

Russia: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the arrest of Alexei Navalny upon his return



The European Union condemns the detention of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny upon his return to Moscow on 17 January and calls for his immediate release. Politicisation of the judiciary is unacceptable and Mr Navalny's rights must be respected. We also call upon the Russian authorities to immediately release all those journalists and citizens who have been detained in connection to their reporting of, and support of, Mr Navalny upon his return. This detention confirms a continuous negative pattern of shrinking space for the opposition, civil society and independent voices in the Russian Federation. The EU will follow closely the developments in this field and will continue to take this into account when shaping its policy towards Russia.

The European Union has condemned in the strongest possible terms the assassination attempt, through poisoning using a military chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group, on Alexei Navalny, to which it responded by imposing restrictive measures on six individuals and one entity. Together with our partners, the European Union will continue to call upon the Russian authorities to urgently investigate the assassination attempt on Mr Navalny in full transparency and without further delay, and to fully cooperate with the *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons* (OPCW) to ensure an impartial international investigation.