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French court delivers justice in le Pen embezzlement case – will the European Parliament follow?

Pia Engelbrecht-Bogdanov · Tuesday, July 7th, 2026

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After over a decade, the French justice system has delivered accountability: far-right politician Marine le Pen and all of her co-defendants have been **found guilty** of embezzling European Parliament funds, of which **€1.9m** must now be repaid.

Justice has been served – in France. This should now give the European Parliament the impetus to address how public money is managed by MEPs and Parliament political groups. The last year alone has seen credible, repeated allegations of the Parliament’s far-right political groups misusing EU funds: last year, a Parliament audit firstly **found** the now-disbanded Identity and Democracy (ID) group had allegedly misused 4.3 million euros. Transparency International EU (TI EU) has **submitted a complaint** to the EU’s Anti-Fraud Agency (OLAF) in response, calling for an immediate investigation of the group’s then-Secretary General, Philip Claeys, who remains an employee of the European Parliament.

Now, **fresh allegations** concern the Patriots for Europe group, which is chaired by Rassemblement National MEP Jordan Bardella. The group has reportedly been found by the Parliament to have misspent more than €276,000 in 2024. TI EU has **called on** the Parliament to take control of the group’s finances, open disciplinary procedures against the Patriots’ Secretary General, and refer the matter to the European Public Prosecutor as a consequence.

Nick Aiossa, Director at TI EU, said

“Today is a clear day for much-needed accountability. Yet national judicial systems and civil society watchdogs alone cannot cover for the European Parliament’s inertia

when it comes to addressing the misuse of public money. It should be incumbent upon the Parliament to investigate the current allegations before it, and take all necessary action to deliver accountability, like the French court has today.”

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