

MEPs renew call for Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project to be shelved

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News

Controversial Russia-to-Germany pipeline due to go online by 2019.



Photo credit: Press Association

The controversial Russia-to-Germany pipeline running under the Baltic Sea is due to go online by 2019.

If it opens, it will double the existing Nord Stream 1 pipeline's capacity of 55 billion cubic metres of gas a year, and bypass existing pipelines running across Poland and Ukraine.

But several Central European and Baltic EU member states oppose the scheme and have labelled it a threat to the security of their energy supply.

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They include German EPP group leader in the European Parliament, Manfred Weber and Norbert Rottgen, chair of the Bundestag's foreign affairs committee, who have called on the German government to "show its colours and speak against Nord Stream 2."

The pan-European Green party is now also renewing its demand for the controversial project to be scrapped.

The calls come after Russian President Vladimir Putin met Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel at a summit on Saturday. The two leaders discussed the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project that Russia's Gazprom has already begun building in the Baltic Sea.

European Green Party co-chairs Reinhard Butikofer, a sitting MEP, and Monica Frassoni said, "The majority of EU member countries, a majority in the European Parliament, and the European Commission all oppose this pipeline project for plenty of reasons."

"The German government has so far preferred to largely ignore the criticism, pretending this was an exclusively economic undertaking."

"The majority of EU member countries, a majority in the European Parliament, and the European Commission all oppose this pipeline project for plenty of reasons" **European Green Party co-chairs Reinhard Butikofer and Monica Frassoni**

The two added, "Nord Stream 2 was extremely political from the very beginning. The very substance of the political controversy over Nord Stream 2 goes to the core of the central strategic question for the European Union with regard to its future external relations."

"Will European member states hang together and act in solidarity in relation to the rest of the world, or will they hang separately, each and every one weakened by a lack of coherence?" said Butikofer and Frassoni, a former MEP.

"Some commentators say that Nord Stream 2 has become a battle of wills between Washington DC and Berlin about who gets their way in light of the fact that President Trump has come to oppose this project also."

"But that is not true. It is rather a battle about the strength and clarity of Germany's European inclination."

The pair said that European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's visit to Washington in July had "proved that the Union can act effectively if it sticks together."

But they ask, "Will the German Chancellor apply the same approach to Germany's Russia relations? If so, the German government must refrain from allowing Russia to pursue its divisive energy policy in

Europe by holding on to the Nord Stream 2 project against majority opposition in the EU.”

“And any deal that persists on building Nord Stream 2 while just adding a little Russian fig leaf would constitute German unilateralism in the face of the need for European solidarity just the same.”

"Merkel has manoeuvred herself into a difficult spot with regard to Nord Stream 2. If she now wants to move in the right direction, the first step could be the announcement that the German government will stop blocking the necessary reform of the EU's gas directive. That should send the right signal to Moscow and to Washington."

About the author

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