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# POLITICS OF THE NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE

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## Introduction

The ongoing Nord Stream 2 pipeline controversy discusses the entangled nature of energy policy, foreign policy, and security. The politics surrounding the issue have highlighted Russia's increasingly hostile stance towards Central and Eastern Europe, tensions within the European Union, and between Germany and the United States. Efforts to present the pipeline as a purely economic project have been overshadowed by the numerous strategic and diplomatic issues it has raised. This paper will analyse the politics of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, highlighting how energy security is a key component of wider security and strategic concerns. Such wider concerns include the EU's economy, the geopolitical balance regarding Russia, and the national security of countries in Eastern and Central Europe. The paper will proceed as follows: after presenting some key details about the pipeline, it will address the Russian interests in the success of Nord Stream 2 and the unequivocal opposition posed by Ukraine and Poland. Following this, the paper will highlight the complicated positions of Germany and the US, as the former attempts to balance strategic and economic concerns, and the latter tries to juggle commitments to its allies.

For the most part, the Nord Stream 2 runs parallel to the Nord Stream pipeline, which is already finished and operational since 2011. These pipelines run from Russia to Germany through the Baltic Sea. The Nord Stream 2 will have double the capacity of the first pipeline, with an increase from 55 billion cubic meters to 110 billion cubic meters per year.<sup>1</sup> Gazprom, the Russian state-owned energy company, owns these pipelines with financing from other European companies.<sup>2</sup> The project has faced delays, but as of September 2021, Russia reports that the pipeline is built and ready for operations.<sup>3</sup> However, Germany's energy regulator, the *Bundesnetzagentur* (Federal

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<sup>1</sup> van der Plas, Steven "Nord Stream 2: A Look at Europe's Most Controversial Pipeline," *Jason Institute of Peace and Security Studies*, April 18, 2021, <https://jasoninstitute.com/nord-stream-2-a-look-at-europes-most-controversial-pipeline/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Russia's Nord Stream 2 Natural Gas Pipeline to Germany" CRS Report No. IF11138. *Congressional Research Service*, updated December 9, 2021 <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11138>

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Soldatkin, "Russia Completes Nord Stream 2 Construction, Gas Flows yet to Start," *Reuters*, September 10, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russias-gazprom-says-it-has-completed-nord-stream-2-construction-2021-09-10/>.

Network Agency), revoked the pipeline's certification owing to legal issues.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the pipeline is not yet operational.

