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# France for Ukraine

*Present on all continents, a nuclear power, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and a founding member of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, it remains attached to a world order based on the law and the respect for human dignity. Albeit shaken, this order shall remain the reference for our actions.*

*Strategic Vision of the Chief of Defense Staff, 2022*

May 9, 2022 became one of the most important dates in Ukraine's recent history. On that day, U.S. President Joseph Biden signed a historic executive order for Ukraine and the United States itself. It concerns the Lend-Lease Ukraine Democracy Protection Act of 2022, which would allow the U.S. executive branch to bypass lengthy bureaucratic procedures to provide aid to Ukraine. The Act, passed for the first time since World War II, gives Ukraine the opportunity to receive virtually unlimited aid from the country with the most powerful economy and military in the world on extremely favorable terms.

May 9 proved to be significant for Ukraine in the European context as well. On that day, French President Emmanuel Macron delivered a speech before the European Union Parliament in Strasbourg. A few weeks earlier, after being elected to a second presidential term, he made his first official visit to Berlin, as is the tradition of French presidents, and stopped on the way in Strasbourg, where he appeared before members of parliament on Europe Day for the first time since his election victory. For many, Macron unexpectedly departed from the routine characteristic of such speeches and spoke of the need for fundamental changes in the political arrangement of the European Union. It became clear in his speech that the important impetus for thinking about the implementation of these changes was the hostilities that began in Ukraine on February 24 and their consequences. In addition to democratic control of the European institutions and social legislation, the French president spoke of changes in the principles and procedures of the EU's enlargement policy. Macron urged Europeans to think about a new kind of political community, in which European and democratic countries that remain outside the European Union today would find a new platform for cooperation. Among these countries, Ukraine was mentioned first, which, according to Macron, given the current procedures, could take decades to join the European Union. It should be noted that these statements were made by Macron not only as President of France, but also as President of the Council of the European Union. What led to Macron's change of position on these issues, especially on the question of enlargement? It is worth noting here that immediately after starting the office of the President of the Council of the European Union, Macron paid particular attention to the alarming processes taking place in Ukraine.

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After the spring of 2021, the security services, diplomats and military of the world's leading countries spoke with particular intensity about preparations of a military campaign by Russia. In late 2021 and early 2022, politicians and heads of state took over public statements. Among the dozens of Western leaders who tried to prevent or at least temporarily postpone the start of hostilities in Ukraine by communicating with Putin, Emmanuel Macron stood out for the frequency of his exchanges with the Russian leader. After December 2021, Macron's visit to Moscow added to regular phone conversations, which became almost daily by February 2022. The meeting with Putin lasted six hours. The phone calls continued even after the war began on February 24. In total, Macron spoke to Putin 18 times between December 2021 and early March 2022. After the discovery of the horrific crimes committed by Russian soldiers in Bucha and other Ukrainian cities, no more direct communication took place between Paris and Moscow.

When it comes to France and European countries in general, French ministers and state officials distinguished themselves by their unusually rigid rhetoric. "We will destroy the Russian economy," French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire said in a television interview on February 28, 4 days after the war in Ukraine began.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Macron's "hyperactivity" was hardly unusual for the public observant of French domestic or international politics. Such involvement of France as a state and of Macron himself in the ongoing processes in and around Ukraine had several reasons:

1. Strategic – France's vision of its own role on the European continent and in the European Union after the Brexit;
2. Formal – the presidency of the Council of the European Union;
3. Political – presidential elections (both rounds of which took place against the backdrop of the war started by Putin in Ukraine).

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<sup>1</sup> Nous allons provoquer l'effondrement de l'économie russe. BFMTV. 01.03.2022 [https://www.bfmtv.com/economie/economie-social/bruno-le-maire-nous-allons-provoquer-l-effondrement-de-l-economie-russe\\_AN-202203010131.html](https://www.bfmtv.com/economie/economie-social/bruno-le-maire-nous-allons-provoquer-l-effondrement-de-l-economie-russe_AN-202203010131.html)

## FRANCE IN EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION – TOWARDS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

France is the only country in the post-Brexit European Union to possess nuclear weapons. Compared to other countries on the continent, the French armed forces are the most actively involved in combat operations on different continents and are considered the most combat-capable military force in the European Union. Paris has never hesitated to use these arguments in favor of its security strategy.

