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**TWITTER COMMUNICATION OF FRENCH POLITICIANS AS A REACTION  
TO RUSSIAN FULL-SCALE INVASION OF UKRAINE (BASED  
ON THE ACCOUNTS OF VALÉRIE PÉCRESE, ÉRIC ZEMMOUR  
AND MARINE LE PEN)**

**Siden O. I.**

*Lecturer at the Department of Romano-Germanic Philology  
and German Translation, Postgraduate Student  
Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University  
68 Desantnykiv str., 10, Mykolaiv, Ukraine  
[orcid.org/0009-0002-9200-2478](https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9200-2478)  
[olena.siden@gmail.com](mailto:olena.siden@gmail.com)  
[siden.o@chmnu.edu.ua](mailto:siden.o@chmnu.edu.ua)*

**Key words:** *Twitter communication, Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, French politicians, content analysis, thematic analysis, critical discourse analysis.*

Nowadays the civilized world is in the process of instant developing, scientific progress and active implementation of modern technologies. New media as a part of modern technologies can be a tool for preventing wars or media coverage of them. Starting February 24, 2022, social networks were flooded with information about Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine coming from Ukrainian and foreign political actors who used social media to communicate with their target audience. In this article Twitter has been explored as a means of political communication, Twitter accounts of French politicians (Valérie Pécresse, Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen) and their reaction to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine over a period of January-April 2022 has been analyzed. Due to the versatility of the topic our research has been conducted using quantitative content, qualitative content, and thematic analysis, as well as elements of critical discourse analysis. The article concludes that despite belonging to right wing political parties, French politicians instrumentalise the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine differently. Center-right Valérie Pécresse supports Ukraine, approves sanctions against Russia, calls for help and decisive action from the EU and NATO, does not approve of EU expansion, referring to Ukraine's accession to the EU, and the end of cooperation of French industries with Russia. Whereas far-right Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen demonstrate an ambiguous attitude: they respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, call for humanitarian aid and condemn the Russian invasion, but at the same time they demonstrate a pro-Russian position, continue Russian narratives about the responsibility of the USA and NATO, use Russian transliteration of Ukrainian cities and territories, oppose sanctions, and call for peace, avoiding the direct nomination of war.

## ТВІТЕР КОМУНІКАЦІЯ ФРАНЦУЗЬКИХ ПОЛІТИКІВ ЯК РЕАКЦІЯ НА ПОВНОМАСШТАБНЕ ВТОРГНЕННЯ РОСІЇ В УКРАЇНУ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ АКАУНТІВ ВАЛЕРІ ПЕКРЕС, ЕРІКА ЗЕММУРА І МАРІН ЛЕ ПЕН)

**Сідень О. І.**

*викладач кафедри романо-германської філології та перекладу  
з німецької мови, аспірант*

*Чорноморський національний університет імені Петра Могили*

*вул. 68 Десантників 10, Миколаїв, Україна*

*orcid.org/0009-0002-9200-2478*

*olena.siden@gmail.com*

*siden.o@chmnu.edu.ua*

**Ключові слова:** *твітер-комунікація, повномасштабне вторгнення Росії в Україну, французькі політики, контент-аналіз, тематичний аналіз, критичний дискурс-аналіз.*

Нині цивілізований світ перебуває у процесі стрімкого розвитку, наукового прогресу та активного впровадження сучасних технологій. Нові медіа як частина сучасних технологій можуть бути інструментом запобігання війнам або висвітлення їх у ЗМІ. Починаючи з 24 лютого 2022 року, соціальні мережі були переповнені інформацією про повномасштабне вторгнення Росії в Україну від українських та іноземних політичних діячів, які використовували соцмережі для спілкування зі своєю цільовою аудиторією. У цій статті твітер досліджено як засіб політичної комунікації, проаналізовано твітер-акаунти французьких політиків (Валері Пекресс, Еріка Земмура і Марін Ле Пен) та їхню реакцію на повномасштабне вторгнення Росії в Україну в січні-квітні 2022 року. Зважаючи на багатогранність теми, наше дослідження було проведено з використанням кількісного контент-аналізу, якісного контент-аналізу, тематичного аналізу та елементів критичного дискурсу-аналізу. У статті зроблено висновок, що, незважаючи на приналежність до правих політичних партій, французькі політики інструменталізують російське повномасштабне вторгнення в Україну по-різному. Правоцентристка Валері Пекресс підтримує Україну, схвалює санкції проти Росії, закликає до допомоги та рішучих дій з боку ЄС і НАТО, не схвалює розширення ЄС, маючи на увазі вступ України до ЄС, та припинення співпраці французьких компаній з Росією. Тоді як ультраправі Ерік Земмур і Марін Ле Пен демонструють неоднозначну позицію: поважають суверенітет України, закликають до гуманітарної допомоги та засуджують російське вторгнення, але водночас демонструють проросійську позицію, наслідують російські наративи про відповідальність США і НАТО, використовують російську транслітерацію українських міст і територій, виступають проти санкцій і закликають до миру, уникаючи прямої номінації війни.

**Introduction.** Constant scientific development, new technologies and globalization are inexhaustible features of modernity. The 21st century is characterized by radical changes in the way of life, which also transform the way of communication. Today, the leading mechanisms of informing are digital media and the Internet, which provide 24/7 access to information on any device and at any place. The shift in the format and method of access to information affects the choice of communication channel between representatives of the authorities and society. It is

also possible to trace significant changes within the framework of society-government interaction. Politicians actively use new media (social networks, websites, blogs, miniblogs, video blogs, podcasts, etc.) for propaganda, election campaigns and communication with society. In addition, through social networks there is a direct way of informing the population, which is especially important during crisis situations, for example, a pandemic, military conflicts, etc.

Nowadays online communication in the political space is in the field of interest of modern linguistics.

Researchers explore problems of modern political communication [39] and investigate social media as an environment of political communication [12; 35; 36; 42; 43]. Different social networks are examined, while some study Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in the context of political participation [13; 45; 46; 13], others take a critical look at social media as a means of communication by political leaders [44]. It is possible to note a significant interest in Twitter as an election tool in Brazil [24], Norway [34], Ukraine [45] and all around the world [11]. Twitter is considered in detail as a place for Campaign Communication, Network Interaction, and Political Participation [5]; and compared with Instagram as platforms for party leader communication [34]. It is also investigated as a political communication space [7; 20; 23]. Relations between politicians and the public [29] and political influence through Twitter [32] are inspected. It was reported in literature that Twitter, in the context of French politics, is a valid place for relations politicians-journalist in France [8] and municipal tweet-campaigns in France [26]. The main scientific attention of recent research is on Twitter communication of French, British and Italian politicians in 2016 [10] and strategies of modern social media usage by French politicians [15].

Recent empirical developments have also revealed that researchers are particularly interested in political Twitter communication in times of crisis. However, only a few studies have shown the mechanisms of instrumentalisation of Twitter communication during the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The researchers are dedicated to the analysis of Twitter accounts [38], examination of the differences between human and bot social media accounts [33], reveal of fake news [4]. However, the issue of political Twitter communication in the French context has not been considered yet. Thus, this study will fill the gap providing insights into how French politicians reacted to Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine over the period January-April 2022 using their accounts on Twitter.

