

EU Sanctions FSB Chief, Senior Kremlin Officials Over Navalny Poisoning

October 15, 2020



Ambassadors from the 27 EU countries approved the sanctions after France and Germany proposed measures last week, saying Russia was responsible for the poisoning. **Jean-Francois Badias / AP / TASS**

The European Union has slapped sanctions on senior Kremlin officials and the head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) over the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, according to a decision [published](#) on the EU's legal portal Thursday.

The EU banned travel and froze the assets of FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov, as well as President Vladimir Putin's first deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyenko and the Kremlin's head of domestic policy Andrei Yarin.

Related article: [Navalny Urges EU Entry Bans on Putin's 'Close Circles'](#)

Brussels imposed the same measures on Russian deputy defense ministers Pavel Popov and Alexei Krivoruchko, as well as Putin's envoy in Siberia where Navalny fell violently ill in

August.

The sanctions enter into force Thursday.

Navalny was medevaced to Germany, where the government said its military scientists determined that he was poisoned with the Novichok nerve agent. The global chemical weapons watchdog later said it found a previously unknown strain of Novichok in Navalny's samples.

The EU has also sanctioned the Russian State Scientific Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology (GosNIIOKhT), which it said was behind the development of Novichok and other chemical weapons.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, nicknamed "Putin's chef" because his company has done catering for the Kremlin, was sanctioned for undermining peace in Libya by supporting the Wagner Group private military company which is active there.

Prigozhin, a wealthy tycoon close to Putin, is already under U.S. sanctions over his links to the Wagner mercenary outfit, which has been accused of interfering in various conflicts around Africa.

Ambassadors from the 27 EU countries approved the sanctions after France and Germany proposed measures last week, saying Russia was responsible for the poisoning. The Kremlin denies its role.

"The EU with this step has harmed relations with our country," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters following the EU's announcement, describing the measure as a "consciously unfriendly step" on the part of the EU and vowing Russia would retaliate.

Paris and Berlin said last week they wanted to target individuals "based on their official function" and an entity "involved in the Novichok program."

European powers have repeatedly asked Moscow to investigate the poisoning, but in a joint statement last week the French and German foreign ministers said the Kremlin had come up with "no credible explanation."

Russia's foreign minister said Wednesday that EU sanctions "will not go without consequences" as international media identified their possible Russian targets this week.

AFP contributed reporting.

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