between the party's

4. Although the defense booklet has been removed from the RN's website, the press conference organized by Marine Le Pen to present the booklet on February 11, 2022, is available at: <https://rassemblementnational.fr> [accessed September 23, 2026].

two leaders on international issues, emphasizing that at the level of the MPs, there was “no confusion about the line to follow.”⁵

Furthermore, RN lawmakers do not set the topics on committees’ agendas, even though their opinions matter. The committees’ officers (“le bureau”) comprise a chair, four vice chairs, and four secretaries. They decide the agenda collectively. In each committee considered for this study, the RN has a vice-chair—Manon Bouquin (European Affairs), Michel Guiniot (Foreign Affairs), and Frank Giletti (National Defense and Armed Forces)—which gives the party a say but does not allow it to impose its views. If a topic is not addressed in a committee, it does not necessarily mean it is unimportant to the RN. In other words, the data set studied contains a selection bias.

5. Interview with an RN member of parliament, September 2026.

Sovereignty: The driving force behind the RN's foreign policy

The RN has 15 members on the Foreign Affairs Committee, 11 on the European Affairs Committee, and 14 on the National Defense and Armed Forces Committee.⁶ A recurring theme in these members' statements is sovereignty, which Jérôme Buisson views as the foundation of interstate relations, before adding: "The chair of our parliamentary group, Marine Le Pen, has drafted a Declaration of the Rights of Peoples and Nations enshrining the right to sovereignty, freedom, and security, as well as respect for identities, which we wish to propose to nations around the world."⁷ This lawmaker was referring to a proposal Marine Le Pen presented in 2023, in which she challenged the primacy of European law.⁸

For the RN, France's sovereignty has been undermined for decades by leaders on both the right and the left. The most glaring manifestations of this erosion are said to be the loss of border control—facilitated in particular by the establishment of the Schengen Area—the imposition of excessively restrictive European standards, and the triumph of free trade, which is presented as preventing the protection of the national economy.

Immigration, a symptom of the loss of France's sovereignty

Immigration is—unsurprisingly—one of the most recurring themes in the speeches of RN lawmakers. It is described as "completely out of control" by Kévin Pfeffer or as a "migration flood"⁹ by Marine Hamelet,¹⁰ Marc de Fleurian,¹¹ and Laurent Jacobelli.¹² The EU is considered one of the main culprits behind this situation. The Union's external borders are portrayed as very porous,¹³ and the reestablishment of internal borders is presented as a necessity.¹⁴ The European agency Frontex—whose former director, Fabrice Leggeri, became a Member of the European Parliament for the RN

6. The list of these members of parliament is included in the appendices.

7. J. Buisson, Foreign Affairs Committee, January 22, 2025.

8. Speech by Marine Le Pen in Beaucaire on September 16, 2023.

9. K. Pfeffer, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 22, 2025.

10. M. Hamelet, Foreign Affairs Committee, June 17, 2025.

11. M. de Fleurian, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 30, 2024.

12. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, March 12, 2025.

13. S. Rambaud, Committee on European Affairs, February 17, 2026.

14. N. Dragon, Committee on European Affairs, February 17, 2026.

in 2024—is described as “paralyzed, caught between political pressure and legal constraints.”¹⁵

For the RN, immigration is a cross-cutting issue that can be invoked regardless of the topic on the parliamentary committee agenda. For example, a discussion on a bilateral defense agreement between France and North Macedonia provides an opportunity to reiterate that the RN opposes EU enlargement to the Western Balkans, which have “become a preferred route for illegal migration.”¹⁶ Another example: the hearing of the Minister for Overseas Territories before the National Defense Committee provides an opportunity to denounce irregular immigration in Mayotte.¹⁷

Some meetings are more focused on immigration issues, allowing RN lawmakers to put forward concrete proposals. For example, in October 2024, during the review of appropriations for the “Immigration, Asylum, and Integration” mission, Alexandra Masson defended an amendment aimed at reducing the budget allocated to migrant reception, arguing that “mass immigration jeopardizes public finances.”¹⁸

The following year, her colleague Laurence Robert-Dehault proposed cutting funding to organizations that offer “civic and language training for immigrants,”¹⁹ a move that surprised a centrist elected official. Guillaume Bigot (RN) then retorted: “We don’t want this reserve army of capital; we don’t want to make them sweat in their burnouses; we don’t want an underpaid colonial workforce. So we don’t want the language classes that go along with it. [...] Integration policy is a sham.”²⁰ During the same meeting, Michel Guiniot proposed abolishing the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII), arguing that “continuing to fund it would amount to funding the decline of French society.”²¹

Still on the topic of migration, RN lawmakers pay particular attention to orders to leave French territory (OQTF). They present the low enforcement rate of OQTFs as a symbol of the incompetence and powerlessness of successive governments, which no longer know how to ensure respect for France. In 2024, Stéphane Rambaud stated: “The failure of OQTF policy is a damning reality for Macron’s supporters. In 2023, 137,730 OQTFs were issued, but only 7.7% of them were enforced.”²² Two years later, his colleague Matthieu Marchio denounced an enforcement rate of less than 20% and highlighted “the failure of a laissez-faire policy.”²³

15. S. Rambaud, Committee on European Affairs, February 17, 2026.

16. M. Hamelet, Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 17, 2025.

17. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, March 12, 2025.

18. A. Masson, Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 30, 2024.

19. L. Robert-Dehault, Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 22, 2025.

20. G. Bigot, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 22, 2025.

21. M. Guiniot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 22, 2025.

22. S. Rambaud, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 30, 2024.

23. M. Marchio, Committee on European Affairs, June 3, 2026.

Committee debates show that RN lawmakers believe they can improve this enforcement rate and enable France to regain control over immigration flows by adopting a much tougher stance toward countries that refuse to take back their nationals, starting with Algeria. To this end, they advocate using visa restrictions as leverage and denouncing the December 1968 bilateral agreement governing the movement, employment, and residence of Algerian nationals in France. Kévin Pfeffer puts it bluntly: “In our standoff with Algeria over the issuance of consular laissez-passer, have we really thrown all our weight behind it? Haven’t we merely been putting on a show, thereby lying to the French people, the vast majority of whom support a tougher immigration policy? [...] We could start by denouncing the 1968 Franco-Algerian agreement.”²⁴ As for Jocelyn Dessigny, he deplores “Algeria’s diktat” and urges the government to “show courage and firmness toward an authoritarian regime that is escalating its provocations and failing to respect bilateral agreements.”²⁵

“We need a referendum on immigration now!” exclaims Kévin Pfeffer.²⁶ To give the French people back control of their borders and protect French identity, the RN intends to amend the Constitution. In this case, the far-right party’s intentions are clear, as Marine Le Pen introduced a constitutional bill in January 2024 titled “Citizenship-Identity-Immigration.” This 14-article text, which has drawn strong criticism and warnings,²⁷ aims to establish a “national priority,” abolish birthright citizenship, and modify the conditions for granting asylum. It aims to establish a “constitutional shield” against European institutions, which “will not be able to stand in the way of France’s inalienable and sovereign right to protect its national independence and the integrity of its territory, as well as the identity and security of the French people within its borders.”²⁸

Free trade and European standards in the RN’s crosshairs

In addition to the free movement of people, the free movement of goods and services is also, in the eyes of RN lawmakers, a sign of the loss of French sovereignty. Members of the far-right party believe that the EU—backed by successive French governments—has promoted free trade and neoliberalism at the expense of France and its workers, who have been sacrificed on the altar of globalization. Matthieu Marchio asserts, for example, that “free trade has destroyed industry in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region”, before

24. K. Pfeffer, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 30, 2024.

25. J. Dessigny, Committee on European Affairs, April 9, 2025.

26. K. Pfeffer, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 22, 2025.

27. C. Lesueur, “Présidentielle 2027 : le référendum constitutionnel de Marine Le Pen, ‘un coup d’État sur le fond et sur la forme’”, *Le Monde*, August 17, 2026.

