The shooting Wednesday of Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico in the town of Handlova following a political event sent shockwaves across Europe three weeks before EU parliament elections are scheduled to be held.

Leaders from across the political divide denounced the apparent assassination attempt against the populist, pro-Russian leader, calling it an attack on democracy.

Here’s what European leaders and others are saying:

“What has happened is something that we cannot seem to realize because we cannot comprehend it. A physical attack on the prime minister is, first of all, an attack on a person, but it is also an attack on democracy. Any violence is unacceptable. Hateful rhetoric we’ve been witnessing in society leads to hateful actions. Please let’s stop it.” – Slovak President Zuzana Caputova, Fico’s political rival, in a televised statement.

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“An assassination attempt on one of the highest constitutional officials is an unprecedented threat to Slovak democracy. If we express different political opinions with guns in the squares, and not in polling stations, we endanger everything we have built together in 31 years of Slovak sovereignty." – Slovak President-elect Peter Pellegrini.

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“We strongly condemn this act of violence against our neighboring partner state’s head of government. Every effort should be made to ensure that violence does not become the norm in any country, form, or sphere.” -- Volodymyr Zelenskyy, president of Ukraine on social media.

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“Shocked and appalled by the shooting of Prime Minister Robert Fico. I wish him strength for a speedy recovery.” — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

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“I was deeply shocked by the heinous attack against my friend, Prime Minister Robert Fico. We pray for his health and quick recovery! God bless him and his country!” -- Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

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“I am alarmed to hear reports of an attack on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico. Jill and I are praying for a swift recovery, and our thoughts are with his family and the people of Slovakia. We condemn this horrific act of violence. Our embassy is in close touch with the government of Slovakia and ready to assist.” -- US President Joe Biden in a statement.

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“Such acts of violence have no place in our society and undermine democracy, our most precious common good.” – European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

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“Shots fired at Robert are shots at freedom and democracy\u2026 there can be no room for violence in ***politics***.” Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic.