The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

EU Condemns 'Politically Motivated' Navalny Trial

February 09, 2017



Alexei Navalny **Moskva News Agency**

The European Union has criticized the trial of opposition activist Alexei Navalny for being politically motivated.

Navalny was handed down a five-year suspended sentence on Wednesday after being found guilty of embezzlement.

The decision jeopardizes his hopes of running for the Russian presidency in 2018, when Vladimir Putin is likely to seek his fourth term in office.

"The verdict against Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny on charges of embezzlement attempts to silence yet another independent political voice in the Russian Federation," the EU's external action branch said in an online statement.

"This latest decision, which effectively excludes Mr. Navalny from the political arena, further constrains political pluralism in Russia and raises serious questions as to the

fairness of democratic processes in Russia."

Related article: Alexei Navalny's Sisyphean Battle

Navalny first stood trial on embezzlement charges in 2013, when he was also found guilty.

The Russian Supreme Court overturned the conviction in November 2016 under pressure from the European Court of Human Rights but swiftly ordered a retrial.

Under Russian law, anyone found guilty of committing a "high-level crime" such as embezzlement is not eligible to run for office. The ban lasts for 10 years after the defendant completes their sentence.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/02/09/eu-condemns-politically-motivated-navalny-trial-a57095