Prior to the war in Ukraine that began on February 24, the country's European ambition was openly discussed in French political and military circles: it is the strategic leadership of the continent. In addition to the current factors that fuel this ambition, this approach also has historical foundations, much of which was formed in the period of European political order that followed World War II. Charles de Gaulle's European policy aimed to accomplish two main tasks: to distance Europe from U.S. influence and to form a platform for pursuing France's global interests from the European Union. When French officials speak today of Europe's strategic autonomy and NATO being "clinically dead," many European and American political commentators see this rhetoric as a continuation of de Gaulle's approach, which has become the foreign policy focus of the "Fifth Republic."

In terms of security policy, France implements its strategy in both a bilateral and multilateral (NATO, EU) format. For a long time, the priority for France was a bilateral security policy format, which was seen as a way to preserve the independent character of a vigorously articulated independent foreign policy and its own vision of nuclear security.

In today's France, European interests are seen as French interests. It would not be correct to say that France has given up its global ambitions, but it can be said that Paris has changed its approach to Europe: if France previously viewed the project of a united Europe as an instrument to increase its global influence, the objective is now to develop the European political project according to "French interests". As a result, many of the priorities of French foreign policy are linked to the political, economic and geopolitical realities of Europe.

This change is clearly reflected in Emmanuel Macron's European vision. In the context of intensified geopolitical rivalry, the French president believes that Europeans should be able to defend themselves without the intervention or assistance of any other external actor. It is difficult not to notice the conceptual contradiction that this approach presents with the fundamental principles of the North Atlantic Alliance. This contradiction is also evident in Paris. One of the important elements of the policy of "strategic autonomy" initiated by President Macron was the initiative to form a "European army".

Although France was one of the founders of the North Atlantic Alliance, Charles de Gaulle did not hesitate to make the decision to leave the NATO integrated command. France took this step in 1966. Already before the end of the "Cold War", French politicians, like the Germans, were in favor of bringing defense policy under the competence of the European Union. With the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the security and foreign policy of the countries of the European Union were included in the common European framework. France has been striving to achieve this goal since the early 1980s. In 2009, to prove the absence of contradiction between the defense policy of NATO and the European Union, France joined the NATO command.

After 24 February, it became clear that it was premature, to say the least, to rely on

Germany not only as a leader, but also as a partner in defense and security. In Eastern European countries, the view has long been held that the decisive factor in ensuring the security of NATO's eastern flank is US involvement and leadership. This trend complicates the prospects for strategic autonomy, one of the key concepts in Emmanuel Macron's European policy. In Macron's vision, strategic autonomy means reducing the role of the United States in ensuring European security and producing a more autonomous defense policy by Europeans.

France's policy of "strategic autonomy" was practically indefinitely delayed, if not abolished. Against the backdrop of the United States' unprecedented "New Lend-Lease" aid to Ukraine, France had no choice but to join the ranks of supporters of this program. To organize the multi-billion-dollar aid and coordinate with the allies, the United States European Command created a new logistics center in Stuttgart. Of course, France has neither the resources nor the political will to establish an alternative or even a parallel center. The creation of the center on the territory of Germany is practically equivalent to the establishment of a new military infrastructure, which strengthens the position of the United States as the guarantor of Germany's security. For years, France tried to convince German political circles of the attractiveness of the idea of European "strategic autonomy" and the inevitability of the gradual withdrawal of the United States from European security.

Moreover, after the military aggression of Ukraine, both Sweden, which remained neutral for decades, and Finland, which was "indifferent" to the North Atlantic Alliance in the past, expressed their desire to join NATO and began preparing an application. As expected, this decision led to threats from Moscow and military exercises near Finland's borders. Rumors spread that, in order to defuse the tense situation and prevent the process from getting stalled, Washington had given security guarantees to the new applicant countries in the event of their formal application (in advance and before of the implementation of the fifth article of NATO's charter). On May 5th, Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Linde confirmed that Sweden had indeed received such guarantees from the United States.<sup>2</sup> This finally rules out the prospects of "strategic autonomy" so dear to Macron. The request of the two EU countries to receive security guarantees directly from the United States and the satisfaction of their request is a direct indication of the country that holds the true status of security guarantor on the European continent. An even bigger blow to Paris was the arrival of British Defense Minister Ben Wallace in Finland and the provision of similar security guarantees to Finland on behalf of London.<sup>3</sup> After the Brexit, presenting Britain as the guarantor of the security of the European Union completely removes the strategic scheme with which France would act after Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

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2 Sweden says it received U.S. security assurances if it hands in NATO application. Reuters. 05.05.2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/sweden-says-it-received-us-security-assurances-if-it-hands-nato-application-2022-05-04/>

3 Ben Wallace says it is 'inconceivable' UK would not support Finland or Sweden if either were attacked. The Evening Standard. 04.05.2022. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/ben-wallace-finland-nato-membership-ukraine-war-russia-sweden-b997937.html>

## PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – DÉJÀ VU

No one knows for certain whether history repeats itself, but in the case of France, the record is clear: during the two presidencies of the European Union, in 2008 and in 2022, France had to deal with the most acute crises of the 21st century on the borders of the European Union.

