The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Targeting French Election With 'Fake News,' Says Macron Party Chief

February 14, 2017



A supporter of Presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron holds placard as he speaks during a meeting in Lyon, France. **Michel Euler / AP**

The head of a major French political party has accused Russia of interfering in the French presidential elections.

Richard Ferrand, secretary-general of En Marche! (Onwards!) accused Kremlin-backed media outlets of running a targeted smear campaign of "fake news" against presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron.

In an interview with television channel France 2, Ferrand said that Macron had been singled out by Kremlin media outlets Sputnik and RT for his pro-European policies.

Related article: Russia Launches Operation 'Anyone But Macron'

He claimed that Moscow wanted to swing the election in favor of Macron's pro-Russia rivals,

far-right leader Marine Le Pen and center-right candidate Francois Fillon. Both have spoken out positively about lifting EU sanctions against Russia.

"It is clear that the far-right and the right and their candidates are rather well regarded [in Russia] while we call for a strong Europe, a powerful Europe. It is obvious, objectively, that a certain number of Russian media clearly don't want that," he said.

A report by the French-language version of the Sputnik on Feb. 4 carried quotes labelling Macron as "a puppet of U.S. political and financial elites."

The comments were made by center-right French legislator Nicolas Dhuicq, who also claimed that Macron was being backed by "a very rich gay lobby."

The story may have played a role in Macron's denials that he had had an extra-marital affair with another man.

Related article: Russian TV — Making War Great Again

Sputnik laughed off the allegations, telling readers that Ferrand had cited an irrelevant news article to support his opinion.

Russia Today also said the claims were unfounded.

"It seems that it has become acceptable to level such serious charges at Russia Today without presenting any evidence to substantiate them, as well as to apply this 'fake news' label to any reporting that one might simply find unfavorable," the news channel said in an emailed statement to the Reuters news agency.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/02/14/russia-targeting-french-election-with-fake-news-says-macron-party-chief-a57139