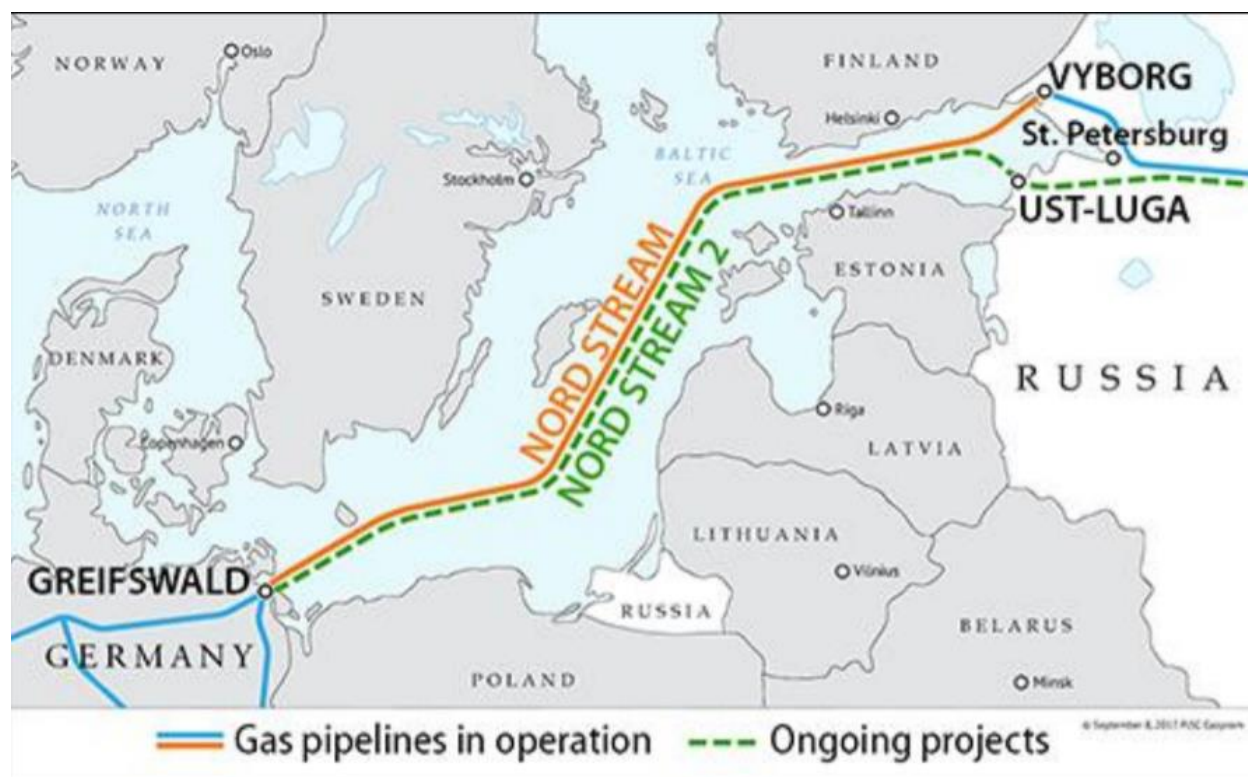


Figure 1. Nord Stream 2 route (Source: Gazprom, edited by Congressional Research Service<sup>5</sup>)

## Russia's Interests

While Russia insists that the Nord Stream 2 is a purely commercial project with no ulterior political motives, there has been much speculation about Russia's geopolitical and strategic gains from this pipeline. This speculation has been driven by the fact that existing routes have enough spare capacity (theoretically), to allow Russia to export the same amount of gas as the Nord Stream

<sup>4</sup> Vera Eckert, "German Regulator Puts Brake on Nord Stream 2 in Fresh Blow to Gas Pipeline," *Reuters*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/german-energy-regulator-suspends-nord-stream-2-certification-makes-demands-2021-11-16/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Russia's Nord Stream 2 Natural Gas Pipeline to Germany" CRS Report No. IF11138.

pipelines.<sup>6</sup> This spare capacity could be reached if existing routes, especially through Ukraine, were repaired and refurbished. There are three geopolitical gains that the Nord Stream 2 presents for Russia:

- Increased energy dominance in Europe<sup>7</sup>: The backdrop of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is an ongoing energy crisis in Europe. This has been exacerbated by Germany's choice to phase out its nuclear and coal power plants. Therefore, Europe is increasingly dependent on Russia for its energy security. Since having a regular supply of energy is so important for the economy, Russia's dominance over Europe's energy supplies endows it with considerable leverage over the EU. It also cuts into other suppliers like Norway. There is a past precedent for Russia cutting off supplies to the EU's detriment, in 2006<sup>8</sup> and 2009.<sup>9</sup> Moscow rationalised these decisions by saying it was prioritising its domestic needs. However, the indication is clear: Russia can cause a major crisis in Europe if it serves its geopolitical ambitions. Even amidst the ongoing crisis, Gazprom has not been renewing contracts to deliver gas through existing routes, presumably to add pressure on the German regulatory agency to give the green light to Nord Stream 2.<sup>10</sup> However, some critics have pointed out that the Nord Stream 2 indicates a bilateral dependence. Russia depends on the European market for its gas exports.
- It can be argued that regardless of the success of Nord Stream 2, one of Russia's goals of sowing division within Europe, and between the US and its Western European allies, has been achieved.<sup>11</sup> Within Europe, there have been calls to check Russian energy dominance

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<sup>6</sup> Russel, Martin. "The Nord Stream 2 pipeline: Economic, Environmental, and Geopolitical Issues" PE 690.705 *European Parliamentary Research Service*, July 2021.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690705/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)690705\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690705/EPRS_BRI(2021)690705_EN.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> van der Plas, Steven "Nord Stream 2: A Look at Europe's Most Controversial Pipeline"

<sup>8</sup> Parfitt, Tom "Russia Turns off Supplies to Ukraine in Payment Row, and EU Feels the Chill," *The Guardian*, January 2, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/jan/02/russia.ukraine>.

<sup>9</sup> Kramer, Andrew "Russia Cuts Gas, and Europe Shivers," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/07/world/europe/07gazprom.html>

<sup>10</sup> Vladimir Soldatkin, "Russia's Gazprom Has No Europe Gas Exports Planned in February via Yamal Pipeline," Reuters, *January 17, 2022*, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/yamal-gas-pipeline-flows-still-heading-eastward-germany-poland-2022-01-17/>.