In order to put an end to the military aggression launched by Russia against Georgia in August 2008, the French president at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy, endorsed a ceasefire agreement between Moscow and Tbilisi. The agreement signed after tense negotiations put an end to the ongoing hostilities on the territory of Georgia, although Russia still did not meet one of its conditions, namely the withdrawal of Russian armed forces from the territory of Georgia to their positions before August 7, 2008.

Unfortunately, despite his role as a mediator as president of the European Union, Nicolas Sarkozy ignored the Putin regime's refusal to implement the EU-brokered agreement and visited Putin in Moscow three times after he lost the 2012 presidential election and left the presidency. In 2015, Sarkozy, who came to Moscow after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, called on the international community to end Russia's isolation and lift sanctions imposed for the 2014 attack on Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this public statement made in the presence of Putin contradicted the Russia policy of his successor, President Francois Hollande, which caused strong reactions in Paris. Eventually, efforts to deepen relations with Putin bore fruit, and in 2019, Nicolas Sarkozy was hired by the Russian insurance company Reso Guaranty in the highly lucrative position of "special advisor."<sup>5</sup> For the exercise of this function, the former French president was supposed to receive 3 million euros over several years. As soon as the first part of the money was deposited, the French Financial Supervisory Authority began an investigation to detect signs of a possible infraction (corruption, influence trafficking).

France assumed the six-month term of the European Union presidency on January 1, 2022. In a speech delivered to the European Union Parliament on that occasion, Macron stated that the European Union needed a new collective security agreement that would give it appropriate forms for its relations with Russia and NATO.

The presidential elections and the political situation against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine.

On April 24, 2022, France and Europe breathed a sigh of relief: Emmanuel Macron won the presidential election. However, there is no doubt that much of the joy of his victory was caused not by Macron's own success as a politician, but by the defeat of his rival, Marine Le Pen. Emmanuel Macron's 58.54% is a clear victory, but it should be noted that his opponent's alarming result - 41.46% - is the most impressive result achieved by far-right forces in recent European history. This fact will be researched by political scientists and sociologists, but it can be said with certainty today that the French liberal-democratic model is in serious crisis.

In addition to the populist and discriminatory program of Marine Le Pen, Europeans

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4 Nicolas Sarkozy à Moscou : "Le monde a besoin de la Russie", France 24. 29.10.2015 <https://www.france24.com/fr/20151029-sarkozy-poutine-rencontre-moscou-syrie-ukraine-diplomatie-critiques-france>

5 Les millions russes de Nicolas Sarkozy. Mediapart. 15.01.2021 <https://transparency-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/mediapart-Les-millions-russes-de-Nicolas-Sarkozy.pdf>

are especially worried about the approach she and her National Unity party have towards Russia, and in particular, towards Putin's regime. Marine Le Pen was one of the first European politicians who not only not condemned Russia's aggression in Crimea, but also called on French and European leaders to understand and share Russia's position. Representatives of her party regularly visit propaganda conferences and seminars held in Moscow. Her political partners regularly visit the propaganda conferences and seminars held in Moscow, as well as the elections held in the occupied territories of Ukraine, where they also serve as international observers.

Today, we observe the evolution of the approach of the victor Emmanuel Macron towards Ukraine. It seems that the view of the commentators who predicted that the president, freed from the hassle of the election campaign, will now be able to take bolder steps is correct. The French president may now have a better chance of getting help for Ukraine, but in the end, political will will be crucial. Days before the second round, Macron had already hinted that Paris was preparing to provide additional military aid to Ukraine. In this new stage of aid, France plans to provide heavy equipment to Ukraine. Macron will have more freedom of action in relation to Ukraine and on the international scene in general, if his party retains the parliamentary majority in the next parliamentary elections, which will be held in June 2022. If he loses the majority, he will not be able to appoint a fellow party member to the post of Prime Minister, and the candidate of the opposition party will hold the post. According to the statistical data available today, the parties of Marine Le Pen (Rassemblement National) and Jean-Luc Melenchon (France insoumise), who came second and third in the presidential election, are most likely to win in the legislative elections. A parliamentary majority for one of them will be equivalent to one of these candidates taking the seat of Prime Minister.

Such a configuration of executive power is not new in French political history. Such a "cohabitation" has already occurred three times, in 1986-1988, 1993-1995 and 1997-2002. In 1986-1988, the prime minister of the socialist president, François Mitterrand, was the leader of the Gaullist right, Jacques Chirac. During Jacques Chirac's own presidency, his government was led by the socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, for four years. In such a "cohabitation", the action of the French government is determined by the consensus between the president and the prime minister. During these years, as a rule, radical decisions and reforms are not observed, and the political situation is more or less stable.

In the run-up to the legislative elections, Emmanuel Macron's party, La République en marche, changed its name. After the move baptized as the recovery of the party, it is called Renaissance.



*The importance of the post of Prime Minister in the upcoming legislative elections is also evidenced by the strategy with which the parties will begin the election campaign. The election poster of Jean-Luc Mélenchon clearly indicates the objective of “France insoumise” in this election: “Mélenchon - Prime Minister”.*

*Photo @bfmtv*

On the basis of personal and partisan characteristics of possible prime ministers, the possible “cohabitation” in 2022 will certainly bring negative results to Ukraine. The position of France towards Ukraine or other countries that have become the object of Russian aggression will change in favor of Moscow. It will be very difficult for President Macron to find political or military support for the countries involved in the confrontation with Russia. Both Mélenchon and Le Pen have a different position on Russia than Macron. Until the discovery of the mass crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine, neither of them backed away from public discussions and calls for rapprochement with Moscow. If in the case of Mélenchon, Moscow is seen as an ally of “anti-capitalist” resistance and “anti-imperialist” struggle (although such an assumption seems comical given Russia’s political-economic arrangement), the reasons for Le Pen’s friendship with the Kremlin have other, more mercantile, grounds.

It is worth noting that in 2022, for the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic, the parties of the left have united under the anti-European and anti-American umbrella. The Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the French Greens have agreed to create an electoral bloc with Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s France Insoumise and will participate together in the legislative elections. With this configuration of the left bloc, the force to be created in the French National Assembly will considerably slow down France’s transatlantic policy and reduce the amount of aid to Ukraine. Although part of this bloc, for example the Greens, do not hesitate to criticize Russia and are distinguished by their harsh rhetoric towards Putin, the main force of this union, the France insoumise, is known for its strong anti-Americanism and anti-NATO political initiatives. Although Mélenchon himself has had

to make statements critical of Russia after the events in Ukraine since February 24, his policy towards Russia will be more conciliatory than that of the Macron government.

Marine Le Pen is an example of those European politicians who have become carriers of the interests of the Putin regime in their country and in European politics.

The “friendship” of the Le Pen political dynasty with Moscow goes back many years. Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder of the National Front and the permanent leader of the party, visited Moscow in 1996. He did not hesitate to maintain relations with such odious Russian politicians as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

Before the 2017 presidential election, he visited Moscow and showed photos of his meeting with Putin to his supporters. The Kremlin paid attention to such a “promising” French politician long ago. In 2014, the Czech Republic-based Czech-Russian First Bank gave two loans to Marine Le Pen: the first loan was in the amount of 9 million euros and was officially intended to improve the financial situation of the party. The second loan was for 2 million euros and was intended to finance the micro party of Marine Le Pen’s father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. In both cases, the terms of the loan were suspiciously favorable to the borrower. It should be noted that Le Pen’s creditor bank was closed in 2016, and one of the contractors of the Russian Ministry of Defense Rosaviazapchast was entrusted with the return of the borrowed money from Le Pen. During the presidential debate, Marine Le Pen promised to return the loan to the Kremlin, although no one knows exactly how and when or if the “National Front” intends to return the grant received from Putin. This will certainly weigh heavily on the already tarnished reputation of this party.

## AID TO UKRAINE

In the days following the February 24 military invasion, France allocated 100 million euros to humanitarian and non-governmental organizations that helped civilians in Ukraine. The weight of humanitarian cargo sent from France to Ukraine reached 800 tons. In total, after February 20, 2022, the value of various aid provided by France to Ukraine reached one billion 700 million USD. On May 5, at the Ukrainian donors' conference held in Warsaw, Emmanuel Macron announced the allocation of an additional 300 million euros to help Ukraine. With this amount, the amount of aid provided by France to Ukraine after February 24 (excluding military components) reached the value of 2 billion US dollars.<sup>6</sup> In addition to humanitarian aid, Paris has also provided the financial guarantees necessary to maintain trade relations with Ukraine.

