Resolution on the situation in Russia: the poisoning of Alexei Navalny

2020/2777(RSP) - 17/09/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 532 votes to 84, with 72 abstentions, a resolution on the situation in Russia: the poisoning of Alexei Navalny.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

Members strongly condemned the attempted assassination of Alexei Navalny, one of the main figures of the political opposition in Russia, using a nerve agent from the Novitchok group, a chemical weapon designed for the military structures and secret services in Russia, who are the only ones to have access to it.

Parliament expressed its deepest concern about the repeated use of nerve agents against Russian citizens, recalling that the use of chemical weapons is in all circumstances a reprehensible crime under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

According to Members, the case of Alexei Navalny is part of a wider Russian policy focusing on oppressive internal policies and aggressive actions worldwide, spreading instability and chaos, restabilising its sphere of influence and dominance, and undermining the rules-based international order.

International investigation and sanctions

The resolution called for the immediate launch of an international investigation into the Navalny case and alleged violations of Russia's international commitments in the field of chemical weapons, while urging the Russian authorities to cooperate fully in such an investigation and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Parliament called for the EU to draw up a list of ambitious restrictive measures against Russia and to tighten existing sanctions against Russia by allowing the collection and freezing of the European assets of corrupt individuals.

Respect for international law

Expressing solidarity with democratic forces in Russia, Parliament called on the Union to demand that Russia repeal or amend all laws incompatible with international standards, including recent illegal changes to the Russian Constitution and the legal framework for elections, as well as legislation on foreign agents and undesirable organisations, in order to support pluralism and free and fair elections and to create a level playing field for opposition candidates.

Russia is called upon to respond urgently to the issues raised by the international community and to immediately disclose its Novychok programme in full to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Relations between the European Union and Russia

Parliament called on Member States to coordinate their positions vis-à-vis Russia and to speak with one voice in bilateral and multilateral fora with the Russian authorities. It stressed the urgent need for a thorough re-assessment of EU-Russia relations on the basis of the following principles:

- to develop a new comprehensive strategy, which will depend on future developments in the field of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights by the Russian leadership and authorities;

- continue to isolate Russia in international fora (such as the G7 or other fora) and critically review the Union's cooperation with Russia;

- prioritise the approval of the EU mechanism (modelled on the Magnitsky law) for sanctioning human rights violations, including a list of persons and sectoral sanctions against the Russian regime;

- adopt an EU strategy to support Russian dissidents, non-governmental and civil society organisations and independent media and reporters in Russia;

- adopt a strategy for future relations with a democratic Russia including incentives and conditions to strengthen national trends towards freedom and democracy.