



PRESS RELEASE

Deutsche Umwelthilfe applies for review of Nord Stream 2 construction permit

New scientific findings on methane leaks from natural gas production have become available since Nord Stream 2 approval - climate balance of natural gas apparently worse than previously assumed – Deutsche Umwelthilfe applies to mining authority of Stralsund for review of construction and operating permit for Nord Stream 2

Berlin, 5 March 2020: Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) is calling for a review of the permit for the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline. Until the review is completed, further construction of the pipeline must be halted. DUH has submitted a corresponding request to the Stralsund mining authority. New scientific evidence suggests that leakages of methane, a very climate-damaging gas, resulting from the production of natural gas are much higher than declared by the North Stream 2 AG and Gazprom at the time of approval. These legal steps were initiated based on an expert opinion commissioned by the Technical University of Berlin.

Sascha Müller-Kraenner, CEO of DUH: *"Building Nord Stream 2 is a bet against the future. The pipeline represents 100 million tons of CO₂ per year, in addition to methane leakages of unknown magnitude. We need independent measurements and verification of methane leaks to determine the real climate balance of natural gas. It is already clear today that Nord Stream 2 contradicts all climate objectives, given its expected lifespan of well over 50 years. Instead of unnecessary fossil mega-projects, we need a clear focus on efficiency, an accelerated expansion of renewable energy and a rapid entry into renewable hydrogen production".*

Greenhouse gases are emitted not only when burning natural gas, but also during its extraction, processing and transport, which are prone to leakages of methane, the main component of natural gas. Methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), its climate impact is 84 times greater than that of CO₂ over a 20-year period. Even small leakages contribute significantly to global warming.

Cornelia Ziehm, the lawyer who prepared the expert opinion: *"The permit granted by the Stralsund Mining Authority explicitly provides for options in the event of previously unforeseeable adverse effects of Nord Stream 2 on the environment. On this basis, the mining authority must investigate operational methane emissions, taking into account current scientific findings. These findings provide at least substantial indications that methane emissions from gas production are actually significantly higher than previously assumed and indicated by the industry. Today, emissions would likely be evaluated differently than when approval was granted. The project will have to be reassessed once the results of the requested investigation are available."*

With regard to the scientific findings on the use of natural gas, Christian von Hirschhausen, TU Berlin, adds: *"Germany has sufficient and very robust capacities for importing natural gas. The second Baltic Sea pipeline, which is currently being planned, is not necessary to secure natural gas supplies for Germany and Europe. Natural gas imports must fall significantly to meet climate targets. Germany must completely phase out the use of fossil gas well before 2050. The economic calculations, which the pipeline was approved on, are based on outdated assumptions"*

about the development of natural gas demand. If Nord Stream 2 is completed, it would make us more dependent on fossil fuels, threatening an irreversible lock-in into an outdated infrastructure. This applies not only to Nord Stream 2, but also to the EUGAL pipeline currently under construction in Germany. The construction of EUGAL should also be stopped immediately".

Independent and verified data on methane leakages are not yet available from Russia. In addition, measurement methods have advanced significantly since the approval of Nord Stream 2 in 2018. Instead of measuring individual valves or components, the current state-of-the-art is to measure entire production facilities. This has already led to a 60 percent increase in measured methane emissions from the US oil and gas industry.

Links:

The expert opinion on the review of the Nord Stream 2 permit by Dr. Cornelia Ziehm and the application by DUH to review the Nord Stream 2 permit can be found here:

<http://l.duh.de/p200305>

More information and FAQ about Nord Stream 2 and methane leaks:

www.duh.de/projekte/nord-stream-2

Study by DIW Berlin (2018) "Another Baltic Sea pipeline is redundant":

https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.593445.de/18-27-1.pdf

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