

Ukraine Eyes 'Guarantees' From Merkel in Farewell Visit

By [AFP](#)

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Angela Merkel is visiting Kiev hours after meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. **AFP Pool / TASS**

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Saturday he hoped German Chancellor Angela Merkel would bring Kiev news of Russian "guarantees" of gas transit fees for his country.

Merkel will travel to Kiev on Sunday, two days after meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

Among the issues discussed by the two leaders on Friday were questions surrounding Nord Stream 2, the 10-billion-euro (\$12 billion) pipeline channelling Russian gas to Europe.

Critics, including some EU nations and the United States, are opposed to Nord Stream 2 because it bypasses Ukraine's pipeline infrastructure, depriving the country of around a billion euros annually in transit fees.

To ward off opposition from the United States, Germany agreed to press Russia to extend a gas transit agreement through Ukraine due to expire at the end of 2024 by 10 years.

Zelenskiy voiced hopes that progress had been made on the issue.

"I hope that Merkel has managed to achieve some kind of deal with Putin, before she lands in Kiev," he told the Funke newspaper group.

"This could be guarantees for Ukraine. For instance, that Russia promises that a minimum amount of gas will pass through Ukrainian pipelines," he said.

Ukraine has vigorously opposed Nord Stream 2. It has been battling pro-Moscow separatists since 2014 and sees the transit of Russian gas through its territory as vital leverage.

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