

Dear University,

I, Azat Mazitov, a second-year student of IBACS, am incredibly crushed, devastated, and afflicted by the death of Alexei Navalny, a Russian oppositional politician — but I am not the only one; so are many other Russian people, Russian civil society, and Russian students of Erasmus University. There are at least 8 Russian students whom I managed to contact after the news of Navalny's death appeared, but there are more; I just don't know all of them. The following is written from the name of all of us — those who emphasises the importance of commemoration.

This email is a matter of proposal: We wish it were possible to establish a spontaneous memorial for Alexei Navalny on the territory of the university campus. Right now, there are no words to express the feelings of all Russians who believed in the words and actions of Alexei Navalny, and as Theodor Adorno, reflecting on memory in post-war Germany, warned us: «The murdered are to be cheated out of the single remaining thing that our powerlessness can offer them: remembrance». Now, many of us, Russian students, are in emigration in the Netherlands for different reasons, including the political situation at home and following academic constraints. And we, here, in all our powerlessness — we don't want to deprive Navalny of remembrance.

We assume you may say that the institution is not a place of political activity, and we agree, but the university is a matter of freedom, respect for the truth, and human dignity. First, Alexei emphasized the crucial importance of all these values. Second, we do not want to establish any kind of political action; rather, a commemorative action in respect for the aforementioned values and the true defender of them.

These values made the triumph of European science possible; they made European universities respectable worldwide; they made us come to study at one of them, at Erasmus University — and we want to have an option to salute them and the one who truly died for their respect.

We hope this request is clear. We will be happy to get permission to establish a spontaneous memorial with flowers, photos, and candles at Erasmus University.