28. Proposed constitutional bill “Citizenship-Identity-Immigration,” No. 2120, introduced on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

highlighting the risks to French farmers posed by the proposed free-trade agreement with Mercosur.

Elected officials from Marine Le Pen's party tend to see Germany's influence behind European decisions and suggest that the EU indirectly allows Berlin to gain the upper hand over Paris. These statements by Laurence Robert-Dehault illustrate this: "Can France's salvation truly lie with the European Union—the very same institution that has gone to great lengths to undermine our nuclear industry, that is currently working hard to undermine our agriculture, and that, for decades, has systematically favored German industrial interests by dismantling our strategic capabilities in the name of unbalanced integration?"²⁹

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stands as a symbol of this German stranglehold. Widely maligned within RN circles, she is a focus of criticism. For example, following the Turnberry Agreement between the EU and the United States, Manon Bouquin asks: "What is so surprising about the betrayal by Madame von der Leyen and a Commission that, for years, has relentlessly sacrificed France's interests in favor of Germany's industrial interests? We have repeatedly warned about the stakes—whether commercial, energy-related, or budgetary. But the Commission continues to overstep its authority, always to our detriment."³⁰

The "usurpation of powers" referred to by the vice chair of the European Affairs Committee reportedly involves, in particular, the proliferation of regulations across various fields. The EU's ability to produce regulations—presented as stifling for entrepreneurs, farmers, and, more broadly, the general public—is a recurring theme for the RN. In his book *Ce que veulent les Français* [What the French Want], Jordan Bardella readily describes these regulations as "absurd."³¹

One category of regulations particularly irritates the elected officials of Marine Le Pen's party: those related to environmental protection. Nicolas Dragon thus presents the Green Deal as an "ideological and bureaucratic pact imposed without any real consultation with the agricultural and industrial sectors."³² He claims it has led to "excessive standards, rising production costs, and a loss of competitiveness, without any reciprocity from our trading partners." Lamenting the ban on pesticides authorized in other parts of the world, the lawmaker concludes: "Imports frequently continue using substances banned in the European Union, without any binding reciprocal measures, thereby undermining yields, incomes, and food sovereignty."

29. L. Robert-Dehault, Foreign Affairs Committee, April 9, 2025.

30. M. Bouquin, Committee on European Affairs, October 15, 2025.

31. J. Bardella, *Ce que veulent les Français*, Paris: Fayard, 2025.

32. N. Dragon, Committee on European Affairs, July 1, 2026.

Another example: During a meeting of the Committee on European Affairs devoted to a regulation aimed at reducing microplastic pollution, Manon Bouquin lamented the adoption of this text, which “adds yet another layer of red tape.” She then exclaimed: “Europe is drowning in regulations while our industry is going under. [...] The truth is that the European Union would rather increase bureaucracy than invest in concrete solutions.”³³

Opposition to European defense

While the RN defends national sovereignty, it opposes the notion of “European sovereignty.” In his 2017 speech at the Sorbonne, Emmanuel Macron popularized this expression. He presented defense as the first “key to European sovereignty.” The President of the Republic advocated that Europe establish a “joint intervention force, a common defense budget, and a common doctrine for action.”³⁴

The shocks of the 2020s—Covid-19, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and Donald Trump’s return to power—have bolstered the popularity of the concept of European sovereignty in Brussels and across member states. European defense has seen notable progress, such as the 2024 appointment of the first Commissioner for Defense and Space, Andrius Kubilius of Lithuania. In the first months of his term, Kubilius oversaw the drafting of the first White Paper on European defense. A few days after the document’s release in March 2025, Commissioner Kubilius appeared before the French National Assembly.

For the RN, these institutional developments amount to a usurpation of authority, as national defense must remain the exclusive prerogative of member states. Catherine Rimbart, a member of the Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, expressed this view forcefully during Andrius Kubilius’s hearing: “A European defense policy is nothing more than a Trojan horse designed to undermine the sovereignty of member states. [...] Defense remains a sovereign prerogative of states, and only intergovernmental cooperation—such as that of the European Defense Agency (EDA)—can respect national sovereignty. [...] What measures will you put in place to finally respect the sovereignty of states and, incidentally, the European treaties?”³⁵ Andrius Kubilius retorted that “all accusations insinuating that the Commission is seeking to seize new powers are erroneous and based on false information.”

The RN therefore adopts a principled position that defense—the beating heart of sovereign authority—cannot be shared with any other entity. “Strategic autonomy” can only be national, as Nicolas Dragon puts it: “France

33. M. Bouquin, Committee on European Affairs, February 19, 2025.

34. “Initiative pour l’Europe. Discours d’Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique”, Paris: Sorbonne, September 26, 2017.

35. C. Rimbart, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, March 25, 2025.

must equip itself with the means to provide for its own defense, with entirely French weaponry, French defense industries, and a nuclear arsenal belonging exclusively to France, paid for by the French people, and intended to defend France's vital interests.”³⁶

Beyond this principled stance, Marine Le Pen's party levels more specific criticisms at France's European partners. One of the most recurring criticisms concerns the dependence of most European states on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States to ensure their security. This dependence, in turn, leads to the purchase of American weapons. RN members of parliament oppose the budgetary instruments created at the EU level to accelerate Europe's rearmament, insofar as these instruments largely authorize the purchase of American equipment. For example, the European Defense Industry Program (EDIP) allows for the acquisition of weapons for which at least 65% of the cost of components are sourced from within the EU.³⁷ This threshold is considered too low by MP Gisèle Louis, who describes EDIP as “an agent that accelerates competition against our companies,” the effect of which would be to “repaint American weapons in European blue.”³⁸

Germany is—once again—singled out, both because it imports American military equipment and because it has a rapidly expanding defense industry. José Gonzalez, for example, condemns Berlin's purchase of F-35 fighter jets,³⁹ while his colleague Laurent Jacobelli asks: “But what kind of European defense are we talking about when three-quarters of arms orders benefit the United States and when France ranks sixteenth among Germany's arms importers, behind North Macedonia?”⁴⁰

Mistrust toward Germany helps explain the hostility of RN lawmakers toward Franco-German cooperation projects such as the Future Air Combat System (SCAF), which was ultimately abandoned in June 2026. Nearly two years earlier, Caroline Colombier had already criticized a project that ran “contrary to all the fundamentals of industrial cooperation: no common doctrine of use, no joint cooperation, and no common specifications”—a project she viewed as a “Macronist whim.”⁴¹

In this context, Laurent Jacobelli expressed fears for the future of the French defense industry: “After its agriculture, energy, and automotive industries, will France sacrifice its defense industry and its 210,000 jobs on the altar of a Europeanism that is already obsolete?”⁴² Other members of parliament are more broadly concerned about the state of French defense,

36. N. Dragon, Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 18, 2026.

37. S. B. H. Faure, “FED, EDIP, SAFE : les instruments budgétaires de l'Union européenne”, *Briefings de l'Ifri*, Ifri, February 19, 2026.

