

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF FINLAND  
ESPOO  
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Ministry of the Environment  
P.O. Box 35  
00023 Government

Reference  
Russia-Germany Offshore Natural Gas Pipeline in the Exclusive Economic Zone  
of Finland – Mid-Term Report of the Environmental Impact Assessment  
Programme

## **STATEMENT ON NORD STREAM AG'S MID-TERM REPORT**

### **General**

In November 2007, Nord Stream AG submitted a mid-term report on the current status of the environmental impact assessment programme for the Russia-Germany offshore natural gas pipeline project. In November 2006, the company published both the Project Information Document and the "Environmental Impact Assessment" document. The Geological Survey of Finland issued its statement in January 2007. It stated that the project is important for energy supply in Europe and will reduce total pollution on the environment in Europe by replacing energy sources that are less environmentally-friendly, such as coal, with natural gas. However, this major project was also estimated to have harmful environmental impacts. It was stated that the construction of an offshore natural gas pipeline will have significant impacts on the marine environment and that the most environmentally-friendly technology should be used in construction, particularly considering that the seabed of the Gulf of Finland is very demanding in terms of construction in the Finnish EEZ.

### **Comments on the mid-term report of the environmental impact assessment programme**

The previous statement concluded that Nord Stream's original report in November 2006 was rather extensive with its appendices but, nevertheless, partly incomplete. Research data were deficient or references to the obtained data were general.

In the marine area of the Gulf of Finland, seabed intervention will be necessary in a fairly large section of the pipeline area, including the quarrying/removal of ridges, the construction of transition wedges or the ploughing of the pipeline into a soft seabed. In all of these activities, large amounts of fine-grained matter are released and will be transported by the sea's currents. If this matter includes

harmful substances, they will thus be released from the sediment and transported in the aqueous phase to a wide area around the pipeline. No plans were proposed in the preliminary programme report on the banking of the surplus masses possibly formed in the removal of the ridges.

Nord Stream states in its mid-term report that it received a total of 129 comments to its original environmental impact assessment published in November 2006. The company decided to continue with the surveys and to take particular account of the comments related to the pipeline route. The company also informed that it had launched a survey in particular in areas where seabed intervention is foreseen.

During the EIA process, the company has optimised its route within the original alignment so that, instead of the original 1.2 million cubic metres of rock to be dumped as the construction material of the pipeline, the company now estimates the needed amount of rock to be only 100,000 cubic metres. In addition, as wished by the authorities, the company has also started to survey a more southern alternative in the Gulf of Finland, still remaining in the Finnish EEZ, however. Route optimisation clearly reduces seabed intervention and thus the environmental impacts of constructing the pipeline. In addition, the company says in its mid-term report that it has launched an environmental sampling programme to investigate the conditions in areas where seabed intervention is expected to take place. Furthermore, the company has contracted to several parties (including the Finnish Institute of Marine Research) field investigations which comprise investigations of offshore sediment, marine flora and fauna and birds in areas where environmental impacts may occur.

It can be stated that, in its actions, the company has aimed to optimise the natural gas pipeline route in the Finnish EEZ in such a manner that the construction has the smallest possible impact on the status of the environment. Furthermore, the additional surveys indicated by the company, the results of which are not yet available, should provide additional assurance as to the implementation of the project in terms of the environment.

Elias Ekdahl  
Director General

Karita Åker  
Regional Director