

Hungary's Orbán meets Putin for talks in Moscow in a rare visit by a European leader

MOSCOW (AP) — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán visited Moscow on Friday for a rare meeting by a European leader with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed peace proposals for Ukraine, which triggered condemnation from Kyiv and some European leaders and officials.

Orbán's visit comes only days after he made a similar unannounced trip to Ukraine, where he met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and proposed that Ukraine consider agreeing to an immediate cease-fire with Russia.

"The number of countries that can talk to both warring sides is diminishing," Orbán said. "Hungary is slowly becoming the only country in Europe that can speak to everyone."

Hungary assumed the rotating presidency of the EU at the beginning of July and, in comments at the beginning of their meeting that were televised, Putin suggested that Orbán had come to Moscow as a representative of the European Council. Several European officials — including the leaders of Germany, Denmark and Estonia — dismissed that suggestion and said Orbán had no mandate for anything beyond a discussion about bilateral relations.

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