38. G. Lelouis, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, February 5, 2025.

39. J. Gonzalez, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, October 29, 2025.

40. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, February 18, 2025.

41. C. Colombier, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, October 30, 2024.

42. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, February 18, 2025.

such as José Gonzalez, who believes that “the armed forces are facing serious capability gaps: a lack of firepower, a lack of tanks, a lack of frigates, a lack of *Rafale* jets, a lack of ammunition, and a lack of training to withstand a high-intensity conflict.”⁴³

This vision of a weakened France, gradually losing its sovereignty and whose decline is accelerated by its membership in the EU, helps explain the RN’s position on major current issues debated in parliamentary committees over the past few years.

43. J. Gonzalez, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, October 29, 2025.

RN lawmakers on international events

The period covered by this study—from the dissolution of the National Assembly in June 2024 to the summer of 2026—was marked by numerous twists and turns on the international stage. Before discussing how RN members of parliament reacted to Donald Trump’s return to power or the war in the Middle East, it is worth addressing the war in Ukraine.

The RN and the Russian question

The RN’s image in foreign policy is associated with Russia. This “pro-Russian” image stems from at least five factors: a convergence of values on certain issues, particularly societal ones;⁴⁴ the open closeness of certain party leaders to Russian authorities, such as European Parliament member Thierry Mariani;⁴⁵ Marine Le Pen’s various visits to Russia, where she was received, among other places, at the Duma in 2013⁴⁶ and at the Kremlin by Vladimir Putin in 2017;⁴⁷ the 9 million euro loan granted to the National Front by the First Czech Russian Bank in September 2014, a few months after Russia’s annexation of Crimea;⁴⁸ Marine Le Pen’s statements in early 2022 that the Russian president had no intention of invading Ukraine.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Russian issue is often presented as a divisive topic within the RN, with the “young guard”⁵⁰ seen as less supportive of Russian interests. Jordan Bardella, for example, has repeatedly described Russia as a “multidimensional threat to France and European interests.”⁵¹

Debates in parliamentary committees provide a clearer picture of the RN’s positions on the war in Ukraine. Several members of Marine Le Pen’s party have condemned the “Russian aggression” of February 2022 and praised Ukraine’s resistance. This stance was particularly evident during the visit of the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament to the National Assembly in June 2025. Nadine Lechon welcomed Ruslan Stefanchuk with these words: “On behalf of the Rassemblement National group, I welcome you to our

44. “Marine Le Pen fait l’éloge de Vladimir Poutine ‘le patriote’”, *Le Figaro*/AFP, May 18, 2014.

45. C. Guillou, “Thierry Mariani, candidat RN en liberté sur les réseaux russes”, *Le Monde*, September 19, 2025.

46. J.-Y. Camus and N. Lebourg, *Les droites extrêmes en Europe*, Paris: Seuil, 2015, p. 269.

47. V. Mallet, *Far-right France: Le Pen, Bardella, and the Future of Europe*, London: Hurst, 2026, p. 199.

48. N. Lebourg and O. Schmitt, *Paris-Moscou: Un siècle d’extrême droite*, Paris: Seuil, 2024, p. 213.

49. See, for example, Marine Le Pen’s interview with the BBC on February 8, 2022.

50. C. Belin, J. Cliffe, C. Lons, and C. Victor, “If Bardella Wins”, *op. cit.*

51. See, for example, the interviews given by Jordan Bardella to France Inter on March 10, 2025, to LCI on December 18, 2025, and to *Politico* on June 15, 2026.

Assembly. As your country is at war, it is an honor to host you. The French people are impressed to see that the Ukrainian people are holding their ground in the face of adversity and the violence perpetrated by Russian forces [...] Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to salute your courage, as well as that of all your fellow parliamentarians. Your adversaries are killing, but they have not taken the soul of Ukraine and never will.”⁵²

However, this respect for the Ukrainians’ endurance and fighting spirit has struggled to translate into concrete support. Indeed, on several specific issues, the RN’s position amounts to a “yes, but” that ultimately serves to curb—or even call into question—assistance to Ukraine.

First of all, RN lawmakers are quick to point out that they “firmly defend international law and its application.”⁵³ It therefore seems logical to them to condemn the Russian attack in February 2022, which, in addition to clearly violating international law, flouts a key principle of Marine Le Pen’s party’s worldview: the sovereignty of states. However, the issuance of an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Vladimir Putin has drawn opposition from RN lawmakers. Matthieu Marchio stated: “We believe that such decisions must be implemented with caution and within a controlled diplomatic framework; otherwise, they risk jeopardizing any negotiated resolution to the conflict.”⁵⁴ As for Alexandra Masson, she clarified that ICC arrest warrants should not apply to sitting heads of state.

Furthermore, the “yes, but” logic applies to sanctions against Moscow, as the same lawmaker put it: “We are not opposed to sanctions against Russia, but we condemn those that are a double-edged sword for Europeans. The push to ban all imports of Russian fossil fuels ignores market realities and the disastrous consequences for our industries and households.” In practice, Matthieu Marchio introduced an amendment aimed at “removing the provisions calling for tougher energy sanctions.”⁵⁵ His colleague Guillaume Bigot went further in his criticism of the sanctions, exclaiming, “*Errare humanum est, perseverare diabolicum!*” and then asking, “Haven’t we made a very serious mistake with these seemingly ineffective sanctions [...]?”⁵⁶

Finally, the “yes, but” also applies to military aid provided to Ukraine. In principle, RN lawmakers are not opposed to it, but they add three conditions that constitute major obstacles. First, arms transfers to Ukraine must not deplete French stockpiles, which are considered insufficient.⁵⁷ Second, Ukrainian arms purchases must not be paid for—either directly or indirectly, when funded through European funds—by French taxpayers.⁵⁸

52. N. Lechon, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, June 18, 2025.

53. A. Masson, Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 19, 2025; M. Marchio, Committee on European Affairs, February 12, 2025; G. Lelouis, Committee on Foreign Affairs, December 3, 2025.

54. M. Marchio, Committee on European Affairs, February 12, 2025.

55. Ibid.

56. G. Bigot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 4, 2025.

57. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, February 18, 2025.

