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To all MEPs signatory to the letter concerning the poisoning of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

I would like to thank you for the open letter concerning the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician, Mr Alexei Navalny, addressed to the German Presidency of the Council of the EU and myself.

I have personally issued two statements immediately after we were informed about this incident, on 24 August and on 2 September, followed by a Declaration on behalf of the EU on 3 September. In these public statements, this assassination attempt has been condemned in the strongest possible terms. Moreover, I addressed the European Parliament on the poisoning of Mr Navalny on 15 September. We had an exchange of views on the issue in the Foreign Affairs Council on 21 September, where we agreed to have Russia as an agenda point at the October Foreign Affairs Council.

Independent specialised laboratories in France and Sweden have also confirmed the finding of a military chemical nerve agent of the “Novichok” group. This chemical nerve agent is similar to the one used in the assassination attempt on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury on 4 March 2018.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor – anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances, constitutes a serious breach of international law and international human rights standards.

The EU has called for a joint international response and reserves the right to take appropriate actions, including through restrictive measures. Any decision on sanctions is for the Council to take.

Let me assure you that we will continue to raise this issue with the Russian government at all levels, calling on Russia to investigate this crime, as a matter of urgency, thoroughly and in full transparency and international cooperation, in particular with the *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons* (OPCW).

Yours faithfully,



Josep Borrell Fontelles