<sup>11</sup> Lang, Kai-Olaf., & Westphal, K. 2017. "Nord Stream 2: a political and economic contextualisation." *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit*.

[https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/51318/ssoar-2017-lang\\_et\\_al-Nord\\_Stream\\_2\\_a\\_political.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/51318/ssoar-2017-lang_et_al-Nord_Stream_2_a_political.pdf?sequence=1)

in the region and to ensure the EU's energy security through alternative means. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline has shaken the strategic coherence of the EU, with the Angela Merkel-led German government favouring the pipeline while others remain sceptical. While some are reluctant to entrench Russian influence in the EU, others cite the discrepancy between the EU's climate/environmental goals and investing in fossil fuel infrastructure like the pipeline.<sup>12</sup> The European Commission is sceptical of the claim that Nord Stream 2 will help Europe's energy security since it does nothing to diversify sources or suppliers of gas.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, there is also the question of compliance with EU law concerning pipelines:

- There is also the issue of U.S interests in Eastern Europe, and its relationship with its Western European allies, most notably Germany. It has imposed sanctions against companies involved in the Nord Stream 2's construction. These actions have drawn criticism that the US is meddling in the EU's internal affairs.
  - The other argument advanced in this regard is that the pipeline is not very consequential. It doesn't affect Russia economically, because other routes are still available for its gas exports to the EU. Therefore, the motive for pushing for the construction of the pipeline can be ascribed to this divisive geopolitical agenda. So far, such turmoil has been caused by the construction of the pipeline - so its operations might cause even more conflict.
- As stated earlier, the Nord Stream 2 would bypass the existing pipelines through Ukraine. Ukraine collects transit fees from Gazprom on the gas that passes through their pipelines. By bypassing Ukraine, Gazprom and Russia can isolate and weaken Ukraine economically.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, they can create a schism between Ukraine and Western Europe, as the latter will be less dependent on Ukraine for gas pipeline routes. Making Ukraine non-consequential in its ability to export gas to the EU, reduces the deterrents for Russia to meddle with Ukraine. Ukraine will no longer have the leverage to disrupt Russian gas exports to the EU. Moreover, with their leverage over Europe, Russia may also be

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<sup>12</sup> Westphal, Kirsten. 2021. "Nord Stream 2 - Germany's Dilemma" *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit*. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/74874#>

<sup>13</sup> Russel, Martin. "The Nord Stream 2 pipeline: Economic, Environmental, and Geopolitical Issues" PE 690.705

<sup>14</sup> "Russia's Nord Stream 2 Natural Gas Pipeline to Germany" CRS Report No. IF11138.

emboldened to become more aggressive in Eastern Europe. Some commentators have called Nord Stream 2 a Russian weapon that is part of a “hybrid warfare” against Ukraine.<sup>15</sup>

## Ukraine and Poland’s Opposition

The loss of transit fees and increased risk of Russian aggression are enough to make Ukraine fundamentally opposed to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Ukraine’s territorial integrity is in question, and so is its economy.<sup>16</sup> Ukraine has attempted to marshal the U.S and the E.U to oppose the pipeline, saying that it will threaten Europe’s energy security and that Ukrainian security concerns must be considered.<sup>17</sup> It has raised concerns that the pipeline does not comply with EU law. Ukraine has reduced its dependence on Russian gas by turning to other suppliers from the EU. However, now that Russia is not dependent on Ukrainian infrastructure for exporting its gas, Russia could sabotage this critical infrastructure as part of its increasing hostility towards Ukraine.

Poland is also opposed to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as it also stands to lose transit fees. Moreover, it cites the pipeline as a boost to Russia’s destabilising presence in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> The Polish anti-monopoly authority has gone so far as to fine the companies investing in the pipeline.<sup>19</sup> Poland has issued joint statements with Ukraine condemning the pipeline, saying:

“Ukraine and Poland will work together with their allies and partners to oppose NS2 until solutions are developed to address the security crisis created by NS2, to provide support to

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<sup>15</sup> Harper, Jo. “Nord Stream 2: Who Wins, Who Loses” *Deutsche Welle*, 23 December 2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/nord-stream-2-who-wins-who-loses/a-60223801>

<sup>16</sup> Rao, Swasti. “Intersecting Geo-Economics and Geopolitics: Nord Stream 2 and Europe” | *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, 2016, <https://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/intersecting-geo-economics-and-geopolitics-nord-stream-2-swastirao-101221>.