58. G. Bigot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 19, 2025.

Third, military support must not draw France into a spiral of escalation with Russia.⁵⁹ This last condition leads Matthieu Marchio to “deem it irresponsible to extend security guarantees to Ukraine, which would amount to directly involving France in a war that is not ours.”⁶⁰

Laurent Jacobelli summed up the situation when he stated: “February 24 will mark the sad anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. I would like to reiterate here our solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In this terrible conflict, there are two lines that must never be crossed: co-belligerence and the long-term jeopardizing of our defense capabilities. France has already sent *Caesar* howitzers, *Mirage* jets, and *Scalp* missiles. Our stockpiles are dwindling, and in the long run, our strategic autonomy and our exports could be threatened. Meanwhile, Ursula von der Leyen and her loyal lackey, Emmanuel Macron, are taking advantage of the circumstances to revive an old pipe dream: a European defense union.”⁶¹

On Ukraine’s accession to the EU, the RN prefers a “no, period” to a “yes, but”: since the party opposes any EU enlargement, it rejects Ukraine’s integration. Some members of parliament add other arguments, such as corruption in the Ukrainian elite or competition from Ukrainian agriculture, which “would exacerbate agricultural and social imbalances within the Union [...]”⁶²

To end the war in Ukraine, RN lawmakers favor a diplomatic approach and advocate organizing a “peace conference,” though they do not specify the organizational details or potential outcomes. Some elected officials seem aware of the limitations of such an approach, as Nadine Lechon puts it: “While we all keep in mind the failure of the Minsk agreements, how can we prevent a future peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia from becoming a new Treaty of Versailles, carrying within it all the seeds of a future war?”⁶³ This question remains, for now, unanswered.

In addition to the war in Ukraine, other current events have sparked debates within parliamentary committees. This is clearly the case with Donald Trump’s return to power and the upheavals caused by his erratic foreign policy.

59. N. Dragon, Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 6, 2026.

60. M. Marchio, Committee on European Affairs, February 12, 2025.

61. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, February 18, 2025.

62. M. Marchio, Committee on European Affairs, February 12, 2025.

63. N. Lechon, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, June 18, 2025.

The RN and Donald Trump's foreign policy

Trumpism is not an easy phenomenon to pin down.⁶⁴ It is generally classified as a nationalist and populist movement. It would be tempting to see a natural convergence with Europe's far-right movements⁶⁵ due, for example, to shared favorite themes, such as rejecting immigration or focusing on identity issues. In reality, however, the situation is more complex. In the post-Cold War era,⁶⁶ the National Front cultivated an anti-Atlanticist tradition that manifested itself not only in opposition to U.S.-led wars but also in sharp criticism of American economic and cultural hegemony.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Donald Trump's "America First" doctrine and his view of international relations as a zero-sum game suggest that defending American interests comes at the expense of other nations.⁶⁸

The RN's stance toward President Trump is therefore not straightforward. During the real estate magnate's first term, Marine Le Pen's party displayed a certain closeness to pro-Trump circles. Steve Bannon, for example, was invited to its annual convention in March 2018. But Donald Trump's second term is proving very different from his first. The weakening of checks and balances has given free rein to the U.S. president's impulsiveness, upending the international system. Transatlantic relations have been severely affected as a result.

Statements by members of Marine Le Pen's party reflect unease with this development. In the aftermath of the November 2024 U.S. presidential election, the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee organized a roundtable discussion to reflect on its consequences. Speaking on behalf of the RN, Alexis Jolly offered his congratulations to Donald Trump before adding: "This election must serve as a lesson for us and allow us to draw conclusions from it. The people aspire to regain control of their destiny, to preserve their nation's sovereignty, and to protect their values [...]. This U.S. election serves as a warning to our opponents: the European Commission, Macron's camp, and the left. People are calling for patriotic and pragmatic policies. They reject open borders, wokeism, and the destruction of industries and jobs under the pretext of environmentalism. Throughout the West, people and nations are expressing their discontent and demanding real

64. F. Vergnion de Chantal, "Qu'est-ce que le 'trumpisme'?", *Politique étrangère*, Vol. 85, No. 2, Ifri, Summer 2020.

65. The use of the plural is justified by the diversity of these movements. For example, parties such as the National Rally, Fratelli d'Italia, and Alternative für Deutschland do not belong to the same political groups in the European Parliament.

66. It is worth recalling that during the Cold War, anti-communism brought the National Front closer to Washington. In the 1980s, Jean-Marie Le Pen advocated a liberal approach to the economy and compared himself to Ronald Reagan.

67. M. Balent, *Le Monde selon Marine*, op. cit., pp. 50–51.

68. J.-M. Guéhenno, "Réflexions sur l'assombrissement du monde", *Politique étrangère*, Vol. 91, No. 2, Ifri, Summer 2026.

change. The French people share the same aspirations, the same hopes, and the same expectations as the American people.”⁶⁹

In the same speech, the lawmaker stated that he expects positive changes on the international stage following the inauguration of the 47th President of the United States. He mentioned a “return to diplomacy on the Ukrainian issue” and a “return to a policy of peace in the Middle East, modeled on the Abraham Accords.” He also predicted a stronger U.S. economy through the implementation of protectionist policies. Alexis Jolly warned that this development could negatively affect France, whose companies would have to redouble their efforts to access the U.S. market.

Donald Trump did indeed move quickly to impose significant tariffs, triggering a trade war that has not spared Europe.⁷⁰ Faced with this tariff offensive, the EU has sought to present a united front. Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which defines the common commercial policy as an exclusive competence of the Union, placed Ursula von der Leyen on the front lines of the European response. She was the one who concluded the Turnberry Agreement with Donald Trump in July 2025. While RN members of the National Assembly took offense at the U.S. trade attacks, they also condemned the role played by the European Commission. Michel Guiniot, vice-chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated: “The (Turnberry) agreement permanently undermines national sovereignty—which is guaranteed by the Constitution—and undermines the policies voted on by Parliament and implemented by the government on behalf of the French people. [...] Once again, France has been committed against its will and against its interests. Once again, the surrender of our sovereignty is detrimental to the French people, since the President of the European Commission—who has no democratic legitimacy—is signing an agreement on a golf course to sacrifice French and European companies.”⁷¹

On another topic, the RN found itself torn between its criticism of the “predatory practices of the United States”⁷² and its opposition to deeper European integration: Greenland. When Donald Trump threatened to annex this Danish territory, the National Assembly’s Foreign Affairs Committee devoted a session to examining a proposal for a “European resolution aimed at supporting Denmark and Greenland and working toward greater cooperation on defense.” On that occasion, Michel Guiniot expressed Marine Le Pen’s party’s “clear and unwavering”⁷³ support for Denmark and Greenland, but he opposed efforts to strengthen “European strategic autonomy.” He introduced an amendment to remove this phrase from the resolution and warned that if the amendment were rejected, the RN would

69. A. Jolly, Foreign Affairs Committee, November 6, 2024.

70. S. Jean, “Trump s’en va-t-en guerre commerciale. Quelles réponses pour l’Union européenne ?”, *Notes de l’Ifri*, Ifri, May 2025.

