

PRESS RELEASE

Final Permit for Nord Stream Pipeline Paves Way for Construction Start in April

- **Regional Administrative Agency for Southern Finland grants Water Permit for construction of the pipeline in the Finnish Exclusive Economic Zone**
- **Nord Stream has now received all requisite permits from the five countries through whose waters the pipeline will pass**
- **Construction scheduled to start in April 2010 with first gas due to be transported in late 2011**

Zug, 12 February 2010. Nord Stream AG today received the last of the permits required to start constructing its 1,223 kilometre natural gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea. The Finnish “Water Permit” complements the earlier permit granted by the Finnish Government for the Nord Stream consortium to use Finnish waters.

The consortium plans to start construction in April 2010 as it has also already received all the permits required by the four other countries through whose territorial waters or Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) the pipeline will pass: Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

The Regional Administrative Agency for Southern Finland (former Western Finland Permit Authority) today approved Nord Stream’s detailed plans to construct, operate and maintain its gas pipeline along a 374 kilometre route through Finland’s EEZ.

“This is the culmination of four years of intensive studies, consultations and dialogue with the authorities, experts, stakeholders and the public in Finland and other countries through the Baltic Sea region,” said Nord Stream’s Managing Director Matthias Warnig.

“I would like to thank the authorities and the many stakeholders whose contributions have helped us to find solutions to the many challenges posed by the Baltic Sea ecosystem. Their support has enabled us to develop this key European energy infrastructure project to world-class safety and environmental standards,” continued Warnig.

“Our project has been made possible by extensive cooperation between many European countries and it will make an important contribution to European energy security,” Warnig added.

The authorities have now agreed on the precise routing of the pipeline and detailed plans for its construction and operation. These plans have been finalised in such a way as to minimise the impacts on the seabed, maritime traffic, fisheries, sea mammals, munitions and cultural heritage and taking account of other environmental considerations. The finalised plans are based on a dialogue with the authorities and feedback from other stakeholders from the five countries through which the pipeline will pass, as well as inputs from the four other countries around the Baltic Sea.

The Nord Stream consortium plans to start constructing the first pipeline in April 2010 and to start transporting gas in late 2011. When completed in 2012, Nord Stream's twin pipelines will be able to transport 55 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year from Russia to Germany, where it will join the European energy grid. Gazprom has already signed long-term contracts to supply over 20 bcm of gas a year through Nord Stream to customers in several EU countries including Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

Finland's State Council had granted a permit on 5 November 2009 to utilize the Finnish EEZ and on 2 October 2009 the Western Finland Permit Authority granted a permit to clear munitions from the seabed along the proposed route.

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Notes to editors:

Nord Stream is a natural gas pipeline that will link Russia and the European Union through the Baltic Sea. The European Union's annual natural gas imports in the year 2007 were approximately 312 billion cubic metres (bcm) and are projected to increase to 516 bcm by the year 2030. This means that by 2030, the EU's annual import needs will have increased by about 200 bcm (Source: IEA, World Energy Outlook, 2009). Nord Stream will meet about 25 percent of this additional gas import requirement by connecting the European gas pipeline network to some of the world's largest gas reserves. The project will be an important contribution to long-term security of supply and a milestone of the energy partnership between the European Union and Russia.

Nord Stream AG plans to have the first of two parallel pipelines operational in 2011. Each line is approximately 1,223 kilometres long, providing a transport capacity of some 27.5 bcm per year. Full capacity of about 55 bcm per year will be reached in the second phase, when the second line goes on stream. This is enough to supply more than 26 million European households.

Nord Stream AG is an international joint venture established for the planning, construction and subsequent operation of the new offshore gas pipeline across the Baltic Sea. Russian OAO Gazprom holds a 51 percent stake in the joint venture. The German companies BASF/Wintershall Holding AG and E.ON Ruhrgas AG hold 20 percent each, and the Dutch gas infrastructure company N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie has a 9 percent stake.

As a cross-border project, Nord Stream is subject to international conventions and national legislation in each of the countries through which it passes. It has invested 100 million euros in environmental studies and planning and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed along the whole pipeline route. This is a detailed study of environmental aspects in a trans-boundary context. The process is governed by international law (Espoo Convention) and by national legislation in the countries concerned.