New media, and social media in particular, are being used as a weapon in the information age. So-called «social media warfare» is also utilized in recent conflicts such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The aim of it is «to manipulate the perception, opinions, emotions and behaviour of a specific group in order to harm agents such as governments or companies and to push through a specific political, economic, social or cultural agenda» [3]. Social media can be used by anyone, from an average person to a political leader. Therefore, the amount of involved parties is enormous. And, consequently, the scale of the conflict is ubiquitous since there are no boundaries in a digital era. This proves that nowadays war can take place not only on the battlefield but also in a digital space.

Owing to social networks, people all over the world could witness the Russian full-scale invasion, which started on February 24, 2022. On that day social networks all over the world were filled with information about the beginning of hostilities from eyewitnesses of events, representatives of power and executive structures, Ukrainian and foreign politicians, etc. Political actors used already existing communication channels, which are personal accounts on social networks in order to provide information, declare their attitudes, point of views, sentiments, etc. to their target audience directly. In that way, the right-wing French politicians (Valérie Pécresse, Éric Zemmour, and Marine Le Pen) used their accounts on Twitter in order to state their position and demonstrate their reaction to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**The relevance of the article** is determined by the significant influence of social networks on the interaction between society and the government, and the insufficient study of the communication of French politicians in the social network Twitter as a reaction to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**The object of the research** is Twitter communication of French politicians over the period January-April 2022 as the reaction to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**The subject of the research** is recurring words, collocations, and themes of French politicians (Valérie Pécresse, Éric Zemmour, and Marine Le Pen) concerning the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine over the period January-April 2022.

This article aims to analyze Twitter accounts of French politicians (Valérie Pécresse, Éric Zemmour, and Marine Le Pen) as the reaction to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine over the period January-April 2022, outline recurring words, collocations, and themes in the tweets concerning Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As material of the research Twitter accounts of Valérie Pécresse (@vpeccresse), Éric Zemmour (@ZemmourEric) and Marine Le Pen (@MLP\_officiel) are selected. The selection criterion for the politicians was belonging to right-wing political parties.

**Twitter as a tool of political communication.** Politicians actively use social networks as a tool to approach their target audience in a more direct way. Among all networks, Twitter is one of the most popular within the framework of society-government interaction due to several reasons. Firstly, social communication on Twitter is limited to a tweet (post) of only 280 characters, which allows focusing the attention of both the addressee and the recipient on the most important thing. Secondly, the tweet cannot be edited, only deleted, which makes it impossible to change the previously submitted information. Thirdly, according to the statistics provided by the real-time web analyt-

ics service «Statcounter GlobalStats», Twitter ranks 2nd in terms of global popularity among other social networks in the period January-April 2022 [2]. The first place is taken by Facebook, which in European countries is perceived primarily as a place for casual communication with friends, while Twitter is perceived as a social network for consuming political content, according to the political digital strategist and media researcher Dmytro Plakhta [41]. Fourthly, Twitter is perfect for linguistic investigations due to the brevity of tweets. The relations between language and politics can be efficiently investigated, by taking text apart from media data.

Thus, the brevity, convenience, and popularity of Twitter make it excellent to use in political space, in particular during crisis situations, such as the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when the digital environment was flooded with information. Thereby over the period January-April 2022, using their Twitter accounts, French politicians expressed their positions regarding the then possible war in Ukraine, and then Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Center-right Valérie Pécresse and right-wing radicals Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen, all three politicians who ran for the post of President of France in 2022, have also repeatedly expressed their attitude to the tragic events in Ukraine, mainly using text rather than audiovisual means.

**Methodology.** This research is conducted through the combined use of quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and elements of critical discourse analysis since the investigation focuses on the frequency of particular words and collocations usage, themes dedicated to them, and nominalization of the war.

Allowing the analysis of big amounts of information, content analysis is defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics [28, p.1]. It has several subtypes, among them quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative content analysis is determined as a research method in which features of textual, visual, or aural material are systematically categorized and recorded so that they can be analyzed [9]. Whereas qualitative content analysis involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation [39]. Thematic analysis is

a method for analyzing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns [6]. A repeated pattern can be understood as a repeated theme, which is the most important element of the analysis.

Since critical discourse analysis (CDA) investigates (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practice [18], the elements of CDA perfectly serve for the investigation of nominalization is in the field of interest in the research. Fairclough describes nominalization as «the conversion of processes into nominals, which has the effect of backgrounding the process itself – its tense and modality are not indicated – and usually not specifying its participants, so that who is doing what to whom is left implicit» [17, p. 179].

Using quantitative, qualitative content, thematic analysis and elements of critical discourse (nominalization) analysis the investigation of Twitter communication (i.e. tweets) of French politicians (Valérie Pécresse, Éric Zemmour, and Marine Le Pen) has been conducted. Firstly, tweets of politicians over the period January-April 2022 have been collected and analyzed. Secondly, recurring words, collocations, and themes in the tweets concerning the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine have been distinguished. Thirdly, the nominalization of the war has been outlined. Finally, based on the examined data set, conclusions about the reactions of French politicians to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine have been summarized.

The data consisted of tweets extracted from the Twitter accounts of Valérie Pécresse (@vpecresse), Éric Zemmour (@ZemmourEric), and Marine Le Pen (@MLP\_officiel) over the period January-April 2022 utilizing manual selection.

Initially, 4647 tweets and retweets were extracted from all the 3 politicians (see Table 1), and only 219 of all tweets and retweets were related to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

**Results and discussion.** There are studies assuming that European far-right politicians support the politics of Putin. They claim that «there's love in the air between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Western Europe's far-right political parties» [30], and

Table 1

List of political leaders included in the study

Politician	Number of tweets and retweets	Number of tweets and retweets related to the war	% of “interest”
Valérie Pécresse	758	58	7,65
Éric Zemmour	2427	69	2,84
Marine Le Pen	1462	92	7,65

«cooperation between populist right-wing parties in Europe» with the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) [19]. At the same time, up-to-date investigations demonstrate different points regarding European far-right politicians and support of the politics of Putin. For example, Fagan, M., & Clancy, L. [16] state that «among European right-wing populists, favorable views of Russia and Putin are down sharply», whereas Roonemaa, H., Laine, M., & Weiss, M. give proof that show how closely Italian, French, German and Austrian politicians coordinate with Moscow [31]. The Socialist and Democrats Group's initiative demonstrates concern about Putin's far-right allies in Europe that «threaten our democracies» [1]. Therefore, based on the above-mentioned studies and investigations, the assumption can be made that far-right European parties have been keeping close relations with Putin regardless of all crimes he has done and keeps on committing. The proof of it can be also seen in Twitter communication of right-wing radicals Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen apropos of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which will be investigated further.

Concerning center-right parties, which facilitate democratic stabilization and the institutionalization of modern welfare states [22], relations to Russian imperialism cannot be traced. At the same time, facing the challenges of simultaneously satisfying different groups of cross-pressured voters [21] by center-right parties can be seen in Twitter communication of center-right Valérie Pécresse.

The investigation is moving on now to analyze the reactions of French politicians to the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in their Twitter communication. A general overview of accounts showed them as skillful users of the social network. Politicians utilize the audiovisual capabilities of Twitter: writing tweets, using hashtags, links, pictures, photos, videos, retweets with and without quotations.

Before proceeding to examine recurring words, collocations and themes in the tweets concerning the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is important to investigate the first mention of then possible military aggression in the Twitter accounts of French politicians.

The first mentions of a possible then full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine can be seen on the Twitter account of Valérie Pécresse and Éric Zemmour in February 2022, whereas Marine Le Pen expresses her opinion about it on January 19, 2022. Known for her pro-Putin views, Le Pen emphasized maintaining relations between France and Russia without enmity in response to questions about the «Ukrainian crisis» («la crise ukrainienne»), which French and European politics have faced, namely how to settle this issue if she were the President of France: «Il faut avec la #Russie les mêmes relations que l'on doit entretenir avec les grandes puissances : des relations de respect,

*dépourvues d'une hostilité de principe, et qui visent avant tout à défendre les intérêts de notre pays*». Marine Le Pen also claimed that she questioned the utility of the US-EU Cold War against Russia, that France had taken decisive action in the conflict and the situation needed de-escalation. Moreover, Le Pen mentioned the European sanctions, which, according to her, primarily affected France, not Russia. As a result, Marine Le Pen bypasses Ukraine, claiming that it is the USA and the EU that are waging a cold war with Russia, while France should primarily take care of its well-being.

First mention of Russian military action in Twitter communication of Éric Zemmour also demonstrates a pro-Russian (and pro-Putin in particular) position. On February 2, 2022 Zemmour shared a video excerpt from a television program during which the position of France in the world was discussed, as well as Russian invasion of Ukraine. In it Éric Zemmour claims that Emmanuel Macron no longer inspires confidence in the eyes of Vladimir Putin, because he has changed his mind too much and is generally a puppet of the United States. The assumption can be made that Zemmour in a certain way ignores Ukraine (without even naming it directly) and sees it as a place for a clash between the USA and Russia. In addition, on the eve of a full-scale invasion, on February 21, 2022, Zemmour expressed the opinion that war in Ukraine is inevitable and France, in exchange for Russia withdrawing its troops, should give guarantees that NATO will not expand: «la guerre n'est pas inéluctable en Ukraine. Conformément à son rôle de puissance d'équilibre, la France devrait donner aux Russes des garanties sur la fin de l'élargissement de l'OTAN en échange du retrait de leurs troupes». Later in a tweet dated February 20, 2022, Éric Zemmour attached a photo from a press release stating his changed position (compared to the previous one) on Ukraine. He emphasized the observance of the sovereignty of Ukraine and its borders («La décision de la Russie de reconnaître l'indépendance des deux Républiques du Donbass, dans l'Est de l'Ukraine, viole la souveraineté de l'Ukraine et le principe d'intangibilité des frontières»); called for the avoidance of a new war («Une nouvelle guerre sur notre continent doit absolument être évitée»). Zemmour blamed the conflict primarily not on Russia, but on Western policy (the narrative of collective action is promoted by Russian propaganda) and NATO («La responsabilité de cette situation incombe d'abord à la Russie, mais est aussi le résultat de la politique menée par les Occidentaux et l'OTAN, qui n'ont cessé d'ignorer les préoccupations sécuritaires légitimes de la Russie en refusant tout dialogue sérieux sur l'ordre de sécurité européen»). These observations prove the pro-Russian position of Éric Zemmour, who follows Russian propaganda narratives and demonstrates favoritism of the politics of Putin.



Being different from the representatives of right-wing radicals, February 6, 2022 center-right Valérie Pécresse openly condemned the Russians (and not Vladimir Putin alone, as Zemmour and Le Pen did) who started the war against Ukraine, which is a terrible mistake to her mind. Pécresse also mentioned one of the «red lines» that Russia had crossed, which was the encroachment on the borders of Ukraine. It is worth noting, even before the Russian full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, Valérie Pécresses called the events in Ukraine a war, not a conflict, situation, crisis, etc. in contrast to Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen.

It is equally important to analyze in detail the reactions of politicians on the official day of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine (February 24, 2022). All of them strongly condemned military aggression and called for a diplomatic solution. Centre-right Valérie Pécresse demonstrated Europhile position, advocating for the united power of the EU, not only France: *«La réponse de la France et de l'Europe doit être vigoureuse, coordonnée et sévère»*. She emphasized that the war also concerns Europe, since it is going on in the heart of the continent: *«La guerre est de retour au cœur du continent européen»*. In meantime Éric Zemmour, out of 8 tweets about Ukraine, only in 3 of them he used the word «war», in others Zemmour used «vicious and escalating circle» (*«cercle vicieux et à l'escalade»*) and «Russian military intervention» (*«l'intervention militaire russe»*), avoiding direct nomination and possibly demonstrating him following Russian propaganda narratives even in the name of the military conflict. It is worth mentioning how Éric Zemmour also avoided the nomination of Ukraine altogether, calling the country «Russia's neighbors»: *«Il faut mettre fin au cercle vicieux et à l'escalade entre la Russie et ses voisins»*, which he also repeated in his tweet on February 25: *«Et je propose comme corollaire immédiat, le cessez-le feu, évidemment, mais aussi le retrait des troupes russes des zones séparatistes et le respect par les Russes de l'intégrité territoriale de ses voisins»*. This observation also serves as proof of Zemmour being in a fully pro-Russian position. Concurrently Marine Le Pen claims France-centered position, she accentuates the well-being of the French, condemning the sanctions due to which prices are rising, which can be a tragedy for her compatriots: *«Les sanctions contre la Russie ne doivent pas avoir pour conséquence une aggravation de la situation des Français, notamment en matière de pouvoir d'achat avec une éventuelle explosion des prix de l'énergie. Ce serait un drame pour les Français»*. Le Pen continues the theme that it is better for France to leave NATO in order to become an independent, equidistant and permanent country: *«La France n'a une voix à nouveau audible que si elle est indépendante, équidistante et constante, selon les trois axes de notre diplomatie posés par le Général*

*de Gaulle. En étant dans le commandement intégré de l'OTAN, on perd ces qualités»*.

Taking all mentioned above into consideration, the intermediate conclusion can be made that at the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine politicians demonstrated their reactions based on their political preferences, i.e. Valérie Pécresse displayed herself as Europhile, accentuating actions from the EU altogether with NATO; Éric Zemmour as pro-Russian and pro-Putin followed Russian narratives; and Marine Le Pen as a France-oriented politician concerned about the French well-being firstly.

