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## Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the sentencing of Alexey Navalny and Pyotr Ofitserov

The Spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, issued the following statement today:

*"The High Representative is concerned about the guilty verdict and the prison sentences handed down today by the Kirov Court against Alexey Navalny, member of the Russian opposition coordination council and anti-corruption campaigner, and his co-defendant Pyotr Ofitserov. The charges against them have not been substantiated during the trial.*

*Civil society has a vital role to play in exposing wrongdoing and defending human rights, and it should not be stifled.*

*This outcome, given the procedural shortcomings, raises serious questions as to the state of the rule of law in Russia. The High Representative hopes that their sentences will be reconsidered in the appeal process."*

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**P R E S S**

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