

## EU leaders pay tribute to slain Gdansk mayor

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News

EU leaders have paid tribute to Paweł Adamowicz, the mayor of Gdansk, who died after being stabbed by a knife-wielding assailant at the weekend.



*Photo Credit: Press Association*

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Adamowicz was a high-profile liberal critic of the ruling right-wing Law and Justice, and supported issues such as gay rights and accepting asylum seekers.

Heartfelt tributes were led by the Socialist group leader Udo Bullmann who, speaking on Tuesday, voiced “great sadness” at his death.

Bullmann told reporters in Strasbourg that Gdansk is a “proud and historic city and an outpost of EU values.”

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The German MEP added, "This murder is a disgrace and an attack on all true Europeans. This is not a Polish but European issue.

"Pawel was a real defender of human rights and we will never forget people like him, added Bullmann at a news conference.

The 27-year-old suspect, who was arrested, is a Gdansk resident with convictions for bank robbery and has spent time in prison.

## SIX-TERM MAYOR

In 1990, Adamowicz became a city councillor for Gdansk, rising to mayor of the city in 1998. He has held the office ever since. His most recent victory was in November, granting him a sixth term which was due to run until 2023.

"This murder is a disgrace and an attack on all true Europeans. This is not a Polish but a European issue. Pawel was a real defender of human rights and we will never forget people like him" **Udo Bullmann MEP**

The assassination of Adamowicz, a six-term mayor who often mingled freely with the citizens of his city, has sent Poland into shock. In Gdansk, the city flag was lowered to half-mast and a mass was held on Monday.

Thousands gathered for a minute's silence at the statue of Neptune in the city's Long Market and they were addressed by the European council president, Donald Tusk, a Gdansk native, friend and long-time ally of Adamowicz.

In an emotional address, Tusk addressed Adamowicz directly: "My dear Paweł, we are here with you today as your friends. You had to wait so long, until such a tragic moment, to see from up there just how many friends you have here in Gdansk."

## 'ONE OF POLAND'S FINEST SONS'

More reaction came from former UK Labour MP Roger Casale, now of New Europeans, who told this website, "We are totally sick and utterly saddened by the appalling news of the murder. He was on the side of human rights, of democracy, of the citizen and of the refugee. He fought for equality and the rights of the LGBTQ community. We have lost a great European and Poland has lost one of its finest sons."

Polish Interior Minister Joachim Brudziński said the attack was "an act of inexplicable barbarism" while the country's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on Twitter: "The attack on the life and health of

Paweł Adamowicz is worthy of the highest condemnation."

The World Jewish Congress said Adamowicz was a leading voice against right-wing extremism.

"My dear Paweł, we are here with you today as your friends. You had to wait so long, until such a tragic moment, to see from up there just how many friends you have here in Gdansk" **Donald Tusk**

On Tuesday, Parliament's President Antonio Tajani led a minute of silence to remember Adamowicz at the opening of the session in Strasbourg.

## **RENOUCE LANGUAGE OF HATE**

EPP deputy leader Esteban Gonzalez Pons voiced "sadness and concern" at Adamowicz's murder, saying, "He was a great friend of many in our group, a committed European and good person."

Addressing a news briefing in Strasbourg on Tuesday, the Spanish MEP added, "We must not prejudge the police inquiry of course, but I would say that it is vital we renounce the language of hate. We saw the example of Jo Cox, the MP in the UK who had spoken out against Brexit."

"All the time we hear the language of hate and an attempt to demonise our political adversaries, sometimes, as we have seen this week, in a fatal way."

"I therefore urge all politicians, including myself, the media and social media, to show the utmost respect to political adversaries. This is of paramount importance."

### **About the author**

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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