71. M. Guiniot, Foreign Affairs Committee, November 19, 2025.

72. M. Bouquin, Committee on European Affairs, October 15, 2025.

73. M. Guiniot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 3, 2025.

not vote in favor of the text. Here, in a sense, we see the “yes, but” stance observed on the Ukrainian issue: the expression of support in principle actually entails serious limitations.

Finally, it should be noted that the minutes of the parliamentary committees we examined do not clarify the RN’s position on NATO. Members of Marine Le Pen’s party have spoken out against Ukraine’s integration into this organization, but they have not taken a stance on France’s role within it. A tweet by Marine Le Pen in May 2026 does shine some light on the matter though: “We do not wish to leave NATO. We will withdraw from NATO’s integrated command during this five-year term. [...] We want (this organization) to refocus its efforts on the fight against Islamic fundamentalism.”⁷⁴

In addition to the war in Ukraine and Donald Trump’s return to power, the third international issue that sparked debate in parliamentary committees was the war in the Middle East.

The RN and the war in the Middle East

The period analyzed in this study—from the dissolution of the National Assembly in 2024 to the summer of 2026—does not cover the October 7, 2023 attacks or the start of the war in Gaza. However, it was marked by an escalation of the war in the Middle East, including, among other events, the start of a new Israeli ground military operation in Lebanon, U.S. airstrikes against the Houthis in the spring of 2025, and the various phases of the war directly involving Iran.

During this period, in March 2025, Jordan Bardella visited Israel for the first time, a move the press portrayed as a further step toward the RN’s normalization. The party president notably visited the Yad Vashem memorial and the sites of the October 7 attacks. He expressed clear support for the State of Israel.

This “pro-Israel” stance is also evident in the minutes of parliamentary committee meetings. During a hearing with Benjamin Haddad before the Committee on European Affairs, Representative Jocelyn Dessigny challenged the Minister Delegate for European Affairs: “On the issue of Israel, you have allowed the European Commission to engage in a serious challenge to the Association Agreement, in the name of an alleged violation of human rights. The reality is that certain states, driven by ulterior political motives, want to punish a democracy. You could have pointed out that the agreement with Israel is a tool for cooperation, not an instrument of ideological blackmail, and that the State of Israel is fighting against terrorists responsible for the pogroms of October 7.”⁷⁵

74. Tweet by Marine Le Pen (@MLP_officiel), May 22, 2026.

75. J. Dessigny, Foreign Affairs Committee, July 1, 2025.

The term “pogrom” was also used during a hearing with the Palestinian ambassador to France. Two RN lawmakers spoke on this occasion: Alexandra Masson to denounce the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and call for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas; and Sébastien Chenu to question the ambassador about her position regarding “the political and militant agenda, promoted by certain countries or organizations, concerning the destruction of Israel.”⁷⁶ During another session of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the same lawmaker described Israel as a “friendly country” and expressed regret over the shift in Emmanuel Macron’s position: “Israel is being mistreated and abandoned through cynical rhetoric at the most inopportune moment.”⁷⁷ This shift in the President’s position ultimately led to France’s recognition of Palestine. Marine Le Pen’s party strongly opposed this, arguing that such an act—in the aftermath of October 7—amounted to strengthening Hamas. Officially, RN leaders continue to support the two-state solution, but lawmakers did not reaffirm this position in the documents we reviewed.

During committee debates, the only criticisms—voiced only in veiled terms—by RN lawmakers toward Israel concerned the consequences of the war in Iran. They do not question the justification for the initial U.S.-Israeli strikes—citing a vital issue for the State of Israel—but they criticize both belligerents for failing to control the consequences of their attacks. The rise in energy prices triggered by geopolitical shocks—in this case, Iran’s closure of the Strait of Hormuz—is a recurring theme for Marine Le Pen’s movement, which focuses heavily on purchasing power, and that some analysts describe as a “*parti tribunitien*,”⁷⁸ a reference to the plebeian tribune in the Roman Republic.

Thus, one month after the war began, Nicolas Dragon called, in the Foreign Affairs Committee, for “a reduction in taxes on petroleum products” and “withdrawal from European mechanisms for setting energy prices.”⁷⁹ A few days later, the same lawmaker reiterated these demands, emphasizing that “energy is a basic necessity.”⁸⁰ The longer-term solution advocated by RN lawmakers is to increase the share of nuclear power in the national energy mix, as Nicolas Dragon puts it once again: “This conflict highlights France’s dependence on fossil fuel imports, a vulnerability that powers such as China, Russia, and the United States are exploiting. A national policy on low-cost energy production is essential. Only French nuclear power meets this requirement. Therefore, we must further encourage its development in the face of intermittent green energy sources in order to ensure our economic competitiveness.”⁸¹

76. S. Chenu, Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 20, 2024.

77. S. Chenu, Foreign Affairs Committee, October 15, 2024.

78. J. Fourquet, *La France d’après. Tableau politique*, Paris: Points, 2024, p. 645.

79. N. Dragon, Foreign Affairs Committee, March 25, 2026.

80. N. Dragon, Foreign Affairs Committee, April 1, 2026.

81. N. Dragon, Foreign Affairs Committee, March 25, 2026.

Marine Le Pen is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, but she rarely speaks there. She reserves her remarks on international issues for plenary sessions of the National Assembly.⁸² For example, on March 25, 2026, she delivered a speech on the Middle East in which she reaffirmed the legitimacy of Israel's operation in Lebanon to combat Hezbollah, while calling on the Jewish state to exercise restraint: "While Israel has the right—and indeed the duty—to defend itself [...], the region's only democracy must respect the rules of international law, particularly those relating to armed conflicts. Whether it is the targeting of UNIFIL or, more seriously, the deaths of three Lebanese soldiers or Father Pierre el-Raï, the Israeli army must avoid collateral damage at all costs."⁸³

While RN lawmakers view the Middle East through the lens of energy, another factor that influences their perspective on the region is Islamism. For example, following the fall of Bashar al-Assad, elected officials from the far-right party opposed the normalization of relations with the regime established by Ahmed al-Charaa. In the Foreign Affairs Committee, Jorys Bovet asked: "On February 5 (2025), the President of the French Republic spoke by phone with the current interim president—a notorious former jihadist—regarding a possible visit to France. How does France—a country that has suffered greatly at the hands of Islamism—intend to resume dialogue with a country that today sadly groans under the yoke of an authoritarian Islamist regime?"⁸⁴

With the "migration crisis" of the summer of 2015 still fresh in people's minds, Syria is also viewed through the lens of immigration. Thus, in the Committee on European Affairs, Jocelyn Dessigny addressed the Minister Delegate for European Affairs: "You are hailing a so-called peaceful transition in Syria—without conditions, without demands for control over migration flows, without guarantees for our borders—and you are supporting a hasty lifting of sanctions that paves the way for new waves of migration that are increasingly uncontrolled and increasingly imposed upon us."⁸⁵

In the view of RN lawmakers, the issues of immigration and Islamism are linked. This was particularly evident during the debates on a resolution aimed at adding the Muslim Brotherhood to the EU's list of terrorist organizations. Michel Guiniot supported this move, describing the Muslim Brotherhood as "a totalitarian Islamist movement, radically incompatible with our republican spirit and our democratic society, as well as with our Christian nation."⁸⁶ He did, however, express two reservations. On the one hand, he criticized the text for being tied to European institutions, arguing that "France should be able to adopt measures without having to seek the approval of the European Commission or the Council of Europe." Second, he lamented the lack of any

82. Interview with an RN official, September 2026.

83. Marine Le Pen's speech to the National Assembly on March 25, 2026, is available as a video at: www.youtube.com [accessed September 23, 2026].

