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EU Diplomat Assaulted During Visit to Far East Russia's Vladivostok

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Vladivostok. **MT**

An EU diplomat from Romania was assaulted during a work trip to the city of Vladivostok last month, the German news website Der Spiegel reported Tuesday, citing unnamed diplomats familiar with the incident.

The unidentified official, a Romanian national, was reportedly threatened and attacked by two men who pulled up next to her in a vehicle during an early morning walk on May 26. She had been traveling with a French colleague to visit the consulates of EU member states in Vladivostok.

Russian state media that reported on the diplomat's visit at the time identified her as 33-year-old Eveline Ioana Mărășoiu. Video published by local media showed journalists and pro-Kremlin activists holding up signs reading "The EU funds the murder of Russians" and harassing Mărășoiu on her arrival at the airport in Vladivostok.

EU diplomats who spoke to Der Spiegel said they had "strong assumptions" that the

diplomat's assailants may have been linked to Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), although their identities remain unknown.

It was not immediately clear whether Russian law enforcement authorities took action to investigate the attack.

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The assaulted diplomat has since left Russia, and Romanian Foreign Minister Emil Hurezeanu said she was "in perfect safety and in full health in Brussels."

EU ambassadors were said to have held an emergency meeting on Tuesday to assess the implications of the incident for their diplomatic operations in Russia.

Brussels has summoned Russia's Permanent Representative, Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov, for "clarifications" into the incident, according to Der Spiegel.

"We condemn any violence against EU diplomats. They must be able to carry out their duties free from fear and intimidation," lead EU security spokeswoman Anitta Hipper said.

"The safety of our staff is paramount, and we will continue to review the protection of our diplomatic staff," she added.

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