<sup>17</sup> Szabo, Zsuzsanna. “Ukrainian Minister Stresses ‘Threats’ Posed by Nord Stream 2 to Europe Energy Security.” *Standard & Poor Global Platts*, August 23, 2021. <https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/082321-ukrainian-minister-stresses-threats-posed-by-nord-stream-2-to-europe-energy-security>.

<sup>18</sup> Lang, Kai-Olaf., & Westphal, K. 2017. “Nord Stream 2: a political and economic contextualisation.”

<sup>19</sup> Agnieszka Barteczko, Oksana Kobzeva, “Polish Watchdog Fines Gazprom \$7.6 Billion over Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline,” U.S., October 7, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nordstream-poland-gazprom-idUSKBN26S19J>

countries aspiring to membership in Western democratic institutions, and to reduce threats to peace and energy security.”<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the two countries have also called upon Germany and the US, whom it still considers allies, to address the situation satisfactorily without empty promises, but with concrete steps.<sup>21</sup>

## Germany’s Interests

Germany’s role in the Nord Stream 2 debate can be characterised as a dilemma between energy policy and foreign policy, with no neat resolution offering itself. Germany plans to phase out its nuclear power plants by the end of 2022 and aims to stop using coal to generate energy by 2038.<sup>22</sup> It is planning to focus on using renewable energy instead, especially wind and solar energy. This is part of its decades-long energy transition plan (*Energiewende*).<sup>23</sup> The decision to phase out nuclear power in 2022 has been met with scepticism, as Germany and Europe more generally face a worsening energy crisis, with shortages causing a price surge affecting households and energy-intensive industries.<sup>24</sup> Amidst this ongoing crisis, proponents such as Putin have pitched Nord Stream 2 as a solution to Germany’s energy woes.<sup>25</sup> Natural gas is portrayed as a transitional fuel on the way to greater dependence on renewable sources.<sup>26</sup> Since its conception, Nord Stream 2 has been framed by the German establishment as a purely commercial project that has no political overtones. This message has been reiterated by the corporations involved in the pipeline’s

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<sup>20</sup> Joint Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Zbigniew Rau on Nord Stream 2, 21 July 2021.

<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/spilna-zayava-ministra-zakordonnih-sprav-ukrayini-dmitra-kulebi-ta-ministra-zakordonnih-sprav-polshchi-zbignyeva-rau-shchodo-pivnichnogo-potoku-2>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> “Final Decision to Launch the Coal-Phase out – a Project for a Generation,” *German Federal Ministry for Economics Affairs and Climate Action*, 2020, <https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/EN/Pressemitteilungen/2020/20200703-final-decision-to-launch-the-coal-phase-out.html>.

<sup>23</sup> “Germany announces proposal to phase out coal by 2038, further changing its generation mix” *US Energy Information Administration*, May 29, 2019. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=39652>

<sup>24</sup> “Europe’s energy crisis will trigger its worst neuroses” *The Economist*. January 15, 2022.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/01/15/europes-energy-crisis-will-trigger-its-worst-neuroses>

<sup>25</sup> Kramer, Andrew “Putin Suggests Germany Approve Nord Stream 2 to Solve Energy Crisis,” *The New York Times*, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/13/business/energy-environment/putin-nord-stream-germany.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Russel, Martin. “The Nord Stream 2 pipeline: Economic, Environmental, and Geopolitical Issues” PE 690.705



construction, as well as ex-Chancellor Angela Merkel and her successor, Olaf Scholz.<sup>27</sup> However, this position has been met with opposition from within Germany and from other EU/European countries.

Internally, some parties, now within the coalition government, have remained sceptical of the pipeline. Most prominently, Annaleena Broeback, the German foreign minister from the Green party had been vocal about her opposition before the coalition government formed. The reasons for the opposition from the Green party include Russia's hostility towards Ukraine and the pipeline not complying with European law. At the time of writing, the German energy regulator revoked the pipeline's certification. This is because of various European Union laws.<sup>28</sup> The law requires that the owners of the pipelines be different from the suppliers of the gas that is transported in them. Moreover, the pipeline must remain open to third-party access. In Nord Stream 2's case, Gazprom is both the owner and supplier, and is reluctant to give up its monopoly to third party access. Other issues include Gazprom's dubious record of gas cuts, and of cutting off supplies to Slovakia and Hungary to prevent them from reselling to Ukraine. This poses a risk in terms of getting a certification that the pipeline will not pose a supply security risk to Germany or the EU as a whole. The European Parliament also called for halting the pipeline after Russian authorities arrested Alexander Navalny, the opposition leader in Russia. This was immediately following his treatment in Germany, after an attempted assassination attempt.

