



The News

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by Emma Phillips

Nicolas Sarkozy is in court today as the trial gets underway on the financing of his 2007 presidential campaign. The trial is the culmination of a ten-year anti-corruption investigation. The prosecution alleges that the former president forged a “corruption pact” with former Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, in which suitcases of cash were exchanged for favours. If he is found guilty, Nicolas Sarkozy faces up to ten years in prison. He has always denied any wrongdoing. Late last year, the former president was handed a three-year sentence in what was known as the wiretapping case. This trial, with 11 other defendants, is due to go on until April 10th.

Another trial getting underway today is that of a man accused of attacking two people with a cleaver outside the former offices of newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in September 2020. That hearing is before the special assize court for minors in Paris and comes on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo*.

Minister of the economy, Eric Lombard has set out to show signs of openness in meeting with representatives from the Socialist party today to discuss the 2025 budget. The budget for this year has still not been passed after the Barnier government was overthrown a month ago. Meetings with ecologists and communists have also been scheduled at the Elysée for Wednesday. The government under Bayrou is hoping that compromises can be reached in order to draft a finance bill without a motion of no confidence.

Emmanuel Macron has called for cooperation with the United States. Speaking at the annual gathering of ambassadors at the Elysée Palace earlier today, the president insisted that if France decided to be “weak” and “defeatist”, there was little chance of any respect from the United States under President Trump.

And finally, 12 départements remain under amber alert for high winds, with a storm heading over the Paris region and stretching as far as the Ardennes. That storm will clear by the evening.