40 displaced researchers from Ukraine received financial and academic support to continue their activities in France.<sup>7</sup> Similar assistance has been provided to Ukrainian journalists who have lost the possibility to work professionally in their own country due to the war.<sup>8</sup>

According to the UN, 5.4 million Ukrainians have had to leave their homeland since the end of February 2022. The absolute majority of them have been taken in by Poland, Romania, Moldova and other neighboring countries. In the two months since the beginning of hostilities, only a fraction of them, 70,000 Ukrainian asylum seekers, have arrived in France, 80% of whom are women and children.<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that for the first time since 2001 (Yugoslavian war), the "temporary asylum" mechanism has been implemented by the European Union, which gives Ukrainian IDPs a legal status without applying for asylum and without going through lengthy procedures. As a result, they have the possibility to receive medical care completely free of charge and to find legal employment in the territory of the European Union almost automatically (in the case of France, after registration with the Ministry of Interior). Ukrainians will be able to use this status for three years, after which their final status will be determined. The French government is currently working to find 100,000 homes for the settlement of displaced Ukrainians. In addition to other assistance, Ukrainians living in the country receive 200 euros per month.

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6 Message du Président Emmanuel Macron à l'occasion de la Conférence internationale des donateurs pour l'Ukraine. 05.05.2022. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/05/05/conference-des-donateurs-ukraine>

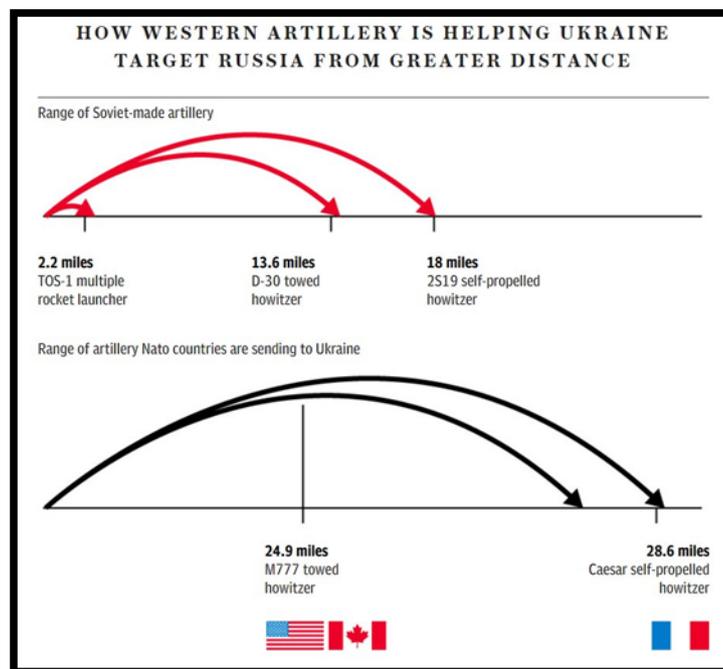
7 Communiqué de presse - Soutien aux médias et aux journalistes dans le contexte de la guerre en Ukraine. 05.05.2022. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/ukraine/evenements/article/communique-de-presse-soutien-aux-medias-et-aux-journalistes-dans-le-contexte-de>

8 Le ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères accorde une contribution exceptionnelle pour les scientifiques en exil. 15.04.2022 <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/ukraine/evenements/article/ukraine-le-ministere-de-l-europe-et-des-affaires-etrangeres-accorde-une>

9 Plus de 70 000 réfugiés ukrainiens ont été accueillis en France. Liberation. 29.04.2022. [https://www.liberation.fr/societe/plus-de-70-000-refugies-ukrainiens-ont-ete-accueillis-en-france-20220429\\_Z6KNLHDCDBAFFCHJ6BB5QAHYYM/](https://www.liberation.fr/societe/plus-de-70-000-refugies-ukrainiens-ont-ete-accueillis-en-france-20220429_Z6KNLHDCDBAFFCHJ6BB5QAHYYM/)

## MILITARY AID

During the first months of the war, French military aid to Ukraine appeared rather minimalist. It was clear that officials were reluctant to talk about the issue, limiting themselves to vague formulations when speaking to the French and international press.<sup>10</sup> However, on the basis of unofficial sources, there were reports of anti-tank weapons, night vision equipment and other military equipment supplied to Ukraine by France. In this regard, the situation changed after Emmanuel Macron's interview published on April 22, in which he mentioned an unspecified number of "Caesar" artillery systems as well as various weapons transferred to Ukraine. In addition, it was reported that 40 Ukrainian military personnel were already in France to master these modern systems.<sup>11</sup> After this announcement, France became one of the few countries to provide heavy artillery to Ukraine. This qualitatively changes the approach of Paris and indicates the quantitative and qualitative evolution of military aid to Ukraine.