Germany's support of the pipeline has created fractures within the EU, as most members do not agree that Nord Stream 2 is a purely commercial project. Most of the criticism has come from countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, while France has mildly voiced its concerns. The issues raised are the following<sup>29</sup>:

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<sup>27</sup> Andreas Rinke, "German SPD Official Defends Pro-Nord Stream 2 Policy," Reuters, January 8, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/german-spd-official-defends-pro-nord-stream-2-policy-2022-01-08/>.

<sup>28</sup> Riley, Alan. "Russia Readies Its Nord Stream 2 Weaponry" *Center for European Policy Analysis* July 22, 2021, <https://cepa.org/russia-readies-its-nord-stream-2-weaponry/>

<sup>29</sup> Lang, Kai-Olaf., & Westphal, K. 2017. "Nord Stream 2: a political and economic contextualisation."



1. The pipeline project violates Europe's energy solidarity and the notion of an Energy Union. Germany has asked countries to think beyond self-interest when it comes to issues like refugee policy but has not applied the same standard when it comes to Nord Stream 2.
2. The pipeline has negative consequences for countries connected to the Ukrainian east-west route. If Nord Stream 2 begins operations, the Ukrainian route can become obsolete leading countries to lose their transit fees (e.g., Slovakia) or being forced to develop new infrastructure.
3. The pipeline undermines diversification initiatives that the EU has committed to maintaining its energy security. The supply from Russia is more vulnerable to interruptions and makes it difficult for the EU to oppose possible Russian hostility in Ukraine or elsewhere.
4. Gazprom can use the leverage from Nord Stream 2 (which can ease the energy crisis) to attain exemptions from EU wide laws such as the third-party access law. This will create a monopolistic supplier to the EU, which is a dangerous geopolitical proposition.

Following a dispute between Germany and Poland, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has mandated that Germany must consider the interests of all the member states when undertaking the certifying process.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the Polish energy regulator has been allowed to participate in the German certification process of Nord Stream 2.<sup>31</sup> Recently, Ukraine has also been included in the process.<sup>32</sup>

## US Interests

The United States is keen to remain on good terms with both Ukraine and Germany. As a major player in the NATO alliance, it is committed to resisting Russia's plays for dominance in Eastern Europe. The US also claims that it is concerned about the negative effects of the Nord Stream 2

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<sup>30</sup> Riley, Alan. "Russia Readies Its Nord Stream 2 Weaponry"

<sup>31</sup> Stuart Elliott, "Poland's PGNiG Approved to Take Part in Nord Stream 2 Certification Process," *S&P Global Platts*, September 23, 2021, <https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/natural-gas/092321-polands-pgnig-approved-to-take-part-in-nord-stream-2-certification-process>.

<sup>32</sup> "Ukraine Will Be Part of Nord Stream 2 Certification Process -German Regulator," Reuters, November 15, 2021 <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/ukraine-will-be-part-nord-stream-2-certification-process-german-regulator-2021-11-15/>

pipeline on Europe's energy security. The US initially created a package of sanctions against Russia and the companies involved in the pipeline's construction. These sanctions enjoyed a bipartisan consensus and served to delay the pipeline's completion. However, the Biden administration has decided to waive sanctions and actively stop future sanctions from being imposed. In July 2021, they also reached a deal with Berlin to allow the smooth completion of the pipeline.<sup>33</sup> Biden has thus been open to rebuilding US-German ties, which is a significant part of the NATO alliance. This move was met with some outcry from Ukraine and Poland. However, the US and Germany have stated that they are "resolutely committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Ukraine. Moreover, they have agreed that new sanctions will immediately be placed should Russia use energy as a weapon against Ukraine.<sup>34</sup> Germany has also agreed to use leverage to maintain gas transit through Ukraine for at least 10 years. As part of a Green Fund, they have pledged \$175 million for Ukraine's energy transformation. Moreover, Germany and the US have agreed to support Ukraine, Central and East-ern Europe in infrastructure and technical domains to transition to cleaner energy via the Climate and Energy Partnership and the Three Seas Initiative.

