

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4365/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Has the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline already commenced?

News sources confirm that Nord Stream has started to deliver gas pipes to the Finnish town of Kotka to be used in the construction of a gas pipeline along the bottom of the Baltic Sea by the Nord Stream consortium. In addition, Nord Stream has signed an agreement with the Italian company Saipem to be responsible for putting the pipeline into the water.

During the European Parliament plenary on July 8, a huge majority of the MEPs voted in favour of the report A6 0225/2008 calling on the Commission and the Council to fully commit themselves to analysing the environmental impact of the construction of this pipeline according to the provisions of EU legislative acts. Clearly, to be credible such a study must be independent and objective. One environmental impact assessment (EIA) is currently being carried out by Nord Stream contractors and is expected to be completed by January 2009. Individual Member States are conducting their own studies. According to Article 2(3) of the Espoo Convention, and European legislation the EIA must be completed before an activity such as 'large-diameter oil and gas pipelines' can be undertaken.

In light of the above, we ask the Commission the following:

Does the Commission regard the action carried out by Nord Stream as the commencement of an activity before the EIA procedure and other requirements stipulated by European law and various international conventions have been completed?

The European Community has ratified the Espoo Convention and is subject to its obligations. Will the Commission take part in the next meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Espoo Convention and will the Commission provide full legal analyses regarding European law to guarantee that European legislation and relevant Conventions are being followed?