*Capabilities of Artillery Systems Available to Ukraine Army ©Ukraine Business Magazine*

In addition, following the extent of crimes committed by Russian forces in the vicinity of Kyiv and in various Ukrainian cities, Paris sent a team of criminologists and technical experts to Ukraine who, together with the Ukrainian prosecutor's office, were immediately engaged in the detection and investigation of crimes committed against the civilian population.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the United States and Britain, France was among the countries that declared that Russia's launch of a large-scale military operation in Ukraine was unlikely, and that

10 Le risque d'escalade en Ukraine est très fort, 22.04.2022. Ouest-France <https://www.ouest-france.fr/politique/emmanuel-macron/le-risque-d-escalade-en-ukraine-est-tres-fort-d79f638e-c1a5-11ec-8a48-02f9bba22954>

11 40 artilleurs ukrainiens en France à partir de ce week-end pour être formés sur Caesar, 22.04.2022. Lignes de Défense Ouest France. <http://lignesdedefense.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2022/04/22/40-artilleurs-ukrainiens-en-france-a-parti-de-ce-week-end-po-23000.html>

12 <https://twitter.com/EdePoncins/status/1513429247393767425>

Moscow's military preparations were aimed at putting pressure on Kyiv and the West. Such a mistake by France on the international stage led to the dismissal of the head of French military intelligence, General Eric Vido.<sup>13</sup>

In her speech to the European Union Parliament, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen solemnly declared that Europe's goal was a victory for Ukraine.<sup>14</sup> Given the importance of Europe and European politics in Macron's political worldview, French support for Ukraine is likely to be considerably strengthened.

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13 French military intelligence head steps down over Ukraine – reports. Reuters.31.03.2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-military-intelligence-head-steps-down-over-ukraine-reports-2022-03-31/>

14 Speech by President von der Leyen at the EP Plenary on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU's capacity to act. 04.05.2022 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech\\_22\\_2785](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_22_2785)

## SANCTIONS AND ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON RUSSIA AND BELARUS

When it comes to sanctions against Russia and Belarus, France acts under the flag of the European Union and avoids giving them a bilateral character. When talking about the sanctions imposed on Russia, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs refers to them as sanctions imposed by the European Union.<sup>15</sup> Chronologically, the sanctions imposed by France and the European Union begin in March 2014 and are divided into five packages. Their purpose is to “make it more difficult to finance the Kremlin’s military campaign” and to take economic and political measures against Russia that reveal those responsible for the military aggression.<sup>16</sup> The illegal annexation of Crimea (2014), the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as independent states (2022), and the implementation of unjustified and unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine (2022) are cited as the reasons for imposing sanctions.

Sanctions are divided into the following categories:

1. Individual restrictions - the aim is to designate political and financial supporters of the Kremlin and limit their freedom to operate their usual activities. There are 1083 people and 80 companies in this category: they are forbidden to enter the territory of the European Union; all their financial assets located in the territory of the European Union are frozen. Vladimir Putin himself, deputies of the Russian Duma, members of the Russian Security Council, senior officials and ministers (Sergey Lavrov, Dmitry Medvedev, Nikolai Patrushev, Sergey Naryshkin...), propagandists, civil servants, businessmen and oligarchs appointed in the territories occupied by the Kremlin (Roman Abramovich, Oleg Deripaska...);
2. Economic sanctions - these sanctions affect various sectors of the Russian economy: financial sector - limitation of access of Russian banks and companies to EU capital; ban on financial transactions with the central banks of Russia and Belarus; disconnection of certain Russian and Belarusian banks from the SWIFT system; ban on the delivery of euros as currency in Russia and Belarus; ban on any form of financial investment in Russia; participation and/or investment in projects co-financed by Russian state funds. Energy sector - ban on importing coal from Russia; ban on exporting oil refining technology and equipment to Russia; ban on investing in the Russian energy sector; transportation sector - closure of EU airspace to all Russian-owned and/or Russian-registered aircraft; ban on Russian ships entering EU ports; Ban on the entry of Russian and Belarusian road transporters into the territory of the European Union; Ban on the export of air, sea and space technologies to Russia; Defense sector - ban on the export to Russia of dual-use products and technologies useful to the military-industrial complex; Ban on arms trade with Russia; Minerals and others: Ban on importing iron, steel, wood, cement, seafood and alcohol from Russia to the EU. Ban on exports of luxury goods to Russia.