The investigation is moving on now to analyze recurring themes in the tweets concerning the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in the communication of French politicians: support for Ukraine, sanctions against Russia, peace, the well-being of the French people, Ukraine entering the EU and NATO, critics of Emmanuel Macron and his representatives, diplomatic solution for the war, migrants and refugees, keeping relations with Russia, the war in continental Europe, Ukraine entering the EU and NATO, following Russians narratives, EU and NATO to blame for the war, favoritism of Putin, withdrawal France from NATO, critics of Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen. There are plenty of topics that are shared among all three politicians; however, their positions about them are different. For example, regarding sanctions against Russia Valérie Pécresse supports and emphasizes their strengthening: *«Les sanctions prises à l'égard de la Russie doivent être durcies et étendues à la Biélorussie qui est désormais un État belligérant dans ce conflit»* (28.02.2022); *«Il faut durcir les sanctions contre la Russie et Vladimir Poutine»* (09.03.2022). Whereas Éric Zemmour does not see the point in using sanctions since «it goes against our economic interests»: *«J'estime que ces sanctions vont non seulement à l'encontre de nos intérêts économiques, mais qu'elles sont en plus inefficaces: elles ne résoudront pas le problème plus général de la sécurité en Europe soulevé par la situation en Ukraine»* (20.02.2022). Marine Le Pen opposes sanctions too, arguing that it has dire consequences for the well-being of the French: *«Selon la nature des sanctions qui vont être prises contre la #Russie, il peut y avoir des conséquences terrifiantes sur le pouvoir d'achat des Français, notamment dans le domaine de l'énergie, alors qu'ils sont déjà extrêmement fragilisés»* (25.02.2022).

However, all three politicians are in favour of Ukraine not entering the EU. Pécresses explicitly states that she does not like the idea of Ukraine joining the EU: *«Je ne suis pas favorable à un nouvel élargissement de l'UE, y compris à l'Ukraine, parce que je pense que l'Europe doit d'abord se réformer en profondeur : autonomie stratégique de défense, préférence communautaire, souveraineté alimen-*

taire et énergétique» (14.03.2022). Whereas Marine Le Pen implicitly hints at Ukraine's possible accession to the EU, being against the EU enlargement: «Je suis opposée à l'élargissement indéfini de l'Union européenne» (09.03.2022).

The positions of the right wing politicians regarding Ukraine joining NATO are also negative. In a video dated February 20, 2022 Le Pen calls for Ukraine to be left as a buffer zone (i.e., neutral) that will not join NATO in order not to upset Russia; «LPR» and «DPR» should be granted autonomous status according to the Minsk agreements; recognize «the integration» of the Crimea into Russia. Le Pen argues that it is the influence of the USA, which seeks Ukraine's accession to NATO, and the latter is actually managed by the Americans. Éric Zemmour calls on NATO to promise that Ukraine will not become a member («Les frontières de l'Ukraine doivent être reconnues par la Russie et l'OTAN doit s'engager à ce que l'Ukraine ne devienne jamais un de ses membres» (20.02.2022)) and even suggests that Ukraine be a neutral zone («Il faut un plan qui prévoit l'organisation nouvelle de l'Europe, la neutralité de l'Ukraine, et en échange, le respect de ses frontières et de sa souveraineté. Ce plan est le seul qui peut ramener la paix» (03.02.2022)).

Simultaneously, the support of Ukraine can be seen in Twitter communications of all three politicians. They approve and support humanitarian aid: «Je lance un appel à tous les élus de France pour démultiplier les initiatives et fournir notre part de l'aide humanitaire et matérielle dont le valeureux peuple ukrainien a si douloureusement besoin. #UkraineRussiaWar» (04.03.2022-Pécresse); «Pour aider les Ukrainiens qui fuient la guerre, la priorité doit être d'aider financièrement et logistiquement les pays européens frontaliers, en particulier la Pologne, à accueillir les femmes, enfants et personnes âgées» (28.02.2022-Zemmour); «Il faut apporter toute l'aide humanitaire possible aux Ukrainiens, cela passe évidemment par l'accueil de réfugiés durant la guerre» (13.03.2022-Le Pen). Marine Le Pen also expresses her solidarity with Ukrainians («Permettez-moi d'évoquer ma solidarité et ma compassion absolues avec le peuple ukrainien. L'agression dont l'Ukraine a été victime n'est pas admissible» (20.04.2022)) and admires the resistance of the Ukrainian nation («Comment, dans un tel contexte, ne pas ressentir de la solidarité pour le peuple ukrainien qui lutte courageusement pour son indépendance, malgré l'immense déséquilibre des forces?» (05.03.2022)). Whereas Éric Zemmour admires the resistance of Ukrainians, mentioning «national sentiments» and national pride («Je pense que Poutine a sous-estimé l'émergence d'un sentiment national ukrainien. Les Ukrainiens se battent, c'est un peuple fier, ils résistent face à l'offensive d'une armée plus puissante que la leur» (02.03.2022)).

The theme of the military actions in Ukraine concerns not only the territory of Ukraine but also the territory of Europe. For example, Valérie Pécresse emphasizes that the war against Ukraine is the war not only against Ukraine, but also against Europe: «En se lançant dans cette guerre, V.Poutine misait sur l'indécision de l'Europe» (10.03.2022); «Cette guerre est un électrochoc. Pour défendre la liberté et la souveraineté d'un État agressé en Europe, nous ne reculons pas» (11.03.2022); «Il aurait fallu aller à Moscou avec l'ensemble des représentants européens pour montrer la puissance de l'Europe» (14.03.2022). Éric Zemmour tweets about the war in Ukraine in the context of territorial Europe too: «Hier, la Russie a attaqué l'Ukraine. Hier, la Russie est venue porter la guerre en Europe» (25.02.2022); «Les crises s'accroissent. Elles ne s'annulent pas. La guerre à l'Est de l'Europe n'annule en rien la désintégration de notre pays» (29.03.2022) and even the whole world («Nous ne voulons pas plus de la guerre mondiale que de la guerre à l'intérieur de nos frontières! Nous voulons la paix!» (06.03.2022)).

The well-being of the French people is possibly speculated and manipulated using the topic of the war against Ukraine by Valérie Pécresse and Marine Le Pen. Politicians are concerned about the well-being of the French, which is mostly affected by sanctions on Russia. For instance, Pécresse says that this could have a bad effect on France, when it comes to French companies closing in Russia: «Je salue la décision de Renault de suspendre ses activités en Russie mais je ne donnerai aucune leçon de morale aux très nombreuses entreprises françaises de taille plus réduites qui travaillent en Russie et dont la survie financière en dépend» (24.03.2022). Marine Le Pen supports this point, arguing that it has dire consequences for the well-being of the French: «Selon la nature des sanctions qui vont être prises contre la Russie, il peut y avoir des conséquences terrifiantes sur le pouvoir d'achat des Français, notamment dans le domaine de l'énergie, alors qu'ils sont déjà extrêmement fragilisés» (25.02.2022). As proof of the consequences for the population, the politician cites the example of sanctions in 2014, when Russia occupied the Crimea and part of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions: «En 2014, les sanctions contre la Russie ont eu pour conséquence de faire souffrir nos agriculteurs, qui ont arrêté leurs exportations en Russie. Aujourd'hui, un renchérissement du coût de l'énergie ou des matières premières m'inquiète» (25.02.2022). Le Pen warns of price hikes due to «conflict in Ukraine» («Le conflit en Ukraine fait peser la menace d'un renchérissement des prix de l'énergie : ma proposition de baisser massivement la TVA sur le gaz, l'électricité, les carburants et le fioul est plus que jamais d'actualité. Il faut protéger le pouvoir d'achat des familles !» (27.02.2022)) and repeatedly mentions

