



EU backs new sanctions against Russia over Navalny's death

By: Alberto Nardelli | Mar 18 2024 at 04:19 PM | [International Trade](#)

Foreign ministers of the European Union agreed on new sanctions related to the death of the Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny in an Arctic prison last month.

The ministers approved the package during a meeting in Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told reporters Monday. The restrictive measures include some 30 persons and two entities, according to an earlier draft of the proposal seen by Bloomberg.

The decision comes after Vladimir Putin was declared the winner of a presidential election whose outcome was pre-determined. Putin extended his quarter-century rule after winning 87.3% of the vote with no serious challenger in the election.

Among the proposed listings are several prison and government officials and judges, as well as the IK-3 and IK-6 penal colonies, according to the draft. The EU approved a modest package of sanctions last month aimed at Moscow, its 13th since Russia invaded Ukraine. Those measures focused on enforcing existing restrictions.

Navalny's allies had called on people to protest Putin's election by turning up at noon on Sunday. Long lines formed at that time outside some polling stations, including in Moscow and St. Petersburg, in a symbolic show of defiance amid the harshest Kremlin crackdown on dissent in decades.

Navalny rose to prominence during massive pro-democracy protest in Russia in 2011-2012. The Kremlin critic was barred from running in a 2018 presidential ballot because of a fraud conviction that the US and EU criticized as politically motivated.

He fell ill in August 2020 on a flight to Moscow after meeting with local activists in the Siberian city of Tomsk. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an international watchdog, confirmed that a nerve agent from the banned Novichok group had been used in the poisoning.

The opposition leader was transferred to a remote Arctic prison colony, IK-3, in late December from a jail outside Moscow. In his last post on X, formerly Twitter, on Feb. 14, he reported that he'd been sentenced to 15 days in a punishment cell for the fourth time since he'd arrived there.

Separately, the EU also approved new sanctions on Hamas leaders and violent Israeli settlers, Borrell said, without providing additional details.