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15 Sanctions adoptées contre la Russie et la Biélorussie. Le Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères. [https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/#sommaire\\_1](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/#sommaire_1)

16 Sanctions de l'UE contre la Russie liées à la situation en Ukraine (depuis 2014) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

3. Media restrictions: As of March 2, 2022, the broadcasting of the Putin regime's propaganda media, Sputnik and Russia Today, was banned in the territory of the European Union.
4. Diplomatic constraints - In 2014, the summit between Russia and the European Union was cancelled. The member states of the Union decided to cancel bilateral summits with Russia indefinitely. The discussion on the cancellation of visa traffic with the European Union was stopped; Russia was removed from the "Big Eight" group, which returned to the "Big Seven" format; The ongoing negotiations on Russia's membership in various international organizations ended; In February 2022, the simplified procedure for issuing visas to Russian citizens to enter the European Union was cancelled. Since the beginning of the military attack on Ukraine, Western countries (the United States, Germany, Greece, Poland, Croatia, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, etc.) have expelled up to 200 Russian diplomats. France joined these countries and demanded that 35 Russian diplomats immediately leave the territory of the country. It should be noted that the corresponding statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the expelled diplomats had acted "to the detriment of the interests and security of France", which amounted to accusing them of espionage.<sup>17</sup> A week later, six more were added to these 35 diplomats. On April 11, 2022, the French counterintelligence service announced that after several years of investigation it had managed to disrupt a covert operation of the Russian special services, and that six more Russian diplomats caught in activities incompatible with their status should leave French territory immediately.<sup>18</sup>

France has seized 64 properties of Russian oligarchs and corrupt officials, including luxury villas and palaces, worth nearly one billion euros. The police confiscated yachts, helicopters and works of art worth hundreds of millions of euros (from Igor Sechin, a member of Putin's closest entourage, oligarch Mikhail Fridman, etc.).<sup>19</sup> The amount of frozen financial assets reaches 24 billion euros. In this respect, France is one of the leading European countries.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Guerre en Ukraine. La France s'apprête à expulser 35 diplomates russes. Ouest France. 04.04.2022 <https://www.ouest-france.fr/monde/guerre-en-ukraine/guerre-en-ukraine-la-france-s-apprete-a-expulser-35-diplomates-russes-0bccb430-b441-11ec-9a24-5bd00f9afaef>

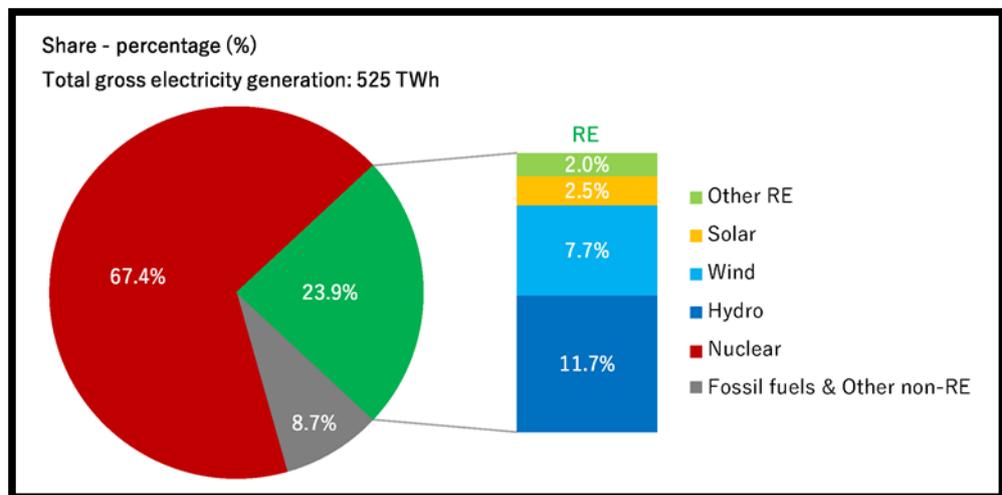
18 En France, une opération de contre-espionnage mène à l'expulsion de six agents russes. France 24. 11.04.2022 <https://www.france24.com/fr/france/20220411-en-france-une-op%C3%A9ration-de-contre-espionnage-m%C3%A8ne-%C3%A0-l-expulsion-de-six-agents-russes>

