

# Russia / Poisoning of Alexei Navalny: Remarks by the High Repres



*Check against delivery!*

## **Opening remarks**

Let us have a look at the situation – as you have requested – in Russia, particularly at the poisoning of the opposition leader, Mr Alexei Navalny, which has shocked all of us.

I would like to take this opportunity to transmit once again my best wishes to him and his family and the fact that we condemn in the strongest possible terms this assassination attempt – because these are the words that we have to use, assassination attempt.

I personally issued two statements immediately after these events happened, [on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August](#) and [on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September](#), and the 27 EU Member States issued a [Declaration on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September](#).

The German government confirmed, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, that Mr Navalny has been poisoned by a military chemical. Yesterday we learnt that French and Swedish laboratories have ratified this conclusion.

There is now irrefutable evidence that a nerve agent of the “Novichok” group, similar to the one used in the assassination attempt on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in March 2018, was used to try to assassinate Mr Navalny.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances, constitutes a serious breach of international law and international human rights standards.

We keep calling upon the Russian authorities to cooperate fully in this investigation and particularly with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

This is what I have to inform you of, distinguished Members of the European Parliament.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-194060>

### **Closing remarks**

*Check against delivery!*

[We continue calling on Russia to investigate this crime](#) through a fully transparent procedure, under the auspices of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We can expect that the poisoning of Mr [Alexei] Navalny will have an impact on European Union-Russia relations. We are going to discuss that in the next Foreign Affairs Council.

Some of you talk about the possibility of this affecting Nord Stream 2. Once again, this is something that is outside of the possibilities of the European institutions. What I can tell you is that the European Commission has never shown a lot of enthusiasm about this pipeline, which from the Commission we have been considering as not a relevant priority infrastructure. But it is something that is up to the Member States that have been pushing for this infrastructure to be built. As I said, there is the scepticism of the Commission, which has never shown strong support for it.

Finally, about the possibility of sanctioning Russia with a kind of “Magnitsky-style” [human rights sanctions] regime: When I took office, I immediately launched [\[negotiations for\] a global human rights sanctions regime](#), which has been discussed once again at the last Foreign Affairs Council. [There are] continued discussions in the Council. The legal acts are currently being drafted.

I hope that what has happened to Mr Navalny will represent an encouragement for Member States to stop discussing and start acting and approving this human rights sanctions regime that, in the same way that the Americans call it the “Magnitsky Act”, we could call it the “Navalny sanctions regime”. This could be a good way of taking stock of what has happened and keep in the records for the future the name of Mr Navalny associated to a sanctions regime for people who violated human rights.

Mr President, thank you very much.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-195015>