that the French suffer from this («*En 2014, ce sont nos agriculteurs qui ont souffert des sanctions!*» (01.03.2022); «*Les sanctions contre la #Russie en 2014 ont été d'une efficacité nulle : elles ont frappé en premier nos industriels, nos agriculteurs, et de surcroît, elles ont été si mal conçues qu'elles ont poussé la Russie à recréer intégralement des filières agricoles*»(03.03.2022); «*Oui à une posture de fermeté dans le conflit en Ukraine. Non à une fuite en avant belliciste qui pénaliserait, comme les sanctions appliquées à la Russie en 2014, les familles, les industries et les agriculteurs français!*» (05.03.2022). Marine Le Pen claims that she is primarily interested in the fate of France and the French, which is why she opposes sanctions: «*J'essaie de toujours défendre l'intérêt de la France et des Français et de me projeter à long terme. Je me suis opposée aux sanctions contre la Russie qui toucheraient le gaz car la conséquence serait une augmentation spectaculaire des prix de l'énergie*» (04.04.2022).

Another theme presented in Twitter communication of politicians is critics of other politicians. Valérie Pécresse condemns the French presidential candidates (Marine Le Pen and Éric Zemmour) for their support for Russia: «*Je le dis à tous les candidats à la présidentielle qui professent une admiration sans borne vis-à-vis de V.Poutine: Mme Le Pen, M.Zemmour et M. Mélenchon.Vous êtes disqualifiés pour représenter le peuple français. Vous êtes disqualifiés pour présider la France*» (26.02.2022); «*Quand je vois Marine Le Pen et Éric Zemmour faire allégeance à la Russie, je me dis que ce n'est pas la France gaulienne que je défends, ce n'est pas une France debout, c'est une France à genoux*» (23.02.2022). Pécresse also criticizes Emmanuel Macron, saying that his actions have not been enough and that it is *already* time to take action for peace in Europe: «*On ne peut pas reprocher au Président de la République d'avoir tenté de dialoguer avec Poutine mais ce dialogue a été trop tardif et solitaire. Il est temps que l'UE définisse une stratégie pour la paix en Europe*» (22.02.2022). Valérie Pécresse also condemns Zemmour alone, emphasizing his favoritism of Putin: «*Eric Zemmour, c'est l'esprit de Munich, c'est l'esprit de défaite. On ne peut pas se dire patriote quand on est sous l'influence de Vladimir Poutine*». Valérie Pécresse even calls Zemmour «*Vladimir Zemmour*», demonstrating that the French politician supports actions of Putin: «*Eric Zemmour n'assume plus d'être#VladimirZemmour*» (10.03.2022). Pécresse emphasizes the fallacy of the politician's opinions about Putin, Europe and NATO too: «*Éric Zemmour s'est trompé sur Vladimir Poutine, sur l'Europe et sur l'OTAN*» (10.03.2022). It is worth mentioning, how Valérie Pécresse alludes to Zemmour's affinity for Putin, saying that the French politician «*Éric Zemmour, le #miZogyne avecun grand Z*» (07.03.2022), since it is publicly known that

Russia uses the letter Z as one of the symbols of the war against Ukraine.

One more topic raised by all three politicians is the diplomatic solution of the military actions. Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen insist on diplomacy: «*Le rôle de la France, c'est de trouver une solution diplomatique au plus vite*» – Zemmour (02.03.2022); «*Il faut essayer de trouver une issue diplomatique à cette crise, à cette violation massive, évidente, du droit international*» – Le Pen (24.02.2022). Whereas Valérie Pécresse emphasizes the participation of France, and not only NATO, in resolving the conflict, both diplomatically and militarily: «*La France doit rester une grande puissance militaire et diplomatique*» (23.02.2022); «*Nous ne pouvons plus compter sur l'OTAN pour assurer la sécurité de l'Europe*». (23.02.2022); «*La France doit toujours être à l'initiative pour trouver une issue politique et diplomatique à cette guerre en#Ukraine*» (02.03.2022).

The theme of criticizing the government and Emmanuel Macron in particular is found in Twitter communication of right-wing radicals Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen. Zemmour blames the President of France for allowing the war in Ukraine to happen. Zemmour accuses that thanks to the policy of the President, France has become dependent on Russia («*Emmanuel Macron n'a pas pu construire avec Vladimir Poutine une relation d'égal à égal, car il n'est pas allé au bout de la logique de l'indépendance française*» (26.02.2022); «*Si la France n'arrive pas à négocier la paix, c'est qu'elle n'impose plus le respect, et si elle n'impose plus le respect, c'est parce que tous les gouvernements, y compris celui d'Emmanuel Macron, ont réduit comme peau de chagrin notre appareil de défense, voilà la réalité!*» (06.03.2022)) as well as on other countries («*Nous n'avons jamais voulu et nous voudrions jamais être inféodé ni à la Russie, ni à la Chine, ni aux Etats-Unis, ni à personne*» 06.03.2022)). Éric Zemmour also retweeted (03.07.2022) the French weekly magazine «*Marianne*», which included a link to the article [27] «*Guerre en #Ukraine: Bruno Le Maire appelle les Français à réduire leur consommation d'énergie*», in which the Minister of Economy asks the French to reduce energy consumption in the context of the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. Éric Zemmour commented on this and blamed one of the ministers of Emmanuel Macron for the situation, i.e. implicitly blamed the President of France.

Criticizing the government, Marine Le Pen also does not avoid condemning the policies of Emmanuel Macron and himself in particular. She believes that he failed in the role of president, representative of NATO and the EU («*Emmanuel Macron ne devrait pas mentir : son voyage en Ukraine et Russie n'a servi à rien. Il n'a RIEN obtenu, car il n'y est pas allé comme président de la République française*



mais comme représentant de l'OTAN et de l'Union européenne» (10.02.2023); «Emmanuel Macron transforme les enjeux les plus tragiques en une opération de communication indécente. J'estime que le rôle d'un chef d'Etat est de mener une diplomatie discrète et efficace pour la paix, ainsi que protéger les Français des conséquences économiques de la guerre» (12.03.2022)).

