

Nord Stream Passes Ships and Bombs

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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LONDON — Nord Stream will begin receiving natural gas for the world's longest subsea pipeline from Russia to Germany in early September and remains on track to start operating by the fourth quarter, the company said Wednesday.

The next 24 hours will be the last phase of construction after a year and one month of pipe laying in the Baltic Sea, Ruurd Hoekstra, deputy director of construction at Nord Stream, said in a briefing Wednesday in London.

Gazprom and its partners — BASF SE's Wintershall unit, E.On Ruhrgas, Nederlandse Gasunie and GDF Suez — plan to ship gas directly to Europe, bypassing transit countries such as Ukraine. The 1,224-kilometer link, which will surpass the Langeled pipeline from Norway to Britain as the world's longest subsea gas pipeline, will transport 27 billion cubic meters of Russian fuel a year from Vyborg to Lubmin.

Nord Stream will take about four weeks to reach full capacity, and there are no fixed plans yet for a future maintenance schedule, Hoekstra said. Nord Stream won't need to halt flows

for inspections or repairs, he said.

During the laying of the 7.4 billion euro (\$11 billion) link, with each piece of pipe weighing 24 tons, Nord Stream discovered shipwrecks and World War II bombs. One sunken vessel was relocated away from the pipeline's route.

A hoard of 17th-century copper plates used in the gun-making industry was also found. The ship carrying them had sunk on a trip from Sweden to Germany, Hoekstra said.

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