

France could be next to leave EU in secret 'Frexit' plan if Le Pen wins, warns Macron

Presidential candidate Marine Le Pen wants to make France the next country to leave the EU in a secret plan, according to French president Emmanuel Macron.

The French president made the claims as he faces a harder-than-expected fight to stay in power against Ms. Le Pen, in part because the economic impact of the war is hitting poor households the hardest.

When asked about his political rival's beliefs on the EU, he said: "She wants to leave but dare not dare say so, and that's never good.

"She says that she wants an alliance of nation states, but she is going to find herself in a corner and she is going to try to come up with an alliance with her friends."

Mr. Macron, a pro-EU centrist, said voters wouldn't allow a "Frexit" to happen, so Le Pen would secretly ally France with countries like Poland and Hungary.

"It would be a strange club," said Mr. Macron. "I don't think it is a club that would be good for France. I don't think it would be good for Europe."

He added: "The EU has changed the life of this country."

Mr. Macron famously said he considered Brexit to be a "crime" by the politicians that encouraged it.

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Meanwhile, Ms. Le Pen, an outspoken nationalist who has ties to Russia, also confirmed that if she wins in the presidential run-off, she will pull France out of NATO's military command and dial back French support for the European Union.

France's European partners are worried that a possible Le Pen presidency could undermine western unity as the US and Europe seek to support Ukraine and end

Russia's war on its neighbour.

In reference to the presidential election, Mr. Macron declared that it's "a referendum on Europe."

Earlier in his term, Mr. Macron had tried to reach out to Russian President Vladimir Putin to improve Russia's relations with the West, and the pair met weeks before the Russian invasion in an unsuccessful effort to prevent it.

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Since then, however, France has supported EU sanctions against Moscow and has offered sustained support to Ukraine. Ms. Le Pen also said France should strike a more independent path from the US-led NATO military alliance.

And despite the atrocities that Russian troops have committed in Ukraine, Ms. Le Pen said that NATO should seek a "strategic rapprochement" with Russia once the war is over.

Such a relationship would be "in the interest of France and Europe and I think even of the United States," she said, to stop Russia from forging a stronger alliance with world power China.

Ms. Le Pen said she would rather soften EU regulations from within as opposed to leave the institution outright, but would not rule it out altogether if the French public wanted to leave.

Source:

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