Resolution on the arrest of Aleksei Navalny

2021/2513(RSP) - 21/01/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 581 votes to 50, with 44 abstentions, a resolution on the arrest of Aleksei Navalny.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and ECR groups.

The resolution recalled that the situation of human rights and the rule of law continues to deteriorate in Russia, with systematic efforts by the authorities to silence free speech, limit the freedom of assembly, obstruct opposition activities, react with repression to any activities aimed at exposing corruption, and stifle the activities of Russian civil society.

Parliament called for the immediate and unconditional release of Alexei Navalny and of all other persons detained in relation to his return to Russia, whether they be journalists, team collaborators or citizens showing support. It also urged Russia to put an end to the harassment, intimidation, violence and repression of independent and dissident voices.

It condemned Russia’s behaviour, which it deems inappropriate for a member of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe which has committed to respecting fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law as enshrined in the ECHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Appropriate measures should be taken to evaluate the breaches of commitments made by Russia.

Members condemned Russia’s repeated use of chemical nerve agents against Russian citizens and recalled that the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances constitutes a reprehensible crime under international law.

Parliament urged the Council to:

- significantly strengthen the EU’s restrictive measures vis-à-vis Russia, including by sanctioning the individuals and legal entities involved in the decision to arrest and imprison Alexei Navalny;

- introduce sanctions against Russian oligarchs related to the regime and members of President Putin’s inner circle as well as media propagandists who possess assets in the European Union and enjoy freedom of travel to the Member States. These sanctions should also be extended to their immediate family members.

Members stressed that the EU should no longer be a welcoming place for Russian wealth of unclear origin. Moreover, it should impose additional targeted restrictive measures under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime against all individuals who were involved in or bear responsibility for the attacks against Alexei Navalny.

The EU and its Member States are called on to:

- devise a new strategy for the EU’s relations with Russia, centred around support for civil society, which promotes democratic values, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights;

- critically review cooperation with Russia in various foreign policy platforms and on projects such as Nord Stream 2, the completion of which the EU must stop immediately;

- coordinate their positions on Russia and speak with one voice in bilateral and multilateral forums with the Russian authorities.