

FOREST AUTHORITY

Vantaa, 25 January 2007

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**Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre**

P.O. Box 38

00521 Helsinki

Your request for a statement dated 20 November 2006

**THE RUSSIA-GERMANY UNDERSEA NATURAL GAS PIPELINE IN  
FINLAND'S EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE; THE FOREST AUTHORITY'S  
STATEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
PROGRAMME**

The Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre has provided the Forest Authority with an opportunity to issue a statement on the abovementioned environmental impact assessment programme. The company named Nordstream AG has prepared a programme describing the plans for the assessment of the environmental impact of the construction and operation of the gas pipeline. The Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre will collect statements by various authorities and parties, and provide them to the Ministry of the Environment which will coordinate Finland's response to other States in the Baltic Sea area and to the party carrying out the operation. Cooperation between States on this issue is based on the Espoo Convention (Convention of the UN Economic Commission for Europe on the Assessment of Environmental Impacts Exceeding State Borders). The assessment report will be completed by 1 August 2007 after which it will be available to the public during August and September.

It is planned that the 2 km wide channel needed for the gas pipeline will pass through Finland's exclusive economic zone for a distance of 369 km. Two parallel pipelines will be installed in the channel, for which the seafloor will be dug along a maximum width of about 50 m. Two 1,220 mm diameter steel pipes will be lowered side by side into the channel. The exact location of the pipes in the channel will be determined later based on studies of the seafloor. 55 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year will be transported to Germany through the pipes.

Public water areas in Finnish territorial waters are administered by the Forest Authority. In addition, the Forest Authority administers and maintains the national parks in eastern Gulf of Finland, the Tammisaari archipelago and the Finnish Archipelago, the Sandkallan-Stora Kölhällen, Kallbådan, Mastbådan, and Grimsörarna seal conservation areas, a group of smaller nature conservation areas and

areas that belong to the Natura 2000 programme, which are located in the “preliminary area of indirect impact” of the planned gas pipeline. In the Gulf of Finland, the channel would run on average about 5 km beyond the border of Finnish territorial waters, about 10 km in the western part of the pipeline. At its closest, the channel would touch the border of Finnish territorial waters; this would occur south of the Kalbådagrund lighthouse. The channel would be very close to the border of Finnish territorial waters in the Gulf of Finland between Tiiskeri and Porkkala.

The assessment programme examines the effects of the gas pipeline on e.g. natural conditions, conservation areas, the cultural heritage, tourism, recreational use and the use of natural resources.

### **The Forest Authority’s suggestions on the assessment programme**

The assessment programme is very thorough, but it does not yet present detailed descriptions of the implementation of the investigations and studies that will be carried out. The Forest Authority suggests that in the assessment report that will be prepared, more detailed plans for studies and actions should be presented at least regarding the following issues:

- minimization, using various technical means, of the damage to marine organisms resulting from the embedding of the gas pipeline into the seafloor
- methods for how to avoid digging up layers of hazardous substances carried into the sea by Kymijoki river and sedimented into the seafloor, and how to avoid spreading these dangerous chemicals again into the food chain of the Gulf of Finland
- a plan for how to avoid disturbing the alarmingly reduced population of ringed seals in the Gulf of Finland by traffic, explosions etc.
- a monitoring plan for the monitoring of important classes of indicator species at the present time, during the work period, and after the installation of the gas pipeline (before–under–after). At a minimum, the Forest Authority considers the monitoring of the bird population, most important fish species and seals of the outer archipelago necessary. The areas of the national parks in eastern Gulf of Finland, Tammisaari archipelago and Finnish Archipelago are available for this purpose, for which earlier material exists in the case of some of the abovementioned indicators to be monitored.
- a plan for what is to be done with the pipes when the pipeline is decommissioned in the future

Director of Environmental Services

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