84. J. Bovet, Foreign Affairs Committee, February 12, 2025.

85. J. Dessigny, Committee on European Affairs, July 1, 2025.

86. M. Guiniot, Foreign Affairs Committee, January 14, 2026.

mention of “the link between Islam and immigration, even though it is—as no one can deny—an imported ideology.” Another lawmaker, Guillaume Bigot, expressed a similar view: “Why ignore the elephant in the room? Fighting the entrenchment of ‘frérisme’ without stemming the flow of new arrivals who bring Islamism from countries already destabilized by this ideology amounts to combating the effects without addressing the causes.”⁸⁷

Beyond the three key issues—the Middle East, developments in U.S. policy under Donald Trump, and the war in Ukraine—RN members of parliament raise other topics less frequently—or only in passing. As explained in the methodological section at the beginning of this text, this marginalization is not necessarily due to a lack of interest on the part of the RN, since the party does not control parliamentary committee agendas. We believe it is important not to overlook some of these topics in this study, even if we address each only briefly.

China: From one form of dependence to another

The topic of China was directly addressed during a June 2025 session of the Committee on European Affairs devoted to presenting an informational report on “relations between the European Union and China,” drafted by Sophia Chikirou of La France Insoumise (France Unbowed). On that occasion, RN Representative Sylvie Josserand denounced the “major flaws” in a report that displayed “disturbing leniency”⁸⁸ toward Beijing. She condemned the report’s failure to address “massive dumping practices, (public) subsidies, and (forced) technology transfers orchestrated by Beijing,” as well as its failure to mention China’s support for independence movements in New Caledonia. She concluded her remarks with a rhetorical question: “How do you explain that while you mention France’s status as Washington’s vassal, you remain silent on the danger of becoming Beijing’s vassal? Changing masters does not mean gaining freedom.”

The issue of China was also mentioned, incidentally, in the Foreign Affairs Committee during a hearing with the German ambassador to France. There, too, they expressed mistrust toward Beijing. Expressing concern for the future of European industry, Jorys Bovet stated: “We oppose 100% electric vehicles, which jeopardize hundreds of thousands of jobs in both France and Germany, erode the expertise of our automotive suppliers, and only increase our dependence on rare metals—particularly from China.”⁸⁹ Along the same lines, during a session of the European Affairs Committee devoted to the “temporary suspension of the European Green Deal”, Guillaume Bigot highlighted China’s dominance in the field of renewable energy, drawing the following conclusion:

87. G. Bigot, Committee on European Affairs, January 7, 2026.

88. S. Josserand, Committee on European Affairs, June 17, 2025.

89. J. Bovet, Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 28, 2025.

“Using public funds to purchase Chinese vehicles, Chinese solar panels, and Chinese wind turbines—or using public funds to build battery gigafactories—when our energy costs are two to three times higher than elsewhere, is a very bad idea for the economy, for the purchasing power of our fellow citizens, and, of course, for the planet.”⁹⁰

Africa: A symptom of France’s decline

Africa is rarely mentioned in the documents we analyzed. This relative absence is due to the shift in the strategic cycle that occurred in 2021–22 with the end of the “global war on terrorism” and the start of the war in Ukraine. For the French armed forces, this shift meant a pivot from the “southern flank” to the “eastern flank.”⁹¹ Although the corpus studied begins in mid-2024—nearly two years after the end of Operation Barkhane—RN lawmakers occasionally revisit the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal of French troops from the Sahel. Catherine Rimbart, a member of the Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, sums up her view with a scathing remark: “France is in the process of being kicked out of the (African) continent,” before adding: “Permanent bases are closing; Chad has severed its defense ties with France.”⁹² The lawmaker then recalled a visit by Marine Le Pen to this Sahelian country—where she was received by Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno—and believes that the RN, had it been in power, could have prevented such a rupture: “Marine Le Pen observed, during her meeting with the Chadian president, that there was no fundamental hostility toward France. Our African partners simply expect to be treated with respect for their sovereignty.”

Africa also features in parliamentary committee debates when the topic of immigration arises. For example, Kévin Pfeffer spoke before the Foreign Affairs Committee to demand stricter controls on visas granted to African nationals.⁹³ As for Laurent Jacobelli, he denounced before the National Defense Committee “the migratory flood orchestrated by the Comoros in Mayotte.”⁹⁴

Criticism of French development aid policy

Another RN lawmaker, Guillaume Bigot, linked irregular immigration in Mayotte to France’s development aid policy: “In response to the migration crisis triggered in 2018 by President Azali Assoumani, the President of the Republic called on Comorian authorities to better control their borders and

90. G. Bigot, Committee on European Affairs, May 14, 2025.

91. É. Tenenbaum with A. Zima, “Return to the East: The Russian Threat and the French Pivot to Europe’s Eastern Flank”, *Focus strategique*, No. 119, Ifri, June 2024.

92. C. Rimbart, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, March 19, 2025.

93. K. Pfeffer, Foreign Affairs Committee, April 15, 2026.

94. L. Jacobelli, Committee on National Defense and the Armed Forces, March 12, 2025.

the departure of their citizens, in exchange for development aid. This was neither unambiguous nor simplistic, but this system is a veritable trap: today, the Comorian authorities are threatening to lift restrictions on illegal immigration if we halt our development aid. So not only has official development assistance failed to stem the flow of illegal immigration—which remains comparable to what it was before the migration crisis—but, on top of that, it is backfiring on us.”⁹⁵

More generally, official development assistance has been the subject of recurring criticism from RN lawmakers. This criticism is reminiscent of the criticism that prevailed in the United Kingdom before Boris Johnson abolished the Department for International Development (DfID) and in the United States before Donald Trump announced the end of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The French Development Agency (AFD) is thus specifically targeted. It is accused of being “a financial black hole that produces no tangible results in support of interests.”⁹⁶ The AFD is accused, among other things, of supporting Islamist organizations,⁹⁷ funding initiatives in the Gaza Strip, developing projects that promote gender equality, and even providing aid to China, even though China has a much higher growth rate than France.⁹⁸

In the face of attacks from the far right—with Reconquête also launching a scathing attack on the AFD—Rémy Rioux, then the Agency’s director general, spoke on Sud Radio to denounce oversimplifications and falsehoods. In particular, he pointed out that the AFD is a development bank and that 85% of its activities consist of “loans, not grants.”⁹⁹ In China’s case, he clarified that the AFD finances projects through loans at a 5% interest rate and therefore makes a profit.

