

Permit and Inspection Section

16 January 2007

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Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre  
P.O. Box 36  
00521 HELSINKI

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## EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES

1347 / 440 / 2006

**STATEMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME  
CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RUSSIA-GERMANY NATURAL GAS  
PIPELINE VIA THE FINNISH EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE**

The Uusimaa Regional Environment Centre is requesting a statement on the environmental impact assessment programme concerning the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in the Finnish exclusive economic zone. The pipeline will be built to transfer natural gas from Russia along the bottom of the Baltic Sea to Germany. It is planned to build two pipeline legs, travelling along the seafloor some 50 metres apart. One pipe is planned to be taken into use in 2010 and the reported year of commissioning of the second pipeline leg is 2012. The diameter of the pipes is 1,220 mm and length between Russia and Germany 1,200 km. The pipeline stretch travelling in the Finnish EEZ is 369 km. The estimated operational life of the pipeline is 50 years, after which the pipeline will be decommissioned.

The pipeline will be laid in the sea from pipe-laying vessels and the pipe will be covered or laid in a trench. The seafloor needs to be formed by dredging, levelling or filling gaps between ridges and in some cases also by way of blasting in order to facilitate the installation of the pipeline. The pipeline will be protected by embedding it into the seafloor or covering it with crushed rock or sea bottom sediments. The pipeline has to be protected particularly well at crossing cables (telecommunications, electricity etc.) and shipping lanes.

The installation of the pipeline affects a seafloor area some 100-150 metres wide. The installation changes the seafloor in the immediate vicinity of the pipe, and bottom sediment excavation causes the water to become muddier, its extent depending largely on the structure of the bottom sediment, water currents etc. How the installation will impact the sea organisms, vegetation or valuable natural sites in the vicinity of the pipeline cannot be confirmed in advance. The nearest conservation areas in the municipality's territory are located some 9 kilometres away from the pipeline.

Negative impacts caused by the pipeline excavation can result from the spreading of toxins in the sea bottom sediments or ammunition and chemical containers dumped in the sea coming across the pipeline route and being broken. According to the plan, these have been explored beforehand, but due to the vastness and morphological variation of the sea bottom, it is not possible to explore every individual point.

Due to the extent of the project, there is a lot of complementary material. A summary of the proposed action's information, pipeline's location in the Baltic Sea region and summary of the environmental assessment programme are sent enclosed to the agenda. Other materials will be on display in the Environmental Board and the meeting.

Prepared by: erkki.selin@kirkkonummi.fi

Proposal Environment Manager:

The Permit and Inspection Section decides to issue the following statement on the environmental impact assessment programme concerning a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in the Finnish exclusive economic zone:

The installation site of the gas pipeline in the sea bottom is so far offshore that the installation cannot be foreseen to cause major negative impacts on the coast. The sea bottom is changed in the vicinity of the installation site, causing changes in conditions. These are taken into account in the programme and the project. The project planning has some currently somewhat open issues, which will be resolved in connection with the construction work. However, due to circumstances, there are some issues that need to be resolved before the installation of the pipeline.

Before laying the pipe into the sea, sufficient exploration in the pipeline route is required to locate any unexploded ammunition and chemical wastes dumped into the sea. The risk caused by them must be evaluated accurately and preparation for possible emergencies is required. Passing cables and other connections in the sea bottom (e.g. Estlink cable) safely and procedures to eliminate any disturbances have to be assessed.

The project is so massive that its potential impacts have to be assessed with particular caution in every aspect and construction supervision has to be very strict during the construction phase as well.

PROCESSING:

During the discussion, Vice Chair Harri Valkonen proposed that the first sentence of the second paragraph of the base proposal be changed as follows:

"Even though the gas pipeline's installation site is in the sea bottom far offshore, it must be noticed that the action will cause impacts on the entire Baltic Sea region."

Member Susanna Kankaanpää proposed that a new paragraph be added after the 2nd paragraph of the base proposal:

"From the Municipality of Kirkkonummi's point of view, the impacts of the construction on muddying of water, releases of hazardous materials and eutrophy and consequences to fishing and recreational use are considerable."

The Permit and Inspection Section unanimously approved both proposals.

Decision Permit and Inspection Section:

The Permit and Inspection Section decided to issue the following statement on the environmental impact assessment programme concerning a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in the Finnish exclusive economic zone:

Even though the gas pipeline's installation site is in the sea bottom far offshore, it must be noticed that the action will cause impacts on the entire Baltic Sea region. The sea bottom is changed in the vicinity of the installation site, causing changes in conditions. These are taken into account in the programme and the project. The project planning has some currently somewhat open issues, which will be resolved in connection with the construction work. However, due to circumstances, there are some issues that need to be resolved before the installation of the pipeline.

From the Municipality of Kirkkonummi's point of view, the impacts of the construction on muddying of water, releases of hazardous materials and eutrophy and consequences to fishing and recreational use are considerable.

Before laying the pipe into the sea, sufficient exploration in the pipeline route is required to locate any unexploded ammunition and chemical wastes dumped into the sea. The risk caused by them has to be evaluated accurately and preparation for possible emergencies is required. Passing cables and other connections in the sea bottom (e.g. Estlink cable) safely and procedures to eliminate any disturbances have to be assessed.

The project is so massive that its potential impacts have to be assessed with particular caution in every aspect and construction supervision has to be very strict during the construction phase as well.

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It was entered in the minutes that Environment Manager Erkki Selin left the meeting after the processing of the matter at 6:05 p.m.

Extract attested by:  
Kirkkonummi, 23 January 2007

[Signature]  
Birgitta Lemström  
Keeper of the minutes

