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Germany Says No Nord Stream 2 Approval for Six Months

By AFP

December 16, 2021



Gazprom

The approval process for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany is likely to drag into the second half of 2022, German energy regulator BNetzA said on Thursday.

German authorities are waiting for the pipeline's Swiss-based "Nord Stream 2 AG" operating company to submit documents to restart the certification process, BNetzA president Jochen Homann told a press conference.

The pipeline would then also have to be approved by the European Commission, he said, "which means that decisions on this will not be made in the first half of the year".

Nord Stream 2 was completed in September but BNetzA suspended the German approval process in November, saying it needed to become compliant with German law before it could be certified.

Related article: Germany Suspends Nord Stream 2 Certification

The Baltic Sea pipeline is set to double supplies of cheap natural gas from Russia to Germany, which the EU's top economy says is needed to help it transition away from coal and nuclear energy.

But the $12 billion project has for years been dogged by delays and drawn fierce criticism from Germany's eastern European Union allies like Poland and from the United States.

Critics say the project will increase Europe's dependence on Russian gas and Ukraine has described it as a "geopolitical weapon".

This week the new German government threatened to block the pipeline from operating if Russia invades Ukraine, amid growing alarm over Russian troop movements on the border.

"In the event of further escalation this gas pipeline could not come into service," Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said.

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