

MEPs criticise visit of EU foreign policy chief to Moscow



Josep Borrell reported back from his trip to Moscow, which was criticised by many MEPs © European Union

The visit of Josep Borrell to Moscow should not have taken place, say many MEPs, who also criticise the Council for failing to respond to Russia's aggressive policies.

In a debate on Tuesday afternoon with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell on the current situation in Russia, some MEPs defended the purpose of his visit, whilst many condemned the [trip to Moscow](#). They stressed that it did not come at a good time, due to the protracted deterioration in EU-Russia relations, with continued Russian aggression in Ukraine, the crackdown on protesters, EU diplomats expelled from the country, assassination attempts by the country's intelligence services and the imprisonment of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Mr Borrell said in his opening statement that he went to Moscow to see, through principled diplomacy, whether the Russian government was interested in addressing differences and reversing the negative developments in EU-Russia relations. The reaction he received points in a different direction, he added.

Russian attempts to undermine the EU

Many members underlined that the Russian government is not interested in reversing the negative trend in EU-Russia relations, as long as the European Union keeps raising issues related to human rights and rule of law. They also strongly criticised the behaviour and attitude of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov towards the EU and Josep Borrell during their meetings and press conference, which served to undermine the EU.

Members also pointed to the failure of EU member states in the Council to put in place more and stronger actions against Russia, including further sanctions. Some denounced certain EU capitals for not responding appropriately to the deterioration of EU-Russia relations, for instance by stopping the Nord Stream II pipeline.

You can watch the debate in full [here](#). (09.02.2021)

Live replay to individual speakers:

[Josep BORRELL FONTELLES](#) High representative/Vice President of European Commission

[Michael GAHLER](#) (EPP, DE)

[Kati PIRI](#) (S&D, NL)

[Dacian CIOLOȘ](#) (Renew Europe, RO)

[Thierry MARIANI](#) (ID, FR)

[Sergey LAGODINSKY](#) (Greens/EFA, DE)

[Anna FOTYGA](#) (ECR, PL)

[Clare DALY](#) (The Left group, IE)

Further information

Press statement: “EU-Russia relations: MEPs condemn the decision by the Russian authorities to expel three EU diplomats” (08.02.2021)

Press release: “Parliament demands significantly tighter EU sanctions against Russia” (21.01.2021)

European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the arrest of Alexei Navalny

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2020 on the situation in Russia: the poisoning of Alexei Navalny

Video clip: Alexei Navalny arrest in Moscow: statements by David McAllister (EPP, DE), AFET Chair, and Andrius Kubilius (EPP, LT), rapporteur

EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material (EU-Russia relations)

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