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Moscow slams EU's 'arbitrary' chemical-weapons sanctions, threatens to retaliate

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22/01/2019



Russia has threatened to respond to “freshly invented” punitive measures imposed by the EU over the Skripal poisoning. Moscow says it’s an arbitrary punishment that disrespects established non-proliferation norms.

The accusations that gave rise to the sanctions *“don’t stand up to criticism,”* the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. *“We reserve the right to retaliatory measures in response to this unfriendly act.”*

On Monday, Brussels used its new powers against four Russian nationals over the March 2018 poisoning of double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the UK.

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Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov (named in the sanctions ruling as Russian intelligence agents Alexander Mishkin and Anatoliy Chepiga) were subjected to a European asset freeze and a travel ban, along with Igor Kostyukov, the head of Russia’s main intelligence directorate (the GRU), and his deputy, Vladimir Alekseyev.

Read more [Russians don't hold Kremlin responsible for Skripal poisoning, say British did it themselves – poll](#)



The EU also sanctioned five Syrians who it claims were involved in the Damascus government's chemical-weapons program.

*"It's notable that among the first subjects to be added to the EU's 'chemical' restrictions list are citizens of Russia and Syria – two countries that (unlike, for example, the US) have ensured the complete destruction of their chemical weapons arsenals under OPCW control,"* said the Foreign Ministry.

Moscow has repeatedly denied any involvement in the Skripal poisoning and offered to help with the investigation. London has not provided any conclusive proof of Russian involvement.

The EU Council adopted a new regime of restrictive measures on October 15, 2018. Under the new regulations, the EU reserves the right to sanction persons and entities it deems to be involved in the development and use of chemical weapons, without seeking the opinion of the UN Security Council.