95. G. Bigot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 5, 2024.

96. N. Dragon, Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 8, 2026.

97. M. Hamelet, Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 8, 2026.

98. M. Guinot, Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 5, 2024

99. Interview with R. Rioux by Jean-Jacques Bourdin, Sud Radio, February 21, 2025.

Conclusion

An examination of debates in the Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, and National Defense and Armed Forces committees reveals a number of insights into the RN's international positions.

Lawmakers from the far-right movement generally demonstrate consistency and restraint. As a senior party official explains, this stance stems from an awareness of the duties associated with significant responsibilities, but it is also part of a strategy: to appear as the party of order in contrast to La France Insoumise (France Unbowed), which is portrayed as the “party of chaos”.¹⁰⁰ This official adds that during RN's parliamentary group meetings, the concept of “strategic corporal” is sometimes emphasized: a mistake made at a relatively low level can have serious repercussions at the highest levels. The goal, therefore, is to “keep a low profile” and avoid “indulging oneself” by making off-the-cuff remarks. The RN wants to prevent a repeat of an incident that occurred in 2022: Representative Grégoire de Fournas was temporarily expelled from the National Assembly for making racist remarks on the floor of the chamber.

Fundamentally, defending France's sovereignty and the interests of the French people appears to be the guiding principle behind RN lawmakers' statements. They are outlining the contours of a sovereignist foreign policy, though the details remain vague. Nevertheless, a few specific points can be anticipated: increased border controls, involving a revision of the Schengen Agreement; a tougher immigration policy leading to a standoff with certain countries of origin or transit; affirmation of the primacy of national law over European law; an increase in the French military budget; a challenge to the progress made in European defense; a reduction in official development assistance, etc. As the debates unfold, concrete measures are emerging, such as the possible abolition of the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) or a substantial reduction in the French Development Agency (AFD) funding.

This sovereignist and “patriotic” stance would inevitably lead to crises with certain actors, starting with the EU. While the RN no longer intends to leave the Union, it plans to engage in a power struggle with Brussels and transform the EU from within. Jordan Bardella has already warned that he is considering halving France's contribution to the EU budget.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the RN has no intention of allowing itself to be hindered by

100. Interview with an RN official, September 2026.

101. “Présidentielle 2027 : Bardella prêt à en découdre sur la contribution française au budget européen,” *Les Échos*, June 15, 2026.

rules decided upon by European institutions. The principle of the direct application of regulations would undoubtedly be quickly called into question, as would the transposition of certain directives. Rulings against France by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights—which is part of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg—would certainly be ignored.

Another player with whom a crisis would seem difficult to avoid is Germany. At least, that is what the sharp tone of several lawmakers' remarks toward Berlin suggests. It is difficult to predict what form such a crisis might take. The trigger could relate to budgetary issues: German policymakers are quick to criticize their French counterparts for a lack of fiscal discipline, reflected in a public debt approaching 120 percent of gross domestic product. However, a victory by a party like the RN would undoubtedly drive up France's borrowing rates and widen the yield spread with Germany.

A crisis with Algeria would also be foreseeable. If the RN came to power, it would seek to carry out mass deportations of undocumented immigrants, particularly those already subject to an OQTF (obligation to leave French territory). Algeria is the country of origin most represented among undocumented foreigners apprehended.¹⁰² To force Algiers to issue consular laissez-passer, the lawmakers suggest using the leverage of limiting the number of visas granted to Algerians. Furthermore, they affirm their intention to denounce the bilateral agreement of December 1968 governing the movement, employment, and residence of Algerian nationals in France.

How would such crises unfold? No one knows, not even the RN lawmakers themselves. But one thing we can state uncontroversially is that the various parties involved would be bound to react, and that escalation is never easy to control.

On major current issues, lawmakers' statements suggest significant shifts. This is particularly true regarding the war in Ukraine. While RN lawmakers take a principled stance in support of the Ukrainians, they accompany it with significant reservations that would effectively dry up aid to Kyiv. They do not explicitly call for "turning off the tap"¹⁰³—to borrow a recent expression from the party's vice president, Louis Aliot—but their positions could easily move in that direction. Furthermore, we can also anticipate a desire to ease sanctions against Russia, particularly in the energy sector: lawmakers criticize the boomerang effect of the sanctions and want to find ways to lower the energy bills of the French people.

This point calls for a more general observation. The statements by RN lawmakers reveal a strong link between domestic and foreign policy, which—

102. "Les éloignements d'étrangers en situation irrégulière en 2025 : une dynamique ascendante," Directorate General for Foreigners in France, available at: www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr [accessed September 16, 2026].

103. "Couper le robinet à l'Ukraine" : le ton est monté entre Édouard Philippe et Marine Le Pen au sujet de l'aide à Kiev", *Le Monde*/AFP, September 4, 2026.

incidentally—is identified by some scholars as a hallmark of populist foreign policy.¹⁰⁴ The war in the Middle East is also viewed through the lens of energy, as well as that of Islamism and immigration. The RN presents itself, in a sense, as a shield capable of protecting the French people from external threats.

But beyond this defensive stance, it also seeks to restore France’s strong voice on the world stage. RN lawmakers describe a country in sharp decline, losing its capacity for action and even its independence. They call for a national revival and often cite General de Gaulle. The first president of the Fifth Republic is, in fact, the historical figure most frequently cited by members of Marine Le Pen’s party—a move that some observers denounce as a “strategy to co-opt his legacy”¹⁰⁵ or a tactic of “de-demonization.”¹⁰⁶ Whether this is a sincere reference or a political ploy, one thing is clear: the France of 2026 is not the France of 1958, and today’s world is not the world of 70 years ago. Dreams of grandeur and power risk colliding with the reality of France’s capabilities and the complexity of a world where antagonisms and interdependencies intertwine. “When the balance between means and ends is broken, even the most ingenious strategies are in vain,” said De Gaulle.¹⁰⁷

104. S. Destradi, “Qu’est-ce qu’une politique étrangère populiste ?”, *Politique étrangère*, Vol. 89, No. 2, Ifri, Summer 2024, pp. 49–60. Sandra Destradi explains more specifically that populists in power use foreign policy issues to mobilize political support at the national level.

105. J. Hayoun, “L’extrême droite française a voué une détestation tenace au général de Gaulle ; aujourd’hui, elle pourrait réussir sa stratégie de captation d’héritage”, *Le Monde*, August 16, 2026.

106. L. Soullier, “Dans un long texte, Marine Le Pen revendique l’héritage du général de Gaulle”, *Le Monde*, June 3, 2020.

107. This quote, attributed to Charles de Gaulle, is cited by André Malraux in *Les Chênes qu’on abat*, Paris: Gallimard, 1971. See also: A. Malraux, *Œuvres complètes*, Vol. III, Paris: Gallimard, 1996, p. 613.

