

# Press Release

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Paris, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

In response to the many questions we have received and that our employees have been subjected to, and in response of the strong emotion aroused by Alexeï Navalny's situation in Russia, our Group reiterates its total commitment to and respect for individual freedoms, the rule of law and freedom of expression.

While it condemns any infringement of these principles of which Mr Alexeï Navalny may have been a victim, it cannot remain silent in the face of unjustified public questioning in strict accordance with the facts and the law in this case and owes it to its clients, partners and employees to establish the truth.

Thus, as a reminder, this case dates back to 2012 for a local commercial case of suspected fraud.

In 2012, the local Russian authorities summoned Yves Rocher Vostok to interrogate him in the context of a judicial investigation that was underway into the Glavpodpiska company belonging to the brothers Oleg and Alexeï Navalny. Yves Rocher Vostok's management had to answer the investigators' questions and during these interrogations they discovered several important and corroborating clues which made it likely that a fraud had been committed against him. In 2008, Yves Rocher Vostok was using the services of the Yaroslavl Post Office, which no longer seemed to be able to handle its parcel volumes. Oleg Navalny, one of the senior officials of the Russian Post Office at the time, recommended that Yves Rocher Vostok uses the services of Glavpodpiska. The question was whether this recourse was justified and what were the possible implications of Oleg Navalny. At that time, Yves Rocher Vostok ignored he was also a shareholder of Glavpodpiska. Our subsidiary merely answered the questions of the local authorities. It applied the usual internal procedures as well as those provided for by the applicable Russian law in order to have access to the documents and elements of the case file and shed light on what had taken place.

Yves Rocher Vostok never filed a complaint against the Navalny brothers or made any legal claim against them at any time. Moreover, from 2013, Yves Rocher Vostok did not intervene in the proceedings.


A first judgement condemning the Navalny brothers was filed on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, confirmed by the Moscow Court of Appeal in 2015 and then by the Russian Supreme Court in 2018. The suspicions of fraud by the Navalny brothers against two private companies (including Yves Rocher Vostok) were confirmed by three judgments. Following these judgements, Alexeï Navalny was sentenced to a suspended prison sentence of 3.5 years with a probationary period of 5 years ending on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The Russian Prosecutor General extended this probationary period in 2017 and extended it to December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for facts that in no way relate to the case in which Yves Rocher Vostok had intervened.

At the same time, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2017 that the Navalny brothers had been deprived of their right to a fair trial and denounced "*arbitrary and manifestly unreasonable*" court decisions. As such and in such a case, the European Court was only responsible for judging the conformity of the judicial proceedings with the European Convention on Human Rights to which Russia is a signatory. In fact, the European Court does not examine the facts being judged but the procedure being applied. The proceedings were conducted in accordance with the rules of Russian law over which Yves Rocher Vostok had no control.

Finally, we would like to come back to a quote which is often mentioned in this case and which is a source of confusion. The phrase "*we have not suffered any prejudice*" is often taken out of context; this was only with regard to the rates for services invoiced by Glavpodpiska to Yves Rocher Vostok, which were in line with market prices. This does not purge the questions as to the conditions under which the contract with Glavpodpiska was concluded.

Therefore, in Russia, all legal proceedings involving Yves Rocher Vostok have been closed.

In France, regarding the complaint for "*slandorous denunciation*" filed by Alexeï Navalny's counsel, neither the Public Prosecutor's Office nor the Investigating Judge hearing the complaint has retained any charge or responsibility against our company. The criminal proceedings have been closed and only Alexeï Navalny is



requesting their reopening. Indeed, the current proceedings before the Rennes Court of Appeal only concern a refusal by the examining magistrate to authorize additional acts of investigation against our company.

We would like to remind you that Groupe Rocher is apolitical. To that extent, we do not wish to be used for political purposes or to take part in the current political debate in Russia. This is the antithesis of our values and our mission. In addition to working for the common good, our primary objective is, and will remain, the well-being of our customers while ensuring the safety of our employees and the preservation of Groupe Rocher's private interests.

**For more information, please contact us:**

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