

# COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Oleg and Alexei Navalny – Yves Rocher Vostok:

The appeal confirms the dismissal order in favour of  
the company Laboratoires de Biologie Végétale Yves Rocher

Press release issued on 22th May 2023

## **The Rennes Court of Appeal confirms the dismissal order in favour of the company Laboratoires de Biologie Végétale Yves Rocher.**

Issy Les Moulineaux, 22th May 2023

After an appeal judgement of the dismissal order, the Rennes Court of Appeal has again confirmed the innocence of the company Laboratoires de Biologie Végétale Yves Rocher on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. As the complainants filed an appeal in cassation, the procedure is still underway.


The Rocher Group regrets that the complainants have decided to appeal in cassation, and that this contention has thus been extended. The Group will keep defending its integrity and innocence relentlessly throughout the justice process.

We would like to remind that the Rocher Group is non-political. In this sense, the Group does not wish to be played for political purposes nor does it wish to take part in the current political debates taking place in Russia. This is clearly against its values and our mission.

The Rocher Group reiterates its total commitment and respect for individual freedoms, the rule of law and freedom of expression, and condemns any infringement of these principles to which Mr Alexei Navalny may have fallen victim.

### **Precisions on the procedure**

In 2012, the local Russian authorities summoned Yves Rocher Vostok for questioning as part of a judicial investigation that was underway into the Glavpodpiska company, owned by brothers Oleg and Alexei Navalny. Yves Rocher Vostok's management indeed had to answer questions from investigators, and during the questioning they discovered several important and consistent clues pointing to the existence of a possible fraud. In 2008, Yves Rocher Vostok was using the services of the Yaroslav Post Office, which seemed no longer to be able to handle its volumes of packages. Oleg Navalny, one of the senior officials of the Russian Post Office at the time, recommended that Yves Rocher Vostok should use the services of Glavpodpiska. The issue was thus to understand whether this recourse was justified, and what were the possible implications for Oleg Navalny, whose partnership status Yves Rocher Vostok was unaware of at the time. Our subsidiary simply answered local authorities' questions. It applied the usual procedures both internally and under the applicable Russian law in order to gain access to the documents and elements of the judiciary file and to shed a light on what had happened.



Yves Rocher Vostok never filed a complaint against the Navalny brothers, nor did it make any legal claim against them. As of 2013, Yves Rocher Vostok has not taken part in the proceedings under Russian law.

A first judgment condemning the Navalny brothers was handed down on December 30, 2014, which was subsequently upheld by the Moscow Court of Appeal in 2015 and by the Russian Supreme Court in 2018. The suspicions of fraud by the Navalny brothers against two private companies (including Yves Rocher Vostok) were upheld by three judgements. As a result of these judgements, Alexei Navalny was sentenced to a 3.5-year suspended prison term with a 5-year probationary period ending on June 30, 2019. The Russian General Prosecutor extended this probationary period in 2017 to December 29, 2020 for acts that do not relate to the Yves Rocher Vostok case. It was in the context of this extension of probation, again totally unrelated to the case in which Yves Rocher Vostok was questioned, that Alexei Navalny was imprisoned. This has absolutely no connection with the so-called "Yves Rocher case".

Meanwhile, 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. In this respect and in such a case, the European Court was only in charge of judging the conformity of the judicial procedure with the European Convention on Human Rights to which Russia is a signatory. Indeed, the European Court does not examine the facts but only the procedure applied. The ECHR ruled that the procedure was duly conducted under Russian law over which Yves Rocher Vostok had no control as a company.

Finally, we would like to answer to a quotation that is often mentioned in this case, and which is source of confusion. The sentence "we have not suffered any damage" is often taken out of context; this statement referred solely to the prices for services invoiced by the company Glavpodpiska to Yves Rocher Vostok, which were in line with market prices. This does not obliterate the questions about the conditions under which the contract with Glavpodpiska was concluded.

Thus, in Russia, all legal proceedings involving Yves Rocher Vostok are closed.

In France, a complaint for "slandorous denunciation" was filed by Oleg and Alexei Navalny's lawyers and neither the prosecutor's office nor the examining magistrate overseeing the complaint have retained any charge or responsibility against the Group. The procedure has thus been closed and only Oleg and Alexei Navalny requested its reopening by referring to the Rennes Court of Appeal against the investigating judge's refusal to authorize additional investigative acts.

After examining the case, the Rennes Court of Appeal confirmed in June 2021 the refusal of the investigating judge to authorize these additional investigative acts requested by Oleg and Alexei Navalny and on October 11, 2021, our company was dismissed from the case as none of Oleg and Alexei Navalny's allegations against us were upheld. This dismissal was confirmed on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023.



## About the Rocher Group

The Rocher Group is a family business from Brittany, founded in 1959 by Mr. Yves Rocher. Convinced, from MR. Yves Rocher's personal experience, that nature has a positive impact on people's well-being and will to act for the planet, the Rocher Group was the first international group to adopt the mission-driven company status, which purpose is to "reconnect women and men to nature".

It now includes 9 brands (Yves Rocher, Arbonne, Petit Bateau, Stanhome, Kiotis, Dr Pierre Ricaud, Sabon and Flormar), more than 16 000 collaborators, 50 millions clients and has a nearly 2,4 billions turnover in the cosmetics, clothing and home embellishment sectors.

Located in more than 110 countries, the Rocher Group is developing ever more internationally, driven by Bris Rocher, grandson of the founder Mr. Yves Rocher and CEO since 2010.

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