

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5500/06
by Henrik Lax (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: High-risk project to lay pipeline through the Baltic Sea

In the autumn of 2005, an agreement was signed to construct a 1 200 kilometre gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany. Nord Stream AG is responsible for the project. There are major environmental hazards associated with the gas pipeline.

From an environmental point of view, it is important to use sufficiently advanced technology during the construction phase. The time of the year when the building work is carried out is significant, as is the geographical position of the pipeline, since protected areas should be avoided. It is possible that wartime munitions will be encountered during construction. There is also a great danger that the building work will release hazardous substances, such as DDT and other environmental toxins, from the seabed.

Once the gas pipeline is completed, it must be maintained. Any methane leaks will contribute to climate change. The pipeline also constitutes a security risk as it can, in principle, be used for intelligence activities, which may therefore pose a military threat to the States along the Baltic.

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the project causes as little environmental damage as possible during the construction phase and subsequently?

How will the Commission prevent Russia from using the gas pipeline as an instrument for intelligence activities against the States in the Baltic Sea region, which could create tension over security?

What measures will the Commission take to prevent the pipeline from becoming a future target for international terrorism?