19 Oligarques russes : ce que la France leur a confisqué. TF1. 04.05.2022 <https://www.tf1info.fr/international/video-ukraine-ce-que-l-on-sait-des-dix-nouveaux-biens-d-oligarques-russes-geles-en-france-2218636.html>

20 Guerre en Ukraine : bâtisses en plein Paris, château dans les Yvelines... 10 nouveaux biens russes gelés en France. Le Parisien. 03.05.2022. <https://www.leparisien.fr/immobilier/guerre-en-ukraine-batisses-en-plein-paris-chateau-dans-les-yvelines-10-nouveaux-biens-russes-geles-en-france-03-05-2022-Y6HLHT3QYVDGLOBGUNN2ZRPPVM.php?ts=1651598391414>

## ENERGY AND ENERGY SECURITY

France is among the world leaders in the share of nuclear energy in its energy supply and receives 70% of its electricity from nuclear power plants. This is the result of a policy decisions taken after the first oil shock in 1974, which was linked to the development of energy security policy. In 2014, the government planned to reduce the share of nuclear power to 50%, but the implementation of this decision was postponed to 2035 in 2019, and in February 2022, the construction of six new nuclear power plants was announced. It was also noted that the plan envisaged the construction of eight more such plants. Due to the availability and low price of electricity, France is the largest exporter of electricity in Europe. In 2019, France supplied a record 57 terawatt-hours to neighboring countries, and in the second half of 2021 alone, 21 terawatt-hours and retained the position of the largest electricity exporter in Europe. In 2021, Italy (7.5 terawatt-hours) and Great Britain (6 terawatt-hours) lead in the amount of electricity received from France.



*The International Energy Agency (IEA). Country Report 2020.*

In addition, France plans to stop supporting oil exports in 2025 and natural gas exports in 2035, following a decision by the Macron government after the Paris climate summit. In light of this decision and the growth of nuclear power generation, it is unlikely that France will object to reducing the share of Russian oil and natural gas in the European market, and in the long term, this is consistent with Paris' energy security policy.

In the near future, France will have the opportunity to increase its electricity exports to Germany. No one knows yet to what extent Germany will be willing to receive a large part of its electricity from France if Russian resources are abandoned, but France has a chance to obtain another lever, this time energy, on its rich neighbor in addition to nuclear weapons.

## CONCLUSION

France's aid to Ukraine, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is modest compared to other Western countries. Besides United States and Great Britain, which provided much more important humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine, France was "surpassed" by many Eastern European countries. Against the backdrop of Europe's largest crisis of the 21st century, such a comparison calls into question the priorities of French foreign policy, on which Paris had placed great hopes in its European policy. After the new logistics bases on the continent, the discovery of unprecedented aid to Ukraine and the start of the policy of strengthening the Eastern flank of NATO, the talk about the "exit" of the United States from Europe has become a thing of the past. The famous "strategic autonomy" policy of Europe, dear to Paris, has practically lost its foundations. Another branch of this autonomy was the independent dialogue with Russia by the Europeans. The steps taken by Putin since the beginning of 2022 and the crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine have reduced the prospects of such a dialogue near to zero.

Contrary to Western expectations, Ukraine and its armed forces have successfully resisted the Russian army and have achieved significant successes. The two months that have passed since Russia started a full-scale war have shown the exaggerated ideas in the West about the capabilities of the Russian army. Moscow is using the best of the Russian armed forces against Ukraine, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Ukrainian cities are being bombed with the most modern ballistic and cruise missiles, the best units of the Russian army and the modern weapons they have are involved in the fight against the Ukrainians. Nevertheless, Moscow could not decide on any of the strategic tasks set by Putin in February. Due to the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian armed forces, the Russian army suffered heavy losses. The "Blitzkrieg" did not take place: the war has become a long-term one. After the unconditional and unprecedented support for Ukraine announced by the United States, Great Britain and Eastern European countries, France, even if it wanted to, no longer had the room for maneuver for a differing policy and was among the countries that had to thoroughly review their foreign policy priorities and approaches.