Regarding the economical impact that Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine makes on France, Marine Le Pen believes that the war has caused disputes over French sovereignty, including food and energy independence: «La guerre en #Ukraine pose des sujets politiques. Elle pose le débat de notre souveraineté, notamment alimentaire et énergétique» (01.03.2022). She does not avoid the topic of dependence of France and EU countries on Russian gas: «C'est parce que les Allemands ou les Belges ont fait le choix idéologique de la suppression du nucléaire qu'aujourd'hui l'Europe est ultra-dépendante du gaz russe» (13.03.2022); «Le nucléaire est le meilleur moyen d'avoir une énergie à bas coût, une énergie décarbonée, et de ne pas dépendre du gaz russe ou du charbon : je souhaite un grand plan de relance du nucléaire» (14.03.2022). Marine Le Pen also criticizes the French political authorities, saying that the cruel war in Ukraine helps to highlight France's weaknesses, which are the result of wrong political choices, for which the French are paying a heavy price, referring to the prices of gas, fuel, electricity, etc.: «La guerre cruelle que subissent les ukrainiens mettent en lumière des faiblesses très lourdes de notre pays, conséquence de choix politiques erronés et que les Français payent déjà au prix fort. Notre dépendance énergétique avec l'explosion du prix du gaz, du fuel, de l'électricité et bien sûr du carburant qui a dépassé 2 euros le litre. Notre dépendance agricole également qui risque d'entraîner une inflation sur les prix de l'alimentation» (14.03.2022). Valérie Pécresse condemns the dependence of France and Europe on Russia too and emphasizes the achievement of independence in various spheres, for example, in the gas sector: «Les européens vont devoir relever le défi de l'indépendance énergétique pour ne plus céder au chantage gazier russe et le défi de la souveraineté agricole et alimentaire» (10.03.2022).

Another theme introduced by Marine Le Pen is calling for the independence of France from NATO («La France a tort d'être dans le commandement intégré de l'#OTAN, car elle n'apparaît plus comme l'arbitre qu'elle toujours été et que je souhaiterais qu'elle redevienne» (09.02.2022)), as well as the withdrawal of the country from the organization («Il n'a jamais été question pour moi de sortir de l'alliance atlantique, mais de sortir du commandement intégré de l'#OTAN. L'autonomie et l'indépendance de la France passent par la sortie du commandement

intégré de l'OTAN» (01.03.2022); «Je veux sortir du commandement intégré de l'OTAN. Je veux que l'on retrouve une diplomatie indépendante, équidistante et constante, à l'image de ce qu'avait voulu le Général de Gaulle» (22.03.2022)). In addition, Le Pen believes that France should be an independent country, not a mouthpiece of NATO or the EU: «La France ne peut avoir une voix qui porte que si elle apparaît comme la France, pas comme le porte-voix de l'OTAN ou de l'Union européenne» (20.02.2022).

An interesting moment of her Twitter communication is also the defense of Vladimir Putin, where she does not approve of the use of the term «war criminal» in relation to the Russian president: «Je ne reprends pas le terme de Joe Biden sur Vladimir Poutine, le qualifiant de «criminel de guerre». On ne négocie pas la paix en insultant l'une des parties et en se faisant plaisir avec des propos injurieux» (21.03.2022). Equally interesting is her tweet on February 25, when the whole world knew about the war started by Vladimir Putin, for Marine Le Pen the Russian president still remained an ally, as he could help in the fight against Islamist fundamentalism, referring to refugees: «J'ai rencontré Vladimir Poutine en 2017. Je le rencontre parce que, 2 ans après le #Bataclan, je considère que la #Russie peut être un allié dans la lutte contre le fondamentalisme islamiste».

The far-right politicians raised the topic of migrants and refugees, which is of great importance and disturbance in France. For instance, Ukrainian refugees were not left of the attention of Marine Le Pen. The politician believes that providing shelter for Ukrainian refugees is absolutely normal, since Ukraine is a European country: «L'Ukraine est un pays européen, il est naturel que les pays européens accueillent les réfugiés européens» (01.03.2022). At the same time, Le Pen mentions migrants, comparing them with Ukrainian refugees, but asks to distinguish between these two categories, since migrants want to enter the country because of economic problems in their native countries, and Ukrainian refugees are fleeing war, it is normal to be in solidarity with the latter: «A #Melilla, il y a des centaines de jeunes hommes qui veulent passer la frontière de force : nous savons faire la différence entre les réfugiés de guerre ukrainiens – avec qui il est normal que la France soit solidaire – et ces #migrants économiques» (03.03.2022). But even in this matter, Marine Le Pen is cautious about the borders of France, she believes that it is better to help Ukrainians settle in Poland, since it is territorially closer: «Je salue l'action de @louis\_aliot, qui se trouve en #Pologne pour aller chercher des personnes âgées, des femmes et des enfants qui vont pouvoir trouver refuge dans sa ville de #Perpignan.» (05.03.2022). Whereas Éric Zemmour maintains a more strict position regarding migrants; he is against the «inflow» of migrants to France. For exam-

ple, with the help of the theme of the war in Ukraine, Zemmour promotes a narrative about observing the borders of states, referring not only to Ukraine, but also to France: «*Avec cette guerre, les frontières sont désormais enfin perçues pour ce qu'elles sont: d'indispensables garants de la liberté, de la sécurité et de la paix des peuples*» (26.02.2022). Another telling example of this is a tweet on March 9, 2022 where the politician wrote «Inadmissible» and attached a photo with the title of the article «*Guerre en Ukraine: non-Ukrainien sur trois parmi les réfugiés en France*», where it is written that of the migrants identified by the authorities, 30% are migrants of other nationalities, that is, non-Ukrainians. Although Éric Zemmour is in favour of Ukrainian migrants, he is against all other «types» of migrants: «*Je veux accueillir temporairement les réfugiés ukrainiens qui sont nos frères européens et chrétiens. Je ne veux pas que des immigrants africains profitent de cela, comme c'est déjà le cas*» (17.03.2022). The politician also emphasizes the respect of borders by migrants («*Le prochain Président devra rétablir sa souveraineté partout où elle est nécessaire. Il devra protéger ses frontières comme un trésor précieux. Il devra renforcer son armée mais aussi sa police et sa Justice*» (26.02.2022)) and calls for their observance («*J'ai condamné tout de suite l'invasion en Ukraine parce que je suis un défenseur de la souveraineté nationale, de l'intégrité des frontières, donc je ne vais pas encourager leur violation*» (14.03.2022)).

In the context of migrants, which is one of the most popular topics in French society and politics, the retweet of Éric Zemmour is of particular interest. In it the politician ironically comments (12.03.2022) on the tweet of Aurélien Taché, who posted a photo with dark skinned people and wrote that he helps Ukrainian refugees: «*Rencontre à Cergy de réfugiés arrivés d'Ukraine, après un long périple. La France doit pouvoir leur fournir des conditions d'accueil dignes et humaines. Je me suis engagé à les accompagner dans leur parcours administratif. #RefugeesWelcome*». Éric Zemmour commented on this with his famous phrase "Okay!" (Ben voyons!), from which the assumption can be made that the politician does not believe that Ukrainians can be darkly skinned and generally opposes migrants with «non-white» skin color. Equally interesting is a tweet on March 2, 2022 in which Éric Zemmour alludes to Muslim migrants in France, comparing them to Chechens who shout «Allah Akbar»: «*\*Quand je vois Vladimir Poutine faire appel aux Tchétchènes qui crient Allah 'Akbar avant d'aller se battre, cela me glace le sang*». That is, the politician defines migrants not only by skin color, but also by faith, and is against those who are not Christians (in one of his tweets, he calls Ukrainian refugees «Christian brothers» – «*les réfugiés ukrainiens qui sont nos frères européens et chrétiens*» (17.03.2022)).