Appendices

List of RN Members of Parliament on the Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, and National Defense and Armed Forces Committees.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Name	Date and place of birth	Constituency	Occupation
Mr. Michel Guiniot	Born on November 29, 1954, in Chauny (Aisne, 02)	Oise (6 th district)	Former executive Former artisan and shopkeeper
Mr. Franck Allisio	Born on August 4, 1980, in Marseille (Bouches-du-Rhône, 13)	Bouches-du-Rhône (12 th district)	Self-employed Communications consultant
Mr. Romain Baubry	Born on January 28, 1989, in Mont-Saint-Aignan (Seine-Maritime, 76)	Bouches-du-Rhône (15 th district)	Police officer, gendarme, prison guard
Mr. Guillaume Bigot	Born November 14, 1969, in Paris	Territoire de Belfort (2 nd district)	Political columnist, director of a business school
Mr. Jorys Bovet	Born on March 30, 1993, in Saint-Martin-d'Hères (Isère, 38)	Allier (2 nd district)	Delivery driver
Mr. Jérôme Buisson	Born January 15, 1973, in Roanne (Loire, 42)	Ain (4 th district)	Italian Teacher
Mr. Sébastien Chenu	Born April 13, 1973, in Beauvais (Oise, 60)	Nord (19 th district)	Communications Advisor
Mr. Marc de Fleurian	Born February 7, 1989, in Ploemeur (Morbihan, 56)	Pas-de-Calais (7 th district)	Civil service executive
Mr. Nicolas Dragon	Born April 19, 1977, in Laon (Aisne, 02)	Aisne (1 st district)	Self-employed (communications and public relations consultant)
Ms. Marine Hamelet	Born on July 13, 1967, in Savigny-sur-Orge (Essonne, 91)	Tarn-et-Garonne (2 nd district)	Sales Representative Childcare provider
Ms. Sylvie Josserand	Born on August 23, 1968, in Mâcon (Saône-et-Loire, 71)	Gard (6 th district)	Attorney at the Nîmes Bar, professor at the University of Nîmes
Ms. Marine Le Pen	Born August 5, 1968, in Neuilly-sur-Seine (Hauts-de-Seine, 92)	Pas-de-Calais (11 th district)	Attorney
Ms. Yaël Ménaché	Born on May 12, 1985, in Péronne (Somme, 80)	Somme (5 th district)	Sales Representative
Mr. Kévin Pfeffer	Born on July 9, 1990, in Forbach (Moselle, 57)	Moselle (6 th district)	Political Staff Member
Ms. Laurence Robert-Dehault	Born on January 17, 1964, in Saint-Dizier (Haute-Marne, 52)	Haute-Marne (2 nd district)	Private hypnotherapist

COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Last name	Date and place of birth	Constituency	Occupation
Ms. Manon Bouquin	Born on June 2, 1992, in Évreux (Eure, 27)	Hérault (4 th district)	Parliamentary staff member Civil service executive
Mr. Guillaume Bigot	Born on November 14, 1969, in Paris	Territoire de Belfort (2 nd district)	Political columnist, business school director
Mr. Anthony Boulogne	Born June 8, 1993, in Laxou (Meurthe-et-Moselle, 54)	Meurthe-et-Moselle (6 th district)	Corporate administrative and sales executive
Mr. Jocelyn Dessigny	Born on June 29, 1981, in Noisy-le-Grand (Seine-Saint-Denis, 93)	Aisne (5 th district)	Corporate administrative and sales executive
Mr. Nicolas Dragon	Born April 19, 1977 (Laon, 02)	Aisne (1 st district)	Self-employed Public Relations Consultant
Mr. Jordan Guitton	Born on January 30, 1995, in Troyes (Aube, 10)	Aube (1 st district)	Parliamentary Staff Member
Ms. Sylvie Josserand	Born August 23, 1968, in Mâcon (Saône-et-Loire, 71)	Gard (6 th district)	Attorney at the Nîmes Bar, professor at the University of Nîmes
Mr. Matthieu Marchio	Born on June 8, 1993, in Dieppe (Seine-Maritime, 76)	Nord (16 th district)	Real estate agent
Ms. Yaël Ménaché	Born on May 12, 1985, in Péronne (Somme, 80)	Somme (5 th district)	Sales Representative
Mr. Stéphane Rambaud	Born April 5, 1960, in Algiers (Algeria)	Var (3 rd district)	Retired from the National Police
Mr. Alexandre Sabatou	Born on February 18, 1993, in Nogent-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne, 94)	Oise (3 rd district)	Information Systems Project Manager at the General Directorate of Customs

NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMISSION AND THE ARMED FORCES

Last name	Date and place of birth	Constituency	Occupation
Mr. Frank Giletti	Born on March 1, 1973, in Évreux (Eure, 27)	Var (6 th district)	Civil servant (local government)
Mr. Frédéric Boccaletti	Born November 23, 1973, in Martigues (Bouches-du-Rhône, 13)	Var (7 th district)	Bookseller, then professional politician
Ms. Caroline Colombier	Born August 22, 1957, in Autun (Saône-et-Loire, 71)	Charente (3 rd constituency)	Attorney
Mr. José Gonzalez	Born on April 28, 1943, in Oran (Algeria)	Bouches-du-Rhône (10 th constituency)	Driving instructor, Employee at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Employee at Marseille-Provence Airport
Mr. Laurent Jacobelli	Born on October 13, 1969, in Thiais (Val-de-Marne, 94)	Moselle (8 th district)	Audiovisual Director
Mr. Pascal Jenft	Born November 29, 1966, in Sarreguemines (Moselle, 57)	Moselle (5 th district)	Business owner
Ms. Laure Lavalette	Born on April 16, 1976, in Talence (Gironde, 33)	Var (2 nd district)	No declared professional activity
Ms. Nadine Lechon	Born on April 16, 1963, in Sainte-Foy-la-Grande (Gironde, 33)	Dordogne (1 st district)	Farmer
Mr. Julien Limongi	Born on February 12, 1996, in La Ciotat (Bouches-du-Rhône, 13)	Seine-et-Marne (4 th district)	Former executive Parliamentary aide
Ms. Michèle Martinez	Born on June 6, 1968, in Perpignan (Pyrénées-Orientales, 66)	Pyrénées-Orientales (4 th district)	Court Officer's Clerk
Mr. Nicolas Meizonnet	Born on December 22, 1983, in Nîmes (Gard, 30)	Gard (2 nd district)	Computer Engineer
Mr. Thibaut Monnier	Born on February 24, 1987, in Belfort (Territoire de Belfort, 90)	Drôme (4 th district)	Corporate administrative and sales executive
Ms. Catherine Rimbart	Born on September 13, 1968, in Avignon (Vaucluse, 84)	Vaucluse (5 th district)	Self-employed (communications) Parliamentary aide
Mr. Romain Tonussi	Born on April 9, 1996, in Istres (Bouches-du-Rhône, 13)	Bouches-du-Rhône (8 th district)	HR Manager



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