

## Letter: The Time to Stop Nord Stream 2 is Now

Nord Stream 2 remains a major geostrategic threat to Ukraine and Europe. We call on stakeholders in Washington, Berlin, and Brussels in a position of authority and responsibility to apply all means necessary to stop this project.

On May 19, the U.S. Department of State submitted a report to Congress pursuant to the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), and we found ourselves gravely alarmed by the decision to "waive the application of sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, its CEO Matthias Warnig, and Nord Stream 2 AG's corporate officers." This is a wrong signal to send when Ukraine has just faced a major military buildup on its border, and the peacemaking process to end the occupation of Crimea and stop the war in Donbas has stalled.

U.S. President Joe Biden called Nord Stream 2 out precisely for what it is – a "bad deal for Europe" that, if built, will "lock in great reliance on Russia [which] will fundamentally destabilize Ukraine." The commitment to stop Nord Stream 2 was echoed by Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State, during the confirmation hearing. Blinken did not mince words and affirmed that he was "determined to do whatever I can to prevent that [Nord Stream 2] completion," reiterating that Biden "would have us use every persuasive tool that we have to convince our friends and partners including Germany not to move forward with it."

We support the U.S. and European calls on Germany to help stop this Russian geopolitical project. Indeed, it is time for Berlin to take a firm position against Nord Stream 2 and work with its U.S. and European allies to ensure that pipe-laying activity in the Baltic Sea ceases. This diversionary pipeline threatens European unity, contradicts the climate goals, and subverts the E.U.'s common energy policy. Thus, its completion can't be permitted.

The European Parliament voted decisively to demand a halt to construction. The U.S. Congress has targeted the project with several rounds of sanctions, which effectively dissuaded several major companies from participating in Nord Stream 2. Absent a forceful action by the German Government to terminate this ill-fated pipeline, the U.S. sanctions remain the only mechanism holding Kremlin back from realizing its core geopolitical objective, boosting its malign influence across Europe, and decisively weakening Ukraine's defense posture. We firmly believe that if Nord Stream 2 was already completed and operational, Russia would have escalated its aggression towards Ukraine.

To stop Nord Stream 2, the United States does not need to adopt new measures: it must simply apply its existing, mandatory sanctions, which Congress passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities as part of this year's and last year's National Defense Authorization Acts. While the brunt of the executive authority available under the current sanctions laws has not been fully leveraged, Russia is working to finish the pipeline with its own vessels and support from some non-Russian companies.

The Kremlin expects Germany to negotiate a deal with the United States, in which the full application of sanctions will be avoided. This cannot be allowed. Too many times in history, grand bargains were struck at the expense of Central & Eastern Europe—and we have all paid dearly for it. By hesitating to apply existing laws and impose sanctions on companies currently involved in Nord Stream 2 pipe-laying, the United States is sending a dangerous message to Russia, one that will affect Russian behavior far beyond Nord Stream 2.

We continue to count on Ukraine's friends and allies in Washington, Brussels, and Berlin to terminate this pipeline of deception once and for all. With thousands of Russian troops still massed on our borders, no single, non-military action would do more to protect Ukraine against Russian aggression than stopping Nord Stream 2.