

Coalition Against Funding Putin's Neo-Fascism

Bundeskanzleramt
Bundeskanzlerin
Angela Merkel
Willy-Brandt-Strasse 1
10557 Berlin

Dear Madam Chancellor:

We appeal to you, Madam Chancellor, to take immediate measures to halt all construction on Nord Stream 2 (NS2) until Putin removes all Russian troops from Ukraine's territory, and Alexei Navalny is freed. Furthermore, we urge you to maintain a moratorium on NS2 pending reconsideration by an independent commission of experts on its impact on Germany's and Europe's energy security in light of the ever-growing threat from a neo-fascist Russia. Lastly, we strongly recommend that you work with the new American Administration in a welcoming and trusting framework for mutual support and cooperation of Euro-Atlantic efforts in infrastructure cyber-security, clean energy, and adequate, affordable energy supplies.

As you well know, between 1939 and 1941 - in tandem with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact - a series of trade and credit agreements between fascist Germany and Soviet Russia provided Germany with a great many resources they needed to build up their military strength for the invasion of Eastern Europe and the USSR. Now history has come around full circle, and a democratic Germany finds itself nearing closure on a new "pact," but this time with neo-fascist Russia receiving the resources *it* needs to build up its military for the invasion of not only neighboring states, but to undermine and intimidate European democracies.

President Biden stated that Nord Stream 2 is a "bad deal for Europe." It divides Europe, exposes eastern and central Europe to Russian manipulation and intimidation, and goes against Europe's own stated energy and security goals. It is *not even needed* because Ukraine's pipeline, with Russia's other Baltic pipeline, have a capacity of nearly 210 billion cubic meters of natural gas – more than twice as much as Germany consumes, and without even factoring in the gas currently received from multiple other sources and future reductions committed to Paris Accords.

NS2 is *not at all* about creating additional capacity but about supplanting the main existing path for Russian gas to Europe that runs through Ukraine. That is why NS2's onshore extension, EUGAL (majority-owned by Gazprom), allocates only 20% of NS2's gas to Germany and points west, while the other 80% is to be routed to the Austrian gas hub in Baumgarten to replace the gas supplied through Ukraine. According to the German Institute for Economic Research, the consumption forecasts on which Nord Stream 2 is based "significantly overestimates natural gas demand in Germany and Europe" and that there will be no supply gap if the pipeline is not built.

It should be self-evident that in the Kremlin's strategic planning *NS2 is not, and never has been*, a "commercial project" but a political one, concocted by Putin to greatly increase European dependence on Russian energy, export his corruption and agents throughout Europe,

and to isolate, punish, and coerce nations like Ukraine in eastern and central Europe to succumb to his will. This surely must be known to you and the profit-seeking businessmen and politicians who are behind it. (Ukraine's pipeline could be modernized at a fraction of the cost without the divisiveness and environmental damage.) It is estimated that when NS2 and the Turkish stream are completed, Russian fossil exports to the European market will grow from 40 to 70%.

That is why the termination of NS2 has received strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress and why countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Canada and even the European Union's parliament have urged that the pipeline be closed. Even ordinary Germans are divided with substantial numbers fearing its adverse impact on the environment, and others deeply troubled by the support and rewards it offers those bent on warring against democratic European states. Tom Tugendhat, chairman of the British Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, termed NS2 "a project by the Russian Government to undermine the alliance and East European states" and that undermines Europe and Germany.

Your government's support for NS2 has disappointed many human rights supporters with its unwillingness to leverage NS2 as a potent pressure point in changing Putin's behavior towards his political opponents or to refrain from aggression against countries like Ukraine and Georgia. Norbert Roettgen, head of the German Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committee, declared that "we must pursue hard politics, we must respond with the only language Putin understands – that is gas sales." In response, there has been only a shameful silence.

Canceling the NS2 pipeline is the single, most effective tool that the West has in thwarting Putin's ambitions and destructive actions. Over the years that NS2 has been under construction, Gazprom and its Kremlin backers have done everything legally possible to subvert, circumvent, stone-wall, and reject efforts by the European Union or German energy regulators to hold them to the same regulations and standards that affect all other gas providers. Brussel's efforts to ensure energy security for all of Europe and to provide for transparency, open access to all, competitive pricing, and diversity in both energy source and its transport have been frustrated and court decisions ignored. If Gazprom behaves in such a manner when they are still "guests" in Germany, consider how they will conduct themselves once they feel safely "at home."

Madame Chancellor, the decision to withdraw from this politically ruinous agreement with Russia rests entirely on your shoulders. Ukraine's fate and Europe's future that is free from the insidious grasp of Russia's tentacles rests squarely with this momentous decision.

Respectfully, on behalf of the Coalition:

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