Although Éric Zemmour is in favour of helping Ukrainian refugees, he believes that after the end of hostilities they should return home: «*Ces familles veulent le plus souvent rester à proximité de leur pays et des hommes qui se battent pour le défendre. Quand la guerre sera terminée, ces réfugiés pourront revenir sur la terre qu'ils aiment*» (28.02.2022). He also alludes that Ukrainians do not necessarily have to go to France, he believes that closer Poland is better suited for shelter: «*Que demandent les Ukrainiens ? J'écoute ce qu'ils veulent pas ce qu'on veut pour eux : ils veulent aller en Pologne pour être à côté de leur pays et de leurs maris. Je considère qu'il faut les aider en urgence*» (02.03.2022); «*On ne peut pas rester insensible à la douleur des réfugiés. Les Ukrainiens veulent aller en Pologne, rester à proximité de leurs proches qui se battent et pouvoir rentrer en Ukraine. Il faut les aider*» (02.03.2022). At the same time, Éric Zemmour has a tough position and alludes that it is not necessary to give asylum to all those fleeing from war: «*Soyez en cohérence avec vos principes : accueillerez-vous tous les migrants victimes de toutes les guerres, d'où qu'ils viennent?*» (11.03.2022).

Following the Russian narrative is also presented in the Twitter -communication of right-wing Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen. For instance, the feed of Éric Zemmour often repeats the narrative about the guilt of the US, NATO and the collective West in general. The politician condemns the expansion of NATO («*Je le répète depuis des années : l'expansion ininterrompue de l'OTAN à l'Est est un motif d'inquiétude pour les Russes et ils sont prêts à se battre pour l'empêcher*» (25.02.2022); «*Depuis le 14 février, je propose un traité de paix signé par les Américains, les Européens et les Russes pour inscrire dans le marbre la fin de l'extension de l'OTAN à l'Est de l'Europe*» (25.02.2022)) and blames the US («*Les États-Unis le savent très bien, eux qui poussent chaque fois plus loin les frontières de l'OTAN, et ils savaient aussi très bien qu'ils n'interviendraient pas pour aider les Ukrainiens ensuite*» (25.02.2022)). Marine Le Pen continues the narrative of the USA guilt too, saying that NATO has become a giant arms sales machine under the leadership of the Americans: «*L'OTAN, au fur et à mesure, est devenue une gigantesque machine à vendre de l'armement américain, et un organe sous direction américaine*» (20.02.2022). Moreover, Le Pen discredits organizations such as the EU and NATO, calling British media as "Anglo-Saxon" (the same name is given by their Russian propaganda): «*A Versailles, Emmanuel Macron a dit à la presse française qu'il était pessimiste sur l'issue des négociations, et à la presse anglo-saxonne qu'il était optimiste. Le président de la République se sert de la guerre en Ukraine pour faire peur aux Français*» (13.03.2022).

It is worth mentioning Éric Zemmour often changes his opinion when talking about who is to blame for

Russian aggression against Ukraine. For example, on February 25, 2022 he considers Russia guilty («Je condamne sans réserve l'usage de la force par la Russie» (25.02.2022)), on March 2, initially, Putin is solely to blame («*La Russie est le seul agresseur. Il y a une différence entre définir l'agresseur et définir les responsabilités. Les historiens le diront, mais l'heure n'est plus à cette évaluation. L'agresseur est Vladimir Poutine*»), and in the next tweet of the same day, the Russians in general are to blame («*Les Russes sont capables de tout*»). The opinion of the politician changes on April 4, when photos and videos of war crimes in Boucha were published, then Zemmour blames the Russian army («*Les images de la ville de Boutcha révèlent au monde entier des atrocités commises par l'armée russe sur les populations civiles. Nous ne pouvons rester insensibles à ces images*») and all those who are responsible for it («*Ces crimes de guerre doivent faire l'objet d'une enquête pour punir les responsables*»).

It is noteworthy to mention that in France Éric Zemmour is known for his favoritism of Putin, his views on politics, and the methods he uses for this. That is possibly why Valérie Pécresse called him «Vladimir Zemmour» on her Twitter account. French TV programs also use the same theme. For example, in a tweet by Éric Zemmour on February 16, 2022 he shared a video excerpt from the «France 5» channel, where the inscription «*Éric Zemmour, le Poutine français?*» was displayed on the screen. In that excerpt the politician denies the connection between France and Russia: «*Ne comparons pas la France et la Russie. Je n'adopterai pas en France les méthodes démocratiques de la Russie. Je fais miennes les pratiques démocratiques françaises parce que je suis Français*». At the same time, Éric Zemmour calls methods of Putin harsh and tyrannical, Zemmour believes that it is necessary to negotiate with Putin («*Vladimir Poutine a des méthodes rudes et tyranniques. Mais je suis amené à devenir président de la République et il faudra discuter avec lui comme avec tous les chefs d'État*» (15.03.2022); «*Aujourd'hui, lorsque notre Président de la République tente de négocier avec Vladimir Poutine, il n'est pas écouté et Poutine se joue de lui, car Poutine se dit qu'il est l'émissaire des Etats-Unis et de l'OTAN. Croyez-moi, je ne m'en réjouis pas*» (25.02.2022)) and even conclude a treaty with him («*Depuis le 14 février, je propose un traité de paix signé par les Américains, les Européens et les Russes pour inscrire dans le marbre la fin de l'extension de l'OTAN à l'Est de l'Europe*» (25.02.2022)). Therefore, the assumption can be made that the position of Éric Zemmour regarding Putin is quite ambiguous and he is more in favour of Putin, than that he is against Putin.

It is equally important to note that there are several important themes raised only by Marine Le Pen.

Among them, the topic of maintaining relations with Russia is presented. As one of the arguments «in favour», Marine Le Pen cited the example that if Russia moves away from Europe, then it will become closer to China, which will be a great threat to Europe: «*Il faudra trouver les voies d'un apaisement avec la Russie. Si la Russie s'éloigne de l'Europe, elle tombe dans les bras de la Chine : ce serait pour l'Europe un grand danger*» (24.03.2022). Another example of approval of further relations with Russia can be considered the following statement by Marine Le Pen, in which she says that Russia will always be a neighbour of Europe, because «history has proven that today's enemies can become tomorrow's friends»: «*La Russie restera toujours un voisin de l'Europe: l'histoire a prouvé que les ennemis d'un jour peuvent devenir les alliés de demain*» (01.04.2022). However, after the publication of the terrible events in Boucha, Marine Le Pen condemns the actions of the aggressor country («*Les révélations sur les atrocités commises à Boutcha imposent que l'ONU établisse les responsabilités. La Russie, comme tout autre pays, ne devrait réintégrer le concert des nations sans que soient punis les coupables de crimes de guerre établis par la communauté internationale*» (03.04.2022)); calls for the punishment of those guilty of war crimes («*Ma position sur les atrocités commises contre le peuple ukrainien a toujours été claire depuis le début de l'invasion russe : les coupables de crimes de guerre doivent être identifiés par une enquête de l'ONU, punis par la justice et ne peuvent réintégrer le concert des nations*» (05.04.2022)); «*Les faits révélés par les vidéos à Boutcha sont des crimes de guerre. J'ai demandé une enquête de l'ONU, et je vois que le secrétaire général des Nations Unies réclame lui aussi une enquête indépendante pour savoir quelles sont les responsabilités*» (05.04.2022); «*A partir du moment où des civils désarmés sont assassinés, ce sont à l'évidence des crimes de guerre, et j'ai demandé une enquête de l'ONU sur #Boutcha et #Marioupol. Ceux qui sont responsables de cela doivent être écartés du concert des Nations*» (14.04.2022)).