However, the Biden administration decided to include the pipeline within a wider sanctions package if Russia invades Ukraine. This is in line with the NATO "deterrence package" meant to frighten Russia from a military incursion into Ukraine. Previously Germany was keen to not bring Nord Stream 2 into the Russia-Ukraine conflict. But recently the chancellor Olaf Scholz has said that should Russia invade "everything would be on the table" - including putting a hold on or cancelling the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

## Conclusion

While the above sections have made clear the positions of various countries vis-a-vis the pipeline, I will conclude by highlighting two further dimensions of Nord Stream: environmental security

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<sup>33</sup> Macias, Amanda. "U.S., Germany Strike a Deal to Allow Completion of Controversial Russian Nord Stream 2 Pipeline," CNBC , July 21, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/07/21/us-germany-strike-deal-to-allow-completion-of-russian-nord-stream-2-pipeline.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Shagina, Maria & Kirsten Westphal. "Nord Stream 2 and the Energy Security Dilemma," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*, 28 July 2021, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/nord-stream-2-and-the-energy-security-dilemma>.

and lobbying. Critics within Germany and the EU are also focused on the fact that investing in the pipeline does not align with the EU's climate and energy goals, regarding decarbonisation. Natural gas is viewed, and pitched by the pipeline's proponents, as a transitional energy source to renewables, however, some ambiguity exists as to whether the transition will indeed be followed through.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, marine habitats in the Baltic sea are being affected negatively by the pipeline's construction and its future operation.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, pursuing energy security in the short term might have long term destabilising effects through the deterioration of environmental security.

The other aspect that deserves attention is the role of political and financial lobbying to build and operate the pipeline. The Nord Stream company's chairman is Germany's ex-chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder.<sup>37</sup> He has also been nominated for Gazprom's board.<sup>38</sup> It was Schroeder, as chancellor, who signed the deal with Putin for the first Nord Stream pipeline. Within weeks of leaving the chancellorship, he was named chairman by Nord Stream, which has intimate ties to Gazprom and the Russian government. Schroeder has since been lobbying for Nord Stream 2. Moreover, the CEO of Nord Stream 2 is Matthias Warnig, an influential German businessman in Russia.<sup>39</sup> He is also said to be Putin's personal friend and ally. Both figures can be seen as evidence that the top levels of the German business community have a significant leaning towards Russia. German political and business elite have long been labelled as *Russlandversteher* or Russia "understanders."<sup>40</sup> Russia has been cultivating support for the pipeline among the German business community. German companies Uniper and Wintershall are also part of building the pipeline. Nord Stream 2 has also been employing lobbyists in the US to campaign against the sanctions that

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<sup>35</sup> Russel, Martin. "The Nord Stream 2 pipeline: Economic, Environmental, and Geopolitical Issues" PE 690.705

<sup>36</sup> Detloff, Kim. "Nord Stream 2: A Gas Pipeline Passing through Marine Protected Areas?," *Naturschutzbund Deutschland*, 2015, <https://en.nabu.de/topics/ecosystems/nordstream2.html#:~:text=Nord%20Stream%20will%20destroy,German%20state%20of%20Mecklenburg%20Vorpommern.&text=Protected%20habitats%20will%20be%20destroyed,ducks%20will%20be%20driven%20away>.

<sup>37</sup> Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Why Merkel Chose Russia over US on Nord Stream 2," *Politico*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/vladimir-putin-german-chancellors-nord-stream-russia-energy-angela-merkel/>.

<sup>38</sup> "Former German Chancellor Schroeder Nominated to Join Gazprom Board," *Reuters*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-germany-schroeder-gazprom-avtomatizat-idUKKBN2K91V5>

<sup>39</sup> Goncharenko, Roman "Who Is Nord Stream's Matthias Warnig, Putin's Friend from East Germany? *Deutsche Welle*. January 25 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/who-is-nord-streams-matthias-warnig-putins-friend-from-east-germany/a-56328159>.

<sup>40</sup> Mankoff, Jeffrey. "Russian Influence Operations in Germany and Their Effect" *Center for International and Strategic Studies*. February 3, 2020.

President Trump and Biden had imposed on the pipeline.<sup>41</sup> These ties of the business elite are important to note because they reveal a nexus of geopolitics, energy policy and vested business interests, in a potentially harmful combination to states like Ukraine. Therefore, in conclusion, it is evident that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline has complex politics that come with its construction and operation. It is certainly not a purely commercial project, as some proponents have claimed. Moreover, considering the ongoing volatility between Russia, Ukraine and NATO at the time of writing, the pipeline is certainly an important piece of this larger brewing conflict.

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<sup>41</sup> Timothy Gardner, "Lobbying for Russian Pipeline Spikes in Washington," *Reuters*. August 4, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-nordstream-2-lobbying-idUSKCN2500FI>

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