



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Eighth Session

5 – 7 October 2021

EC-98/NAT.13

2 November 2021

ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**REQUEST FOR CIRCULATION OF A DOCUMENT
AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

The Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation has requested that a note verbale addressed to the Technical Secretariat, dated 2 November 2021, be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Eighth Session of the Executive Council.

Annex: Note Verbale No. 54 from the Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to the Technical Secretariat, Dated 2 November 2021



Annex

**NOTE VERBALE NO. 54 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT,
DATED 2 NOVEMBER 2021**



PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE
PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

№ 54

The Permanent Representation of the Russian Federation to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) presents its compliments to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (hereinafter, “the Secretariat”) and, with reference to notes verbales number 101/2021, dated 18 October 2021, from the Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the OPCW; number 41/2021, dated 18 October 2021 from the Permanent Representation of Germany to the OPCW; number 2021-0496245, dated 18 October 2021 from the Permanent Representation of France; and dated 18 October 2021 from the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the OPCW, has the honour to convey to the Secretariat its assessment of the responses of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federative Republic of Germany, the French Republic, and the Kingdom of Sweden to Note 44, dated 7 October 2021, from the Permanent Representation.

The Russian side finds that the responses of these countries do not contain the necessary information and perceives them to be formalities with no substance that are propagandistic in nature.

**TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

The Hague

The Permanent Representation is also forced to remind the Secretariat of the absence of its response to the Permanent Representation's Note number 29, dated 27 July 2021. The Russian Side strongly requests that the Secretariat provide the video materials in its possession recorded by Secretariat experts when collecting biological samples from A. A. Navalny in the Charité clinic, and when they were split and tagged for transfer to the laboratories designated by the Secretariat to conduct tests, and to report any other actions of the Secretariat within the framework of providing technical assistance to the Federative Republic of Germany in relation to the incident with A. A. Navalny, a citizen of the Russian Federation.

The Permanent Representation also requests that the Secretariat urgently circulate a copy of this Note and the attached document ("Assessment of the Responses of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden to the Russian Request under Paragraph 2 of Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention, dated 7 October 2021, Regarding the Incident with A. Navalny") among all States Parties and publish it on the OPCW website and the Catalyst network as a national document of the Ninety-Eighth Session of the OPCW Executive Council.

The Permanent Representation avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat the assurances of its very highest considerations.

Encl.: 7 pp.



[official seal of the Embassy of Russia in the Netherlands]

The Hague, 2 November 2021

**Assessment of the Responses of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and
Sweden to the Russian Request under Paragraph 2 of Article IX of the
Chemical Weapons Convention, dated 7 October 2021
Regarding the Incident with Alexei Navalny**

On 7 October 2021, in response to the démarche against Russia at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by a group of 45 States “concerned” about the 2020 incident involving Russian blogger Alexei Navalny, the Russian Federation submitted through the OPCW Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) a counter-démarche to the representatives of France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom under paragraph 2 of Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”).

On 18 October 2021, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden sent their official responses to Russia’s request through the OPCW Secretariat within the timeframe set out in the Convention; however, the content of their responses cannot be found satisfactory by the Russian Federation or other rational States Parties to the Convention, as they are bereft of substance.

We are forced to note that the documents received are nothing more than non-committal, “megaphone diplomacy”-style replies containing “highly likely” statements. They are clearly aimed at bringing the efforts to publicly clarify all circumstances of the incident involving the blogger to a dead end. This indicates the intent of the French, German, Swedish, and British sides to bring this situation to the point of absurdity, by essentially preventing the disclosure of the facts revealing the true nature of the incident with Alexei Navalny, as well as the international political campaign surrounding him launched by the German authorities.

The Russian Federation has yet again been denied its legitimate request for information and materials of crucial importance to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs—these are required in order to complete the preliminary inquiry into the incident with Alexei Navalny to establish evidence of a criminal offence and the possible grounds for launching relevant criminal proceedings. According to the repeated statements by the representatives of the States named above, the latter are allegedly in possession of documentary and material evidence, including biological samples from the blogger confirming his intoxication with some chemical warfare agent. Yet for some unexplained reason, they are making every effort to hide it from both the Russian investigative authorities and the international community.