The graphic recurrence of topics mentioned above by French politicians is presented in the following table 2.

The investigation is turning now to the nomination of war in Twitter communication of French politicians. Center-right Valérie Pécresse calls the war «war» and not «situation, crisis, conflict» etc.: «*La guerre est de retour au cœur du continent européen*» (24.02.2022); «*En se lançant dans cette guerre, V.Poutine misait sur l'indécision de l'Europe*» (10.03.2022), whereas far-right Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen avoid direct nomination. Zemmour implicitly talks about the war in Ukraine using a word «peace»: «*La France a un devoir de puissance pour préserver la paix*» (20.02.2022), «*Il nous faut une*



## Recurrence of topics

Topic	Valérie Pécresse	Éric Zemmour	Marine Le Pen
Support for Ukraine	10	13	9
Sanctions against Russia	11	1	20
Peace	5	22	5
Well-being of the French people	4	2	25
Critics of Emmanuel Macron and his representatives	11	8	9
Diplomatic solution for the war	5	4	13
Migrants and refugees	4	6	5
Keeping relations with Russia	1	1	11
War in continental Europe	1	4	1
Ukraine entering the EU and NATO	1	1	2
Following Russians narratives	-	5	7
EU and NATO to blame for the war	-	2	2
Favoritism of Putin	-	2	2
Withdrawal of France from NATO	-	-	8
Critics of Éric Zemmour	8	-	-
Critics of Marine Le Pen	3	-	-

*paix durable, mais l'urgence est désormais de faire taire les armes*» (20.02.2022). Éric Zemmour uses other metaphorical expressions such as «vicious and escalating circle, the Russian military intervention, situation, conflict, disaster, escalation between Russia and its neighbours, use of force by Russia, fratricidal conflict» («*cercle vicieux et à l'escalade, l'intervention militaire russe, situation, conflit, catastrophe, l'escalade entre la Russie et ses voisins, l'usage de la force par la Russie, conflit fratricide*»). In one tweet of February 20, Zemmour avoided the nomination of Ukraine altogether, calling the country «Russia's neighbors»: «*Il faut mettre fin au cercle vicieux et à l'escalade entre la Russie et ses voisins*», which he also repeated in his tweet on February 25: «*Et je propose comme corolaire immédiat, le cessez-le feu, évidemment, mais aussi le retrait des troupes russes des zones séparatistes et le respect par les Russes de l'intégrité territoriale de ses voisins*».

Marine Le Pen attempts to maneuver, directly naming the war or even «cruel war» («*guerre, guerre cruelle*»), however, in most cases she uses words and collocations such as «crisis, conflict, military operation (as it is called in Russia), circumstances, Russian invasion» etc. («*crise, conflit, circonstances, opération militaire, invasion russe*»). In addition, it is worth to mention far-right using Russian transliteration of Ukrainian cities which possibly demonstrates their support for Russian policy, for example, «Kiev» instead of «Kyiv», «Marioupol» instead of «Marioupol», «Donbass» instead of «Donbas».

The graphic recurrence of nominations used by French politicians is presented in the following table 3.

In summary, having analyzed the data regarding Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, common

themes such as support for Ukraine, diplomatic resolution of the military conflict, criticism of the government, Ukraine joining NATO and EU can be traced. At the same time, there are topics raised by one politician: Valérie Pécresse concerns about far right Zemmour and Le Pen; Marine Le Pen is interested in withdrawal from NATO; Éric Zemmour attempts to find who is guilty in the war. Several themes are in the interest of two politicians simultaneously: Pécresse and Zemmour are worried about the war at the continental Europe; Le Pen and Pécresse are concerned about the well-being of the French; far-right politicians follow the Russian narratives and are uncertain about immigrants and refugees. Concerning the nomination of the war, it is explicitly used mostly by center-right Valérie Pécresse, whereas far-right Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen avoid direct nomination.

**Conclusions and future prospects.** Nowadays social media are actively used in political communication in order to approach their target audience in a more direct way. Within the framework of society-government interaction Twitter is one of the most popular tools among politicians. Since communication in Twitter is limited to a tweet of only 280 characters, it is perfect for linguistic investigations due to the brevity of tweets. Because of the versatility of the topic our research has been conducted using quantitative, qualitative content, thematic analysis and elements of critical discourse analysis. It has been discovered that in the Twitter communication of French politicians, despite belonging to right-wing political parties, Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine is instrumentalised differently. The overall attitude of politicians is characterized by condemning military actions against Ukraine. Center-right Valérie Pécresse demonstrates her full



Table 3

## Recurrence of nominations

Nomination	Valérie Pécresse	Éric Zemmour	Marine Le Pen
war («guerre»)	14	20	23
peace («paix»)	5	24	6
crise («crise»)	1	4	7
situation («situation»)	5	2	4
conflict («conflit»)	2	1	6
Russian invasion («invasion russe»)	3	1	1
military operation/intervention («opération/intervention militaire»)	-	2	2
escalation («escalade»)	-	1	1
circumstances («circonstances»)	-	-	2
other	-	3	-
Kiev	-	1	1
Donbass	-	-	3
Marioupol	-	-	1

support for Ukraine, whereas far-right Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen display ambiguous positions: they respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, call for humanitarian aid and condemn the Russian invasion, but at the same time they demonstrate a pro-Russian position, propagate Russian narratives about the responsibility of the USA and NATO, use Russian transliteration of Ukrainian cities and territories, oppose sanctions, and call for peace, avoiding the direct nomination of war, calling it «crisis, conflict, military operation». Recurring topics in the tweets of French politicians are support for Ukraine, sanctions against Russia, peace, well-being of the French people, Ukraine entering the EU and NATO, critics of Emmanuel Macron and his representatives, diplomatic solution for the war, migrants and refugees, keeping relations with Russia, war in continental Europe, Ukraine entering the EU and NATO, following Russians narratives, EU and NATO to blame for the war, favoritism of Putin, withdrawal of France from NATO, critics of Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen. Nomination of the war is distinguished by usage of direct nomination (war) and implicit nomination (peace, crisis, situation, conflict).

Future research opportunities can be found by broadening the amount of data for the investigation, i.e. considering more accounts of politicians, using other analysis methods, and choosing other social networks.

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