

STATEMENT

On the detention of Aleksei Navalny, and suppression and persecution of the democratic opposition in the Russian Federation

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia,

responding to the detention of Aleksei Navalny, a leading member of the Russian political opposition, lawyer and anti-corruption activist, in Moscow, Russia, on 17 January 2021;

recognising that Aleksei Navalny has previously been detained, arrested and convicted on the basis deemed politically motivated by the European Court of Human Rights and that violated his rights to freedom and are against the principles of fair trial;

reminding of the international obligations of Russia that call for adherence to the principles of the rule of law and the protection of human rights and freedoms, and that the detention of political opponents does not comply with these obligations;

pointing out that last year, on 20 August 2020, on Russian territory, Aleksei Navalny fell victim to a ruthless crime – a poisoning attempt using a military-grade nerve agent from the “Novichok” group developed by Russia – and that Russia still has not opened a criminal investigation into this crime;

referring to the statements by the European Parliament, the European Union, G7 and NATO member states on the detention of Aleksei Navalny following his return to Moscow;

adhering to the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime introduced by the Council of the European Union on 7 December 2020;

referring to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and international obligations assumed by Russia as a member state of the European Council, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the UN;

reminding that, according to the Chemical Weapons Convention, any attempt to poison an individual using a neuroparalytic agent is considered use of chemical weapons and, regardless of the attacker or the circumstances, is a severe violation of international and human rights standards,

urges the Russian Federation as the permanent member of the UN Security Council and an elected member state to the UN Human Rights Council to uphold in its territory the principles and human rights enshrined in the UN Charter;

strongly condemns the illegal and politically motivated detention of Aleksei Navalny upon his return to Russia, carried out by the Russian

authorities in an attempt to silence the opposition and critics of the regime;

calls for an immediate and unconditional release of Aleksei Navalny and an investigation into the poisoning;

recommends the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia to call on its international partners to take an active stand on this matter and substantially intensify the EU response by establishing restrictive measures;

calls on the Russian authorities to immediately discontinue the persecution, intimidation and suppression, as well as other forms of violations of the human rights of their political opponents and social activists (including the Russian non-governmental organisation “Anti-Corruption Foundation”).