
DENMARK SEEKS TO CHANGE LAW ON PIPELINES AMID NORD STREAM 2 DIVISIONS

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Denmarks government is proposing amending legislation to allow it to ban pipeline projects on the grounds of foreign and security policy, due to concerns raised by Russian efforts to build a disputed gas pipeline through Danish waters.

The small Nordic country has been caught in a geopolitical conflict as Russian state gas exporter Gazprom and its partners behind the Nord Stream 2 pipeline seek permission to pump more gas to Europe via the Baltic Sea to Germany.

We want to have the possibility to say yes or no from a perspective of security and foreign policy, the minister of energy and climate, Lars Christian Lilleholt, told Reuters, adding that it was currently only possible to veto such projects on the grounds of environmental concerns.

The EU is divided between Eastern European and Baltic Sea countries that see a new pipeline carrying Russian gas across the Baltic making the EU a hostage to Moscow □ and those in northern Europe, most especially the main beneficiary Germany, for whom the economic benefits take priority.

Nord Stream 2 official: We see a lot of smokescreens thrown around

The Third Energy Package does not apply to Nord Stream 2, as it doesnt apply to any of the existing or future import pipelines into the EU internal market, and the European Commission accepts that, Sebastian Sass told EURACTIV.com in an exclusive interview.

The provisional route of Nord Stream 2 crosses Danish waters close to the Danish island of Bornholm, between Sweden and Poland.

Denmark and Sweden earlier this year requested that the European Commission intervene in Nord Stream 2 before the two states agree on permits for the pipeline to pass through their waters. EU diplomats said there was little scope for either nation to block the plan.

The current regulatory framework does not allow Denmark to say no to the construction of transit pipelines in territorial waters on the basis of foreign policy considerations, the ministry said in a statement.

Lilleholt said the go-ahead for the pipeline was not a matter for Denmark alone.

It is a question of establishing a very important pipeline from Russia to Europe, this is not only a question for Denmark, he said.

EU sources have said the Commission, sensing that there may ultimately be no legal basis to block approval of Nord Stream 2, is delaying it as long as possible.

But last week, the EU said it was seeking a mandate from members to negotiate with Russia. Lillholt said he saw this as very, very positive.

EU offers to negotiate Nord Stream 2 on behalf of members

The European Union has offered to negotiate with Russia on behalf of its member states about the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which aims to bring Russian gas to Germany under the Baltic Sea, Danish newspaper Politiken reported yesterday (29 March).

Nord Stream 2 earlier this week officially delivered its application to Danish authorities which now has to decide on permits for it to pass through Danish waters. This assessment will be made on the basis of existing rules, the ministry said.

The Nord Stream 2 project has previously said it does not see it as a task for the European Commission to make a political judgment on whether investments are needed by the market or not.

Denmarks right-wing minority government would now negotiate with other parties to win support for the proposal.

Kaynak/Source: