



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No.1463 Vienna, 29 February 2024

EU Statement on the Death of Alexei Navalny and the Dire Human Rights Situation in Russia

1. The European Union is outraged by the death of the Russian opposition politician, Alexei Navalny, for which the ultimate responsibility lies with President Putin and the Russian authorities. We join ODIHR in its call on Russia to allow an independent and transparent international investigation into circumstances of his sudden death. The EU will spare no efforts to hold Russia's political leadership and authorities to account, in close coordination with our partners; and impose further costs for their actions, including through sanctions.
2. The EU has repeatedly condemned in the strongest possible terms Mr. Navalny's poisoning and all politically motivated rulings against him for his legitimate political and anti-corruption activities, calling for his immediate and unconditional release. We have recalled that the prohibition of torture is absolute under international law and repeatedly called on Russia to ensure his safety and health, including by approaching authorities in Moscow to no avail.
3. Throughout his life, Mr Navalny demonstrated incredible courage, dedication to his country and a strong determination in his anti-corruption work across Russia, a cause that attracted widespread sympathy and support across the country. He embodied the struggle for democracy. This is why Russian authorities were afraid of him, also in the context of Russia's ongoing unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and the upcoming Russian Presidential elections in March.
4. Around the world, people have gathered to pay tribute to the memory of Alexei Navalny. In Russia, the authorities tried to prevent this in a number of places and

several hundred people have been detained. They must be immediately released. In view of the ongoing human rights violations, political repression and unprecedented crackdown on civil society in Russia, the recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report of September 2022 remain highly relevant as the most valuable instrument exposing the regime's repression. We also express our appreciation for UN Special Rapporteur Mariana Katzarova's invaluable work on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation.

5. Mr. Navalny became a symbol of the fight for freedom, justice and democracy. These were the guiding values also for Boris Nemtsov, whose memory we honour on the ninth anniversary of his assassination. With him, we remember Anna Politkovskaya and all others who have lost their lives, health, and freedom in defence of human rights in Russia.
6. Unfortunately, there are still at least 700 political prisoners in Russia, among them Igor Baryshnikov, Tamara Parshina, Vladimir Kara-Murza, Alexei Gorinov, Ilya Yashin, Boris Kargalitsky, Lillia Chanyшева and Yuri Dmitriev, journalists Alsu Kurmasheva, Maria Ponomarenko, Dmitriy Vitushkin, Evan Gershkovich and other activists and public figures such as Alexandra Skochilenko, Dmitriy Ivanov, Evgenia Berkovich, Svetlana Petrychuk, Parvinahan Abuzarova, Grigoriy Melkonyants, Ksenia Fadeeva and Ivan Safronov. We call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners.
7. The European Union is appalled by the politically motivated sentencing of Oleg Orlov, a prominent human rights defender and co-chair of the Nobel Peace Prize-awarded Memorial organisation. We call once again on Russia to abide by fundamental rights enshrined in its constitution as well as by international law, including international human rights law.
8. As the 2022 OSCE Moscow Mechanism report showed, there is a clear correlation between internal repression and external aggression. The EU stands in solidarity with those Russians who want to see an open and democratic Russia, and with those who want Russia to end its illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU will continue to support Russian independent media actors, civil society and human rights defenders inside and outside Russia.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, SAN MARINO, and the UNITED KINGDOM align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.