

Germany, Poland, Sweden to Expel Russian Diplomats in Tit-for-Tat Move

By [AFP](#)

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The EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell met Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow last week.

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Germany, Sweden and Poland on Monday said they were each expelling a Russian diplomat, in retaliation for Moscow's expulsion last week of their diplomats for allegedly taking part in protests in support of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

The three EU countries announced the tit-for-tat moves in coordinated statements, which come against a backdrop of [mounting tensions with Russia](#).

"Today the Federal Foreign Office has declared a staff member of the Russian Embassy in Berlin persona non grata," the German foreign ministry said.

Moscow's decision to expel the Swedish, Polish and German diplomats "was in no way justified," it added.

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Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde said Stockholm had "informed the Russian ambassador that a person from the Russian embassy is asked to leave Sweden."

"This is a clear response to the unacceptable decision to expel a Swedish diplomat who was only performing his duties," she wrote on Twitter.

The Polish Foreign Ministry likewise condemned the "groundless expulsion" of a Polish diplomat in Saint Petersburg and said it had declared "persona non grata" a Russian consular official in Poznan, western Poland.

Russia had Friday [announced](#) the shock expulsion of the three EU diplomats during a rare meeting in Moscow between EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Moscow accused the diplomats of attending "illegal protests" last month.

Ties between Moscow and the EU have worsened over Navalny's arrest and jailing in recent weeks, which have sparked nationwide opposition protests.

Navalny was arrested upon returning to Moscow on January 17 after spending several months in Germany recovering from a poisoning attack the West believes was ordered by the Kremlin.

The EU's Borrell is expected to meet with foreign ministers from the 27 EU states on February 22 to discuss fresh sanctions against Moscow that would require an unanimous vote among the EU members.

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