

Hungary's Orban Arrives in Moscow, Sparking Anger in the West

By [AFP](#)

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[@PM_ViktorOrban / X](#)

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Friday met Russian President Vladimir Putin for talks about the fighting in Ukraine, on a trip the EU said threatened to undermine the bloc's stance on the conflict and that was criticised by Kyiv.

Putin hosted Orban – the EU leader who has made the friendliest gestures toward Moscow – at the Kremlin where the Russian president said he expected the Hungarian to speak for Europe as the holder of the EU's rotating presidency.

"I understand that this time you have come not just as our long-standing partner but as president of the council," Putin told Orban, adding that he expected him to outline "the position of European partners" on Ukraine.

Putin said that he wanted to "discuss the nuances that have developed" over the conflict in

Ukraine with Orban, who visited Kyiv earlier this week.

The Ukrainian government lambasted the meeting, stressing they had no hand in its planning.

"The decision to make this trip was made by the Hungarian side without any agreement or coordination with Ukraine," Kyiv's foreign ministry said in a statement.

The European Union said Friday that Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban was visiting Moscow without a mandate from fellow EU leaders, on a trip that threatens to undermine the bloc's stance on the Ukraine war.

"Prime Minister Viktor Orban's visit to Moscow takes place, exclusively, in the framework of the bilateral relations between Hungary and Russia," EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.

"Prime Minister Orban has not received any mandate from the EU Council to visit Moscow."

Hungary's six-month EU presidency gives the central European country sway over the bloc's agenda and priorities for the next six months.

NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg echoed Borrell's comments, saying Orban was not representing NATO.

Orban's visit to Moscow would come days after the right-wing nationalist made a surprise trip to Kyiv, where he urged Ukraine's leadership to work towards a quick ceasefire with Russia.

The Hungarian leader on Friday insisted that peace cannot be achieved without dialogue.

"If we just sit in Brussels, we won't be able to get any closer to peace. Action must be taken," Orban said in his regular interview on Hungarian state radio, when asked about his Tuesday visit to Ukraine.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk expressed disbelief at the rumor of Orban's Moscow trip, while Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo called it "disturbing news".

Orban and Putin last met in October 2023 in Beijing, where they discussed energy cooperation.

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