



Brussels, 28 January 2021

**Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles**  
High Representative of the Union  
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Vice-President of the European Commission

Dear High Representative,

We have recently learned about your intention to visit Moscow in the beginning of February. Although we welcome your efforts to improve the relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation, we do not find this particular moment to be well chosen for the first visit of the EU's top diplomat to Moscow since 2017.

We share the concern of a number of EU Foreign Affairs ministers that, considering the current situation in Russia, your visit will most probably be used for internal propaganda purposes. With the poisoning of Mr Navalny and his recent arrest, followed by a violent crackdown on massive protests in his defence and in defence of a democratic Russia that took place throughout the country last weekend, the regime revealed its cynicism and brutality. Your visit in Russia now will send an ambiguous signal to those who had the courage to take to the streets a couple of days ago.

Should you nevertheless decide to keep your plan unchanged, we, as the Members of the European Parliament, would urge you or other members of your delegation to meet with Mr Navalny's entourage in order to send a political signal of EU's disapproval of Mr Putin's treatment of his opponents. This would also be a precious message of hope sent from the European Union to the Russian people and human rights defenders in this country.

A credible European Union cannot do business as usual with a regime that, not for the first time, tried to secretly kill its own citizen and who tolerates no dissent at all. Not anymore!

Sincerely yours,

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Petras Auštrevičius, Renew Europe  
Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Renew Europe  
Javier Nart, Renew Europe  
Bogusław Liberadzki, S&D  
Liudas Mazylis, EPP

Jerzy Buzek, EPP  
Sven Giegold, Greens/EFA  
Rasa Juknevičienė, EPP  
Michal Šimečka, Renew Europe  
Michael Bloss, Greens/EFA  
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Clara Ponsatí, non-attached

Milan Zver, EPP