

# [***German Far-Right Candidate Under Fire for Nazi Comments***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C35-1171-DY68-14G5-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Maximilian Krah, the AfD's lead candidate for the European elections, was banned from public appearances after claiming not all SS members were criminals.

**Body**

[*Germany's*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/germany?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has banned its lead candidate for upcoming European elections from making public appearances after he claimed that not all members of the [*Nazi*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nazi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) SS were necessarily criminals.

The announcement that Maximilian Krah will pull back from campaigning came a day after longtime ally, French far-right leader [*Marine Le Pen*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/marine-le-pen?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), said lawmakers from her National Rally party would no longer sit in the same parliamentary group as the AfD after next month's European parliament elections.

In an interview with the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Krah said he would "never say that anyone who wore an SS uniform was automatically a criminal," referencing German novelist Günter Grass, who admitted late in his life to having joined the Waffen-SS as a teenager.

The Schutzstaffel (SS), a major paramilitary organization under [*Adolf Hitler*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/adolf-hitler?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), played a leading part in the Holocaust and the slaughter of six million Jews and other groups targeted by the Nazis.

After the interview emerged, Krah argued that his comments were "being misused as a pretext to harm our party."

He said on social media that he agreed to stop campaigning to avoid damaging the AfD in next month's [*EU*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/eu?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) parliamentary vote. He will, however, remain on the ballot as the party's lead candidate.

The AfD released a statement later saying that there was a "constructive exchange" between party leadership and Krah. They concluded that Krah's controversial statements caused "massive damage to the party in the current election campaign."

In addition to Le Pen, Krah has made enemies of other European far-right leaders who see him as a liability to their cause, which has been growing in popularity throughout the continent. Danish far-right MEP Anders Vistisen, whose party is also part of the right-wing Identity and Democracy (ID) group, has called on the AfD to "get rid of Krah" or leave the group altogether.

While the latest controversy has led AfD leaders to halt Krah's campaign ahead of next month's elections, the 47-year-old politician remains their top candidate because it's too late to remove him from the ballot.

Born in Saxony, Krah studied law and earned his doctorate in jurisprudence, establishing a career as a lawyer. He entered ***politics*** with the AfD, quickly rising through the ranks due to his outspoken views and strong advocacy for nationalist policies.

Krah has also been at the center of other recent scandals related to his alleged foreign ties. German prosecutors have launched a preliminary investigation into suspicions that he's been financed by Russian and Chinese actors. One of his assistants in the European Parliament was arrested in April on charges of being a Chinese agent.

Krah and another AfD candidate for the European Union elections, Petr Bystron, have denied allegations that they took money to promote pro-Russian positions on a Moscow-funded news website.

In the upcoming [*European Parliament elections*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/european-union?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), right-wing and other Euro-skeptic parties are expected to gain significant ground. The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group and the ID group are both projected to see notable increases in their number of seats.

But the center-right European People's Party (EPP) is still expected to remain the largest group, although with fewer seats than before. The Socialists and [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) (S&D) group is also expected to maintain its position as the second-largest group with a slight increase in seats​.

The elections will take place across the continent from June 6 to June 9.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2397486/maximilian-krah.jpg)

**Graphic**

Maximilian Krah

Getty Images

Maximilian Krah, Member of the European Parliament of the German far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party speaks during the European Election Assembly at the AfD's federal party congress at the trade fair in Magdeburg, eastern Germany on July 29, 2023.

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