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Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre
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00521 HELSINKI

STATEMENT ON THE SUBMARINE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FROM RUSSIA TO GERMANY IN THE FINNISH EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

Reference: Reg.No. UUS-206-R-32-53

The Helsinki City Board issues the following statement on the submarine natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in the Finnish exclusive economic zone – environmental impact assessment programme:

As a whole, the environmental impact assessment is unambiguous but general in nature. The current status information on the planning and affected area has to be specified noticeably in many parts during the assessment, for example by consulting environmental authorities and experts from research institutes.

According to the assessment programme, construction work of the submarine gas pipeline is planned to begin in autumn 2008. Helsinki City's new bulk cargo harbour in Vuosaari will be taken into use in 2008, and various projects are planned to be built on the bottom of the Gulf of Finland at the same time are pending. Construction-time risks may also be increased by possible mines and dumped explosives from the war time. The EIA should evaluate the projects' construction-time interactions and risks and evaluate the impacts of already completed projects and the gas pipeline project on one another. In addition, the amount and location of chemical weapons and dumped ammunition should be explored as possible. Also, the removal of the gas pipeline equipment from the seafloor and the possible impacts of this should be planned preliminary during the EIA.

According to the assessment programme, the gas pipeline project's impacts on shipping and the project's potential risks to shipping will be evaluated by specialists. The City Board sees that the heavy ship traffic between Helsinki and Tallinn and environmental impacts on shipping should be examined and taken into account in the EIA.

The impact of dredging, blasting and dumping on the spreading of muddiness should be evaluated. HELCOM's instructions should be observed in dumping. The hazardous materials in the sediment samples taken from the pipeline route should be examined comprehensively, including tributyl tin. The sampling and number of points of research should comply with HELCOM's instructions.

The source materials for the environmental assessment should also be supplemented with information on possible spawning and reproduction areas for fish and important fishing areas.

Should it materialise, the gas pipeline project can have an indirect effect on people's living conditions and safety. The rescue service authority requests that special attention be paid to quick flow of information between different parties in connection with emergencies.

The City of Helsinki requests an opportunity to issue a statement on the future assessment report as well.

HELSINKI CITY BOARD

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