London, Berlin, Paris, and Stockholm have left a number of our key questions unanswered, namely:

- What is the exact chemical composition of the toxic substance allegedly detected by German—and later French and Swedish—military chemists in the Russian blogger’s biological samples?
- Who was the person who accompanied Alexei Navalny aboard the chartered medical flight from Omsk to Berlin, and what was their departmental affiliation?
- What was the role of British national Ms Pevchikh in this whole affair, whose involvement is so heavily concealed by both the German and British authorities?
- Why are the Russian law enforcement agencies not being given the opportunity to question Ms Pevchikh?

The statement made by Paris about waiting for “credible explanations for this attempted murder” from our country is logically inconsistent with France’s simultaneous refusal to cooperate with the Russian Federation on the incident with Alexei Navalny under the 1959 European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, under which the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Russian Federation requested the results of the toxicological analysis of the blogger’s biological samples allegedly conducted by the French military chemical laboratory, but to no avail. Berlin and Stockholm have also adopted a blatantly provocative stance.

The United Kingdom continues spreading its tired propagandistic slogans, twisting the facts and issuing boilerplate, quasi-prosecutorial accusatory rants against Russia. London’s position—according to which the questions we posed allegedly cannot be directed to the British authorities—is also puzzling. This makes no sense, given that London was the one to take the initiative and assume the “honourary” mission to submit to the OPCW a document on behalf of the 45 States “concerned” about the incident with Alexei Navalny. One gets the impression that the British authorities have become carried away with their anti-Russian provocations—similar to the Skripal fraud—and remain falsely confident that the truth will never be revealed to public.

The German response rejects the obvious fact that there is a conspiracy among a group of Western States with Berlin’s full participation, resulting in Navalny’s health incident having been brought to the international level at the OPCW. Russia has been the target of unsubstantiated accusations of using a certain “chemical warfare agent”. This is exactly how the cholinesterase inhibitor initially detected at the Charité hospital was classified by the

military chemical laboratory of the Bundeswehr Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology—the formula for which, as mentioned earlier, is carefully concealed. However, if the German side was truly concerned about the actual investigation into the incident with Alexei Navalny within the framework of the Convention, it would surely share the information about “the findings” in the blogger’s biological samples with us. Yet Berlin remains stubbornly reluctant to do so.

The actions consistently undertaken by the German authorities and their Euro-Atlantic allies starting on 20 August 2020 clearly point to an orchestrated provocation aimed at discrediting the Russian Federation in the eyes of the international community and causing us not only political, but also financial and economic damage through sanctions.

Germany has persistently evaded directly answering the question of “Who was the person who accompanied Alexei Navalny aboard the chartered medical flight from Omsk to Berlin and what was their departmental affiliation?” Yet another reply is mockingly laconic: there were no members or representatives of the German Government or other German authorities aboard that plane, they say. Yet, during his entire stay in Germany, Alexei Navalny was heavily guarded by German special services and received attention at the highest political level.

Furthermore, they have long tried to conceal from the Russian side even the very fact that Germany requested assistance from the OPCW. Without disputing the thesis of the German authorities that the Convention does not require prior notice to or the consent of other States Parties to the Convention when requesting technical assistance, it is still worth recalling that right up until 14 September 2020—the day when the German Government officially announced that the OPCW Secretariat had collected biological samples from Alexei Navalny—the designated high-ranking officials of the OPCW Secretariat, in response to numerous requests from Russia, persistently claimed that they had not received any requests for technical assistance from the German side. They later admitted that such “secrecy” about what was going on was maintained at Berlin's request. So why was the interaction between the German authorities and the OPCW Secretariat on the incident with Alexei Navalny steadfastly concealed from the Russian Federation? It is noteworthy that the OPCW Secretariat is confused even about the date of Germany's request for technical assistance: whether it was 20 August or 4 September 2020.

