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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY  
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1555th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 February 2026

**On the anniversary of Alexei Navalny's death**

Mr. Chairperson,

The death of former opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who was serving time in a Russian penal colony as punishment for a criminal offence, has long since become a bargaining chip for a number of Western countries that are using it for their own short-term, opportunistic political purposes. What is more, the Brussels bloc could not care less who this so-called fighter for human rights really was. The criminal past of their “protégé” is no stumbling block for them in that regard, nor are his extremist views and rhetoric.

Our working position is that we have repeatedly provided exhaustive explanations on the case of this former Russian opposition figure at various platforms, including here in this room, both during his lifetime and after his demise. However, for the benefit of those who have evidently forgotten this, we may remind them that Mr. Navalny, a Russian citizen, was convicted by a Russian court of law – under criminal charges from the outset that had nothing to do with his political views (“embezzlement by means of deception”). He died in custody of natural causes, namely multiple chronic diseases, as has also been confirmed by Mr. Navalny's relatives, who posted online the findings of the doctors in charge of the autopsy. Unfortunately, before his body had even been laid to rest, the “ritual dances” around his persona kicked off and they continue to this day, as we are seeing right now.

Mr. Chairperson,

Two years later, this tragic story continues to catch the fancy of officials from the Brussels bloc and London. On 14 February, a number of Western countries issued a joint statement claiming that Mr. Navalny's death was the result of poisoning with epibatidine, a toxin extracted from the skin of an Ecuadorian poison dart frog. Such a conclusion was reached allegedly on the basis of analyses of samples taken from the body of the deceased. It was apparently not until 2026 that technologies appeared on the scene finally making it possible to establish with absolute accuracy that the Russian State is using exotic amphibians to settle scores with its prisoners. We had, it seems, run out of novichok, so more reliable methods had to be put into play – after all, Russia is teeming with tropical frogs! Remarkably, the

aforementioned countries not only exhort everyone to believe this nonsense, but also accuse Russia of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention.

These accusations are as ludicrous as they are groundless. The purpose of such “sensationalist” stories is obvious, namely to shock gullible members of the public so as to keep up the requisite anti-Russian animus in society. As in the days of Nazi Germany, where the authorities were of the view that the more absurd an “accusation”, the more plausible it was. And in that regard, purity of method is neither here nor there.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation always stands ready to engage in a substantive discussion. But it has to be one in which facts and formulae are employed, as opposed to unsubstantiated accusations, propagandistic clichés and absurd theories. However, as soon as such a conversation becomes overdue, our Western colleagues find themselves with a lump, or to use the English idiom, a frog in their throat. Not a tropical frog by any chance?

In closing, we once again call upon the countries of the collective West to abandon the pernicious practice of interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States and to address their own systemic human rights problems, of which they have more than plenty. In any case, far more than there are Ecuadorian poison dart frogs in Russia.

Thank you for your attention.