Berlin has asserted that German military chemists have determined that certain “traces” on the water bottle that representatives of Navalny's inner circle allegedly took from his hotel room in Tomsk are identical with a certain substance allegedly found in the blogger's

biomaterials. Therefore, this bottle is a potential key piece of evidence of a possible assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny. How then should we understand the German side's unceremonious statement that the Russian Federation does not need this physical evidence to investigate the incident? They claim that Russia has all the necessary materials to complete the investigation.

Furthermore, the German side asserts that it knows nothing about the role of Maria Pevchikh, a British national, in the story with Navalny or her present whereabouts. But it was Maria Pevchikh, according to her own words in an interview with the BBC Russian Service on 18 September 2020, who brought the aforementioned bottle (i.e., the key “evidence of poisoning” of Alexei Navalny in the possession of the German side) to Berlin on the same plane that transported the blogger from Omsk. How then could the German authorities not be aware of Maria Pevchikh's role or her present whereabouts? The German side's incongruous explanations about this woman sound even more implausible against the backdrop of media reports about her frequent visits to Navalny both at the Charité hospital in Berlin, and at a villa near Freiburg, where the blogger was guarded by German special services around the clock.

In response to the crucial question “Why is the formula of the chemicals allegedly found in the biomaterials of the Russian citizen outside of the Russian Federation still hidden from the relevant Russian experts?” the German side has once again resorted to a clumsy bureaucratic “trick”, referring the Russian side to the leadership of the OPCW Secretariat and its previously published report on technical assistance to Germany, from the text of which this same formula of said chemicals was redacted at Germany's insistence. The snake has bitten its own tail.

In this same context, for some reason reference is made to the clumsy statement by Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW Secretariat, that “the results of the analysis (note: carried out by the OPCW specialists) confirmed that a toxic chemical of the novichok family was found in Mr. Navalny's blood”. However, it should be recalled that the aforementioned report by the OPCW Secretariat does not mention any “novichoks”. It refers to “the biomarkers of the cholinesterase inhibitor with similar structural characteristics to the toxic chemicals belonging to Schedules 1.A.14 and 1.A.15”.

It is obvious that the OPCW Secretariat, together with and under the supervision of the German authorities and their allies, are deliberately concealing the formula of the substance allegedly found in Navalny's biomaterials for fear that its disclosure would definitively destroy the already unfounded narrative of Russia's fabricated breach of the Convention.

The answer from the German side regarding its lack of photo and video materials recorded during the collection of biological samples from Navalny in Berlin's Charité clinic also raises serious questions. Video recording of sampling is required by OPCW rules and is a standard procedure in OPCW activities. We still have no response from the Secretariat to our similar request of 27 July 2021: we urged the Secretariat to provide video footage in its possession of the collection of samples and to report any other activities of the Secretariat related to the provision of technical assistance to Germany in connection with the incident with Alexei Navalny.

With regard to the United Kingdom's claims that Russia allegedly has “stalled and effectively blocked the OPCW Secretariat from deploying a technical assistance visit”, it is worth recalling that it was the leadership of the OPCW Secretariat that, under fabricated pretexts, effectively refused to provide such assistance to the Russian Federation under Article VIII, paragraph 38 (e) of the Convention based on the modalities requested by the Russian side, which are in full compliance with the Convention. Thus, a proposal for a joint examination of Alexei Navalny's remaining biological materials by OPCW experts and the relevant Russian specialists using OPCW equipment, but on the premises of the OPCW-certified laboratory of the Research Institute for Hygiene, Occupational Pathology, and Human Ecology in Saint Petersburg was rejected. At the same time, London is well aware that there are no “standard modalities” for providing such assistance, and it is up to the requesting State to determine the type and scope of assistance required.

In conclusion, we note that the unconstructive position of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden has not made it possible to clarify, within the mechanisms provided for by Article IX of the Convention, the true circumstances of the incident involving Alexei Navalny. The main question remains unanswered: where, when, and under what circumstances did traces of the substance allegedly detected by military chemists from Germany, France, Sweden, and specialised laboratories of the OPCW appear in the blogger's biomaterials outside the territory of the Russian Federation? The Omsk medical professionals who saved Navalny's life found no traces of any poisons in his system.